WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY?

By **Szymon Wróbel**

In this essay the author attempts to define the history of philosophy. He rejects four existing propositions according to which the history of philosophy is (1) the story of great problems or questions, (2) the history of intellectual systems, (3) the history of 'celebrated names,' or (4) the story of concepts that are 'essential' for the philosophical project. Instead the author argues that the history of philosophy is a theatrical spectacle in which the philosopher is a designer positioning the stage decor and drawing on dead philosophers to build a personal dramatic work in search of his or her own intellectual genealogy.

Key words: Genealogy, geophilosophy, history, concepts, theatre

> *The divergence, the difference between Dionysus and Apollo, between ardor and structure, cannot be erased in history, for it is not in history. It too, in an unexpected sense, is an original structure* [une structure originaire]*: the opening of history, historicity itself.*
>
> <div align="right">Jacques Derrida[1]</div>

TEMPO

Similarly to Michel Foucault in *The Order of Discourse* – his Inaugural Lecture at the Collège de France[2] – I express my wish that I could have slipped surreptitiously into a discourse which has no beginning and which never ends. This is partly because we never choose our beginning nor our end, but even more because the author of this paper takes a role of a 'historical man' or simply an 'old man,' whose soul – as Nietzsche put it in his text *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life* – is merely that of conserving and honouring the antiquarian, or it is a soul indulging itself in a monumental consideration of the past or even a soul reclining all too comfortably in the seat of judgment.[3] That is why my paper is not going to be about the monumentality of antique examples, nor the objectivist

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[1]   Jacques Derrida, 'Force and Signification', trans. Alan Bass, in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 26.

[2]   Michel Foucault, 'Orders of Discourse', trans. Robert Sawyer, in *Social Science Information*, 10/2 (April 1977), p. 7-30.

[3]   Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Use and Abuse History for Life', in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. Reginald John Hollingdale, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 57-123.

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passion of collectors, nor about the critical passions of people infused with a love of justice. Historians all too often appear to us as those who constantly denounce something rather than present us with a gift. This should change. History should also be part of the ethics of hospitality and it should be founded on reciprocity; it should afford the logic of donation and it should master the artistry of giving. History ought to provide us with the gift of time; it ought to give us time or better still – it should retrieve time.

I expect the historian to prove his skill in retrieving the philosopher's time, in regaining the time lost through the philosopher's absence in debates on the philosopher. I expect the historian to exert the power to reinstate the scattered traces of the philosopher's past existence, and I equally expect the historian to exert his will to revitalize the seemingly dead and obsolete texts, and to unfold the anachronistic time that has never lapsed and today – as it has remained imperfect – calls for 'operational time' for its recovery. In other words, I expect the historian to be able to roll out the ball of static time. Make no mistake, I do not hope for the reminiscence, resonance or reconstruction of the philosopher's scenes of fight, but instead I hope to find and realize the time lost to the philosopher in thinking, time, which constantly loses itself in thinking about philosophy as a form of thinking which has long been overcome. Perhaps what I expect from the historian is something truly impossible, for what I expect is the resurrection of a seemingly dead thought. Some neo-platonic philosophers have used the word *complication* to signify the original state preceding any development, expanse, or time. In such a meaning, this noun of action from *complicate* 'to fold together, fold up, roll up' embraces multiplicity in one and affirms one in multiplicity. As such it also signifies the time of becoming for philosophy. Even today, medicine uses the word to denote the unexpected evolution of the disease, the intensification of the production of symptoms within a body under change.

My paper on time will unfold at two speeds. The first speed is that of a fallen being, permanently occupied and constantly short-changing itself within the trivialities of universal opinions, a being almost indiscernible from the surrounding buzz. First is thus the speed of the subject who arrives before the time for the actual answer. It is the speed of the subject who has no time to reactivate the primordial time, i.e., to unfold the rolled-up time of complication. The second speed is that of the emerging or slowly reactivating subject, the subject who does not blot out the traces of its arbitrariness and injustice, the subject itemizing the 'inherited estate' which was bequeathed to him as yet another heir to the intellectual property and interim proprietor of powers, i.e., the subject pursuing genealogy of quality for the primordial institution imprinting his identity. Borrowing from Carlo M. Cipolla – the greatest theorist of stupidity since Erasmus of Rotterdam – I would accept his principle *allegro ma non troppo* as a formula for this elaboration: 'fast but not too fast,' 'joyfully but not too joyously,' 'forward but not intrusively.'[4] After all, moving forward does not exclude weaving one's way, wandering, deviating or even drifting away (*deriving*).

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[4] Carlo M. Cipolla, *Allegro ma non troppo*, Il Mulino 1988.

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HIGH TEMPO: HASTY CONSIDERATIONS

First, hastily, I will verify and reject the four most widespread opinions on what the history of philosophy is.

For one, the history of philosophy is often mistaken for the history of grand questions or problems, great difficulties or controversies, and, finally, aporias. If that were to be true one is immediately compelled to ask legitimate questions such as: 'Precisely how are these questions formulated?' Or, 'What are they about?', 'What objects do they refer to?', and the like. Indeed, questions such as 'What is truth?', 'What are the sources of knowledge?', 'What are the limits of human knowledge?', 'What does it mean to be?', 'What is reality?', 'What is the subject?' – are all questions exciting human reason. At the same time, thanks to this excitement, they engage human reason in endless controversies and confront it with haunting dilemmas.

Is not it for this fact that so-called 'people of science' keep telling us – philosophers – that philosophical questions and problems are either 'infantile,' immature or 'improperly formulated,' or that they are 'delusional,' 'non-empirical,' or 'unverifiable'? While the very same 'people of science' are perhaps likely to admit that these questions are an irreducible part of the human desire for knowledge – our cognitive interest, they are still openly unappreciative as regards the computing power of the human intellect. The history of philosophy is becoming a history of an increasing awareness of the problems and increasing awareness that these very problems are unsolvable. 'The real philosophical problem,' – says Hans Georg Gadamer, – 'is an insoluble problem.'[5]

The very 'insolvability,' however, should perhaps be the least concern of this style of philosophical thinking for when we ask the 'historians of great philosophical questions' – such as Leo Strauss or Hans Georg Gadamer any further, the questions tend to complicate and intensify the problems, e.g., is the list of these and similar questions exhaustive and finite? What, indeed, is a question in philosophy? To what does a philosophical question expose the subject of cognition and the subject of speech? How does a philosophical problem arise? How do philosophical questions emerge within the historical process? What factors condition the prosperity of certain problems? What brings an end to the prosperity of certain problems? How come, for example, that 'body' becomes a philosophical problem, and 'philosophy of the body' becomes a leading philosophy? Is there in the world at least one object barred from becoming the subject of philosophical thinking?

To deepen the complexities let us ask even further: how does a philosophical question establish its status as a universal question, rather than remain purely private, personal or occasional? How does a 'personal problem' of a 'private academic' raise itself to the level of a philosophical problem? Kant, for example, inaugurates his philosophy

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[5]   Hans Georg Gadamer, 'Begriffsgeschichte als Philosophie', in Hans Georg Gadamer, *Kleine Schriften III*, (Tübingen: Mohr), p. 237-250.

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by asking, 'What is a synthetic judgement *a priori*?' Apart from being seemingly 'universal,' the question reveals Kant's 'provincialism;' his entanglement with his 'here and now,' and a cognitive motivation to a degree determined by the epoch. Does a seemingly 'impartial' epistemological question really substitute or replace the 'situation' or 'actuality' of the philosopher? Has philosophy always silenced (concealed) its political and economic situation by pretending to be independent and detached from the situation? If so, the history of philosophy would be the history of those concealments, silences, and unspoken conditions of thinking, the articulation of which was Kant's strong demand.

Every philosophy appears in a certain situation. The philosopher always emerges owing to certain prosperity, a constellation of interests and cognitive claims of various, often conflicting social groups. The philosopher, however, ascends not so much as a result of the situation nor as a founder of the situation, but more as a vessel and bridge for the interaction of forces and interests, the place of flow of those forces, the place without which the situation itself would not be complete. Socrates in Athens, Machiavelli in Florence, Hobbes in England, Spinoza in Amsterdam, Kant in Konigsberg, Heidegger in the fallen Weimar Republic, Marx in early capitalism, Deleuze in turbocapitalism – are all not the victims of the situation but strong elements of this situation and a part of the philosophical theatre, which itself is largely a part of the theatre of politics.

Of course, this is not a simple transmission. I am not at all close to the idea that a theory of cognition is a theory of society as was articulated *inter alia* by Jürgen Habermas.[6] I am also not a great enthusiast of setting the 'history of ideas' or 'sociology of knowledge' as great rivals of the 'history of philosophy.' In a sense, I regard both of these disciplines as depraved versions of the history of philosophy. I know what philosophy is and I sense what a sociology of knowledge could be. The former gives priority to knowledge over society, the latter suggests the opposite, that society is superior to knowledge. The sociologist of knowledge and the historian of ideas both do something equivocal: they pretend to be philosophers, that is, they deals with concepts, but in fact they are sociologists, for they deal with the conditions of the existence of society. Speaking in the language of Louis Althusser, for theme determination in the last instance constitutes precisely this enigmatic whole – 'society.' For example, in the works of this historian of ideas, the idea of freedom is no longer an idea or even concept, but an imaginary or even phantasmic condition for the existence of society.[7]

For this reason, the history of philosophy cannot be part of the history of human knowledge written against the background of the history of society. The sociologist of knowledge is a scientist and his results are important in the field of scientific knowledge,

6   Jürgen Habermas, 'The Idea of the Theory of Knowledge as Social Theory', in *Jürgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests,* trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 67-89.
7   Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society,* trans. Kathleen Blamey, (The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1998).

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whereas the historian of philosophy is a philosopher. This is a fundamental difference which changes the way things are – the scene, the actors, and the script of the drama. Regardless of how we see the 'mission' of philosophy, regardless of whether we perceive the philosophy as an ideology, i.e., a justification of time and place (Karl Mannheim), utopia, i.e., the fight for a new time and place (Karl Marx), expression, i.e., the word of the monad (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz), or a refusal to participate in some actual world (Michel de Montaigne), or still – as a search for a place for philosophy in absolute democracy (Baruch Spinoza), that is, whatever the initial superstitions, the philosopher above all attempts to understand himself – his place on earth – by transforming his own historical memory.

Science can be made without memory, even if its subject is – as in the case of the history of science, the history of ideas, or the sociology of knowledge – memory itself. That is why, I would venture to claim that the relationship between philosophy and time (epoch) is a union of *revealing concealment* and *openness by closure*, which means that philosophy not only transforms the antinomy of its time (society) into the antinomy of intellect (abstract questions), but above all it arouses a certain kind of a 'view of reality,' it arouses some kind of sense, 'the concept of another Real,' 'concept,' which is the most difficult to excite.

The philosopher is someone who questions the sense of reality in order to arouse a 'new concept of the Real' that is significantly different from the imaginary reality of the environment surrounding us. The philosopher wishes to liberate us from the tyranny of reality for the concept of the new Real. I do not think that it is possible to formulate a more revolutionary and perverse, and therefore more *complicated*, program of epistemological and social dismantling. The historian of philosophy is not free from this disassembly and must respect and even himself propose an alternative concept of the 'real' and thus – of the historical reality of philosophy. In paraphrasing my favourite phrase of Niklas Luhmann's I would say that 'The 'real' is what one does not see when observing reality.'[8] So what is, expressed in philosophical language, in the nature of the Real for the historian of philosophy?

Well, in repeating the lessons of Jacques Lacan, for the present we can say, the Real is what does not fit into the symbolic system, and therefore it is above all – the language itself. There is no place for the real in language, as it is constantly breaking the structure of symbolization. The 'Real' causes that the process of symbolization, which leads to the emergence of an image, does not occur at all; it is this occurrence that drives this very process. If we were looking for an analogy to this notion in the philosophical tradition it would be Kant's 'thing in itself.' Certainly, philosophy is a great waking to the Real.[9]

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[8]   Niklas Luhmann, *Observations on Modernity*, trans. William Whobrey, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 23.
[9]   For the three registers: real, symbolic and imaginary, refer to Lacan's work: Jacques Lacan, *On the Names-of-the-Father,* trans. Bruce Fink, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

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Let us return to our main problem, because this is not the end of the series of questions addressed to great historians. We persist in asking: do we have any catalogue, encyclopaedia or even a lexicon of the ways to understand the significance of these puzzling philosophical problems? In my hasty investigation I was able to find three possible meanings.

First of all, the philosophical problem is understood as a problem entangled in the form of paradox. In a paradox, our thinking on the basis of premises considered true and our reasoning commonly considered to be legitimate, we come to the negation of one of the premises or to the conjunction of two contradictory claims. In other words, when the values of variables, i.e., defined sets of situations and concepts, generate questions that cannot be answered without disrupting the convictions taken earlier for granted on the basis of the same set of situations and concepts. This is illustrated by the famous paradox of the liar attributed to Eubulides of Miletus: 'If a liar says he is lying, it follows that he is lying and not lying at the same time.' No answer is satisfactory here.

The second understanding of the philosophical problem takes the form of an indecidable. Indecidables for Derrida are units of appearances, false verbal, nominal or semantic properties, which can no longer be understood within the binary philosophical opposition, which they resist despite being part of it, they are both an inherent part and a 'disorganizing' and 'dismantling' part, never forming a solution in the form of speculative dialectics. Generally speaking, an undecidable situation – an anomaly, appears when the problem cannot be solved with the binary conceptual apparatus. We then often resort to calling it *aporia* – a logical or intellectual wasteland, indicating either helplessness or a non-encompassable difficulty.

The philosopher is tempted to think that reason is aporetic by nature. What sustains our faith in apologetic reason is perhaps Kurt Gödel's 1931 article *On Formally Undecidable Propositions of Principia Mathematica and Related Systems I*, wherein Gödel reveals that it is impossible to presume that mathematics can be based on a set of axioms sufficient to systematically derive an infinite number of true statements in a given domain.[10] Truth be told, Gödel himself reveals much less to the mathematicians than he does to the philosophers by modestly proposing that the axiomatic method is bound by certain limitations, so that even ordinary arithmetic of natural numbers can never be fully formalized.

Finally and thirdly, philosophical problems are called antinomies, i.e., according to the interpretation of Kant they are irremovable problems deposited at the junction of reason (transcendental dialectics) and intellect (transcendental analytics). Important in Kant's statement is that antinomy is not a mistake but an indelible feature of reason. The traditional notion of error – being the product of external determinism – Kant replaces

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[10] Kurt Gödel, *On Formally Undecidable Propositions of Principia Mathematica and Related Systems*, trans. Bernard Meltzer, (Edinburgh-London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962).

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with the notion of false problems and internal illusions. These illusions are considered unavoidable, and even resulting from the nature of reason. Reason cannot refrain from knowing things in themselves, even though the cognitive interest should be limited to phenomena.

As a summary, we conclude that the history of philosophy seen as a history of great philosophical questions would have to be a history of paradoxes, of indecidables like the Deriderian *hymen* – the entrance to the vagina and simultaneously the gate to it or *pharmakon* – medicine and poison at a time, or simply of the antinomy of human reason. Philosophy would thus balance on an inconclusiveness, conflict, or source difference which are not contained in its history and yet sanction history – comparable only to some *Ursprache* of an indefinite, always ambivalent, fluid semantics.

Sigmund Freud in his work *The Antithetical Sense of Primal Words* sought the analogy between ancient languages and dream-work which engages the same means of contradictory meanings.[11] Fear 'of philosophy,' but also the 'fear in philosophy,' would thus bear all the signs of fear of the unintended return of the same, the fear of a doppelgänger, who, though having all the qualities of the subject, is not the subject itself. Anxiety in philosophy would be 'the fear of ambivalence,' because even though in a doppelgänger we recognize what is known to us – all the while enjoying the pleasure of recognition – we still find in it something that does not belong to us: something eerie – *unheimlich,* uncanny.

Philosophy would thus belong to this fear and its work would belong to these contradictory meanings resembling dream-work (*die Traumarbeit*) and pertaining to the infinite (or beyond-finite) claims of human reason. I do not dare to settle at the moment whether or not philosophy is forever doomed to implement in its regime the processes of legitimation by paralogy.[12] I only remember the critical and disciplined remarks of Émile Benveniste concerning the hypothesis of the antithetical sense of primal words: if primal words in the ancient times had double meanings, they would not be a language at all, i.e., they would not be a structure consisting of a finite number of discrete units that could combine into hierarchical sequences to express any meaning.[13]

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[11]   Sigmund Freud, 'The Antithetical Sense of Primal Words', trans. Joan Riviere. in Sigmund Freud, *Collected Papers*, vol. 4, (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), p. 184-191.
[12]   Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
[13]   Émile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, trans. E. Pahner, (London: Faber & Faber, 1973).

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ANSWERS

However, the history of philosophy does not exhaust its potential in the history of the grand questions which expose human reason to antinomies. Suffice it to say – as the second answer to the question of the history of philosophy – that the essence of philosophy is also to be found in structural history, the history of responses to these paradoxical questions which produce philosophical positions, i.e., large systems (systematics), intellectual formations, those persistent and difficult to eradicate thought communities. Idealism, materialism, pantheism, determinism, object-oriented philosophy, Thomism, hermeneutics of suspicion, Platonism, etc. – are the names of those difficult to eradicate 'answers' to embarrassing questions. In opposition to these great philosophical positions and systems, philosophy deals mostly with the multiplication of controversy by becoming a sower of scepticism, agnosticism, anarchism, atheism or criticism advocating the not-knowing subject. Non-depraved philosophy keeps away from the throne of knowledge.

Philosophy is also a dogma, and a dogmatic subject is one that is said to know. The history of philosophy, understood as the history of philosophical dogma, or better still, as Imre Lakatos would have it, of ever since degenerated research programs,[14] is a history of communalization and generalization of errors (opinions). A productive research program is recognized as a result of its ability to discover new and amazing facts: the program that degenerates itself, manifests itself in the absence of hyperplasia, the lack of cognitive vitality, the constant return of the same.

A history of philosophy thus understood can be confronted with a subsequent set of verifying questions. First of all, in this variant, the constellation of different philosophies creates a system – one philosophy, the moments of which would be the historic philosophies known both by the name and family names. Questions arise: what makes such a system consistent? What is this system founded upon? What eliminates the differences and establishes its 'structure?'

Moreover, a history of philosophy understood as the history of particular systems often defines these systems by resorting to its forming 'sequence,' for example, Descartes – Spinoza – Leibniz – Kant (modern rationalism), or: Kant – Fichte – Schelling – Hegel (German transcendentalism), or perhaps not a linear but spatial sequence, i.e., based on common motivation: Marx – Nietzsche – Freud (philosophy of suspicions). Or, to refer to the most 'controversial' example proposed by Roland Barthes: Sade – Fourier – Loyola.[15] Let us bear in mind that in this sequence Barthes recognized three great logothetes, i.e.,

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[14]   Imre Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Volume 1*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).
[15]   Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller, (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974).

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founders of a language designed to use fully grammatical speech emerging from sheer nothingness. Simon Critchley's *The Book of Dead Philosophers*[16] serves as a 'history of philosophy' understood as a 'history of philosophers' dying' – from the Tales of Miletus and Solon to Derrida and Debord. Here there comes a sequence of life that is a sequence of death. Here, we learn the answer to the question '*how to live?*' by observing the individual philosopher's reaction to his ultimate situation: death. Here, we learn philosophy by watching always the individual 'answer' of a philosopher to the question of '*how to die?*'

So I ask: just how many possible sequences can be found in the history of philosophy? How many 'stories' does the history of philosophy comprise? How many tenses and speeds does it use to speak to us? Does every history of philosophy – understood as the history of great systems – assume and conceal the problem of another sense, of another history?

Finally, and what is perhaps the most important, is understanding within the history of philosophy the understanding of the entire movement of history, i.e., embracing the whole of philosophy. Would, in this sense, the history of philosophy be a philosophy of 'the whole of philosophy' – playing out and discovering all the scenes of its coming into the world? It was Hegel who noticed that the 'whole' is a 'big excuse of self-knowledge.' The Hegelian spectre, spirit, ghost and genius is one of the most powerful spectres for the philosopher of history. Ever since Hegel we are constantly accompanied by the illusion of the end, the closing, rolling up of philosophy, and thus the closure of its history. From Hegel, every great philosophy appears to us and enters the stage of history as the end of history.

I would like to ask the historian of philosophical systems, whether or not a system has its history (genesis) at all. Again, Hegel taught us the ascension from 'ghost figures' to the 'category of logic,' from The *Phenomenology of Spirit* to the *Science of Logic*. And only within the category of self-derived spirit do we feel the space of the work and the meaning of the system – as long as it is understood as the whole presence of the concept.

Yet, there are more questions to follow this sequence. We also need to enquire about the logic of the passing of the figures of spirit, one into another. Can we trust the assertion that even though philosophical systems, unlike logic or mathematics, do not provide a continuous process of cognition, and even though the continuous change of positions does not translate itself into the steady progress of science, the very problems (apologies) which these systems address have always been the same and will always be recognizable? Well, we may only wish that such an assertion were true for it would be so reassuring for our critical conscience.

Unfortunately, to give but one example, the question of freedom in Plato is the question of 'choosing a soul' before birth when it 'chooses' its destiny; in Hobbes – it is the question of the ability to act without resistance in an environment subjected to the law of the sovereign (sovereign right); in Kant – the question of being able to act in harmony with moral law that is above the law of nature; in Marx – the question of the instrument of class

16   Simon Critchley, *The Book of Dead Philosophers*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2009).

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domination, i.e., 'the will of the bourgeoisie' aimed at a mystification of the exploited and forcing them to accept their fate; and finally in Freud – the question of the drives and their stories – fate, and therefore the individual 'conflicts and wrestling with impulses' entangled in life. The question of freedom is therefore never the same question. The methodological imperative of the historian of philosophy should thus be – to strive to understand the real questions and their real motives, and to avoid at all costs any treatment of these questions and answers as abstract formalities.

Gadamer gives us a collection of great examples on how this principle can be applied. The subject – to refer to the most instructive example – is the Greek *hypokeimenon* – that is; the substratum or the 'underlying thing.' This word was introduced by Aristotle to describe what – in comparison to the varying forms of the appearance of being – does not change and is at the basis of those variable qualities. Does this *hypokeimenon* underlie everything in the modern meaning of the *subiectum*, signifying the stream of *cogitatio*, the kind of self-reflection, self-knowledge?

From Gadamer's point of view, the question of how the subject derives from his infinite isolation is a question resulting from a misunderstanding of the notion of substance and the growing predominance of subjectivity and self-consciousness over consciousness, which is always a consciousness of something. That is what drives Gadamer to insightfully conclude that new questions arise from erroneous wrong, incorrect, inaccurate, incomplete, inexact reading! The explanation of concepts by history is possible only in so far as concepts are still alive in the presence of language. Language, however, does not remember itself, and even more so: it is the essence of language not to remember where it belongs.[17]

IDIOSYNCRASIES

Is there another way of thinking about philosophy and its history? Let us abandon the history of philosophy understood as the history of rash and hasty answers to embarrassing and abstract questions, in favour of the history of philosophy understood as the eventful history of great names set either in chronological order or within a certain problematic field. This is a history of philosophy understood as a history of singularity and peculiarity. It is what Paul Ricoeur refers to as idiosyncratic history.[18] Now, in such a history of philosophy, Spinoza – to give but one example – is not part of the assumed lineage, the movement of philosophical thought, but the place of collapse of that movement, the focal point contemplated for its own sake.

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[17]   Gadamer, *Begriffsgeschichte als Philosophie*.
[18]   Paul Ricoeur, 'The History of Philosophy and Historicity', trans. Charles A. Kelbley in Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 63-77.

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Philosophy is not so much a collection of abstract questions 'detached' from political and economic reality, nor it is a collection of 'answers' to anonymous problems, instead it is a collection of 'reactions' to the problems of a particular time and place. The history of philosophy becomes a history of isolation and solitude and that of simultaneous socialization and communitarisation.

The history of philosophy is always the history of a philosopher who always has a specific face. The philosopher has to be secluded and solitary in order to find real time, not just the imagined political and economic order to which he belongs. Here we come back to the concept of the Real. A philosopher wishing to find a new formula for a 'new real' must leave the reality imagined as real. The philosopher is, however, also a figure of socialization, for he invents and designs new forms of community, new collectives, new democracies, which in a deeper sense realize the still unfulfilled and constantly postponed 'ideal of democracy', i.e., 'real democracy'. It is this dual function of the philosopher that I refer to as *revealing concealment* and *openness by closure*.

It should be noted quickly that in this variant, the history of philosophy is not so much a biographical history as it is philosophemic, i.e., searching for and searching through the meaning (interpretation) of the work of some idiosyncrasy. Here, history is *into* philosophy, not *alongside* or *above* it, whereby a philosopher is not consumed by his own history. Idiosyncratic history has nothing to do with the division of the history of philosophy between biographical and doxographic, that is, either focussed on the biographies and lives of philosophers or on their views. Beginning from Diogenes Laertios' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (3rd century AD) to the book of Rüdiger Safranski dedicated to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche – *Nietzsche. A Biography of his thinking* (2000),[19] a singular history is a history which idiosyncratically combines the life of a philosopher (*bioi*) with his thinking (*gnomai*), in such a way that life is only a life of thought, and thought is only a thought that reveals itself in his life. While life is lived only in a thought, thoughts are lived in another thought.

Philosophers (Aristotle, Spinoza, Descartes, Nietzsche, Derrida) are as if 'parts of the whole' or they are 'partial objects' that represent the always absent whole, the absent structure. Philosophers are not timeless essences nor anachronisms, nor even time-disintegrating entities, nor even subjects desynchronizing time, but vessels of always momentary conceptualisations of the problems of their actuality and holistic history of philosophy. Philosophers are mere 'exertions' or 'interventions' to expand histories and to dismantle historicity.

There are doubts which now need to be voiced with regard to such a project. First of all, I would like to ask: in what lies the relationship between a philosophical text and its

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[19]   Diogenes Laertios, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, ed. Dorandi, Tiziano, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, trans. Shelley Frisch, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002).

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commentary? Philosophy reminds me of discipline in the state of eternal digression and digressiveness. Philosophy, and even more so – the history of philosophy, is symptomatic to a belonging to the era of commentaries. As such, it needs to address the following, more intense questions: what is time in philosophy? Is philosophical time only a time of coexistence that even though does not exclude 'before' and 'after', it nonetheless imposes 'before' and 'after' on itself in geological order? 'Philosophy – say Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in this context – is becoming, not history; it is the coexistence of planes, not the succession of systems.'[20]

Let us raise more questions: Does philosophy have its own autonomous territory, its *modus operandi,* i.e., its *modus* of becoming – especially in comparison and comparison with art, science, and politics? Does philosophy know and implement in its activity the principle of sovereignty? Or is it that philosophy has only its *opus operatum* (work fulfilling or done) but it does not have a set sequence of moves to achieve this 'accomplishment?' Is philosophy by nature and from the very outset an extraterritorial activity, with the philosopher being an 'orphan,' a 'homeless creature,' 'eternal wanderer,' or a nomad who makes homelessness his only virtue? Are we to assume that each and every philosophy, and even more – the history of philosophy is manifold, multifaceted, a kind of theatre *variete*? In this approach, 'philosophical works' would only be 'quanta' of the history of philosophy, and always delusional philosophical alliances with science, art or politics would be moments of momentary philosophical supply, but also – were they to be 'normal practices' – they would be moments of betrayal of their own practice.

At the end of this sequence, I ask the historians: what, indeed, is the community of philosophers understood as a timeless community of idiosyncrasies; non-ethnic, non-linguistic, non-national, albeit logocentric (Derrida) or even phallocentric? Or, is philosophy genderless? Does this literary community of peers reading peers (their letters or diaries) – this 'sect of literate bibliophiles' – qualify as a community at all? Would it not be advisable to assume that philosophical thinking and a philosophical community of friends requires more effort and more activity, such as liberating the virtual meanings of those most alien, inimical, and hostile of thoughts, and the effort to overcome and revive concepts to the gold standard of chemistry or mathematics?

What else would explain why today, at the cost of alienating itself, philosophy is trying to familiarize animals: it lets animals into philosophy and lets thought out of philosophy, thereby becoming the zoosphere of hospitality?[21] Is it not the reason why philosophy should, in fact, be seen as a stage, i.e., a 'place' of constant contamination, infection and virulence, where 'thoughts' are welcomed simply to be abducted by alien forces?

[20]   Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. H. Tomlinson, G. Burchell, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
[21]   Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 25-51.

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CONCEPTS

We have thus arrived at my fourth hasty hypothesis: that the history philosophy is the history of concepts. Again, it is Hans-Georg Gadamer who observed that the history of concepts is, in fact, philosophy, and that perhaps philosophy should consider itself the history of concepts due to the fact that it is always made *in* concepts and *by* concepts, whereby there are no other problems in philosophy than the sole question: *what are the concepts?* It is possible that what we are dealing with in addressing this audacious response to the question of 'what is philosophy?,' is the attempt to raise a certain philosophical discipline, namely – ontology, to first rank. Is conceptuality really the essence of philosophy? Is the 'concept itself' not the very subject of philosophy from Plato to Deleuze? After all, what we call 'philosophy' is merely a collection of enigmatic utterances by Western-educated individuals which render us helpless in the assessment of the measure of responsibility for the use of the very concepts. Is there any such thing as responsibility for using concepts?

Such use allows abuse, and the nature of concepts is enigmatic. Obvious and problematic as it may be, the fact that the concept is the subject of philosophy – real, general and necessary being, and not individual and contingent, permeates the philosophical tradition from Aristotle to Hegel. 'In the third book of Metaphysics,' – observes the great historian Gadamer – 'Aristotle describes the characteristics of philosophy, and in particular metaphysics – the first philosophy ('philosophy' means knowledge in general): all other sciences have a positive domain of knowledge, they have their objects.'[22] Except for conceptuality, philosophy does not have a constricted object of knowledge. This is its curse, but also a moment of glory.

I find even this answer far from satisfying. First and foremost, my difficulty is that concepts are always something different than we think. There is a history of concepts, which means that even concepts have their time. Throughout history concepts have been static patterns in the world and moving 'concepts in the head,' they have been sets of generic features, the properties of construction modelling the use of expressions in different situations, they have been the effects of the use of generic names, the areas in space based on non-integrated coordinates, the geometric space of the differences and similarities of a certain constellations of beings, they have been prototypes and measures of deviation from those prototypes, they have been the descriptors of changes in intensity and saturation (supersaturation) and in the essential order of a certain set of features, they have been a cognitive form of representation in the mind, or semantic construction on the sets. Granted, there is no single perception of 'concept,' or in English tradition – *the notion of concept*. Instead what we have are their many stories. The notion of concept cannot be explained without outlining the context in which it appears, and the 'correctness' of

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[22]   Gadamer, *Begriffsgeschichte als Philosophie.*

a particular notion of 'concept' cannot be assessed without simultaneously assessing the view on the world in which it plays a role.

Here we reach to the essence of my argument and to the heart of my obstinacy, my complication, and my illness. Philosophy understood as a conceptual cognition of concepts should not have its history, it should take the form of ultra-structuralism, or structuralism *avant la lettre*. But even this philosophy – a philosophy that desires to hold back time, to congregate time, or even to be beyond time – is actually playing with time and at a certain time. This brings new problems and raises new questions.

First of all, what is the founding moment for a new conceptual formation – paradigm, *episteme*, of this institution called 'philosophy?' Historians of science have sensitized us to the 'appearance' of the immutability of the meanings of the basic terms of science, and we come across this very same 'appearance' in philosophy. To avoid this appearance, one asks: how does it come about in our 'institution' (academic philosophy) that we abandon a certain topic or type of thinking and leave it for another topic or another type? It was Michel Foucault, the archaeologist and genealogist, who asked: how is it that culture discontinues existing thinking and starts thinking something different and differently? Deleuze and Guattari add that – 'A philosopher sometimes suffers from an amnesia that makes him almost sick.'[23] The fact that concepts are ill is a fundamental issue in philosophy. We will return to this in a moment.

On the basis of the above-mentioned list of questions regarding time of concepts, we can conclude that the history of philosophy cannot be only about a genetic understanding of concepts nor even about their structural understanding necessary to see the concept in tension and in the tense movement with other concepts, but above all about understanding and observing the moment when concepts collapse, the moment when the meaning of a concept is distorted and it passes into other-meaning.

Distortion makes the relationship between the word and the concept dislocated and words begin to slip away in the form of new conceptual forms. The introduction of this distortion into the field of philosophy is a way of doing philosophy and a form of validation for new philosophical concepts, and thus it stands for very philosophical inventiveness. Therefore, the history of concepts finds fulfilment in liberating a concept from its scholastic ossification in order to release the immemorial, forgotten, or as yet unrecognized meanings, and to reclaim the living virtualization of speech.

Certainly, the process of concept creation does not begin with zero, since conceptualization is thinking in the language we speak. The history of philosophy as the history of the language using concepts becomes the history of the practice of human speech – a very special one, practiced on the periphery of speech. For philosophy, language is neither a tool nor a universe of meanings, it is not even a world but a trauma. The essence of trauma is that it always happens 'too early,' and its understanding always comes 'too late:'

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23   Deleuze, Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 29.

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as a result, the subject is always in a state of desynchronization, in the eternal state of delay or acceleration, thus causing everything to happen not 'in accordance with time.'

It is no different with the language which we speak before we begin to understand it. The primary trauma of separation – the matrix of all future traumas, is closely related to the birth of language. A word is the true source of trauma, as it signals the proximity of the other and the need to guess its 'mumble,' 'babble,' or 'chatter.' Philosophy is the search for speech outside of this mumbling, the search of time beyond time, i.e., the right time to play and act, not so much 'in time', but 'inside time,' 'in accordance with time,' without delay and without acceleration. Philosophy is the search for the right tempo: *allegro ma non troppo.*

Language is not just an all-encompassing, ever-present interpretation of the world, it is much more. It is not just that the world is a world for us and has always been interpreted within language. Just as it is not simply that the history of philosophy is the history of language games, in which philosophical problems are articulated. As Ludwig Wittgenstein has rightly suggested: 'Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language'[24] and in this sense, philosophy is an activity demanding a therapy, but it is also a form of therapy itself.

The history of philosophy is always the history of thinking out the conditions of thinking. One of these conditions is language. Philosophy, however, always lacks language and philosophy is always born out of language deficit. Therefore, the main problem not only of philosophy, but also of the history of philosophy is the problem of the mutation of thoughts and, therefore, the problem of novelty in philosophy – the possibility of a new thought, and the 'conditions of producing what is new' or still the conditions for a differentiation (conflicting) of thoughts, and a stratification and expansion of concepts. The Derridian '*différance*' may have never meant anything else but this conflict is at the heart of language.

The philosopher asks maniacally: what is the renewal and what is the sense in questioning what exists? The historian goes on to ask: is every renewal always connected with, and is the consequence of the virulence of the existing system of concepts? What is the *clinamen* – deviation, aberration, deflection of the historic 'falling' of concepts? What infects the system of philosophical concepts with a virus? And lastly, is philosophy not merely a constant hunger for language, an effort to find non-correct language, the language of exceptions, the language of a state of emergency, the language of anomalies and the language of transformations?

I would venture to say that thinking philosophically is reserved only for those who are not satisfied with the available forms of language expression. What this means is that the historian of philosophy must experience the same hunger for language as the

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[24]   Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, (Chichester West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

analysed philosopher. As a rule, thought tries to think of something that is impossible to say, and this thought should not be disturbed in its disclosing, even if the price of this thought is an apparent or blatant agrammatism.

The funniest thing in the history of philosophy is perhaps that the entire history of philosophy is not so much a history of interpreting the world, nor attempts to change it, but the history of producing effective antibodies to its own activity, i.e., the effort to 'collapse the concept.' The history of philosophy is the history of medications and means of overcoming the non-dialogic character of philosophy. The dialectic, hauntology understood as the calling in and talking with ghosts – the spectres of the past, the reterritorialization of the deterritorialized area of philosophical play, and even the renewal of dancing with concepts – are all philosophical pharmakons.

The institution of philosophy calls us to 'speak real' and not to break the concepts away from dialogic speech, it calls us to fund the conceptual hygiene of the ideal language, the communication community, the community of new communications mediated by the new media. Dialogue and its doubles are the names of today's practices of immunizing philosophy, which are reactions to foreign bodies. After all, 'philosophy is abhorrent to discussions,'[25] and even Socrates constantly prevented any discussion. Socrates' atopicity should be understood not only geographically but also grammatically.

SECOND TEMPO: UNHURRIED REFLECTIONS

Towards the end, which is due to come almost imperceptibly slow in its movement, I shall formulate non-defiant, unhurried answers. At this point, however, allow me to repeat what I have proved to be my problem, my illness, my *complication*: what is the history of philosophy, if it is not the history of great problems, nor intellectual systems, nor idiosyncrasies (great names), not even concepts representing the machinery of philosophical device, so what is philosophy?

My first unhurried reply is as follows: the relation of philosophy to the history of philosophy has always been and remains the main theme of philosophy. For centuries the history of philosophy was above all the art of positioning. The historian had to remember how in his *Metaphysics* Aristotle settled and judged Plato's work, how Spinoza wrote about Descartes in his *Descartes' Principles of Philosophy in Geometric Order*, and what Hegel saw in Spinoza listing his name in *Lectures on The Philosophy of History*, what was Nietzsche's Übermensch to Heidegger, what the word *Geschlecht* meant to Derrida when he was reading Heidegger, etc. Let us concede that 'we' – historians of philosophy, have done nothing else but conflicted these proper names and that we have done so in endless chains. Thucydides was placed against Plato, Spinoza against Hobbes, Nietzsche against

[25]   Deleuze, Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 21.

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Freud, Foucault against Lacan, Agamben against Derrida. We have made a gym out of history of philosophy, an atlas and an economy of force. Perhaps it is time to let go of this art of positioning oneself through the positioning of other names. Perhaps the time has come to take a break from further visits to the gym.

Here, I would like to defend the 'other history of philosophy,' i.e., the history of philosophy, which is no longer about the art of conflicting positions, which is not about the reconstruction of the linear history of great subjects, nor is it about the 'dialectic' and the dialectical transition of one name to another, but it is about philosophy understood as a theatrical spectacle in which the philosopher is a scenographer setting the scenery and constructing the drama for the actors on the stage. These actors are general concepts, categories, forms, ideas, definitions, analytical and synthetic sentences, or merely figures of the spirit. The history of philosophy in this variant is the art of searching for moments when a given thought is incited, and when it ignites and excites the intellect or brings culture to the verge of crisis. Hence the importance of the Nietzschean category of *Entstehung* – so strongly emphasized by Foucault[26] – that is, allowing the philosopher to 'jump out from behind the curtain and onto the stage,' or, in other words, allowing the new voice to 'storm into the scene,' or, better still, allowing a new actor to emerge.

For Nietzsche *Entstehung* means above all birth, the art of begetting oneself. As a result, the history of philosophy is transformed into the geometry of stage tensions and the reconstruction of the proper place of philosophical activity. The drama of philosophy is written on the stage: entering the stage – taking place – interpellation directed to the audience – leaving the stage – another return to the stage in the new moment of prosperity and a new (dis)guise. I would also risk the assertion that only the theatricalization of philosophical language allows for the change of the flat dimension of philosophical concepts and styles of speaking into a spatial process of thinking – full of resonance, reflections, shifts, dislocations, unpredictable returns, but also abrupt stops and even collapses.

Foucault recognized in Deleuze the first philosopher of the theatre – stage philosophy, he recognized in him also an actor who walks on stage in the disguise of a currently read philosopher. All the books of Deleuze on conceptual forms – *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay about Hume's Human Nature (1953), Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of Government* (1963), *Proust and Signs* (1964) *Bergsonism* (1966)*, Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (1968), *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975), *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (1981), *Foucault* (1986)*, The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1988) – allow us to see the figure of Gilles Deleuze in his acting role, revealing him always on another stage, in a disguise – that of Hume, Nietzsche,

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[26]   Michel Foucault, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, in Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Donald F. Brouchard and Sherry Simon, (New York: The New Press, 1998).

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Kant, Proust, Bergson, Spinoza, Kafka, Bacon, Foucault, or Leibniz. Deleuze behaves as if he thoroughly read and digested the comments of Georg Fuchs contained in *The Stage of the Future* (1904), and earlier *Considerations of a German on the Stage Art of the French Tragic Actors* Wilhelm von Humboldt (1800). Theatre, stage, audience, and critique were for both Humboldt and Fuchs the best material for the study of the various types of human behaviour and passions that they compared in the two adjacent pedigrees and breeds, the French and German.[27]

Deleuze not only plays scenes from Kant or Leibniz, Kafka and Proust in the theatre, but filters their theatre through his own philosophy and repeals the great philosophical denial; he allows the words of Kant and Leibniz, Spinoza and Nietzsche to flow to their furthest boundaries. Deleuze's thinking is in the guise of the characters-philosophers by realizing their thoughts in pantomime and stage play. 'Thought has to think through what forms it – writes Foucault – and is formed out of what it thinks through. The critique-knowledge duality is perfectly useless: thought says what it is.'[28] Surely one needs to think problematically, not dialectically. Certainly, a-categorical and non-categorical philosophy needs to be invented. Certainly, when the three elements: the clinamen of the philosophical falling of concepts, the philosopher's denaturalization, and his stage action all begin to resonate, then philosophy becomes a trance, and then the investment in philosophy (the casting of our *libido* in philosophy) begins to pay off. We begin to understand that it is worth the effort to play with thinking.

Derrida, in his famous text devoted to Freud – *Freud and the Scene of Writing*, notes that in following Freud's theatre of the subconscious the life of psychoanalytic apparatus can neither be understood as the transparency of meaning nor as the opacity of power, but as a difference in the work of the forces.[29] This is similar to the history of philosophy. When we consider that the enigmatic ambiguity of the writing (the record) is inscribed in the very beginning of life, just as in philosophy is with the writings of the pre-Socratics the memory of whom is, to say the least, uncertain, and whose main conceptual body is composed of *arché (ἀρχή), physis (φύσις), logos (λόγος), the he (το ον) rhizai (ῥίζαι) stoicheia (στοιχεῖα), philia (φιλία)* and *neikos (νεῖκος)* which respectively correspond with the beginning (principle and power), nature, reason, being, roots, elements, the elements, and finally love and strife, all staged between change and quiescence, being and non-being in the great world of the universe (*σφαῖρος sphairos*), in space (*κόσμος, kósmos, order*) – then history can only defend itself against such a 'beginning' and its own mythical entanglement with such a beginning, and against the entanglement of *logos* in *mythos* (*μῦθος* – story, fairy tale) by engaging in a certain economy of postponement, repetition,

27   Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft,* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1905).
28   Michel Foucault, 'Theatrum Philosophicum', *Critique*, 282/1970, p. 885-908.
29   Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', trans. Alan Bass, in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

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and resonance. In this resonance, the very idea of the beginning becomes enigmatic, i.e., the myth of the first time.

For Freud the reminiscence is present not one time but it constantly repeats itself and is deposited in all sorts of signs. Sign (*Zeichen*), record (*Niederschrift*) and transcription (*Umschrift*) are the main features of the history of philosophy, i.e., the work of the biographers of thought and the doxographers of idiosyncrasies. To paraphrase Derrida from the motto appended to this text, I would say that this state of initial conflict and this difference between *logos* and *mythos*, *philia* and *neikos*, *arche* and *physis*, *writing* and *footnote*, *doxography* and *biography* are not erased in history because they are not contained within history. It is, in a very unusual sense: the opening of history, the historicity itself.

GEOPHILOSOPHY

As a result of this theatricality I repeat after Deleuze and Guattari: there is no history of philosophy, and at most there is its geography (topology), its geophilosophy understood as the topology and sequencing of philosophical figures. Deleuze and Guattari seemingly lull our vigilance when they say: 'The philosopher is the concept's friend; he is the potentiality of the concept.'[30] We realize, however, that philosophy is born within the drama of bringing forth and giving away concepts as well as their images (icons and idols), their conceptual figures.

Here, I deliberately avoid the category of 'creation,' which seems to be insufficient and to cloud our thinking. Philosophy is happening in a triangular drama, in which the elements are the plane of immanence, concept and conceptual form. Imagination is the beginning of thinking, the plane of immanence is the act of finding the territory of thought, and the conceptual form is a dynamic value – the way the philosopher becomes – the way he manifests himself and thinks. 'Concepts are not waiting for us ready-made, like heavenly bodies. There is no heaven for concepts.'[31] This heaven must be born by itself. It comes not without effort and not without cruelty to oneself. Not without joy, too, which is the joy of man forgetting the moment of his death. This is the joy of the new pace of philosophical action, which is already a stage activity: *allegro ma non troppo*.

'First – the authors of *What is philosophy?* bitterly admit – concepts are and remain signed: Aristotle's substance, Descartes' cogito, Leibniz's monad, Kant's condition, Schelling's power, Bergson's duration [*durie*].'[32] This is how Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Schelling, and Bergson become substance, *cogito*, a monad, condition, potency,

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[30]   Deleuze, Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 56.
[31]   Deleuze, Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 56.
[32]   Deleuze, Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 56.

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persistence. What they have in common is the movement whereby they become 'conceptual personae.' The historian of philosophy has no other task than to intercept this motion, redirect and harness it into the motion of his own story. Let us remember that 'Not only do Descartes, Hegel, and Feuerbach not begin with the same concept, they do not have the same concept of beginning.'[33] This does not bother them, however, to participate in the same undertaking. We are left with a topology, understood as a 'cross-section' of conceptual personae, a stratigraphy of philosophy, but not with history, understood as a linear flow of time. Is it through the conceptual personae – substance, *ego cogito*, spirit, non-potentiality – that the philosopher becomes something else? An animal, an idiot, an artist, an intensification of life, his own grave? We do not know that yet.

Deleuze and Guattari rightly say that philosophy is neither contemplation nor reflection nor is it communication. The authors focus on a fabrication of concepts. A fabrication of concepts is, however, the production of the effects of truth. This is due to the fact that concepts are inseparable from truth. We are therefore left to consider the fabrication of truth, which – it would follow – means that we must rethink the relationship of philosophy to other 'apparatuses of the fabrication of truth,' with psychoanalysis at the forefront. In this productivity and multiplicity of apparatuses for creating the effects of truth, they do not find any other place than this one: philosophy is a relentless incentive to brave speaking, an incentive to enter the scene of oration, it is – to once again refer to Foucault – the dispositive of truthfulness.[34] The history of philosophy is, as a result, the history of disintegration, reconfiguration, and finally a renewal of the scenes of courage. The primordial stage of philosophy is the configuring stage, i.e., merging and assembling the political conditions of courageous speaking with the uniqueness of the subjective constellation which fills the stage with oration.

We are, therefore, on the stage and we should be interested in the future of philosophical spectacles, the construction of not yet fulfilling philosophical theatres, in the form of practicing the creation of scenes and theatrical machines. The questions asked by Niccolò Sabbatini – the Italian Baroque architect – How much space does one need to set the stage?, How does one make the heavens?, How to arrange the lights and shadows to depict a scene?, How to paint the decorations?, How to space the seats for the spectators?, How to raise the curtain that covers the stage? How to put the lights off the stage and on the stage? How to seat the audience? In what order do the scenes and actors disappear and reappear? How does one show the whole stage in flames? How to open and close the trap door on the stage? How can one make a person change into a stone or

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[33]   Deleuze, Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 56.
[34]   Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others I. Lectures at the Collège de France,* 1982-1983, trans. Graham Burchell, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Michel Foucault, *The Courage of the Truth: The Government of Self and Others II. Lectures at the Collège de France*, 1983-1984, trans. Graham Burchell, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

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something similar? How can one show that stones or rocks transform into people? How does one create clouds in an instant? How does one make the shadow or ghost appear and disappear quickly in different places on the stage – these are the very questions of the philosophical theatre and its conditions for possibility. i.e., the conditions for the fabrication of the 'new real'.[35]

At this theatre the work of Pseudo-Hippocrates *On the Laughter of Democritus* is to be read as a necessary introduction to Plato, and the book by the Bavarian Jesuit Franz Lang *An Essay on Stage Performance* (1727) is to be recited all aloud alongside Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) as an introduction to transcendental aesthetics.

ESTABLISHMENT

What does this mean and how does the subject indulging in oration – this stage philosophy –, enter the scene of the philosophical theatre of thought? Here we come to my last conclusion, an unhurried reply: the history of philosophy can be written only as a pedigree, i.e., genealogically. The philosophical anamnesis in such writing is the search for a retroactive relationship with the philosophical figures of the past. The only freedom in philosophy is the freedom to create a series of pedigree. Building one's own pedigree series, self-generating sequences of kinship, is the only goal of historical writing. Building a personal *Herkunft* – to refer here to another key concept for Nietzsche – i.e., lineage, origin, historic affiliation to race or social type is our only imperative and ethical commitment to ourselves and to history. Building one's *Geschlecht* in reading and studying is our main vocation. Our real effort is searching for our own gender, genus, lineage, and thus finding our own 'natality' or 'parentage.' It does not matter what names fall into the sequence. Even Peter Sloterdijk's sequence laid out in his *Critique of Cynical Reason*,[36] comprising Diogenes of Synope, Lucian the Mocker, the lying Mephistopheles (Goethe), seducing the Great Inquisitor (Dostoevsky), or Anyone (Heidegger) is a substitute topic, it is the secondary scene of philosophy.

The aim of philosophical anamnesis, and thus the genealogical writing of the history of philosophy is to recover the understanding of one's situation in the world, one's political-normative position. It is not about the Bergsonian myth of the restoration of being nor about narrative memory nor about imaginary mystification, nor does it aim at creating a grammatical unity of the narrative, nor at the paramnesia of the starting point,

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[35]   Niccolò Sabbatini, 'Manual for Constructing Theatrical Scenes and Machines', trans. John McDowell, in *The Renaissance Stage: Documents of Serlio, Sabbattini and Furttenbach*, ed. Barnard Hewitt, (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1958), p. 37-137.
[36]   Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, trans. Michael Eldred, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

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for example, reconstructing the memory of the pre-Socratics. It is about recalling and reminding, about the infinite movement of memorizing and forgetting, in other words: the history of saving and erasing. It is about borrowing names from outside the series and making obsolete the already transcribed names in the lineage. Anamnesis is all about establishing oneself as a philosopher because the effect of genealogical activity is to sort out the past by giving it the sense of future necessity, so that the subject establishes their presence by reactivating the presence of others. Thucydides revived Nietzsche no less than Nietzsche had revived Thucydides by immersing himself in the reading of *The Peloponnesian War.*[37] The history of philosophy aims, therefore, at an assumption by the subject of his own historicity as documented by addressing another on the public stage.

　　The conclusion I would like to draw from both a hasty and slow-speed history of philosophy is far from destructive. The history of philosophy appears here as the history of failures of the human intellect, albeit necessary ones. We are the offspring of apories, if only for the fact that witnessing our own intellectual failures has to some extent made us the subjects. The question remains, however, as to whether these failures are only a shameful and humiliating thing, for they are traumatic events befalling us on the stage and in front of the audience, occurring in language which itself is a primordial trauma – the trauma of acting on stage and of stage trauma in acts of speech, or – on the contrary – this trauma may translate itself into our success and bring us glory.

　　My own history of revealing myself as a philosopher and bearing witness to the process of the aging of philosophy would allow for the following answer. Failure is the only reason for the ontology of success, provided that it becomes an open incentive to not only rebuild philosophy but also our own anthropological projects, i.e., our visions of what we can be in the world and what we can do with our lives. For the historian of philosophy, even if he is to remain a 'partial object' – inconsistent and incomplete, even if he is to be exposed to sequences of antinomies and even if he finds himself on an alien stage, the failure of a certain version of himself, i.e., his philosophical form, appears to be a great achievement and perhaps the only faculty worth saving. The failure of the stage philosopher is simply an invitation to rebuild the stage and the theatre itself, i.e., a production of the real. After all, the stage machine is a philosophical machine. The philosopher does not have his own stage, he is an eternal wanderer without territory, an actor on a journey. Perhaps this is the only perceptible generosity of the venture in which we participate: history gives us time to establish ourselves. This is not a 'rush' but it is not 'unhurried,' for this is stage tempo: *allegro ma non troppo.*

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[37]　Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil,* trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 112.