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Orientation in Philosophy:

Courageous Beginnings

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Courageous Beginnings in the History of Philosophy toward a Philosophy of Orientation

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Introduction

All thinking has a prehistory. The prehistory of the philosophy of orientation is the history of Western philosophy. Most often this history is portrayed as a progress in increasing and justifying knowledge. However, acquiring knowledge is only one among other means of human orientation. Orientation is the attempt to, time and again, find one's way in a world that changes continually. Knowledge requires orientation and philosophy has always looked beyond the mere increase and justification of knowledge. In new historical situations, philosophy has repeatedly reoriented itself and others. The following overview outlines instances of fundamental philosophical reorientation and realignment, which have been efficacious down to the present day: as alternative paths helping to develop a philosophy of orientation in the world of today. For reasons of brevity, a very strong selection is needed.

If one looks back at history, one inevitably does so from the perspective of the present. At the beginning of the 19th century, the pinnacle of German idealism, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, was the first to draft a *philosophical* history of philosophy. He wanted to substantiate that philosophy, as he comprehended it in his day, evolved over the course of history. He considered philosophy as having consequently proceeded from its beginnings in Greek antiquity until the present without hazards, surprises or contingency. But this effort also had its time: in the course of the 19th century, one learned to observe how history factually occurred, and toward the end of the 19th century, most of

all Wilhelm Dilthey and Friedrich Nietzsche radically questioned philosophical systems like Hegel's: history could be interpreted in many ways, and there will be no end to it. By and large, this is the current view today: history itself as well as historiography have turned into an open-ended process of orientation and reorientation.

History, however, is interesting and relevant only if the ongoing process of reorientation can be plausibly described; otherwise, it is nothing but the collection of pieces of dead knowledge. Here, we try to provide a brief synopsis of orientation decisions in the history of Western philosophy. There have always been alternative decisions which appear already in early Greek philosophy, first of all in the contrast between the thought of Parmenides and Heraclitus in the 6th century BC: the alternative of either excluding time or putting everything under its command. Both alternatives are plausible. Above all, elaborating on them has been called 'philosophy' since the time of Socrates and Plato who made an academic discipline out of it that achieved and maintained its own standards. However, these standards have never been without alternative ones, too; on the contrary, the fact that alternative standards have always been possible provoked self-reflection and self-criticism, thereby coercing philosophy to develop further. This survey marks those orienting decisions that have stimulated self-reflection and deepened self-criticism in the history of philosophy. In this way, more and more conditions of human orientation were discovered. Overviews require restrictions. Philosophy, as we know it, is like the sea: one can easily get lost. For this reason, I try to steer the course and stay on target by limiting myself to 25 chapters on philosophical orienting decisions, which seem to have been the most courageous beginnings in the history of Western philosophy having the greatest impact for a plausible philosophical orientation today. In each chapter, I deal with two and more authors. Of course, different choices would be possible, too.

Great reorientations in philosophy are often connected with new forms of philosophical writing. That which is new in philosophy can often only be expressed in new forms of writing like prose or poetry, treatise or dialogue, summa or meditation, essay or system, encyclopedia or manifesto. For this, I would refer you to my *Forms of Philosophical Writing* (2021, so far only in German).

My presentation is oriented to the state of recent research, which I can, also for reasons of brevity, not discuss in detail. The overview is also made

for laypeople. It only presupposes a certain familiarity with the language of philosophy and essential features of the history of philosophy, which you can easily find in handbooks or on Wikipedia. Nevertheless, the following may surprise even experts in some respects.

This second edition has been thoroughly revised compared to the first edition from 2019 and now includes a fourth (D) and fifth part (E) on the 20th and 21st centuries. These parts are now the main focus and their presentation is therefore somewhat more detailed; it takes up more than half of the new book. Here, I proceed less historically and more according to central topics: time, language, the given, the human being, action, society and the need for reorientations and their possibility as such. In the new parts, I refrain, again for reasons of brevity, from giving personal characteristics of the philosophers I deal with. Whereas after German idealism the most innovative philosophers in the 19th century were still great outsiders with special living conditions, in the 20th century, as far as we can see to date, they were mostly successful university professors. Simultaneously, philosophy becomes much more complex, and we have to mention more thoughts and more persons who present them. So our presentations become more extensive, too. I am happy to see that in the 20th and the 21st centuries also women provide great impetus in philosophy.

Within the chapters, the courageous thoughts themselves are presented in upright font, while the inspirations that a philosophy of orientation has gained and further may gain from them are in italics.

A. ANTIQUITY AND MIDDLE AGES:

The Need for a Universal Overview

The Situation:
The Need for an Overview – Competing Orientations

Philosophy, as we understand it, stems from ancient Greece. In Greek antiquity, the maritime trade and the contact with foreign cultures had expanded since the 8th century BC; more and more cities and colonies were founded in the Mediterranean world. This increased the *need for a wide-ranging geographic orientation in the Greek settlement area and beyond*. The idea of Hellenism was preserved across the sea, and the common intellectual orientation helped democracy to advance the expectation of a reliable social orientation. At the beginning, single 'wise men' at the periphery of the Greek world offered competing overviews of what was happening in the world; later Athens became the political and intellectual center. Instead of referring to the unobservable and uncontrollable intervention of manifold deities with confusing personal relations to each other, those wise men created an order through concepts like 'the element,' 'the infinite,' and 'number.'

Yet, the needs for overview, for observation and for reliability were fulfilled in different ways. Therefore the new orientation was questionable from the very start, and the new thinkers were forced to reflect upon each other. Self-reflexive orientation, which persisted next to the faith in gods, consolidated in the course of time, became significant and led to alternative schools.

From the early Greek philosophers, as we call them, only few fragmentary testimonies are preserved as quotes from later authors, being open to various interpretations. They still are sources of philosophical reorientation.

1. Alternative Limitations of the Infinite: Anaximander and Pythagoras

In the age-old sea trade city Miletus, which was destroyed several times and rebuilt in Ionia (Minor Asia), which was ruled by the Persian king, Thales (ca. 624/23–548/44 BC) dared to conceive of the first great philosophical thesis that *everything emerges from one element*, namely water. Thales was credible because of his mathematical discoveries, astronomical predictions and economic and political success. Soon the element of water was confronted with other elements (earth, air, fire), which also seemed plausible as the origin of all things.

This was not satisfactory for Thales' presumable disciple Anaximander of Miletus (ca. 610–547 BC). He is reported to have drafted a map of the inhabited world, construed a *sphaira*, a celestial globe and model of the cosmos, and perhaps also created a detailed description of all peoples living on the earth. If the reports are true, he strived after an orientation as we understand it today, first of all a *geographic orientation*. Furthermore, he attempted the most courageous philosophical beginning ever: he did not presuppose limits or limitations of some sort, not even between apparent elements, but rather assumed *something principally unlimited and limitless*, which defines itself in the generation and corruption of things, thereby forming *temporary orders*. Anaximander is quoted to have said: 'But from where things have their origin, into that too their passing away occurs according to as it is proper; for they pay recompense and penalty to one another for their recklessness, according to the order of time.'

Anaximander understands the ever emerging and vanishing limits or orders within the unlimited or unordered (*tò ápeiron,* a word that possibly stems from Aristotle) as 'knots,' 'holders,' 'points of attachment and transition' (*peírata*), that is, as a kind of *foothold* and the *ápeiron* in contrast to them as the *unstable change of limits.* In the Greek epic poems, the earth and the sea were regarded as *ápeiron*, as their limits were not in sight and could be reached only by the gods.

The archaic poet Hesiod (before 700 BC) likewise called the immeasurable depth of the subterranean abyss, in which one cannot even hit the ground after falling down for a whole year, *tò ápeiron*.

In the above quote, Anaximander ethically justifies the unlimited (in a very broad sense): in the length of time to him all limitation is unjust. He seems not to have distinguished something like thinking that thinks the *ápeiron* from outside or as part of it. Thus, his disciple Anaximenes (585–528/24) interprets the *ápeiron* as matter again, though the lightest and most versatile matter, namely air that can condense and dilute and, in this way, constantly move and surpass its limits.

Pythagoras (570–510 BC), who lived and taught on the other side of the Hellenistic world, in Lower Italy, and already established a school, seeks to capture the limits within the unlimited as numbers, thereby bringing them into a well-structured and calculable *system of ordering*. Numbers, too, set limits, but according to pregiven rules; and numbers can also be continued *ad infinitum*. Pythagoras is able to make this numbered order plausible by showing relations in whole numbers that are valid both in music and in the orbits of the planets; thus, he deduces a harmony of the spheres, which, however, is heard by him alone. Possibly this harmony is not so much based on mathematics but rather on numerical symbolism. Nonetheless, Pythagoras creates a highly successful model of how the world process as a whole can be surveyed with the help of mathematics.

The philosophy of orientation like Anaximander keeps time infinitely open for the becoming and passing away of things and orders. It relies on orders of things sorting themselves out over time. And these orders can in many cases, as Pythagoras first assumed, be clarified mathematically. Today, we see that there are only temporal orders and still strive to come to terms with that by seeking or setting boundaries and limits.

2. The Alternative of either Excluding or Including Time: Parmenides and Heraclitus

Parmenides (ca. 540–470 BC), who lived on the opposite coast of Lower Italy, in Elea, begins to refer to his (not explicitly mentioned) precursors and contemporaries and their proposals of how one orients oneself in the world, though only to explicitly reject them. He presses for a *radical reorientation*: he degrades everything observable, which changes incessantly, to mere appearance in order to find an *absolute hold in the non-observable, a being, which is accessible to pure thinking alone*. Parmenides' reorientation becomes the most fateful in the history of Western philosophy.

In order to make his philosophical reorientation plausible, he outlines a great *scenario of orientation*: from Hesiod, he adopts the venerable form of the didactic poem about the fate of gods and human beings, and has sun maids drive a young man to a nameless goddess whom he invents himself. The goddess gives him the choice between two paths: one leading to previous opinions, the other to the truth, in front of which, however, lies a yawning chasm, symbol of total disorientation. The mythical goddess shall authorize the new, unprecedented path of thought, which is praised as the only one that is trustworthy, tenable and reliable.

One only has *signs* or *clues* (*sáemata*) for this new path, but like strong restraints, they delimit and define a clear *leeway*. In Parmenides' view, it is *self-evident* that only being (*tò eón*) can be, while non-being cannot be. This implies that, according to Parmenides, everything temporal belongs to *non*-being because the temporal is *not* yet before or *not* anymore afterwards. Therefore, time must be excluded from the being of that which truly is being. It has not come into being and cannot perish; it must be indivisible and immovable. As such, it is *an absolutely stable and durable foothold of human orientation*. It is not an individual being next to other things, but rather that which all things have in common: being itself (*tò eînai*). Being itself must be conceived without any empirically observable reference points, and to this end, one must think up pure thought that cannot be observed either and that is not dependent on concrete footholds. This *thinking thinks nothing but being itself*. Thus, thinking and being are the same (*tò gàr autò noeîn estín kaí eînai*), as Parmenides has it. In the following history of philosophy Parmenides' identity of 'pure being' and 'pure thinking' is highly appreciated and often taken for granted without

question. It has become a new *plausibility standard*, which was formulated in the most differentiated way by Hegel (chap. 14 and 15).

However, Heraclitus of Ephesus in Iona (ca. 550–480 BC) offers an alternative. He also uses the metaphor of different ways as a scenario of orientation. But the different ways do not lead us to predefined goals: even if you follow each way eagerly and carefully, he says, you do not reach limits. Heraclitus adheres to the *everyday experience of orientation*, the characteristic behavior of the human being, as he calls it: *âethos anthróopoo daímoon* (habit is human destiny). He notes short and concise sayings without clarifying their connection. He pointedly dismisses other suggestions regarding human orientation; however, it is unclear whether he refers to Parmenides (and Parmenides to him). Both of them speak authoritatively: they claim a resolute superiority to their audience in matters of orientation, and this attitude has become a standard for philosophers.

Heraclitus' language is regarded as dark, but he looks for orientation precisely in the darkness of language. For example is it possible to *speak* of non-being, even though there 'is' no non-being. Neither Heraclitus nor Parmenides eschew the *paradoxality* of the being of a non-being; only later Aristotle states the principle of non-contradiction. The *lógos*, Heraclitus' expression for ordered relations in the cosmos, which can be discovered by thought, and for thinking itself, remains hidden in signs and can only be extrapolated from signs: Heraclitus obviously orients himself with signs, being well aware of the leeways of interpretation they open up. Furthermore, he uses images and similes. He does not create concepts for pure thought or for theories conceived by pure thought.

As he demonstrates, the *lógos* discriminates things according to *contrasts*, while both sides are of equal value, not asymmetrical like Parmenides' distinction between being and the semblance of being where this very distinction predetermines what is to be preferred. Instead, for Heraclitus the contrasts persist in a 'reverse harmony' (*palíntropos harmonía*) where both sides hold onto each other. For this reason, everything can always be regarded from different angles, and it depends on one's *perspective* how one defines that which is before one's eyes.

Thus, *all knowledge depends on decisions*. There is no pregiven primordial or superior unity like Parmenides' true being; but all separate things can unite into one, and each is connected with all others through certain ties or links (*synápseis*). All ordered structures arise through the conflict or 'war' between separated

things (*pólemos pántoon patáer*), and it is the course of time (*aióon*) that—just as a child at play—creates expectable, yet also surprising and unfathomable connections. However, there are various degrees of insight into these processes; the less insightful person can agree with the more insightful one, yet no one can force the other to agree.

Obviously, it is Heraclitus' greatest concern to respect both sides of polar opposites and to freely move between them. He is well aware of the *decidability of all knowledge*, which helps one to better understand reality and orient oneself in it. Hence, orientation always 'flows.' Water that diffuses and collects everything, waves approaching and departing, and the river that already has changed when you want to step into it again (so that one cannot step twice into the same river) are Heraclitus' most powerful images for the flux of all things, and theses metaphors have survived until today.

The philosophy of orientation recognizes, following Parmenides, the need for firm footholds in thinking, from which logic is derived, yet without looking for a being per se, which would be accessible only to an alleged 'pure' thinking. Yet, the philosophy of orientation also follows Heraclitus in regarding everything, included presumed absolutely firm footholds, as timely and being mediated by signs and antagonisms in thought. His metaphors of flux still recur in the later Wittgenstein (chap. 21). Both Parmenides and Heraclitus insist on orienting decisions on different paths to go in philosophizing. All human orientation is dependent on such decisions. In its history, philosophy will have ever anew to decide between Parmenidean and Heraclitean approaches or try to reconcile them.

3. Alternative Designs of the Temporal Blending and Decomposition of Matters in Preserving the One Timeless Being: Empedocles, Anaxagoras and Democritus

The last generation of the great early Greek, pre-Socratic or pre-Platonic philosophers tries to unite the insights of their ancestors in again widely differing designs. With Parmenides, they cling to the imperishable, everlasting being, but pluralizing it, and as a result, they can conceive of movement and change.

The life of Empedocles of Akragas, a Greek city in Sicily, is enveloped in myths. His dates of birth and death (c. 494–c. 434 BC) are unclear. He claimed to have traveled around as a god reborn in human shape, accompanied by many followers. Just like Parmenides, he also created epic didactic poetry, but assumed manifold sources or roots (*rhizóomata*) to which he gave the names of gods. According to him, they do not merge into each other, but rather again and again become intermingled and separated from each other by means of the opposed forces of love and hate. Next to the elements, these *interrelating forces* are essential for Empedocles. For the first time, the world does not so much appear as an accumulation of materials or things, but rather as a *web of relationships*. Therein love is to create calmness: the All becomes spherical, a *sphaîros*, while hate creates unsettlement, stirring up the All. Corresponding to our ordinary orientation, the *distinction between calmness and unsettlement* precedes the distinction between truth and error or lie. For Empedocles, both of them blazes the trail for a theory of biogenesis, the workings of the senses and a psychology and anthropology that makes *soul and body closely dependent on each other*. As Empedocles assumes that the universe is infinite in regard to time, but finite in regard to space, he also becomes a pioneer of the thought of an eternal recurrence of the same.

Anaxagoras (ca. 500–425 BC), who went from Clazomenae in Iona to Athens, met a warm reception in the illustrious circle around Pericles (ca. 490–429 BC), but was charged with impiety (even before Socrates). Anaxagoras contributes to the *idea of the aggregation and disruption* of an indeterminable number of infinitely divisible matters that intermix and interpenetrate, so that all of them are part of everything (*pánta en panti*). *Unity and multiplicity are not fixed per se*. It is reason (*nûs*) that takes care of connections and disconnections. For Anaxagoras, reason is still the finest matter that interweaves everything,

causes rotating whirls in which entities develop (*synkrisis*), grow, solidify and differentiate (*apókrisis, diákrisis*). That way, *ever-new worlds* become possible.

Democritus of Abdera in Thrace (ca. 460–380 BC) extends the doctrines of later little-known Leucippus and brings them to Athens, without people there knowing him or wanting to know him. Democritus does not let the divisibility of the intermixing and separating elements continue endlessly; he stops this division by assuming smallest indivisible and impenetrable elements (*átoma*), which amount to formations that can be perceived when they clash or collapse. Instead of interfusing each other in a complex manner, the atoms are thought to cohere and form a great sum. Thus, Democritus' atomism offers a *firm but unobservable footing in the confusing mixture of the world*. The perceiving senses, too, are formations of atoms that interact with the perceived so that *nothing can be perceived as it may be in itself*: all entities perceived become questionable. Democritus hypothesizes the void (*tò kenón*) as being around the atoms in order to make their spatial movement conceivable. Therefore, the void must be penetrable. As a consequence, the concept of a compact being that prevailed since Parmenides becomes risky.

The philosophy of orientation admits various classifications of the world's process according to materials, elements, forces, etc., in so far as they make intelligible the flexibility, alterability and temporality of the world's structures. In whatever way one decides for concepts and classifications, they do not refer to pregiven entities, but provide calming abbreviations, which can be connected to each other in different ways, thereby forming different worlds. The abbreviations or shortcuts themselves belong to the worlds through which they are formed.

4. The Alternative of Relying on Individual Abilities of Orientation in Decision Situations or on a Common Reason and a Shared Truth Independent of Situations: The Sophists and Socrates

The step-by-step transition from aristocracy to democracy in the heyday of Athens enforced strong educational efforts for the citizens wanting to convince each other with their arguments in the assemblies of people. That is how the profession of wisdom teachers, that is: the sophists emerged. In most cases they came to Athens from outside, had no civil rights and did not join the fray. Instead, for payment they helped citizens to acquire a capacity or virtue (*aretáe*) through which they could distinguish themselves from one another, now an enhanced ability to orient themselves in complicated matters and to convincingly judge and decide. The sophists freed their clients from helplessness and perplexity (*amaechanía*) in their communication with others in a way that they became able to master the actual situation in the assemblies and succeed. The motto was: 'Turn the weaker argument into the stronger one.' By their opponents, this virtue was discredited as the ability to use specious arguments. In fact, the sophists were something like *professional teachers of orientation* in the sense of succeeding in difficult situations. Great leaders like Pericles and Alcibiades were greatly influenced by them.

As migratory teachers, moving from city to city, the sophists became acquainted with different opinions and morals and learned to deal with them in a critical manner. From their critical distance they developed the first philosophies of cognition and knowledge, of language and communication, of law and morals, thereby exploring *the societal and political dimension of all knowledge*. They set aside the question of the origin and order of the world's things and its true being, or they treated it ironically with the argument that such a true being is neither identifiable nor communicable.

In order to showcase the *perspectivity of all assertions*, the sophists ostentatiously took up different or even antithetical positions. Competing with each other, they did not commit themselves to common stands and teachings, but rather preserved their personal sovereignty. Particularly Protagoras of Abdera in Thrace (ca. 490–411 BC) became famous for making all assessments of things and persons dependent on the viewpoint and situation of the human being as such and the respective *standpoints of single individuals*. Gorgias of

Leontinoi in Sicily (between 490 and 485 until after 396 BC) did *not accept statements and valuations equally binding everyone*; instead, he erected a golden statue for himself in Delphi. Prodicos of Ceos (between 470 and 460 until after 399 BC) advocated the thesis that *gods are invented for the sake of one's individual needs and desires*. In addition, he was well-known for his meticulous distinctions of concepts. Furthermore, Prodicos is said to have purported the story about Heracles at the crossroads, which became the paradigm of making decisions on *moral orientation*.

Also Socrates (ca. 469–399 BC) was in his day regarded as a sophist competing with other sophists, though with the unique feature that he did not take money for his interlocutions and thus set the example of unselfish philosophizing that is committed to the moral good. According to the few pieces of information we have about him, he was undemanding in his life with his (perhaps two) wives and his three sons. He stemmed from Athens and practiced his civic rights and duties, among them to go to war, where he proved himself outstandingly, and to play his part in the law courts, where he insisted on strict obedience to the law. He respected the laws of his hometown even when he was sentenced to death, although the verdict appeared clearly unjust to him.

However, he seems to have been as sure of the good as Parmenides was of being. And like Parmenides, Socrates felt therein supported by a godlike *daimonion*, which only he he heard himself and which he experienced as preventing him from evil, but not positively bringing the good to his knowledge. It is easier to know what is evil and unjust than to know what is good and just. Coming from a poor background and being unhandsome according to Greek standards, he nonetheless knew how to fascinate the best and most beautiful young aristocrats like no other philosopher, despite the fact that he did *not* offer them any accredited knowledge. However, after the oracle in Delphi had proclaimed that no one is wiser than Socrates, he dared to check this divine sentence on the grounds of the paradoxical premise that he, Socrates, knows that he knows nothing. Hence, he questioned everyone who pretended any certain knowledge in order to find out whether this knowledge proves true. *Like the other sophists, he distrusted knowledge from the ground up, but was ready to prove any knowledge only for the sake of truth instead of using untruth for one's own ends*. He himself proved most successful in his superior moderation of the disputes he launched steering everyone into irresolvable contradiction and disorientation (*aporía*). With his bizarre personality, which he liked to explicitly display, he

both irritated and fascinated his audience. Thereby he created a *reflexive and paradoxical orientation through disorientation*: one knows more if one knows that one knows nothing. The result was most often that the young men want to continue the conversation with Socrates, loving him who loved them.

It was Plato who severely discredited the other sophists, but made his teacher Socrates an ideal philosopher who loved the truth more than anything else, even though he knew that he could never achieve it. He insisted on a common reason of which one likewise cannot know anything. In the dialogues Plato composed Socrates and his *ethos of incessant examination and self-examination* became the role model of enlighteners up until today.

The philosophy of orientation feels close to the sophists including Socrates, as they proceed from the mere statement of putatively true knowledge to reflected inquiry, scholarly research and argumentative disputes on it. While the other famous sophists create a first doctrine of perspectivity and practice it in their open competition with each other, Socrates distinguishes himself by means of his premise of a common reason that looks only for truth and binds everyone, and he succeeds with it.

5. Alternative Conceptual Framings of Being, Becoming and Evaluating: Plato and Aristotle

While Socrates, who is constantly involved in aporetic dialogues on what is and should be, knows that he knows nothing, Plato (428/427–348/347 BC), who partly renders, partly invents such dialogues, writes that he does not write down his own teachings because they may be misunderstood when written down. In his dialogues, Plato, the most famous student of Socrates' is absent; one time he excuses his absence for reasons of sickness. Nevertheless, his written dialogues are the first works that survive on a large scale. They *demonstrate how opinions are bound to individuals, how distinctions are introduced and how people decide for or against them*. In letting others speak, Plato *avoids professing doctrines*. In addition, he highlights the irony of Socrates, but in a way that one does *not* precisely know when he speaks ironically. Through his protagonists, Plato nonetheless speaks with superior authority, yet without taking a theoretical standpoint 'above' things. He does not present truths, but persons who present

truths. When positive doctrines are demanded, Plato's protagonists explicitly use unverified narrations (*mythoi*) including the famous parables.

This also applies to the ideas, the heart of Plato's philosophy. He has Socrates introduce the ideas in different ways in different dialogues, i.e., in different situations of communication between different people. In his dialogue *Parmenides* Socrates as a young man defends the ideas as if they exist per se, while the old Parmenides refutes him and encourages him and others to rehearse the *use* of ideas for convincing people. Not their independent being, but their *orienting use* seems to be crucial for Plato. Consequently, the highest idea of the good is the good use of general ideas in the communication between individuals. Nevertheless, there are alternative interpretations of the ideas, according to which Plato reserves a so-called esoteric knowledge about them for his closest students in his Academy, attributing to them a special existence in a heavenly sphere.

Plato's political experiment of creating a state governed by means of his philosophical concepts, together with the ruler of Syracuse, fails spectacularly. In times when the Athenian democracy is under threat from outside through wars and from inside through struggles for power, philosophy establishes itself by founding schools into which it withdraws. Plato's critical student Aristotle (384–322 BC), who came from outside, abstains from politics and creates the most impressive and influential logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics and political theory ever. In Macedonia which is ruled by a king, Philip II, who in 338 BC annexes Athens and other Greek cities to his kingdom, Aristotle was responsible for the education of the king's son Alexander, later Alexander the Great. While Alexander created his empire which dissolves after his death, Aristotle created a philosophy which conquered Europe and the world for millennia.

For his philosophy and the Lykeion, his own school, Aristotle uses something we would call lecture manuscripts, very dense doctrinal writings, from which the standard literary genre of philosophy, the treatise, develops: the sober, fact-bound and lucid roundup of thoroughly investigated truths, published in one's own name with an ongoing reflection on other doctrines. Though written by an individual person, the treatise shall no longer be regarded as an individual intellectual product, but as a representation of truth itself. Concerning the controversial *questions of being and becoming*, Aristotle maintains against Anaximander's *ápeiron* that everything that 'is' must be something limited, for otherwise it cannot be comprehended. As for Parmenides, being and thinking

are always already connected. Aristotle discards Plato's ideas as a means of determining being and becoming, for if you would use such ideas you in turn need ideas for their application to things and end up in an infinite regress. Thus, thinking itself must be a determination of limits (*horismós*): *thinking comes to a halt* (*stâenai*) *in things*; it is part of the nature (*physis*) itself distinguishing it as a well-ordered cosmos. Thus, there is no separation and no opposition between thought and world (which is difficult to comprehend in the modern age). As to the problem of becoming, thinking solves it by distinguishing between a steady being and shifting qualities. In this way Aristotle captures the *relativity of movement*: change or movement can only be observed and determined, if it is related to something which persists at that time. However, Aristotle fixes that which persists as a non-temporal, ever-persisting, essential substance (*ousía*), from which he distinguishes unessential alternating attributes (*symbebaekóta*), ranking the persisting substances above the changing attributes: the substances are to provide everlasting hold for our orientation. In this way, he creates what we call 'metaphysics.'

For Aristotle, the most obvious example of persisting essences are (apparently constant) biological species. Their members fall under the same general term. So you *see* the general term in each individual. Aristotle calls this kind of concept *eîdos*, which stems from *eidénai*, 'to have seen.' You can see in nature what you think. In order to ensure the essences as independent (*chooristón*) from change around them, Aristotle determines them as the cause which underlies (*hypokeímenon*) the change of its attributes. This under-lying being, which is in Latin *substantia*, turns out to be explicable in multiple ways: (a) as mere matter that can adopt ever-new forms, itself being infinitely changeable; (b) as an individual thing, in which matter is shaped through a form (*morphái*), which persists when the specimens of a biological species are born and pass away and (c) as an end (*télos*), toward which the individuals strive when they grow or their possibility turns into reality (*entelécheia*). The reason why they strive toward such an end is (d) the divine substance: Aristotle considers it the cause for all movement, which itself is not moved, an 'unmoved mover.' Aristotle develops this concept of substance step by step; it is itself moving or, as I call it, *fluctuant*.

Aristotle's *metaphysics* is connected with his *logic*. Logic deals with the forms of thinking itself, which Aristotle carefully observes in the public communication of arguments. Substances enter as 'subjects' into propositions in which 'predicates'

are attributed to them. Aristotle finds the most solid ground (*bebaiotátae tôon archôon*) of thinking in the principle that you cannot attribute opposite attributes to the same thing at the same time (*háma*) and in the same respect (*katà tò autó*). In this way, he excludes time anew, while you can obviously attribute opposite predicates to one and the same thing at different times observing how it moves or changes itself. But the *problem of time* returns in Aristotle's philosophy. For when you try to conceive of time itself, this is possible only paradoxically: time is, as Aristotle himself observes, simultaneously persisting and changing; the 'now' is always the same and always another. Thus, the principle of non-contradiction only applies when time is excluded. *Logic deals with a timeless world*. This will remain problematic for millennia.

As human action is performed in time and in changing situations, Aristotle's point of departure in his ethics is different from his approach in epistemology. In defining the virtues, he does not start with an ideal norm, but with the habitual behavior (*éthos*) in societies (*póleis*) led by male aristocrats. He observes how men are able to excel in it, calling this 'male virtue' (*aretáe*). His method here is another courageous beginning: he differentiates between typical situations of action in the life of a noble Greek man, for instance war, appearing on the scene of public assemblies, dealing with lust, with money, with the truth and so on. Here Aristotle starts from *leeways of action instead of abstract equal norms*. The ethical leeways are limited at both sides through bad extremes, between which one has to find the right middle in the respective situation. This is what we do in our orientation until today.

The philosophy of orientation works, like Plato's Socrates in his dialogues, with ideas as proposals of putatively common points of view that can be used for communicating and determining of what is given in a common situation, yet without assuming that such ideas have an independent being. It benefits from Aristotle's insight that the observation of each movement refers to something that persists, yet without assuming that there must be everlasting substances. What persists in observing change can be something different every time. Aristotle's own concept of substance is fluctuant. In his practical philosophy, he provides a model of how one can think in leeways. We are still guided by Plato's and Aristotle's basic distinctions, even if we no longer understand them in a metaphysical way.

6. Alternatives in the Art of Living: Hellenistic Schools

In the time of the Macedonian and later of the Roman Empire, philosophy continued to consolidate in schools which lasted for centuries: above all Stoicism, Epicureanism and Skepticism. Philosophy never organized itself as clearly and was never as popular as it became in the time of Hellenism (from the 3rd century BC until the 4th century AD). It reached the tops of society up to an emperor of the Roman Empire, Marcus Aurelius (121-180). Yet, the schools continued to compete with each other. They dealt with a series of specialized sciences, among them mathematics and medicine, grammar and philology; huge libraries were set up. But the main topic was the *art of living*: in times when faith in the divine declined and political power was concentrated in the hands of a few, one withdrew into the private sphere. The Roman statesman and great defender of the republic Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC) compares, with pragmatic intentions, the teachings of the schools in order to find out which of them is the best for leading the life of a noble Roman. He develops methods of *overview, comparison and compilation.* He states the benefits of the various philosophies for life and justifies his own decisions among them. *He orients himself toward alternatives*. From the distance of a self-confident and famous Roman politician, he shows how philosophy is a matter of standpoint and decision.

Only late and quasi out of competition, Plotinus (ca. 204–270 AD) dares to develop his own, new and grand philosophical design. He combines Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic doctrines with his idea of an all-encompassing One and Good whose overabundance should emanate progressively, flow into harmonious forms of spirit and matter and solidify in them. This is one more large-scale attempt to master the opposition between the Parmenidean and Heraclitean approaches, now presupposing Plato's metaphysically defined ideas and obfuscating all material texture. On the basis of this Neoplatonism, Christianity was able to ally with philosophy.

The philosophy of orientation is closer to the Epicurean and Skeptical Hellenistic schools than to Stoicism. The Stoic assumption that reason presides over the world is no longer plausible today, while the Stoic distinction between beneficial and detrimental appropriations of the world is still trustworthy, and so is the Stoic distinction between reassurance versus disturbance. Following Epicureanism, the philosophy of orientation relies on observable issues and thereby keeps open leeways for building and using concepts differently. In an Epicurean manner, the everyday orientation tries to avoid trouble. It begins with 'skepticism,' which literally means 'to look around' for relevant footholds. Skepticism with its 'tropes,' i.e., 'turns of cognition,' reflects the situatedness and relativity of knowing. Considering the fact that there are multiple standpoints, that a situation can be interpreted in various ways, and that everyone may rely on different footholds, orientation must be skeptical in order to be successful.

7. Alternative Philosophical Conclusions from Christian Faith: Augustine, Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas, William of Occam and Nicholas of Cusa

Christianity that spread in the Roman Empire and organized itself as a church, formulated dogmas suitable for missionary work, established authorities, conferred holy orders and canonized the Holy Scriptures, was incorporating many thoughts from philosophers, in particular from Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. Vice versa, it caused strong reorientations in philosophy. Through the commitment to one almighty, omniscient and infinitely good God who is beyond doubt and therefore gives human beings absolute security, Christian philosophy was able to question all other footholds. In this way, it *encouraged philosophy to reorient as a whole*.

Its point of departure is the *self-humiliation of the human being before God*: determined by Him and dependent on Him in everything, human beings are sinners in the eyes of God, because they cannot live up to His commandments. Nothing is concealed from Him, but He is concealed from them; all truth is thanks to Him, but nobody can understand His truth. *Christian philosophy starts from the paradox that everything is to be comprehended through God without God Himself being comprehensible. It makes fruitful use of this paradox*. This paradox

leads to another: Christian knowledge is revealed to faith and yet must be verified by reason and logic, which also come from God. As the source of revelation, the Bible contains a number of obvious contradictions. Thus, human reason must decide on the veracity of divine revelation; the new intertwinement of faith and knowledge opens up unforeseen paths of thought. Faith must leave open, firstly, whether human beings can speak adequately about God and everything that comes from Him, secondly, whether human beings can speak adequately about true reality at all in human terms, and thirdly, whether one does not rather do justice to God if one negates all concepts of Him, speaking about Him only through a negative theology or remaining silent about Him. In the certainty of faith, knowledge becomes uncertain, including the knowledge of one's own faith. You not only have to distrust your own knowledge—much more radically than with skepticism—but also your own faith. Thus, one has in turn to abstain from concluding judgments about it. To express it in the language of orientation: one can only have clues, hints, signs or, as we call them, *footholds* of God's being, essence, work and of the right faith in Him. All Christian philosophy and all theology move within the leeways of such footholds.

In the second and third centuries AD, the movement that later was called Gnosticism drew on a variety of sources that combined highly speculative knowledge about God and his mysteries. Then Augustine (354–430), son of an old-style patrician, later bishop of Hippo in North Africa and one of the Church Fathers, reflected in an exemplary way his path to Christian faith through the philosophical approaches current at the time, which turned out to be disappointing: in the new literary form of *Confessiones* he described the long *process of his own reorientation*. As confessions to God, they were paradoxical again: for the all-knowing God already knows whatever the sinner may confess to Him. Believing that God, who sees everything, is watching him, the sinner recognizes his sins, even those that he wanted to hide from himself. He thus sees more deeply into himself.

The exploration of his sinfulness forces Augustine to turn away from the 'outer world' and its footholds, which are equally observable to all, and instead to grasp what has since been called the 'inner world.' This inner world is a paradoxical place and non-place: it cannot be localized. Yet, from now such an inner world is attributed to every human being as his or her proper, true self. It is considered to be something that can only be observed by oneself and is experienced as the scene of one's feelings, consciousness, will and conscience

for one's sins or moral demands. It becomes a strong foothold for philosophy in modernity*: the orientation in the world open for all is deepened by means of the orientation through one's own inner world*. Even the later Wittgenstein will struggle with that.

Yet, for Augustine, ever-new abysses of instability open up. For him, human inwardness is the—always questionable—locus of faith: only here God can be found, only here one can speak to Him, only here He will respond. The inner world also comprehends the memory (*memoria*), to which all is given beyond the moment, and this means that, basically, I am my memory (*ego sum, qui memini*). My memory, though, is idiosyncratic and unfathomable: something can come into my mind or not, and sometimes I remember something in one way, sometimes in another, my memory is like a stomach; it digests my experiences such that I can make the best use of them in a new situation, whether it is correct or not. Thus, further self-examination is necessary and leads me to inner caves that are more and more concealed (*caveae abditiores*). As a consequence, I never reach a stable and concluding concept of myself (*nec ego ipse capio totum, quod sum*). *The more the (sinful) inward withdraws, the more I try to approach it*. Hence, before God I become a question to myself (*mihi quaestio factus sum*).

This lack of hold intensifies over time. In exploring *memoria,* Augustine realizes that the past and the future are accessible only in the present as that which is remembered or expected. But the present itself is only the transition from the past to the future. Thus, *time itself is without any firm foothold*, which Aristotle still found in the eternal orbital movement of the stars. Augustine now conceives of time also in relation to the human interior, which, being itself subjected to time, 'extends' time (*distentio*). As a consequence, one cannot say what time is, and yet one can handle it without any problems (*Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio*). In his confessions to God, Augustine discovers *an orientation ability that is independent of conceptual knowledge*. As he trusts in the incomprehensible God, he can and must trust in his own orientation: due to God's grace. The unfathomable and merciful God meets him as voice (*vox*) and face (*facies*); He speaks with him in love. In his face-to-face communication with God, Augustine discovers *love as the condition for successful communication between individuals.*

Many centuries later, the strongest alternative philosophical conclusion from Christian faith followed in a form comparable to the one Augustine had chosen, namely the form of prayer. Anselm of Canterbury (ca. 1033–1109)

conceives of God as 'a being beyond which nothing greater can be conceived' (*aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari potest*). Using nothing but this concept, which also was prepared by Augustine, Anselm demonstrates that God really exists: if 'real being' is something more (*maius*) than just 'being-thought.' God must exist because God is more than all and existing is more than not to exist. Thus, one can build faith in God based on conceptual thinking and vice versa. But these are thoughts again. Being likewise paradoxical, it is not finally settled whether Anselm's so-called ontological argument for God's existence is tenable or not. Even if it is logically correct, it could still be misleading. *In the Christian horizon, being, knowledge and faith are reassigned to each other from the ground up*. All existence becomes questionable, you can believe in it or not.

Peter Abelard (1079–1142) questions the authorities Christian faith relies on by playing them off against each other. He points out that the Bible speaks in ambiguous parables, that the Church Fathers can change their opinions, that even the prophets often cannot distinguish whether the Spirit of God is speaking to them or not. Things present themselves differently in different perspectives, words rendering concepts are used differently. In the *controversy over universals*, general concepts as such become doubtful. Do they exist independently of the things that exemplify them (realism), or do they only belong to the mind (conceptualism), or are they only signs or names, i.e., words invented by human beings (nominalism)? All options are possible, a definitive decision between them is not. *If you are looking for a strong foothold of your orientation in universals like concepts, laws, methods, norms or values, you will still tend to realism; if you doubt them, you will point to the differences of minds; if you distrust all generalizations, you will prefer nominalism in order to keep your orientation as open as possible. And sometimes you will change your choice.*

The most important representatives of so-called *scholasticism,* the elaborate and didactic clarification and concatenation of the guiding concepts of Christian faith, namely Albertus Magnus (ca. 1206–1280) and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), take a conciliatory position in the controversy over universals: universals are, in their view, real in the divine intellect before creation and the existence of the worldly things (*ante rem*); they may be within them (*in re*), and in human thought subsequent to their worldly existence (*post rem*). Thomas in particular draws on the philosophy of Aristotle, which was handed down and edited by Islamic translators and commentators. In Aristotle, who has also provided the logical means for the coupling of concepts, Thomas finds the

deepest and most broadly elaborate knowledge of ancient philosophy. He himself creates the hitherto *most comprehensive orientation on the basis of both Christian faith and philosophical knowledge*. His doctrines are taught at many universities as standardized basic knowledge; still in the 19th century, the Catholic Church explicitly adopts it as the basis of its dogmatics. All observations and thoughts have to be matched with them; heresies can be clearly marked off by means of them. To this end, scholasticism creates a new special literary form, the *quaestio*, which includes the coherent weighting of arguments for and against a specific issue, and the *summa*, the exhaustive and self-consistent compilation of *quaestiones*, a genre which Thomas brings to perfection.

A few generations later, William of Occam (1280/5–1347/8) continues to adhere to both faith and Aristotelian logic, which for him also pertain to God's thinking. Yet, he concedes that God could also have created the world differently. Whether and how the world exists, ultimately depends on God's will, which is unpredictable for humans. As an alternative to the 'old way' of orientation (*via antiqua*), Occam admits the *contingency of the world* as the 'modern way' (*via moderna*). Logic, then, is no longer a means of justifying the order of the world, *concepts turn into mere names* that say nothing about the essence of things. William also refrains from principles: he introduces *the methodical principle of renouncing the multiplication of content-related principles* prevalent in scholasticism. In doing so, he courageously opens up new ways of orientation: principles may or may not be asserted in human orientation, and if one does not want to be led astray by them, one should use them sparingly. In addition, William already fights for the separation of ecclesial and imperial power. Already during his lifetime, the university of Paris, which has the supreme authority in this area, prohibits his doctrines.

In the light of Christian faith, Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) also questions logic in so far as it is considered a criterion for the contents of belief. He likewise does not hope to recognize God in the order of the world; he works explicitly with *paradoxes*, drawing on sources of Neoplatonism, mysticism and mathematics. He was not only a well-versed, accomplished scientist and university professor, but also an undogmatic spiritual diplomat, an important Church politician and reformer, who at times courageously opposed the Pope, and a bishop who also had to fight militarily for the survival of his diocese from which he had to live (and from many other benefices that he puts at his

disposal). Intermediately he was a Curial Cardinal. So he knew the world well, also in political and economic terms.

Philosophically, he starts from the premise that every creature in the world is different (*aliud*) from all other creatures: there is, in the final analysis, no sameness, which is why one can discern only similarities. This is possible through his concept of distinctions or contrasts: they touch each other at some point; a polygon whose corners are multiplied more and more approaches a circle, and the more it increases in size, the more the circumference of the circle approaches a straight line. In this way opposites coincide in infinity (*coincidentia oppositorum*) and our human concepts become paradoxical: our knowledge is learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*), the finite can be determined through human reason (*ratio*) only by keeping away the infinite. But with the help of such paradoxes, the intellect (*intellectus*) might border on the infinite (and, consequently, on God). Thereby, it can 'fold' the world into God (*complicatio*) and again 'unfold' it from Him (*explicatio*), and by performing this the intellect itself can become creative in its own orientation. Nicholas of Cusa already employs the *imagery of orientation*: he describes the human spirit as a 'cosmograph' that, in our language, drafts maps of the world on the basis of footholds which it grasps in order to orient itself in the world. Complex geographic maps were later called 'Cusanus-maps.'

The philosophy of orientation finds strong impulses in medieval philosophy as well even though it is today often by-passed. The Christian philosophy of the Middle Ages, from its beginning in Augustine, which is the most courageous one, has vigorously deepened the conditions and possibilities of human orientation. It tries to grasp the incomprehensible God proceeding from the comprehensible world and reflects the seemingly comprehensible world from the view of the incomprehensible God. With this double move, the decidability of comprehension itself is comprehended; through the Christian intervention, orientation as a whole turns out to be decidable. Nevertheless, a thoroughly proved faith, as in Thomas Aquinas, creates an orientation which for many people is still helpful. But medieval philosophy is also able to radically question its Aristotelian basis: from Augustine's reference to the uncertain 'inward' of the human being via Anselm's problematic proof of God's existence out of the mere idea of Him, the contradictions between authorities in faith which Abelard points out, the universals whose ontological status is controversial and whose justification with principles may be redundant according to William of Occam, to the possibilities

of creating one's own orientation in faith which Nicholas of Cusa unfolds. They all open up the questionable nature of grasping not only God, but also His world which demands new courageous beginnings.

B. MODERN ENLIGHTENMENT:

The Search for Humans' Own Orientation

Toward the end of the 15th century, a *sense of complete reorientation* emerged. One did not explicitly turn against Christian belief, but resolutely broke away from its meanwhile highly controversial dogmas and their precepts for philosophizing. The scholastic knowledge was regarded by many people as obsolete and outdated. Proceeding from Italy, one oriented oneself afresh in the name of the human being (humanism) and sought to regain the image of the human, also in the shape of bodily beauty, from antiquity, the time preceding Christianity. The worldly conditions of the human being and, besides nature, of history and language gained center stage together with the individual. In the upper classes of society, one began to pursue the ideal of self-perfection (*uomo universale*) independent of corporatist and clerical orders.

Manifold discoveries, inventions and designs in different fields stirred and promoted a comprehensive reorientation, first and foremost
– the discovery of America and the circumnavigation of the Earth, which became possible with the help of the (re-)invention of the compass (which was formerly known in China): it opened new horizons for *geographic orientation*;
– the rearrangement of center and periphery in the *astronomical orientation*: for the sake of an easier mathematical calculation of the orbits of the planets and the stars, Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) moved the earth away from the middle of the world and makes it a mere standpoint in the universe;

– the development of perspectival painting, i.e., the geometrical reconstruction of natural seeing: what seems natural in the perception of spaces and is basic for *sensory orientation* can be produced by means of calculable illusions;
– the beginning capitalist organization of global trade, the *economic orientation* on markets;
– the invention of printing enabled the dissemination of knowledge of all kind independent of chanceries and churches on anonymous markets for an ever-growing audience: everyone who learned to read (initially only very few) could expand his or her *intellectual orientation* as desired, *ad libitum*;
– Protestantism admitted and demanded everyone's own *religious orientation* to the Bible itself, which was no longer copied in exclusive monasteries but sold at public markets;
– the *political orientation* to power as such, without any moral and religious guidelines;
– the invention of gun powder with its consequences for *military orientation*;
– the design of utopias or *worlds of new orientation as a whole*: this had ancient predecessors, for instance in Plato, and was newly presented in tentative, playful, sometimes satirical forms as a 'non-place,' but nevertheless as a deliberate alternative to the existing outdated world; Thomas More (1478–1535), who reinvented the literary form, optimistically transferred his elaborate vision of the 'best state of a republic' to a 'new island.'

The *new scientific knowledge* was no longer based on definitions of essences, as Aristotle had it, but rather on observations, calculations and experiments. As Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) showed, observations under clearly defined circumstances (i.e., under purposeful exclusion of situational conditions) allow for accurate measurements and mathematical calculations. Instead of relying on religious and metaphysical assumptions about the world as a whole, one methodically relies on one's own selection of parameters for experiments and their dependency on each other. This is a radically different kind of physics, a revolution in physics, based no longer on nature itself, but on its human observation. With the help of technical devices (such as telescopes) and apparatus (such as inclined planes) and of the unambiguous language of mathematical symbols, limited certainties can be created in demarcated views and formulated by means of theories, which are able to be renewed again and again.

8. Alternative Secularizations of Philosophy: Machiavelli, Bruno, Montaigne, Bacon and Hobbes

In this huge reorientation, philosophy was participating with different, but spectacular new approaches. It panned its spotlight in sweeping ways until it consolidated itself in the middle of the 16th century with fresh focusses. All philosophers mentioned in the following section contributed new evidence from outside the universities. And all of them were (more or less) concerned with the new confessional conflicts of their day.

In a highly dynamic situation of balancing power in Italy, where the popes also, without inhibition, act as worldly rulers, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) reorients the *political orientation*. Over decades, he has to represent the interests of the Republic of Florence which is one of the strongest and most risk-taking republics. Without religious and moral prejudices, he describes politics' own 'law' in fighting for the conquest and preservation of power. His points of reference are Cesare Borgia, the son of the Pope, and the biblical Moses. (Im)morality and faith turn into functions of politics: a ruler only respects them in so far as they are or (pretend to be) useful in the struggle for power. Rulers do not shy away from lies, breach of promise, cruelty and fear of it; when they avoid immorality, then they do so not for moral, but rather for political reasons. Nevertheless, in the long run dominion is established and stabilized through the ruler's respect for the ruled themselves and vice versa, from whatever source that respect may flow. Rulers are dependent on careful, farseeing orientation: they must constantly reckon with situations that may threaten their existence, the more so when they have recently acquired rulership. Machiavelli distinguishes between *situation and orientation* by means of the notions of *fortuna*, i.e., fortunate coincidence, and *virtù*, the ability to confidently master even the most difficult situations by taking advantage of any opportunities. Personally, Machiavelli stands up for a republic governed by free and effective councils. Later, he again bases the autonomy of the secular state authority on divine, natural or rational law; thereby the modern state under the rule of law comes to the fore. Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) from Nola near Naples, who first was a monk, but shifted his denomination several times, gives lectures at many European universities and courts, attacks traditional philosophical and ecclesial doctrines with great passion, defends the new Copernican world view, and is expelled again and again. In his *Heroici*

furori (*Heroic passions*) Actaeon, a mythical image of himself, dies in pursuit of the infinite, which cannot be grasped by the finite mind and only be imagined in similes. Eventually, after a seven-year heresy trial, Bruno is publicly executed by the Roman Inquisition on a pyre which becomes a beacon for the sacrifices of the great *cosmological reorientation*.

In contrast, Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), who was raised a humanist aristocrat and became urbane through many private and diplomatic travels, manages to accomplish intermittent peace during the fierce confessional wars in France. He does so through personal encounters with the involved kings and the Pope. This is possible since he takes up a skeptical stance toward every dogmatic philosophy and theology. Montaigne is the first 'free spirit' in Nietzsche's sense. Without reserve, he is able to face the uncertainty of all knowledge and the insecurity of human existence, but nonetheless, he shows how one can successfully find one's way around in the world and gain footholds in it: through orientation to oneself, to one's own life experience in all its facets (right up to Montaigne's torturing kidney stones). He only relies on his own unbiased observations of the life surrounding him and of himself interacting with it. He assures himself of this *personal orientation* through *Essais*, i.e., attempts or experiments, whose literary form he invents especially for this purpose and which he renews continuously. In contrast to the medieval *summae* and to the later systems, such essays let the mind meander without any predefined method or systematic order of thought. So, all the time one discovers something new, which may then be developed methodically and ordered systematically. Montaigne lives the new ideal of a sovereign personal orientation in a world that has become increasingly complex and confusing.

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) made it far in his political career: he became Lord Chancellor of the British Crown until he was overthrown because of his continuing accumulation of debt and accusations of bribery. In his philosophical writings, he also used the literary form of the essay, but broke it down in 'aphorisms' that can be rearranged or extended *ad hoc*. Bacon reorients the *scientific orientation*. He regards the field of science itself as field of orientation: as an unfamiliar terrain through which one has to find ever-new ways that remain preliminary. He assumes 'the role of a guide' (*indicis tantummodo persona*) who shows a new 'way' (*via*) to science as such and promises a 'great renewal of the sciences' (*instauratio magna scientiarum*). This requires a 'new tool' (*novum organon*) instead of the Aristotelian logic and analytics: instead

of deducing knowledge in a scholastic manner and thereby 'anticipating' the results of explorations, one has to follow the complexity of nature itself; Bacon speaks of 'subtlety' (*subtilitas*). This shall be done 'empirically' and 'inductively' in a tentative 'interpretation,' which generalizes observations carefully and progressively, and revises generalizations again and again in regard to deviating cases. Generalizations can have different degrees of certainty. This means that there only are veritable 'clues' or 'indications' (*indicia vera*) as points of departure for one's interpretation of nature. This interpretation can be hampered not only through conventional concepts, but also through mathematical calculations, while diverse approaches can support it. Through this cautiously and circumspectly *orienting method*, as we call it, science can, according to Bacon, gain real power over nature ('knowledge is power'), but guided by a necessary respect for it, and help to gradually improve human living conditions: 'nature is defeated by obeying it' (*natura parendo vincitur*).

However, as orientation, this method is, according to Bacon, limited through the mind itself: (1) in logical fallacies caused by the nature of the human intellect which draws conclusions too quickly from sensory experience (the *Idols of the Tribe*; (2) single individual passions and ideologies (the *Idols of the Cave*); (3) linguistic idiosyncrasies which can mislead people (the *Idols of the Marketplace*); and (4) philosophical and scientific presuppositions of an era that are held onto like dogmas (the *Idols of the Theater*). Human orientation must always be aware of such constraints in order to keep open its leeways for revealing the givens of nature and making them effective for one's own use. Bacon is the first to see that *both scientific and everyday orientation proceed in leeways*, in which ever-new footholds (*signaturas atque impressiones*) are observed to which scientific theories and systems can connect.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), a century after Machiavelli, came from a modest background. But as a tutor in a noble English family, he had the possibility to travel a lot. On these trips he got to know, among others, Galilei and Descartes. Temporarily he had to flee to France in order to escape persecutions because of his writings; however, he enjoyed the protection of the British Crown.

His thought again is influenced by the severe wars of his day. He combines the sober impulses of Machiavelli and Bacon (whose secretary he is for a short time) and designs the *first comprehensive philosophical system of modernity*, which he models on Euclid's work on the foundation of geometry. In his *Elementa Philosophiae,* Hobbes rebuilds philosophy from logic to religion, now in a harsh

and realistic spirit, which his critics call 'materialist.' Concerning cognition and concepts, he adjoins nominalism (chap. 7), which is least demanding in terms of premises; concerning the determination of the human being, he assumes simple self-preservation. Concerning ethics, Hobbes dismisses the belief that one acts for the sake of the good itself; one does not desire something because it is good, as Socrates has postulated, but rather something appears to be good because one desires it. Thus, Hobbes *reverses the moral orientation*. In his realistic view, human beings are not good by nature, but fight (more or less) a permanent war of all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). They affirm absolute rule not for metaphysical reasons, but for the sake of their safety. To this end, Hobbes introduces the fiction that human beings conclude a contract ('covenant') out of their own interest (not because they want the good), that is binding for everyone except the ruler. He replaces the absolute rule with an absolute ruler, who has power over life and death of everyone. Later, this fiction was gratefully referred to again and again as if it were a reality (chap. 12); Hobbes clearly describes it as fiction: 'Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words.'

The philosophy of orientation appreciates the sense of reality that the philosophers prove for the sake of clarity at the outset of modernity: they gloss over nothing. Preeminent footholds are Niccolò Machiavelli's disturbing exposure of power as the core of political thinking, Thomas Hobbes' paradoxical thought of safeguarding freedom through the submission under an absolute ruler, Francis Bacon's attempt to develop an orienting method of scientific research that is always aware of contingencies in the nature, and Michel de Montaigne's sovereign personal orientation which is skeptical against all general guidelines pretending stability per se. From here, basics of orientation are revealed as the distinction between situation and orientation (Machiavelli's fortuna and virtù), the meandering thinking that precedes and prepares regulative thought (Montaigne's Essais), the limitation of orientation through leeways that can be expanded within leeways again (Bacon's Idola), and the necessity of fictions for societal issues (Hobbes' social contract).

9. Alternative Foundations of the Self-Referential Orientation of Substances: Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz

In the 17th century, the so-called 'rationalism' of modernity took shape in closely connected orientation decisions. Nations still had little significance in philosophy; even though one began to publish more and more in national languages, Latin at first remained the common language among philosophers. The Netherlands, which had endured ferocious fights for freedom, offered a place of refuge with a high, though not unlimited degree of freedom of religion and thought. The Catholic Frenchman René Descartes (1596–1650), the Sephardic Jew Baruch de Spinoza (1632–1677), whose family had to flee from Portugal to the Netherlands, and the Protestant German Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) lived alone, did not teach at universities and remained unmarried. To a certain extent they undertook diplomatic tasks. They payed for their living either through private means (Descartes), through skilled manual work (Spinoza, who was banned by the Amsterdam Jewish community because of his writings, grinded lenses for the new telescopes) or by employment at royal courts (Leibniz). However, all of them built up tight networks with other scholars, with whom they exchanged letters. Leibniz visited Spinoza personally in order to hear his unpublished thoughts. The three of them conceived of *human orientation in self-referential terms*, basing them on the traditional thinking of substances which they significantly transformed.

Descartes, whose family belonged to the French 'nobility of office,' enjoyed an excellent education at a prestigious Jesuit college. Initially, he led the life of a young nobleman in Paris society, participated in the Thirty Years' War as a commissioned officer, traveled a lot through Europe. Yet, after getting to know the world, he withdrew to the Netherlands in order 'to study within myself as well' (*étudier aussi en moi-même*). He lived in hiding, warned by the Inquisition's trial against Galilei (1633), whose discoveries he welcomed.

Since all questions of faith and knowledge are controversial, he wants to base science on an unwavering ground (*fundamentum inconcussum*). This is preceded through *personal experiences of disorientation* which shocked and unsettled him to the core. In order to illuminate these experiences, he creates multiple new literary forms of writing: first, the narrative of three dreams that he locates at a military camp near Ulm at the Danube and dates on November

10, 1619. He reports the following: On the street, he is seized by a whirlwind or a vertigo, is afraid to fall, wants to escape in a college whose members he can see standing firmly on the ground. Assuming to be persecuted by the devil, he is then in his room haunted by thunder and sparks of fire that he seeks to explain with the help of available science, yet without success. Finally, in a book of poetry, he comes across *the question of orientation par excellence*: 'Which way of life will I follow?' (*Quod vitae sectabor iter?*) In this question, caused by his 'heated brain,' the 'spirit of truth' seems to appear to him, for which he thinks he has to thank God alone.

Decades of widely spread own research on physics, astronomy, physiology, psychology and mathematics ensue; among other things, Descartes invents analytic geometry. He presents the results in his *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking the Truth in the Sciences*. He calls this discourse a story (*histoire*) or fairy tale (*fable*), without insisting on their truth. Instead, he speaks of a 'method,' tells his personal way to this method, which he has tried out effectively and now recommends as the foundation of a new universal science. With *methods,* human orientation becomes autonomous, i.e., independent from specific knowledge based on concrete circumstances. Methods are able to give direction to the research of truth that others in different situations can follow in the same way. They *offer general ways of orientation instead of simply claiming opinions or doctrines as true*. If humans consequently follow the same ways in seeking the truth, they will reach the same goals. The results then are 'right' without them having to be 'true' in the sense that they depict reality itself. Descartes elucidates this through a traveler's orientation experience: having lost his way in the forest and wandering around desperately, the traveler does the best in order to orient himself if he walks straight ahead in whatever direction; holding to this direction, he will come out of the woods sometime and regain an overview in the open country. Maybe he does not know where he is; yet now he can find out. The woods were a symbol at that time: 'forests' also designated messy collections of things to know; Bacon, for instance, had entitled a motley work *Sylva Sylvarum.*

Gaining an overview in the midst of a confusing situation is the first step of orientation. In Descartes' view, orientation is necessary for two reasons at his time: on the one hand knowledge has increased significantly and on the other hand it has proven to be uncertain. It is, as Descartes emphasizes, not inherent in reason as such, since everyone obviously goes 'different ways' (*diverses voies*)

using it. Therefore, human reason needs instructions for its proper use. Descartes recommends his readers as a methodological rule to divide and compartmentalize difficult, complex and thus insoluble problems into parts, which are completely surveyable, evident and easily solvable, and then recombine these parts following one's own design. This is the method of *surveyable presentation* (*übersichtliche Darstellung*), as Wittgenstein later calls it (chap. 21).

Thereby, Descartes argues, truths play a role, but as mere intuitions which the philosophy of orientation calls *plausibility standards*; according to Descartes, the final criterion of truth is the ease (*facilité*) of understanding it. *Thus, orientation precedes truth by choosing surveyable and easily understandable ways to it.* Descartes revolutionizes philosophy by recommending to follow the 'order of one's own deliberations' (*ordre des raisons*) and renouncing to say anything about the 'order of things themselves' (*ordre des choses*). This is an outstanding courageous beginning in the history of philosophy, the modern way of asserting truths.

In his *Discourse*, Descartes designs related rules also for leading one's life. He calls them *morale par provision*, which is '*preliminary life orientation.*' When one cannot identify the truest opinions (*les plus vraies opinions*), it is best to follow the most probable ones (*les plus probables*) that have stood the test of time. If these opinions cannot be identified with sufficient clarity, one should take decisions depending on how far the opinions or attitudes in question can be applied to practice, and then cling to them, follow them with *resoluteness*. On the whole, one should rather try to overcome oneself than fate (*fortune*), rather change one's own wishes than the order of the world (*l'ordre du monde*). Wherever possible, one should make a virtue of necessity (*faire de nécessité vertu*). In fact, we use to do so in everyday orientation. The basic precondition for leading one's life is, according to Descartes, to in turn 'provide a comprehensive view (*une revue*) of the diverse activities of the human being in this life, in order to try to make the best choice.'

In the *Meditationes de prima philosophia,* Descartes deepens his *Discourse* to a 'First Philosophy,' a groundwork of philosophy in general. Here, he writes no longer in French for a broad audience, but in Latin for the philosophical expert audience. Meditations are kind of spiritual exercises which he learned to do at the Jesuit college: the routine of consequently pressing forward to one's innermost interiority in order to purify oneself before God from one's sinful incentives: the Augustinian model. Descartes now applies the model to scientific

thinking, tracking down all that is dubious in order to uncover the indubitable. He wants to, as he writes, once in a lifetime (*semel in vita*) turn everything on its head (*evertere*) from the ground up (*funditus*), in order to stabilize the sciences in something firm and persistent (*firmum et mansurum stabilire*). He is now doing this explicitly for his personal orientation.

Here, however, he sees himself unexpectedly slide down an abysmal vortex (*in profundum gurgitem ex improviso delapsus*); the experience of disorientation increases, he loses the ground unter his feet, can no longer support himself anywhere and must work hard to swim out of the vortex (*enîti*). The new foothold is his own power to think his thinking itself in a *mere self-reference of thinking*: this means for him that he cannot doubt that he doubts, if doubting is thinking that anything could be untrue. The famous result of the 'I think, I am' (*ego cogito, ego sum*, without the *ergo*) cuts off every external relation of thinking, turning it to itself. This *self-assessment of thinking* is the starting point of the so-called modern rationalism.

Nevertheless, this self-assessment is a temporal process (*quamdiu me aliquid esse cogitabo*). The new certainty which shall serve as a model of all further certainties is only a *temporal certainty*. This, for Descartes, calls back metaphysics: for, as it was for Aristotle, a temporal process cannot be anything but an attribute (*accidens*) of a substance (chap. 5). Therefore self-referential thinking must exist as a thinking substance (*res cogitans*). And since the temporal process of thinking cannot be physically extended, corporeality must be excluded from it and conceived of as a separate substance, i.e., an extended one (*res extensa*). Thereby, Descartes establishes a dualism of 'soul versus body' or 'reason versus nature' which allows him to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, the existence of God and therefrom in turn the existence of bodily beings. This dualism has split the philosophy of human orientation in a fatal way constraining it to thinking alone.

Finally, Descartes puts his deliberations into the literary form of a treatise, the *Principia philosophiae.* Here, he turns the empirical judgment *ego cogito, ego sum* into a syllogism connecting the *cogito* and the *sum* with an *ergo*: 'I think, therefore I am' (*cogito ergo sum*). In this syllogism the 'first certainty' is no longer the first one and the first one ('it is a contradiction to believe that what is thinking does not exist at the time it is thinking') is dubitable again, because it presupposes a certain knowledge of what is thought, time and existence.

Spinoza draws on these *Principia philosophiae* in order to consequently reconstruct the logical relations in them according to the method of mathematics (*more geometrico*), again along the lines of Euclid's geometry. Mathematics most clearly follows Descartes' method of proceeding only in perfectly clear and transparent steps. Yet, the basic principles of orientation that Descartes identifies (the personal experience, the overview, the decidability of rules, the mere plausibility of results) seem to vanish. A mathematical deduction excludes all individual points of view and standpoints. However, Spinoza gains them back. First of all, he wants to exclude from philosophical thinking all mere wishes and special purposes, i.e., to stop all wishful thinking, and for him the assumption that one is absolutely free to think what one wants likewise is wishful thinking. Spinoza establishes the founding self-relation in a new, surprising and nevertheless logically convincing way.

First step: if being a substance presupposes absolute independence, only God can be a substance. Second step: if we can recognize God only through that which He creates in the nature and all that belongs to it, we cannot distinguish Him from it (*deus sive natura*). Third step: as an overall creator, He must also be cause of Himself (*causa sui*). Forth step: if something is cause of itself, it is cause and effect simultaneously, and if cause is simultaneously effect, both are not distinguished by time. Thus, God's creation of the nature or the world cannot be a temporal process; if you distinguish cause and effect God's creation of the nature by time, these distinctions without time become paradoxical. Fifth step: if God is his nature itself, not distinguished by time, you can also say that He is everything in nature (pantheism) and is not at all besides nature (atheism). But if God is indiscernible from nature created by Him, then nature is just as incomprehensible as God, and there are only limited possibilities to recognize God or nature. As a part of the whole of this God-nature you can only kind of orient to Him or it and, as a part, you have to do this as much as you can. In any case, the result is that *the knowledge of the world or the orientation to it proceeds as a self-relation of the God-nature and this self-relation is its substance, not merely the thinking of thinking.*

Spinoza himself uses only in part these steps and terms explicitly, but they can make clear what his revolutionary approach is leading to. He is thinking our thinking departing from the whole of the world or God-nature. He conceives of bodies and spirits as attributes (*attributa*) of the one divine substance and of persons as varieties (*modi*) of these attributes. They are perspectives *in* the

world *of* the world; *Spinoza initiates modern perspectivism*. As mere perspectives, the *modi's* cognition is limited in a way that they at first struggle only for their own self-preservation (*conatus in suo esse perseverandi*), conducted by half-blind emotions (*affectus*). But when their insight in the whole of nature increases, they will overcome this struggle and also respect the needs of others who likewise are parts of the divine world. In our language, human orientation becomes more composed, serene and successful the more contexts of the world it takes into account. The end must be to adequately comprehend the interconnections of the world as much as possible in order to reduce the adverse affects as much as possible. And if God is real in all parts of His nature and therefore also expresses Himself through their affects, he turns all those parts to each other without reservation, that is: through love. Spinoza turns Hobbes' *homo homini lupus* (man is a wolf to man) into a *homo homini deus* (the human being is God to the human being). The paradox of the *causa sui* inferred from Descartes' *Principia* ultimately leads to the paradox of God's rational love to himself (*amor Dei intellectualis*): if we consider things rationally, we must love each other as joint parts of nature and thus of God who in this love loves Himself. In the end, *the self-relation of the divine world is a self-relation of universal love*. Spinoza's contemporaries described him as someone who actually lived in this spirit.

Leibniz, son and grandson of professors, polymath, inventor of a combinatorics, an infinitesimal calculus and a calculating machine, occasionally works as a diplomat on his own initiative, philosophizes only on the side, but rigorously. He pursues the way which Descartes and Spinoza have begun now explicitly using the notions of 'perspectives' and 'standpoints.'

Concerning Descartes, he abolishes the substantiality of the *res extensa* because corporeal things being divisible cannot be substances, but he maintains the substantiality of the non-corporeal substances. Concerning Spinoza, he changes the basic decisions only slightly, but with major consequences. He connects the monads, as he calls them, by means of purely logical relations which are thought by God and hidden in Him. As a 'central monad' the divine substance is the subject of all possible predicates and thus of all possible determinations of the world; it is the 'original concept' (*conceptus primitivus, notio primitiva*), from which all other concepts emerge like flashes of light. This is perfect rationalism. Yet, in every monad the whole of possible determinations is limited in a different and individual way. The monads are, in this way, mirrors (*miroirs*) of the universe (*univers*) or perspectives (*perspectives*) on it

from different standpoints (*points de vue*): they express the universe (*exprimer l'Univers*) in an individual manner being God's *modi* in their own ways and with characteristically limited sight and insight.

Nevertheless, Leibniz does not understand the monads through thinking alone. In his epistemology he starts from observation (*perception*), which includes unreflected or unconscious observations (*petites perceptions*), called sensations and only in special situations proceeds reflectively or consciously (*apperceptions*). In his God-centered approach, Leibniz can see that consciousness is not a particular being, but a temporary state of observation; the notion of observation turns the old philosophical opposition of sensual perceiving and rational thinking into a timely difference. This limits rationalism. The result is a new self-relation: *the world consists of observers observing each other*, it is a universal system of observations in which the substances become mere hubs of relations. Thereby, space and time are nothing but parameters of the observations. Logically, the only perfect substance consists in relations of relations.

In this construction, there is no need that the monads observe each other immediately. To Leibniz, they cannot transcend their perspectives, but are, in this regard, 'windowless.' They are connected to each other only through the divine 'central monad,' which has determined the algorithms of the monads' interactions and communications from the very start in a 'pre-established harmony.' Thus, Leibniz no longer founds their self-relation through the immediate self-reference of thinking (as does Descartes), but now includes the relation to the rest of the world (as does Spinoza). In the system of observers observing each other every monad is connected with all others and dependent on them, without this even knowing. Instead, God is the perfect observer who encompasses all observations of all perspectives. He has always already a *perfect overview of the world,* and He is able to observe that everything follows the principle of sufficient reason. Hazards, surprises, reorientations and distinctions of good and evil exist only if seen from limited perspectives and limited standpoints of the limited human observation. *Leibniz designs a metaphysical ideal of orientation which displays a perfect orientation carried out with logical calculus without the risks of orientation.* This encourages Leibniz to assume that we live in the best of all possible worlds ordered through divine insight. His metaphysical design of a perfect orientation is first admired and then derided when the confidence in an omniscient and omnipotent God becomes lost.

The philosophy of orientation is prepared through fundamental insights of the modern rationalism that insists on ultimate logically and theologically justified certainties. In Descartes it finds impressive descriptions of profound experiences of disorientation that lead to the reorientation from given truths to methods of gaining one's own certainties through self-reflection and plausibility standards through rules of research. With Spinoza emerges the method to use traditional fundamental terms like substance, God, nature and cause in a paradoxically self-referential way which opens up new alternatives of philosophical orientation. In doing so, Spinoza regains the view of the whole world for one's self-referential orientation. Leibniz' logically and systematically elaborated perspectivism unites self-related and other-related observations from the divine perspective which includes all other perspectives. The ultimate certainties that the three of them justify on a metaphysical basis are partly confirmed, partly disputed and finally dissolve. The rest is plausible even without a metaphysical foundation.

10. Alternative Certainties: Pascal

With Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), Augustine's absolute certainty of faith (chap. 7) returned in early modernity. He questioned the new orientations of both Montaigne and Descartes and in doing so unveiled even deeper conditions of orientation.

For this, Pascal had all the requirements: he also belonged to a highly respected family in the king's service; his father had him being educated following Montaigne's humanistic program (no mathematics). Nonetheless, he became a brilliant mathematician and experimental physicist. He developed among other things a calculus of probabilities (*géométrie du hasard*) and was a brilliant controversial author. Already as a young man he earned so much fame that Descartes came to him to meet him personally. For some years, he likewise plunged into the life of a noble Parisian. But throughout his life he was tormented by some kind of paralysis and severe pain. Finally, he withdrew into a monastery as a hermit or 'solitary' (*solitaire*) and underwent strict penance. In France, the king still pursued an austere politics of religion under the influence of the Jesuits. Yet, the treatise by the Flemish bishop Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638)

about Augustine inflamed a movement of reformation within the Catholic Church and ignited Pascal's religious consciousness. It was soon put on the index.

According to his *Memorial*, dated from the night between November 23 and 24, 1654, Pascal experiences a second conversion to God, the 'God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of philosophers and scholars.' He discards all proofs of God's existence: one cannot teach religion, but must make it venerable and amiable again. In his person, Pascal unites the large range of mathematical-scientific, religious and philosophical endeavors and modes of thinking. He is sensitive both to the methodical-mathematical certainty and to the resolute certainty of faith (*certitude*), and between them, he opens up new philosophical horizons for our everyday life orientation. He also uses several genres of writing: the treatise, the essay and—to great success—the (fictive) letter. Later on, he finds the most suitable form for his thinking: notes or fragments of different length. He assumes that doctrinal systems do not do justice to God and His world; all men-made order splinters. Pascal notes singular thoughts (*pensées*) as mere footholds for his own orientation and thereby forces his readers to *orient themselves on their own in and by means of his fragments.*

In his *Pensées* which are later arranged in various ways, Pascal speaks as an 'I' without presupposing the unity of this I. Like Descartes, he assumes to exist as an I reflecting upon itself, but not because of overall doubts: in Pascal's view Descartes' doubts are only imagined; in particular, you cannot really doubt that you exist. Pascal conceives if the I in relation to other Is: it asserts itself and takes center stage, as if it had a firm position, and in doing so becomes a nuisance for others, wants to subjugate them being unfair in itself (*injuste en soi*) and hateable (*haïssable*). It is neither pure thinking nor a *fundamentum inconcussum* (unshakeable ground), but only, as we call it, a standpoint of orientation.

Furthermore, one can doubt logical contradictions: 'Diverse secure things have been contradicted; diverse false things are accepted without opposition.' The rules of mathematics (which no one at that time knew better than Pascal) are, in the end, only routines that have developed accidentally and to which one could imagine alternatives. Reason adjusts to everything, gets along with everything and follows the respective needs (*la raison étant flexible à tout*). Doubt and disorientation go far deeper than Descartes drives them: the human being is a thinking water reed (*roseau pensant*); yet, human dignity (*dignité*) lies entirely in human thought (*pensée*) and constitutes human greatness (*grandeur*). People have to live with this tension from the ground up. The human being

is a monster (*monstre*), a chaos (*chaos*), something self-contradictory (*sujet de contradiction*), a sewer of uncertainty and error; yet, it judges all things (*juge de toutes choses*), is the glory and scum of the universe (*gloire et rebut de l'Univers*), a paradox for him- or herself (*paradoxe à vous-même*).

Macro- and microphysically, human being is placed between two infinities: the infinite vastness of the universe on the one hand and the infinite smallness of its elements on the other; the human being looks into an abyss (*abîme*) in both directions. The world that can be observed scientifically is an infinite sphere (*sphère infinie*) whose center (*centre*) is everywhere and whose periphery (*circonférence*) is nowhere. The human being goes astray in it (*égaré*), is a nothing (*un néant*) compared to the infinite (*l'infini*), but an all (*un tout*) compared to the void, thus in between nothing and everything, infinitely far away from comprehending the extremes (*comprendre les extrêmes*). In terms of cognition, we human beings drive on a vast milieu (*voguons sur un milieu vaste*), without either secure knowledge nor being completely ignorant. Human beings are always uncertain and floating (*incertains et flottants*), bing pushed from one end to the other (*poussés d'un bout vers l'autre*). Every foothold (*terme, appui*) which we try to hold on to (*attacher*) and make firm (*affermir*) fluctuates and withdraws from us (*il branle et nous quitte*), and when we pursue it, it escapes our grasp (*prises*), slips away from us (*nous glisse*) and flees in an eternal flight (*fuite éternelle*). Nothing stands still and stays for us (*Rien ne s'arrête pour nous*).

Taken ruthlessly to the extreme, this is the *basic situation of human orientation*. Therefore, Pascal concludes, it cannot be about seeking assurance (*assurance*) and firmness (*fermeté*). He resolutely *shifts orientation from certainty to uncertainty*: one has to work for the uncertain, go across the sea, ride on a board (*travailler pour l'incertain; aller sur la mer; passer sur une planche*). And human beings are tuned to this: in all their misery (*tout le malheur*), they search for repose (*repos*), which, however, soon again becomes unbearable for them, so that they fall back into restlessness.

Nevertheless, *even in this abysmal disorientation, for Pascal orientation is still possible* in everyday life as well as in science. Just like a point of a very small size seems indivisible to the senses even though we know that it is not, so we produce principles (*principes*) that appear as final to our intellect without really knowing whether they are final and true. Involuntarily, we draw horizon lines where our thinking ends: Pascal calls the human orientation that creates such points and lines a feeling (*sentiment*) and locates this feeling in the heart (*coeur*).

As a consequence, he outlines a logic of the heart (*logique du coeur*) as the basis of human orientation. According to this logic, we decide which points and principles we adopt as sufficiently certain in a given situation. Such principles can be felt, Pascal says, and from them we deduce theorems (*Les principes se sentent, les propositions se concluent*).

The ability to dispose of principles is what makes the spirit (*esprit*). Pascal, whose spiritual experience extends further than anyone else's at his time, distinguishes the spirit's search for certainty along three degrees:
– first, the 'spirit of accuracy and correctness' (*esprit de justesse*), when it is about the use of familiar principles;
– second, the 'spirit of geometry' (*esprit de géométrie*), when principles need to be selected and related to each other, which already demands a certain amplitude of the spirit (*amplitude d'esprit*);
– and third, the 'spirit of fineness' (*esprit de finesse*), when principles first of all need to be found. As Pascal explains in many notes, this *esprit de finesse*, which comprises all skills and virtues of orientation, is reliant on a convenient environment, an appropriate pace in observing and thinking, a favorable distance to the object and a suitable perspective. The subtle spirit considers alternative truths next to every truth that seems to be found. It distrusts fictions, but reckons with its own weakness (*faiblesse*). It is exposed to desires (*concupiscence*), which may lead to desirable philosophies. It follows styles of cultures without being able to judge clearly what they consist in. It orients itself with the common sense without relying on it. It cannot be tied to a specific profession.

Just as Augustine before him, Pascal dares to look so far down into the abysses of human orientation because he still or once again trusts in God who grants the human being's true felicity (*vraie félicité*). However, in regard to God, too, we only have a sign (*marque*) or an empty trace (*trace toute vide*) which could be willed by God Himself in order to engage human beings to explicitly decide in favor of Him. Reason cannot take this decision; reason can only prepare it by detaching the human being from habitual ways of thinking with the help of doubts. The force (*force*) of reason allows one to decide what to doubt and what to trust to a certain degree. Instead of proving God's existence, Pascal wants to show that it is a rational decision to surrender to religion. He recommends conceiving of this decision as a bet or a game (*jeu*) which include happenstance and hazard (*hasard*), but through which one can only win despite all uncertainty (*incertitude*): for in the bet on the existence of God you can gain eternal bliss

(*béatitude*), but lose nothing apart from the current miserable life. In Pascal's view, everyone must be interested in eternal bliss. This is *his* ultimate certainty.

The philosophy of orientation is confronted with the deepest abysses of human disorientation when encountering the mathematician, physicist, philosopher and staunch Christian Blaise Pascal. He portrays the situation, with which human orientation has to cope, in the widest horizons and simultaneously in the deepest depths. He points to the human being's intangible position in the cosmos; to the 'I' that is not a firm subject of self-referential thinking, but a mere standpoint of orientation; to horizons and footholds that are not firm, but fluctuating and elusive; to the humans' infinitely flexible thinking; to the mathematical logic that only appears to provide ultimate certainty while it is just a well-practiced routine; to the necessary decisions between always preliminary certainties; to the manifold conditions that facilitate or compromise such decisions. The philosophy of orientation could have been written almost as a commentary on Pascal.

11. Alternative Conceptualizations of the Lawfulness of Nature: Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant

In the time of the Enlightenment, religious piety bit by bit gave way to a purely rational conception of God and finally, for some people, to sheer disbelief. Together with the ample supernatural foothold of human orientation, the conjecture of a God-granted lawfulness of the world began to totter. Lawfulness then required confirmation by means of *new evidence*.

The rapid proceedings of the natural sciences offered this new evidence still under the name of a 'philosophy of nature.' In many respects they were irreconcilable with the biblical assertions. The new evidence became spectacular and irrefutable with Isaac Newton (1642–1726/27). In his *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica* (1687) he based the understanding of nature on mathematical principles, but expressly dispensed with metaphysical presuppositions (*hypotheses non fingo*). Instead, he insisted on *empirical evidence discovered by experiments*. By univerlizing the results, he was able to consistently explain processes both on earth and in the universe through common laws, especially the laws of motion and the law of gravitation.

While Newton himself was still devout, surrounding his discoveries with theological, alchemical and magical speculations, which he kept secret, the *lawfulness of natural processes* that he demonstrated established a *new absolute certainty* independent of all human thinking and doing. The laws of natural processes prove to be as sure as those of God, but are of a different kind. While the universal validity of both cannot be influenced, natural laws can be clearly recognized, defined and used for precise predictions and technical applications. They are, as it seems, *firm and stable per se*, regardless of whether they were created by God or not; they can still be attributed to God's purposeful creation, but that matters increasingly less. Dispute only arises about their formulation. One can rely on them definitely without doubt or risk; they provide a new steadfast foundation of orientation. Even though (or because) the laws themselves cannot, like Parmenides' 'being,' be directly observed but only thought, they are a *triumph of reason*. They create—in Hans Blumenberg's words—an indisputable *new 'legitimacy'* against the old religious one. Yet, the new unconditional foothold for human orientation has its downside, too: natural laws, as Newton successfully states them, are indifferent to human purposes. *Since, human beings find themselves in a naked and cold universe without purpose, as Pascal characterizes it.*

Philosophers can refer to the proven lawfulness of nature in alternative ways. In France and Germany one still trusts in the hold onto terms, constructions and systems built of concepts, while in Britain the skepticism against the realism of universals reappears. National traditions develop in philosophy, especially a British, French and German one. Reason is fragmenting. In different languages and cultures, one philosophizes and orients oneself in characteristic variations. Thus, *in philosophy the new evidence becomes questionable again*.

The British John Locke (1632–1704) provides the initial stimuli for this. As a student and fellow at Christ Church College in Oxford he learned and taught Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy. After he gained financial independence through an inheritance, he turned to science, especially medicine and became personal physician to Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, a leading but controversial politician, who protected and supported him ever since. This earned him a lot of political and economic experience, on which he later devoted fundamental works. However, he also had to go into exile in Paris and the Netherlands at times. Locke was on friendly terms with Newton.

In his epistemological *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* he wants to describe how our world arises in the ideas of our mind. Using principles sparingly, he still clings to the assumption of substances. However, unlike Descartes and Leibniz, he no longer presupposes 'innate ideas' in order to ensure truth and certainty. Further, he does not limit certainty to the Cartesian self-referential thinking of thinking, but includes sensory experience, imagination, feelings, passions, appetite and will in the English notions of 'mind' and 'understanding,' while the French notion of *esprit* and the German notion of *Geist* clearly give precedence to thinking. This British approach operates *closer to the 'common sense' and the factual conditions and conventions of everyday and scientific orientation*.

According to Locke, the mind receives its ideas from outside and inside, but is able to clearly distinguish both. He calls the ideas that spring from some physical causal processes, which affect the nerves and the brain, 'sensations' and those that the mind reflects upon in its own way, 'reflections.' Locke also conceives of the mind as being able to differentiate, whether its ideas are simple or complex, which of them represent primary or secondary qualities of things, etc., i.e., whether they are substantial or accidental. Thus we live in a cosmos of well-ordered ideas; signs as means to communicate ideas are also products of the mind itself. The identity of a person is based on the continuity of consciousness which is due to one's memory of signs. But these ideas now are opposed to nature as such. As a result, the lawfulness of nature becomes precarious in the human mind: according to Locke, it can only be part of the connections of ideas and its reality must be granted by God. *In this approach, one's personal orientation is up to one's own ideas and the orientation to the lawful nature needs divine support*.

One generation later, George Berkeley (1685–1753), who also traveled extensively and finally became bishop and married (which was still a rare exception among philosophers), draws *radical consequences* from Locke's reorientation. If one starts with the mind and its ideas, one has to entirely abandon the assumption of an external world existing independently from our mind. For Berkeley, admitting an external world is the source of all materialism and atheism. He insists on Leibniz' and Locke's insight that being can only be conceived of as being perceived (*esse est percipi*). The criterion of how the mind distinguishes its ideas being plausible or not is how lively or vivid or attractive and striking they are. The signs through which the mind registers its ideas can be used more or less generally; they open leeways to subsume more or

less things under them, and this in turn creates leeways for acting in various situations. However, signs can easily deceive us, for ideas are 'mixed, as it were, and blended together.' Signs that symbolize 'abstract general ideas' arbitrarily separate *and* connect these ideas. 'Principles' and among them 'general laws of nature' are abstract constructions with the help of which we only try to explain phenomena; principles are nothing more and nothing less than 'rules we take for principles, which we cannot evidently know.' Thus, also for Berkeley, who deals with Newton's thoughts without mentioning his name, God must remain the supreme authority to guarantee the regular correlation of ideas encoded by means of signs.

Another generation later, David Hume (1711–1776) denied himself to resort to a divine authority that would safeguard certainty. He became the most significant British philosopher. Descending from impoverished Scottish nobles, he delved, against the will of his family, into the study of philosophy. He did that so intensely that it made him sick. Later, he earned his living as an amanuensis of an English merchant; then he went to La Flèche in France, where Descartes had attended school, and, in the deceptive hope of rapid literary fame, worked on his *Treatise of Human Nature.*

Here, he not only describes 'human understanding,' but 'human nature' on the whole, consequently avoiding metaphysical hypotheses. Proceeding from a 'free confession of ignorance' concerning an 'original and ultimate principle,' he strives for a 'cautious observation of human life.' He tries to transfer Newton's experimental method to philosophy, building completely on the evidence of experience, but without drawing on mathematics. For 'the sciences of mathematics, natural philosophy and natural religion' themselves depend on 'the science of man.' Hume proposes 'a complete system of the sciences built on a foundation almost entirely new.' For him, this is possible only in 'a land of tolerance and of liberty.'

His approach leads to *the strongest disillusionment of philosophy* since the ancient skeptics. It pushes Hume into *a new experience of disorientation*. At the end of the first Book of his *Treatise,* he sees himself 'having narrowly escap'd shipwreck,' into which 'the wretched condition, weakness and disorder' of the faculties of understanding brought him; 'despair' makes him 'resolve to perish on the barren rock, on which I am at present, rather than venture myself upon that boundless ocean, which runs out into immensity.' For in most cases, our understanding is 'founded on the imagination, or the vivacity of our ideas';

but imagination is 'a principle so inconstant and fallacious' that it may create illusions and contradictions everywhere. Then, 'the question is, how far we ought to yield to these illusions.' But again, there is no sufficient reason to decide between them; thus we can 'only observe what is commonly done.'

Hume feels 'affrightened and confounded with that forlorn solitude, in which I am plac'd in my philosophy, and fancy myself some strange uncouth monster.' Since he has contradicted all previous philosophy, he expects for his part contradiction in turn, finding in himself 'nothing but doubt and ignorance' or 'philosophical melancholy and delirium.' However, after 'all examination and enquiry,' his mind returns to 'that assurance, which always arises from an exact and full survey of an object.' He decides to maintain his skepticism and look for reassurance through the 'common affairs of life.' He tries to rely on *the everyday life orientation whose conditions are always uncertain*.

In fact, he encounters fierce resistance with his *Treatise*. He is now taking his time and detours. He tries out a variety of literary forms which brings him increasing success; but he fails when applying for professorial chairs in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Then he lives for a long time from employment with noblemen. Later he works in a library, which gains him access to a plethora of books. Finally, he comes to fame in enlightened Paris. And he becomes rich because of his six-volume *History of England*, which he regards both as source and application of his science of man.

In exploring the ways of human understanding Hume follows Berkeley in proceeding from vivid 'impressions,' 'passions,' and 'emotions,' while 'ideas,' which include thoughts, memories and fantasies, are comparatively faint and ineffective; they copy impressions and are associated along riteria like resemblance, contiguity and causation. Descartes' and Locke's substances and Newton's absolute space and time belong to these mere ideas, while the impressions sustain the undeniable conviction of situational reality. Hume reduces the assumption of natural laws to the observation of regular sequences of events, which are *interpreted* as chains of causes and effects. Hence, as Hume puts it in his later *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,* besides logic and mathematics 'all other sciences are reduced to probability.' Thoroughly insisting on experience, he also renounces the hypothesis of a particular and autonomous self or 'I' because one has no impressions of it and there is no identifiable entity in the mind. Hume ranks it as 'a bundle of perceptions' that constantly re-organizes itself on the basis of new experiences. This process can be observed with

the help of memory. Hume already uses the famous metaphor of a continually reconstructed ship to designate *fluctuant identities.* In his *Dialogues,* he plays with identities in deliberately keeping it open with which of his protagonists he identifies himself. Concerning the *free will*, Hume also conceptualizes it non-metaphysically as the *human leeway of decision in the natural world*. This leeway is constrained in manifold ways: 'Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.' *Morals* can be anchored empirically in moral sentiment, which includes mutual sympathy of people and which is constantly trained through observing and assessing the behavior of other people. Hume assumes that morals and other societal regulations, in so far as they are useful for everyone, work out and change on this basis, including the standards for justice and reliability.

Hume's *History of England*, which he, despite the conflicts between the parties at that time, largely keeps impartial and in which he includes literature and science, is at heart a history of human freedom. When it comes to politics, Hume supports a strict separation of powers and the rule of law. On the whole, he champions political stability and, where necessary, considerate reforms. He advocates American independence. He turns down the proposal to continue his very successful work on the grounds that he has become too old, too fat, too lazy and too rich. Loyal to his philosophy, Hume's life comes full circle. He is fond of company and sociality. The new street in Edinburgh, where he builds his comfortable house, is called St. David Street.

In his early experience of disorientation, Hume arrives at the following conclusion: 'We have, therefore, no choice left but betwixt a false reason and none at all. For my part, I know not what ought to be done in the present case.' While Hume, admitting the all-encompassing uncertainty of life, turns to the good life among friends, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), in contrast, reacts to Hume's experience of disorientation by writing the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Reason shall be judged and limited only by reason itself: Kant again holds on to the Cartesian self-referentiality of thinking through which thinking questions itself and finds hold in itself. Following the example set by Copernicus, he starts a 'revolution' in thinking, i.e., a *great theoretical reorientation* according to which 'we can recognize of things *a priori* only what we ourselves have put into them.' He *assures the efficiency of reason by limiting it.* Thereby, he creates the most concise and consistent philosophy we know.

While Locke has given up his university career and Hume fails to achieve it, Kant tenaciously works on it. His background is German university philosophy, which has been established since generations. He remains (nearly) always in Königsberg in the easternmost part of Germany, acquiring his large knowledge of the world from travel stories and books. Prussian and Russian reigns change, but Kant does not engage in politics and diplomacy. He welcomes the French Revolution, yet without conceding a general right to incite political revolutions. He lives alone for his whole life, but is noted for his long-term friendships and hosting dinners. He dedicates himself entirely to the renewal of philosophy on the highest academic level. Hume provides the crucial incentive. Kant prefaces the second, more successful edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* with a quote from Francis Bacon's *Instauratio magna*. Like no other philosopher since Aristotle and Descartes, Kant emerges as one of the highest authorities in philosophy to this day.

It is once again a situation of disorientation. For Kant, philosophy is involved in a 'battlefield of endless controversy.' After having fallen 'into darkness and contradictions,' it finally has to take a 'secure course of a science,' which 'can soon be measured by means of its success.' Where the treatment gets stuck, one must 'often go back again and take another path,' one has to reorient oneself. In order to avoid 'mere groping about,' Kant wants to gain 'calmness' by finding the path to a clear attitude. He continues to expect it from pure reason, but ties its validity to concrete contexts. To him, reason through which 'nature elevates humans above animals' cannot be disposed by nature in such an unfortunate manner that it cannot solve its own problems – a metaphysical presupposition that is no longer shared today. While respecting the British tradition that trusts in experience, Kant simultaneously wants to justify the lawfulness of nature, which Newton has exhibited so convincingly, by reason. For this, he *shifts the rationalistic perspective*: if reason is to contribute to the knowledge about nature and make lawfulness of nature intelligible, it must conform to experience. This is possible, if it is *reason itself that 'forms' sensual experience*. As a result, in recognizing nature it needs sensual experience, but orders it along its own forms, thus being able to claim *universal validity*: universally valid recognition of nature is both conditioned and unconditioned. In this paradoxical way, Kant limits the unconditional status of reason which he assumes to be universal.

The hinge around which his approach revolves is the thinking in forms. Thinking in forms is Aristotelian tradition. In it, an persistent form is filled

with changing content, which for Kant are 'data' from sensual perception. When determined through the forms of reason, the sensual data are to become objective. Thus, these forms are 'conditions of the possibility' of objectivity; they allow 'transcendental' statements *a priori*, i.e., statements of reason that 'sourmount' experience. In this way, Kant develops a 'system' of a 'pure natural science' that is to be fundamental for all empirical science: it consists of principles which reason does not read off from nature, but that it 'prescribes' to nature. *For Kant, the Aristotelian form, which emerges from metaphysical contexts (chap. 5), is to make conceivable an objective philosophical science which does justice to the modern Newtonian law of nature.*

The core idea is: since lawfulness as such is not perceivable, reason can only give a firm hold to the human orientation through its own lawful forms. That is to say, the principle of causality that Newton's natural science presupposes can only be understood as an interpretation of nature through human reason imposing its forms on the contents of experience. Yet, Newton's (and other) laws of nature are determined through an experimental method. Thus Kant limits his philosophical foundation of the validity of natural laws to 'pure' laws of nature. In contrast to empirical laws that can always be enlarged and corrected with new observations and experiments, 'pure' laws like metaphysical ones cannot change. Thus, transcendental philosophy does not affirm specific natural laws, but only creates the certainty that nature can be understood as lawful at all. According to another famous formulation of Kant's, 'reason has insight only into that which it itself creates according to its own design.' In current terms, this is constructivism: *we orient ourselves through our own determinations, even in natural science*. This involves that, in Kant's terms, we never deal with 'things per se' (*Dinge an sich*) but only with 'appearances' (*Erscheinungen*).

In order to provide a 'system' of principles of 'pure' natural science, Kant deduces them through a 'transcendental deduction' from the logical 'form' of judgment at all according to which every subject of a judgment is qualified with a predicate. This is a further Aristotelian premise. From the instances of this logical form-giving, Kant extracts 'categories,' which, under the conditions of space and time, can be formulated as 'principles of the pure reason' (*Grundsätze des reinen Verstandes*). While Newton still conceived of space and time as God's *sensorium*, Kant considers them the human being's 'pure forms of intuition' (*reine Formen der Anschauung* or *Formen der reinen Anschauung* or *formale Anschauungen*). When, for instance, the *logical* relation of 'ground and consequence' (*Grund und*

Folge) is related to the pure spatial and temporal forms of intuition, it appears as the *causal* relation of a spatially separate and temporally preceding physical cause to a temporally succeeding physical effect (*Ursache und Wirkung*). As a result, the law of causality principally applies to human experience determined through, on the one hand, the forms of human reasoning and, on the other hand, the forms of intuition.

The forms and their contents are achieved by a 'consciousness,' an 'I' or a 'subject'; regarding the mere 'conditions of possibility' or the 'forms' of experience, it is a 'transcendental subject.' Picking up a term from Leibniz, Kant calls this transcendental subject (not God) the 'original synthetic unity of apperception.' And as for Hume, *this subject is not a substance, but a mere 'function of the unity,' i.e., a 'synthesis' which turns disparate ideas into coherent ideas*. For Kant, this original synthesis cannot be justified any more, it is the 'highest point' at which the transcendental philosophy is to be 'affixed.' To this day, many people believe that such a transcendental subject factually exists; yet, for Kant it is only a 'condition of possibility' in order to make conceivable objective knowledge of nature beyond Hume's skeptical empiricism. Kant does not claim it as a truth, but only tries to *provide a hold for our philosophical orientation in a 'transcendental' space of certainty that surmounts the space of experience, but does not give way to a space of transcendence*. Both nature and transcendence beyond nature remain an 'unknown X': the space of mere experience is without order, detached from experience human reason runs into illusionary conclusions ('paralogisms') and paradoxes ('antinomies') which create the aforementioned 'endless controversies' regarding the immortality of the 'I,' the extension of the world and the being of God. Kant proves that, in the field of metaphysics, one can prove opposite certainties.

But *for gaining his new transcendental evidence, Kant himself uses paradoxes*:
– Following Aristotle, he separates form and content of knowledge, but at the same time he starts from the premise that form and content cannot be separated in real empirical knowledge. Thinking (*Denken*) becomes knowing (*Erkennen*) only if it relates to experience ('Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind').
– He uses the distinction between form and content both for thinking and intuition, but at the same time he considers the pure forms of intuition or perception (space and time) as the content of the pure forms of the intellect

in order to deduce the 'principles of pure natural science.' So space and time simultaneously are forms and contents, which is paradoxical.
– The transcendental subject is not a fact, but a mere ought: the empirical subject, as it is, shall de-subjectivize itself in order to become capable of objective judgments. Yet, the de-subjectivization of the empirical subject can only proceed empirically. This is possible only to a limited extent and can never objectively be verified.
– If, according to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, only that is to be regarded as real which can also be an object of experience, then reason itself which pursues its own critique, but cannot be an object of experience, is not real.

This does not mean that *The Critique of Pure Reason* is invalid. *Orientation can also be based on paradoxes*. Only when paradoxes are debunked, do they evoke disorientation. Kant seems to have noticed this. He was the first to ask: *What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* In this treatise, he explicitly operates with paradoxes (chap. 13).

The philosophy of orientation does not describe human orientation through laws, because orientation precedes the conceptualization of laws. The British tradition on the one hand, which relies on sensual experience, and Kant on the other hand, who insists on reason as the center of human orientation, take alternative positions on the Newtonian laws of nature which are mathematically formulated, purposeless, and give a strong new evidence and a firm hold to scientific orientation. From a philosophical point of view, both alternatives are plausible and there is no argument to ultimately decide between them. Since laws as such cannot be observed through the senses, Locke and Berkeley leave their certainty to God, while Hume holds them in skeptical suspense and Kant deduces them from pure reason through the elaborate construction of a 'transcendental philosophy.' Yet, this also is to delimit the scope of a priori cognition to the sphere of experience: Kant demonstrates that we can use rational constructions for gaining certainties in our experience. Both approaches, the empirical and the transcendental, concur in the fact that laws can only attributed to our experience of nature, not stated for nature per se. Hence, laws can be nothing but footholds for scientific orientation, albeit, through the experimental method of sciences, very strong ones. Berkeley arrives at the paradox that the world outside of our consciousness remains totally unknown, while we live in it; Kant provides a specific space of certainty between empirical experience and metaphysical transcendence which includes paradoxes as well. Today most

philosophers suppose that human cognition requires both empirical evidence and rational construction. But their connection can and perhaps must now be understood from a deeper concept, that of orientation, which Kant himself made prominent and which can also deal with paradoxes (chap. 13).

12. Alternative Conceptions of Morality, Politics and Economy: Smith, Rousseau, Kant and Bentham

In the second half of the 18th century, the living conditions in Europe and in colonized America, particularly Northern America, changed drastically: the economic productivity and the wealth of nations grew and with them the attention to the distribution of riches and the pressure on the old estate-based system that now appeared as unfair. Likewise, the political and moral challenges increased: questions of slavery, social justice, the democratization of society and with them the philosophical question of which kind of morality is needed. By developing helpful ideas, philosophy achieved practical impact as never before. In order to convert the ponderous governmental economy, so-called mercantilism, into the much more effective market economy, one could refer to Adam Smith, the authors of the United States' Declaration of Independence to John Locke, the French revolutionaries to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the British members of parliament, who were concerned about distributive justice, to Jeremy Bentham. Like Immanuel Kant, all of them proceeded from the *freedom of decision on one's own and on political affairs* and looked for justifying the decisions by moral rules. However, they in turn did so in various ways; after all, the philosophers themselves had to decide on how to orient to freedom. Smith's, Rousseau's, Kant's and Bentham's alternative conceptions of practical philosophy show different *scopes for decision-making* which open up *new possibilities of human orientation*.

Adam Smith (1723–1790) was influenced by the Scottish school of moral philosophy, which was leading in Great Britain at that time. It increasingly broke away from theological precepts and encouraged human beings to develop independent and enjoyable personalities. The related ideal, the perfect harmony of right conduct, emanated from aristocracy and was formulated by Anthony Ashley–Cooper, the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713). Smith's teacher Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746) embedded this ideal within a wider context

embracing economy and politics. Smith, just as his predecessors, based his 'political economy' on the 'moral sense,' i.e., a feeling for that which is morally correct and guided by the 'sympathy' with others. He considered this less a moral demand than the *factual moral orientation in society*.

Smith was very young when he became a professor of logic and later of moral philosophy. Yet, he did not limit himself to philosophy; rather, after accompanying a young nobleman on a multiannual grand tour through Europe, he was appointed as commissioner of customs in Scotland and restored the ailing Scottish monetary system. So he gained a broad base of experience. After his first major philosophical work, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), which he published while being a professor, he turned to economy and history with his *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). His justification of free market economy appeared in the year of the United States' Declaration of Independence, was quickly received and successfully implemented.

Smith admires Newton and configures his *comprehensive moral and economic philosophy* as a side piece of the philosophy of nature. He tries to elaborate simple laws in moral and economic behavior of which the agent needs not be aware; similar to the laws of nature, those laws are obeyed largely independent of the agent's good will. Smith builds on the plain observation that human beings are interested in the exchange with each other, both in perceiving moral conduct and judgment and in economic coping with life. Put in the language of the philosophy of orientation, Smith starts from the *orientation of human beings to other human beings*.

In Smith's sense, 'sympathy' means empathy in communicating with each other. Human beings respect moral conduct and judgment in society and are respected for that. This is a *sociological or sociopsychological description of morality.* Smith extends it to an observation of the economic conduct of human beings on markets. In turn, the moral conduct and judgment are observable as market behavior as well. Smith takes up *the position of an impartial spectator*. Yet, God alone can be a completely impartial spectator; that is why Smith—different from his friend Hume—still seeks an ultimate foothold in religion. However, human beings are able to *change perspectives*. By perspectivizing one's moral and economic assessments one learns to restrain and control oneself and becomes a more deliberate observer of others. In contrast, factionalism and fanaticism render one's observation biased and one-sided.

In Smith's approach, morality is—to put it in Niklas Luhmann's words (chap. 24)—a *market of respect*. While an economic market consists in mutual observation under which conditions others opt for the exchange of goods or services, a moral market consists in observing each other's moral conduct or judgment. Insofar as markets are based on decisions, feelings and assessments, they are intransparent. One can only orient oneself to the observable behavior of the involved persons; the individual's needs and interests on which the decisions depend can be guessed only. Yet, while the economic market provides clear footholds in monetary prices, what is morally respected cannot be scaled like money. Nevertheless, moral values can rise or fall like economic prices through changes of supply and demand under changing conditions of life. This may severely hurt moral feelings. But morally contemptible interests (such as greed for personal profit) can also generate moral goods, as is the case in the market economy which increases wealth for all, albeit only in the long (and sometimes very long) run and never to the same extent for everyone.

This kind of conversion of evil into good on free markets was discovered and propagated by Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733), a London physician of French origin. Using the slogan *Private Vices Public Benefits* he argued in a polemical and satirical form that if no one wants to take advantage of the other out of moral consideration, nothing would stimulate the increase of productivity and the whole society would be impoverished. Mandeville presented plausible examples from everyday life and, furiously opposed by moralists, exposed ineffective moral idealizations of all kinds.

Smith does not follow Mandeville's blatant inferences, but carries forward his ideas. While, according to Hobbes, the 'selfish system' leads to the enthronement of an absolute sovereign (chap. 8), according to Smith it increases everyone's freedom on free economic and moral markets. Supported by rules of law, the 'commercial society' can turn into a 'natural system of liberty.' Smith himself confidently affirms the paradox of evil unwillingly and unexpectedly producing something good as an 'invisible hand.' It reminds people of God, whose actions are beyond comprehension, but does not name God any longer.

Smith's French contemporary Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) offered a first alternative to that. He also proceeds from the pre-reflective feeling of the good, but arrives at a contrary conception of the moral, political and economic. While Smith limits himself to sober observation and description, Rousseau, with a powerful moral passion, projects ideal states. He extremely

extends the leeway both of freedom and obligation in society. Following the French tradition of governmental mercantilist economy, he leaps over the potential of free enterprise economy to create a morally based society. At first, he imagines an original 'natural state' of the human being in which all are free, self–sufficient and equal: people happily coexist in peace without needing any economic or social system at all. Through the rise of private property which triggers greed and envy, the social order that we know arises and destroys the happy peace, so that a new peace can only be established with the help of a reasonable will that obliges everyone.

The daring construction of Rousseau's may also have personal reasons. He lives an unattached, unsecured and unstable life. Having grown up without a mother and then also without a father, he does not complete a regular course of study, switches denominations, swaps his life partnerships, does not commit himself to one single profession, but excelled simultaneously as a philosopher, teacher, writer, playwright, composer and musicologist. He risks his books being banned and burnt, is persecuted, confuses and unsettles his friends and numerous, mostly aristocratic patrons. Increasingly embittered about the society of his times, he longs for solitude and yet pushes himself to the fore and goes public. He has a strong need for self-expression and self-justification, seeks and finds hold in himself alone and his ideas about the complete re-establishment of an egalitarian society. Nevertheless, with these ideas he fascinates the 'higher' educated upper-class circles right up to the leading philosophers of his day. Only few people in Western cultural history cause similarly strong reorientations as he does.

Like Smith's, Rousseau's conception is not easy to overlook and therefore controversial. Rousseau presents his construal of an amiable, yet unrealistic 'natural state' of the human being in his early discourses, the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (*Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, 1750), which he traces back to an inspiration resembling those of Descartes and Pascal, and the *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (*Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men*, 1755), according to which the animal-like state of nature is disturbed just by the mutual observation of economic conduct, from which Smith expects the development of a more and more appropriate morality. In Rousseau's opinion, private property and the division of labor in the commercial society leads to a destructive competition that makes human

beings more and more unequal and most of them unfree. Smith's sympathy among human beings gets lost.

Thus, Rousseau and Smith derive alternative conclusions from the same starting point. While Mandeville and Smith observe a reversal of private vices into public benefits, Rousseau supposes that the good nature of human being turns into evil in society. Hence, for Rousseau, a new radical conversion becomes necessary. He indicates two paths to it: one via education (the individuals shall regain their natural freedom), the other via the creation of a civil society (*société civile*) based on freedom and equal rights. The rule of law allows freely educated individuals to flourish again.

In his later treatise *Du contrat social ou essai sur la forme de la république* (*The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right*, 1762), Rousseau assumes that every member of a civil society has tacitly entered into a contract whose members are obliged to a general will (*volonté générale*). In contrast to the Hobbesian one (chap. 8), this social contract is based on the rational insight into the common good and justice. Living in a lawful republic, prudent people are sovereign, but only in harmony with each other. Rousseau conceives of the common will in a way that it renders representative democracy and majority decisions superfluous. As a consequence, there is no need for leeways of individual moral and political orientations, neither in the natural state nor in society's state of reason. *Common reason orients all with perfect certainty.*

However, this is again full of paradoxes. In his educational novel *Émile*, Rousseau expressly acknowledges that: 'The average man may forgive me my paradoxes – one needs them for reflection. And whatever objection one might bring up against me – I prefer being a man of paradoxes to being a man of prejudices.' So, for him,

– human beings are perfectly good only in a natural state that cannot be observed;

– the evil human beings produced by a society fed from individual economic interests shall be able to create a new society of a thoroughly good common will through a tacit contract;

– through this contract, human beings shall be free through freely surrendering to a law that is totally binding them. Rousseau calls this the total alienation (*aliénation totale*) of the individual wills (*volontés particulières*) from themselves for the sake of the general will (*volonté générale*). When someone asserts a special, particular will, he will be *forced* to be free in this sense (*on le forcera à être libre*).

– a society as such cannot shape, utter and effectuate a general will in a concrete situation of action; individuals are needed to do this. Rousseau thinks of an especially wise legislator. This presupposes different endowments with reason or the use of it – in our language a superior orientation.
– To support his daring construction, Rousseau demands a civil religion in which everyone *must* believe unconditionally including the dogmas of the holiness of the social contract, of God's justice and of personal immortality. Yet, if one *must* believe in something assumed, its credibility is limited. In *Émile,* Rousseau recommends the following for education: 'Lead the pupil always to believe that he is the master, but in reality, you must be the master. There is no submission that is more complete than the one that has the appearance of freedom. In this way, you can conquer and control the pupil's will.' Education for freedom needs deception and is supposed to be submission.

While Smith and Rousseau extend the horizon of moral and political orientation in the course of their work, without looking for systematic and consistent connections, Kant and Bentham continue to hold on to one single principle: the good will vs. the benefit of action.

Kant proposes a Copernican revolution also in moral philosophy, starting here from Rousseau. In order to make moral philosophy universal, he demands an *a priori* principle just here. It must not be based on feelings, observations of behavior, interests or needs that vary from place to place. Rather, it must be based exclusively on reason which is to attribute equally to all humans. Reason only shall be the intention of your action, as the 'good will'; for we only can be morally responsible for our intentions, not for the circumstances under which we act and the consequences which result. Kant again conceives of this *a priori* principle as a 'form' (chap. 11) which he calls the 'categorical imperative.' The categorical imperative 'commands unconditionally' that one is to follow reason alone. The contents fitting into this form cannot be concrete actions that always depend on specific circumstances, but rather the general intentions that currently lead one's action, one's own 'maxims' or 'subjective' practical principles which develop differently during the lives of different human beings. Thus, the categorical imperative commands to examine one's own maxims whether one could give them the form of a universal law for all and at any time. If this is possible without contradiction, one is allowed to act according to the respective maxim, for instance the maxim always to be honest. If a contradiction arises, one must restrain oneself from the maxim.

For instance, one is never allowed to lie even if circumstances urge it, because otherwise one would affirm the permission to lie as a universal law and thus make honest communication impossible on the whole.

By binding moral action to universally justifiable actions, Kant again demands the de-subjectivization of the acting subject (chap. 11). This is needed for following rules at all. Laws regulate the ways in which we deal with others. Yet, *juridical laws* refer to individual actions that can be observed by others in the 'external' world while the agents' intentions (included the good will) cannot be observed. While one may assume that human beings in principle are free to act morally, i.e., out of good will, one cannot expect that all people do so. Therefore, external coercion is necessary to protect human beings from each other. As a consequence, according to Kant moral philosophy must be based on a free will guided by pure reason, while observable actions, insofar as they also affect others, must be subject to legal constrains. You cannot base the peaceful and prosperous coexistence of people on their good will alone. For Kant, there are clear the limits of moral philosophy. But while he considers economy only in the periphery, he tries to keep *politics* within moral limits as well. He defines politics as 'executive jurisprudence,' opposing the 'moral politician,' who controls his politics by the categorical imperative, to the 'political moralist' who concocts a Machiavellian morality that fits to his interests. In some cases, the two are difficult to distinguish.

But Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* is able to dissolve the *problem of the reality of reason* itself (chap. 11). Although reason is not perceptible to the senses, it is observable in a different way. According to Kant, in the command of the categorical imperative ('Act like this!') the 'voice' of reason is heard. He considers this a 'fact' (*Tatsache*) of its own kind, which cannot be turned down, even less than observable facts of nature that, in Kant's eyes, are mere appearances. *For the sake of morality, he introduces a new kind of fact* consisting in the voice of your reason you hear. From this, an 'intelligible world' opens up, which he calls the 'reign of freedom.' This reign is a *dominion of justification*. One only speaks of 'good will' to determine the morality of an action, when it has produced unpleasant effects or has turned out to be useless or detrimental ('well-intentioned, not good'). The good will is for the moral justification of unsuccessful actions while self-evidence, naturalness, ease and sympathy in Smith's sense is removed from the moral justification. This is Bentham's starting point.

Jeremy Bentham who grew up as a child prodigy in a wealthy family, studied law, but never practiced a profession, developed moral philosophy from the notion of usefulness: Kant's and Bentham's concepts of the moral and the political are classic alternatives in the history of philosophy. Bentham's *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* from 1789 is to serve a useful goal: to systematically outline a penal law for Great Britain that can be passed by Parliament and thus be of real benefit to the entire population. The moral philosophy with which Bentham underpins his penal law must therefore be *immediately plausible*. He proposes a moral reorientation à la Mandeville and Smith: 'if happiness were better promoted by what is called immorality, immorality would become a duty; virtue and vice would change places.' According to Bentham what Kant excludes from morality is its beginning and its end: the purpose of *happiness*. It is difficult to deny that everyone strives for happiness.

Happiness can simply be grasped as the preponderance of pleasure over pain. Animals likewise want to avoid pain and find pleasure in the long run. Thus, also Bentham relies on sentiment in his moral and legal philosophy. In order to measure happiness, he focuses on one single principle, comparable to gravity in Newton's philosophy of nature: what makes people happy is what is useful to them. *Utility* is not only the measure of every individual's or government's successful action; insofar as one's own happiness depends on the happiness of others, my striving for happiness also promotes that of others.

According to Bentham, there is no need to introduce a revaluation of evil to good on free markets nor to assume a social contract. He regards the individuals directly as 'members' of the 'fictitious body' of the community. Hence, in a simple summary, the interest of the community is 'the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it.' Nevertheless, in Bentham's view happiness can be scaled like the prices on the market. In order to create the greatest happiness of the greatest number, he proposes a 'hedonistic or felicific calculus' with the following variables or vectors: intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, propinquity or remoteness, fecundity (does happiness produce more happiness?), purity (does happiness have negative consequences?) and extent (how many people enjoy happiness?). For him, all people count equally. Thus, Bentham's principle is universal as well.

His conception of moral action also includes an 'ought': what is useful ought to be done; it is 'a right action,' and for him this is the only sense of

what we 'ought' to do. His principle is self-evident to a degree that it does not need to be proven; instead, one can prove everything else from it. It is not always deliberately pursued; it is often concealed by prejudices. It cannot be combatted by means of other principles because they would also have to be 'good for' something. Finally, the principle of happiness or utility does not need the help of a religious belief; Bentham openly confesses atheism. He advocates liberalization at all fronts, also in questions of race and sexuality. He campaigns for democratization, for the state of law and against slavery. He proposes to supplement the three classic state powers (legislative, executive and judiciary) by a fourth and supreme power: the 'constitutive' power of the people; however, he does not succeed with this.

Of course, even Bentham's principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number has dark sides: minorities can easily be outvoted in the distribution of chances for happiness; Bentham suggests a system of sanctions including physical, religious, political and public inconveniences for the moral education of everyone; he argues against a criminal law based on guilt and pleads for a criminal law based on deterrence; he allows even torture, if it benefits the whole; for him, the freedom of the single human being only consists in safety against the others, which is granted by the law and the police and in protection against illegal measures of the government. A powerful governmental surveillance and control apparatus becomes necessary, which permanently monitors the behavior of human beings, even with the help of informers and investigators in order to punish every wrongdoing with sanctions and correct it. Bentham was most interested in the penal system, for 'the more strictly we are watched, the better we behave.' Smith's principle of observation here turns out to be repressive rather than inspiring.

The philosophy of orientation gains new leeways and alternative techniques of generalization through the alternative approaches to practical philosophy at the end of the 18th century. In moral, political and economic realms, the footholds for orientation are more ambiguous than in epistemology; simultaneously the need for clear and reliable footholds in one's orientation to other orientations increases. Actions require a sensitive observation of situations, while action decisions are facilitated by means of moral principles which are independent of different situations.

Smith, Rousseau, Kant and Bentham count on different sources of morality, Smith on the sensitivity of observation, Rousseau on both sensitivity and reason, Kant

on the principle of the good will, i.e., to use one's reason in a moral way, Bentham on the search for happiness. All presuppose a benevolent nature: according to Smith, a free commercial society is able to turn evil private interests into a better wealth of all, while according to Rousseau human beings become evil in a commercial society and are good by nature; according to Kant, all humans are able to improve society through their good will in their own actions; according to Bentham, everyone can live well together when they deliberately pursue their happiness. These all are optimistic orientations.

They depend on alternative techniques of generalization. Smith upgrades observation to a second-order observation of the others' observations on markets. Thereby, he discovers a new statistical and provisional generalization for one's orientation, which is unprecedented by the (deductive) generalization of metaphysics, the (inductive) generalization of British empiricism and the mathematically shaped generalization of the experimental philosophy of nature. It creates certainties through interrelating uncertainties. Comparing the footholds which are proper behavior and judgment in morality and prices in economic markets, Smith is able to move from moral estimation to economic rating; he supports a society free for everyone's interests. Because the volatile and inscrutable interaction of individuals can only be grasped with continuous comparative study, what is at stake here is again not truth, but probability on which one can never rely completely. Footholds like economic prices or common moral behavior and values change over time as well, but less strongly and fast: every new decision for them affirms their certainty, every decision against them weakens them; sometimes, an individual decision may create a new foothold for all. Moral and economic markets show, how certainties can be stabilized and de-stabilized and, if de-stabilized, become productive in creating new certainties. How they do this cannot be predicted. With freedom comes risk.

But markets create inequality of wealth. Rousseau expects both individual and political liberation and equal wealth when a new civil society is founded on the (alleged) common good nature of human beings, a common reason and a common will of people. He concedes this to be a dogmatic generalization which must be supported through a civil religion. In history, Rousseau's thoughts encourages the French to dare their revolution and in doing so also to use terror.

Kant tries to make conceivable a universal morality by abstracting from individual interests and situations of action at all. The categorical imperative that does not prescribe how all should act, but only delimits how I myself shall act in view of all others, the criterion of acting morally is the logical consistency of my

own generalization: this generalization helps me to distance myself from my own maxims and encourages me to respect the moral behavior and judgment of others. Insofar it is critical.

Bentham who does not presuppose moral demands, but limits himself to descriptions, calculations and recommendations generalizes the individual pursuits of happiness by simply summing them up: the interest of the community is 'the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it.' It results in the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Bentham's principle which is universal as well, not by justification but by observation, gives a concrete handle to the political legislative power, but runs into a legally authorized and governmentally organized observation of the population.

All these kinds of generalization are used in everyday, moral and political orientation. Many states try to combine them as they combine Smith's market economy with Rousseau's civil society. Observations of the economic and moral conduct and statistical and provisional generalizations are needed for governing societies, dogmatic generalizations for radical political reforms or revolutions, critical generalizations like Kant's for improving moral conduct. The alternative generalizations work together without a common principle to balance them. Nevertheless, morality, politics and economy can proceed well in this way. Human orientation is able to decide between alternative options in different situations.

13. Alternative Ways of Conceptualizing How One Can Orient Oneself: Mendelssohn, Kant and Herder

The *notion of 'orienting oneself'* stems from geography. It came through the so-called pantheism controversy in German philosophy. The Jew Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), next to Kant one of the leading philosophers of the German Enlightenment, tried to settle the conflict about 'faith versus reason,' into which the influential Christian friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819) forced him, by introducing the concept of orientation into philosophy. Mendelssohn grew up in humble circumstances, was very small and in frail health, and worked as a home tutor, bookkeeper, Torah instructor, writer and manager of a silk factory. He translated Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin*

and Basis of Inequality Among Men into German and updated Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration* for Judaism. He actively promoted the emancipation of Jews, won an academic prize competition prior to Kant with whom he was on friendly terms, and was regarded as a German-Jewish Socrates; his friend Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), the most prominent German poet of the Enlightenment, made him the prototype of his protagonist Nathan the Wise. Nonetheless, Frederick II, King of Prussia, who was known for his promotion of the Enlightenment and his tolerance, refused him admission to the Prussian Academy of Sciences.

In Mendelssohn's eyes, Judaism can be tolerant because it is not based on dogmas, but rather on a form of life whose laws are extracted from the Torah. Judaism orients itself to the Torah without claiming to ever be capable to fully understand it. The word 'Torah' itself means direction and guidance, i.e., orientation. According to the Jewish tradition, the Torah is authored by God himself. Thus, the alternative of 'faith versus reason' does not arise at all in Judaism.

Yet, Jacobi insists on it when it is about the question whether the deceased Lessing has adhered to the philosophy of the Jew Spinoza (chap. 9) which was suspected of atheism in Germany at that time. Jacobi urges Mendelssohn to acknowledge Christianity and confess its theological dogmas as the only reasonable ones (several of Mendelssohn's children do this later on), knowing that he is questioning Mendelssohn's entire life's work and affecting his friendship to Lessing. From this philosophical and personal emergency the concept of 'orienting oneself' provides Mendelssohn a way out. Regarding Spinozism, he distinguishes between 'sound human understanding' (*gesunder Menschenverstand*) and 'speculative reason': Spinoza may have gone too far in terms of speculative reason, but a moderate or 'chastened pantheism' is not to be condemned. Mendelssohn tries to show that one can 'orient oneself' to Spinozism without committing oneself to it: this happened with Lessing (and will later happen with Goethe and in German idealism) (chap. 14).

However, Mendelssohn does not leave it there. Instead, he begins to understand reason itself as kind of orienting oneself. In his treatise on the sentiments (*Über die Empfindungen*), which is much discussed at the time, he deals with the steering of attention in the exploration of objects and finds out that, put in today's terms, one has to select, evaluate and associate footholds for obtaining an overview or, with Mendelssohn's term, a vibrant 'total

impression.' According to him, thinking is only one of the faculties involved here, and all of this does not happen consciously, but only semi-consciously or 'somnambulistically.' Therefore, Mendelssohn explains the notion of 'orienting oneself' in an allegorical dream of reason, a narration in which he translocates the image of dividing ways shaped by Prodicos (chap. 4) to the Swiss Alps. The figures of 'sound human understanding' and 'speculative reason' appear as mountain guides, coming into conflict with each other. So the wayfarers, who have no sufficient overview of the situation, are confronted with the question of orientation. Mendelssohn puts the answer into the mouth of a third person, the figure of the 'prudent reason' of someone who respects both sides. It does not come up with doctrines and precepts, but only relates the footholds to each other in such a way that a passable route appears. As Mendelssohn has it, prudent (not pure) reason 'orients itself' to sound human understanding or common sense and at the same time is able to 'correct' common sense with the help of the deliberations and conclusions of speculative reason. The reasonableness of an orientation consists of the prudent weighing of both sides. The 'I' following this kind of reasonableness changes constantly; in Mendelssohn's opinion, it has neither a firm apprehension nor a definite concept of itself; it is, in our terms, the *continuously renewing self-reference in orienting oneself.*

When ailing Mendelssohn dies at the beginning of the year 1786, Kant wants to help the cause of the highly esteemed philosopher of Enlightenment. He takes up Mendelssohn's notion of 'orienting oneself,' but realigns it in terms of his *Critique of Pure Reason*. He is already close to the problem of orientation. In the introduction to his regular lecture on logic, he places all insights, everyday ones just as scientific and philosophical ones, into '*horizons*' that can be 'logically' determined according to 'the interest of the intellect,' 'aesthetically' according to 'taste in relation to the interest of feeling' as well as 'practically' according to 'utility in relation to the interest of the will.' In using the metaphor of horizon, Kant draws on a debate established since Leibniz (chap. 9), orienting himself to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762) and Georg Friedrich Meier (1718–1777). While logic deals with unconditional laws, it presupposes rules or maxims that recommend decisions on different horizons in different ways of thinking. Whatever you want to find out is 'pre-determined' by the related horizon and the position that you take in it. Also a transcendental philosophy requires an appropriate horizon. *Orienting decisions that are capable only of conditioned certainty also precede*

the definitions and constructions of a transcendental philosophy which operate in terms of unconditioned certainty. So, without further ado, Kant incorporates Mendelssohn's definition of 'orienting oneself' in his introduction to logic. He states that philosophers shall '*orient* themselves *in thinking,* or in the use of speculative reason through common sense […] as a test to evaluate the veracity of *speculative reason* […] in order to discover the mistakes of the *artificial* use of the intellect.' Like Mendelssohn, he emphasizes here the important role of sound human understanding: the 'judgments' of others can give you a 'hint' so that you can review your own 'procedure of judging' without having to give it up immediately if a 'contradiction' arises.

Kant counters the 'scholarly concept' (*Schulbegriff*) of philosophy, according to which philosophers only address other philosophers and expose themselves to their criticism, with a 'worldly concept' (*Weltbegriff*) of philosophy, according to which it addresses a broader public and their common sense. For him, this worldly concept is crucial. For it is 'essential to check an insight in the face of human beings whose intellect does not cling to any school.' Only then will you achieve 'the complete insight in a certain matter.' Kant endorses even the 'preliminary judgment' with which the decision about the truth of a judgment is postponed when it is not (yet) clear where the truth is to be found. Common sense usually judges its matters in this way, unless it is fooled by prejudices that it deems to be definitive judgments. According to Kant, the preliminary judgment that is typical of orientation can guide the intellect 'in all meditation and investigation' showing means and ways to make progress; moreover, it can 'sense' goals that can be achieved. Kant proposes something like an *art of orienting oneself,* without designating and elaborating it: 'one could even provide rules about how to judge provisionally about an object.'

Yet, for Kant this does not mean that philosophers shall orient themselves with common sense. In his treatise on the pantheism controversy of 1786, which is entitled *Was heißt: Sich im Denken orientieren?* (*What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?*), Kant not only counters Jacobi, whom he considers a religious enthusiast, but also corrects Mendelssohn's understanding of what it means to orient oneself through his own *Critique of Pure Reason*. He leaves out Spinoza, after some people had ascribed Spinozism also to him. Kant begins his treatise, which is a founding paper of the Philosophy of Orientation, with the remark that notions like 'to orient oneself' are good examples of how '*pictorial* representations' (*bildliche Vorstellungen*) make concepts suitable for usage and

how 'a useful maxim' can be won from them 'even in abstract thinking.' In contrast, appealing to common sense, in which everyone is supposed to agree, is always only a final 'emergency relief,' as Kant noted a couple of years before in the Preface to his *Prolegomena*, which is to introduce his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Philosophy must insist on its own competence and on reason itself as authority of its own orientation. In his view, Mendelssohn fostered 'the complete dethronement of reason.'

Instead, Kant defines the notion of orientation starting from its original geographic meaning: the cardinal directions of the compass are determined by the sunrise (*sol oriens*). In an earlier 1768 treatise *On the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Regions in Space* (*Von dem ersten Grunde des Unterschiedes der Gegenden im Raume*, 'regions in space' are the cardinal directions), Kant comes across the problem of the right-left-distinction. The latter may appear self-evident, but there is neither a sensory nor a logical criterion for it: one can neither perceive nor define right and left and East and West without entering into a circular argument. Therefore, the difference crosses Kant's basic determination of cognition as a synthesis of sensory perception and logical thinking; the right-left-distinction is given in sensory perception, but cannot be understood by reason (*dari, non intelligi*) (chap. 11). You can only learn to use the distinction through practice. In his 1786 treatise Kant attributes the distinction between the four cardinal directions (and with it the right-left-distinction) to 'feeling.' Yet, one does not feel anything in employing it; rather, it is a 'subjective principle' filling in where the 'objective principles of reason' are not sufficient. Reason, Kant goes on, realizes this 'shortcoming' through a feeling of a special kind, the 'feeling of need.' It is the *need to orient oneself when the criteria of reason are not sufficient.* As a result, reason loses its supposed autonomy and turns into a *needy reason*. Here, reason has no longer 'free insight.' Instead, the subjective need wrings from it a 'rational faith' (*Vernunftglauben*) rather than a 'rational insight' (*Vernunfteinsicht*). The term *Vernunftglaube* (literally: 'reason-faith') is obviously paradoxical: it unites the two alternative concepts, between which Jacobi urged Mendelssohn to choose, in one term. It thus replaces the term of 'orienting oneself' that helped Mendelssohn to find his way.

In doing so, Kant proceeds step by step: he moves from the 'geographic' orientation, in which the right-left-distinction is crucial, to what he calls 'mathematical' orientation, in which positional relationships independent of the right-left-distinction prevail (you can find your way around your room even

in the dark because you know the location of all the objects there), and finally reaches 'logical' orientation, in which all spatial relations are suspended. This is the realm of the supernatural, which is the 'battle ground' of metaphysics, but also, in Kant's practical philosophy, 'the reign of freedom' (chap. 12). Here, where reason does not have sensual footholds, it has the 'right' to 'orient itself through its own need' or through a *Vernunftglaube*. It is the faith in a moral God. This is not a form of knowledge, because God's existence cannot be demonstrated according to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but an 'ideal of pure reason' which has practical relevance according to the *Critique of Practical Reason*: only God may reward human efforts in moral action, which create *Glückswürdigkeit*, i.e., being worthy of happiness, with *Glückseligkeit*, i.e., factual happiness, at least in a later immortal life. For Kant, this unity of *Glückswürdigkeit* and *Glückseligkeit* or happiness based on moral merit, is the 'highest good.'

It orients human beings as an 'ideal' which for Kant only is a kind of 'guidepost or compass.' It is not mandatory to believe in it, but can help with the efforts of moral action. Simultaneously, it prevents religious enthusiasm or fanaticism, which has provoked the pantheism controversy. For Kant, reason must remain autonomous also in its faith coming from a need.

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), son of a pious teacher and a student of Kant's in Königsberg, soon became acquainted with the most brilliant minds of his day; he held high offices and posts in ecclesiastical and cultural authorities. In the field of philosophy, he stimulated linguistic and literary studies, philosophy of history and of culture. In this way he surmounted the Kantian philosophy.

In his *This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity* (1774), he designs a new orientation scene: he wants to betake himself to the 'open seas,' yet without abandoning the 'poles' around which everything revolves: truth, consciousness of benevolence and happiness of humankind. Hovering at sea on massive waves, in ghost light and fog light that might be worse than the blackest night, he wants to 'diligently take a look at these stars that point the way and give *directions, safety and calm*,' and then steer the ship's course 'with *devotion* and *industriousness.'* He tries to anew orient himself through well-know footholds, but now at an endless and dangerous open sea. There, he deliberately seeks situations of disorientation and develops a new understanding of humanity whose point of departure is the existing variety of cultures and nations. He more and more abandons the universalism of the Enlightenment

thinking. In his late work *Understanding and Experience: A Metacritique of the Critique of Pure Reason* (1799), he settles accounts with Kant's transcendental philosophy point by point, more bitterly than prudently and not always with convincing arguments.

There Herder inserts a long note concerning Kant's treatise on orienting oneself in thinking. Initially, he reminds his readers of the originally geographic sense of the notion of 'orienting oneself,' from which Kant has absolved the term: 'to orient oneself means to find the four cardinal directions in space (*Weltgegenden*) for orienting maps, sails, etc.' Then, Herder marks a mistake in Kant where there is none: he argues that the four cardinal directions are present even when nobody pays attention to them, and that one can neither determine nor change them through being positioned to the right or the left; for the changeable horizon of a single person does, according to Herder, not change the 'firm horizon of the world.' In this respect, Herder falls short of insights already gained. Sure, there is a world in which we must orient ourselves; yet, the distinctions between east and west or between right and left are obviously dependent on the standpoint or position that one takes up in the world. The notion of the 'standpoint' was in general use at least since Spinoza and Leibniz; Kant uses it often.

Herder continues his note on Kant as follows: 'Already the notion that I *can* orient myself in thinking implies that I *must* orient myself, that is, that there are *firm points* inside me and outside of myself that I have to bring into accord.' The first remark is right, the second false: one must orient oneself in uncertain situations, yet the points of reference or footholds are not firm, but depend on the respective situation and one's standpoint in it. Herder himself admits this when describing orienting oneself as 'finding out where one is in the world and how it relates to us and how we relate to the world.' Yet, then again he detaches the self-reference of orientation from its reference to the world: 'If I only orient myself *with myself*, this means that I throw all parts of the world into me and define them in accord with my idiosyncratic egoism, and in this way, I can be very disoriented in the true world.' For sure, the disconnection of orientation from the world and its footholds results in disorientation. However, it is precisely the meaning of orienting oneself that one does *not* disconnect oneself from the world and its changes, but rather continues to remain attentive to them. Herder, in contrast, draws an absurd conclusion: 'Were I to orient the world by myself, I would disorient the world as I revolve around myself, or as I

feel dizzy. The egoism in orienting worlds cannot end up otherwise than in the form of a *philosophy of vertigo*; here one is at one's wit's end with all certainty.' Herder plays with the equivocalness of the German word *Schwindel*, which stands for 'vertigo' and for 'fraud,' in order to insinuate that Kant attempted to defraud. Kant does not go into that any more.

The philosophy of orientation owes its basic notion of 'orienting oneself' to a controversy about faith versus reason, which Kant takes it up from Moses Mendelssohn. He discovers that reason has needs that entitle it to make orientation decisions about matters that are beyond its own insight. He does not include the term into his three critiques, in which he defends the autonomy of reason, but into his lectures on logic, which he gives regularly and where he also uses the orientation terms of standpoint, horizon and perspective. They all precede transcendental philosophy, not dealing with faith. With his philosophy of language, history and culture Herder goes beyond the scope of a philosophy shaped by reason alone which also does the philosophy of orientation. But it is obviously difficult for him to get to grips with the term and the problems of orientation themselves, i.e., to orient himself in them. The dispute does not reach into the depths of the term, but makes it prominent. It soon gains broad acceptance as the noun 'orientation.' Shaped as a philosophical concept ad hoc, it takes centuries to develop it into a fundamental philosophical concept.

14. Alternative Surveys on Knowledge: The Encyclopedias by d'Alembert & Diderot and by Hegel

What is at stake in orienting oneself is not only to find one's way in a certain situation, but also to obtain a long-term orientation – through *knowledge*. In the second half of the 18th century, the French philosophers Denis Diderot (1713–1784) and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717–1783) wanted to provide a *survey of all available knowledge*. They began with translating and extending the English two-volume *Cyclopaedia or Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* by Ephraim Chambers (1680–1740). In the course of three decades, between 1751 and 1780, the two volumes grew into 17 volumes of texts, 11 volumes of plates, 5 supplementary volumes and 2 volumes for indices: the *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres,* in English: *Encyclopedia, or a Systematic Dictionary of the Sciences,*

Arts, and Crafts. It was developed in collaboration with the brightest minds of the French Enlightenment and is its greatest achievement. Some generations later the German Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) alone created an encyclopedia in the form of a 'self-founding' philosophical system: the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, in English: *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline.* It became the highest standard for organizing knowledge philosophically, justifying it and making it surveyable.

It was probably the humanist and librarian at the French royal court, Guillaume Budé (1468–1540) who introduced the term 'encyclopedia.' It combines the Greek words *enkyklios* (enclosing in a circle) and *paideía* (education); just as the German word *Bildung,* it denotes both the process and the object of education. The French enlighteners of the 18th century, who call themselves plainly 'the philosophers' (*les philosophes*) and their own time 'the philosophical age' (*le siècle philosophe*), integrate knowledge from the sciences and the arts and crafts. The editors go to the workshops in order to receive precise descriptions of the crafts, tools and machines in the proper terminology. According to Diderot, until then most workers have just followed their instinct without understanding their machines; they used to work spontaneously and intuitively. In contrast, the *Encyclopédie* is to describe the routines which guide ordinary, artisanal and technical works with concepts, so that they can be compared and refined. *The comprehensive view of all available knowledge is supposed to provide orientation in the sense of creating new possibilities of action*.

The community of authors (*société de gens de lettres*) include experts from different fields and the leading philosophers of the day, among them as diverse thinkers as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau and d'Holbach. Many of them meet regularly in cafés, salons, theaters, editorial offices and Freemasons' lodges; some of them become friends, and all of them try to influence the media of their times: newspapers, stages, book markets. They are independent thinkers who yet orient themselves to each other. The French *Encyclopédie* does not come into being on the basis of a knowledge equal for all, but rather in the mode of *mutual orientation*. First and foremost the authors agree in fighting the Catholic Church which tries to control the public opinion; Voltaire calls the group 'the free thinkers' (*franc-penseurs*). Despite impending publication bans and incarceration, the authors enjoy the benevolence of the French chief

censor and of absolute monarchs like Frederick II. of Prussia and Catherine II. of Russia.

Hence, the *Encyclopédie* springs from *personal orientations* without any institutional restrictions. The responsibility for its articles does not belong to a superordinate institution such as an academy, a university or a governmental agency, but rather to the editors; later, when d'Alembert vacates his position because of constant attacks on the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot takes the task alone. Only the publishers intervene sometimes in order to prevent publication bans. The two editors, both brilliant figures, complement each other beautifully, although (or because) they are very different personalities. D'Alembert, illegitimate son of a cardinal and a marquise, an outstanding mathematician and physicist, authors articles mostly from these fields. He also writes the *Preliminary Discourse of the Encyclopedia* (*Discours Préliminaire de l'Encyclopédie*), where he in a calm and straightforward manner explicates the *common philosophical orientation* of the whole group of authors. Highly recognized, he becomes general secretary of the *Académie française* for life.

Diderot, instead, similar to Rousseau, with whom he is friends, leads a dissipated life that lacks any clear direction. To the dislike of his father, a master knife maker, he never lives in a stable position, is temporarily imprisoned by the censors, follows various interests and gains innumerous contacts and friendships, which helps him to recruit the authors for the *Encyclopédie*. He has plenty of love affairs, from which his frank literary production benefits. Diderot thinks in a meandering, experimental, self-ironic way and he loves paradoxes; he loathes streamlined rational systems; he is vigilant against absolute claims, appreciates dissidents and has the strength to leave things undecided. However, due to his broad sphere of interest, he gains the reputation of being able to overlook the knowledge of his day and make it useful for the general public. In the *Encyclopédie,* he finds the task of his life and the hold for his life. In this context, he works concentrated and according to schedule. To the other authors, he deliberately gives leeway for their interests, orientations and forms of writing. Both editors demand nothing but precision, clarity, brevity and originality. The latter requirement, originality, is due to the fact that *The Comprehensive Universal Lexicon of All Sciences and Arts* (*Das Grosse vollständige Universal-Lexicon Aller Wissenschafften und Künste*), published in 1732–1754 by the German bookseller and publisher Johann Heinrich Zedler (1706–1751), repeatedly was accused of plagiarism. However, the *Encyclopédie* cannot avoid borrowing and adopting

articles from other sources, among them the one about *orienter, s'orienter* which still is understood in its geographical sense alone.

A large-scale endeavor like the *Encyclopédie* runs into the paradox that the intended survey of all up-to-date knowledge gets lost again during the long time of preparation. Diderot states that 'it has become nearly as difficult to find one's way in a library as in the universe.' For this reason, a second-order survey becomes necessary: a *survey of the survey*, and with it a *new kind of self-referential orientatio*n. The *Encyclopédie* creates it in the following five ways:

(1) Firstly through the *alphabetical order* of the articles. For dictionaries, it dates back to antiquity. Yet, for a dictionary the alphabetical order is not mandatory; it could also be structured according to word families or to factual coherencies. When it comes to encyclopedias, structuring them according to factual coherencies would be more obvious; here, the alphabetization means randomization. The objective coherencies that really matter are dissolved and, at their place, an *artificial, but easily achievable overview* is established; here the *Encyclopédie* follows one of the rules of Descartes' method (chap. 9). The arbitrary alphabetical order is easy to learn and fulfills the *basic need for orientation*: to quickly find information for a certain purpose in a certain situation. The decision for the alphabetical order is a *decision about the way of orientation*: *for fast finding knowledge and against factual coherences.*

The alphabetical order enforces the *fragmentation of knowledge in 'articles'* (literally: small limbs or links) in which *information is condensed and abbreviated* by means of a headword or catchword that shall *capture or channel attention*. Diderot discusses in detail how the factual interrelationships are broken down in this way into different articles. Further, the length of the articles must be limited such that they can be read in limited time because the human capacities for orientation can only grasp a *limited number of information in a limited timeframe*. The overview must not get lost within the articles. In addition, the length of the articles must correspond to the *importance of the subject matter*, which becomes difficult if their authors have a huge leeway, as every one of them considers his or her knowledge to be the most important. Diderot reflects this in detail, too. As there is no general law of how to produce an encyclopedia, he thinks that specific virtues are demanded of the editor: power of judgment (*jugement*), richness of ideas (*esprit*) and the penetration of the material (*pénétration*), that is, *specific capacities for orientation*. Diderot also calls for aesthetically shaping the articles: monotony and boredom should be avoided as far as possible.

(2) As descriptions and definitions hardly suffice in regard to handicraft tools, and since they might even confuse the readers, the *Encyclopédie* supplements many articles with *images and illustrations* that shall help the readers to construct and operate the appliances in question. As the illustrations must be labeled, the problem of the *right number of orienting guideposts and road maps* arises. For Diderot, it is enough to have guideposts at places where travelers are in danger of losing their way: 'We did not want to look like a man who would plant guideposts at every step on a road, for fear that travelers would deviate from it: it is enough that there are some guideposts at the places where travelers are at risk of getting lost.' If there are too many guideposts, hints and footholds, one loses track of them.

(3) Instead, the editors of the *Encyclopédie* use a schematic genealogy (*arbre généalogique*) to provide an overview of the factual coherence and interrelation of the articles. D'Alembert & Diderot divide the understanding (*entendement*) into memory (*mémoire*), reason (*raison*) and imagination (*imagination*); to memory, they ascribe the history of the crafts developing through tradition, to reason the sciences and to imagination the arts. After every keyword, they mark its place in the branches of knowledge. Yet, they freely confess that other dispositions and systems would also be possible and meaningful. A genealogy as such cannot count as knowledge, but only as a *provisional orientation about possible factual coherences* in the sphere of the knowable.

(4) All the more significant becomes the internal concatenation (*enchaînement*) of the articles with the help of *references* (*renvoie*). As Diderot has it, concatenation transforms the way of thinking (*la façon commune de penser*): 'In scientific treatises, the concatenation of ideas or phenomena governs the methodological procedure; to the extent that one makes headway, the theme develops, generalizes or diversifies itself depending on the method one prefers.' In order to discover such concatenations, one also needs specific capacities of orientation like, for instance, a sense of combination (*esprit de combinaison*), a sure instinct (*instinct*), sometimes genius (*génie*), and with all of this honesty (*honnêteté*) and courage (*courage*). For the references leave ample leeways and multiple options of interpretation: they may aim at things or words, at nearby or distant issues or at different aspects of a topic. Over time a widespread system of references emerges. Diderot hopes that a proper use of signs would eventually enable concatenations just as precise and transitions just as swift like in mathematics. *Plausibility* (*la force de la démonstration*) *increases along with*

the densification of relations (*rapports, liaisons*). Ultimately, the encyclopedic order (*l'ordre encyclopédique*) lies in the efficiency of its references, which also shows gaps to be filled. Whenever new articles come in addition, the editor must check anew the 'parcours' of references he establishes and make sure that they do not at any place grasp at nothing. In this way, the order of references can be increased – until it becomes unsurveyable itself.

(5) Diderot dedicates a special article 'Encyclopédie' in the *Encyclopédie,* thereby providing an overview *about* the overview *within* the overview, corresponding to how orientation *about* a situation takes place *in* the very situation in question. Diderot's article entails a report on the present encyclopedic project itself rather than a historical and systematic account of the encyclopedia as such. It provides a *philosophy of orientation* in a nutshell. Already in his *Prospectus* to the *Encyclopédie* Diderot describes the orientation that will be given as 'a literary journey around the world [...] without getting lost.' Under the changing conditions, one has to stick to mere footholds that appear everywhere: 'if there are any footholds on this sea of objects that surrounds us, footholds like rocks that seem to pierce the surface and tower above other rocks, this is only due to particular systems, to vague conventions and to certain events that are outside the physical understanding of beings and to the true achievements of philosophy.' Diderot emphasizes this once again in his article 'Encyclopédie' in the *Encyclopédie*. Here, he adds that 'the generic encyclopedic order is, as it were, a map of the world […], the detailed description of all topics, the well thought out universal topography of all that which we know in the intelligible and the visible world; and the references serve as routes between these two worlds, whereby the visible can be regarded as the old world and the intelligible as the new world.'

In addition, one needs ideas regarding the goals of one's research, i.e., ideas of 'first and general reasons' which Diderot calls a 'metaphysics of things.' It gives direction when one is groping in the dark and departing from accidental beginnings. In his third critique, the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant conceives of such metaphysics as 'regulative ideas'; in the language of orientation they are vanishing points (*Fluchtpunkte*) that you follow without seeing them like in viewing pictures. According to Diderot, they in turn can be found by chance: 'The writer, the scholar, and the artist lead the way in the darkness; when they make progress, this is due to fortuity; they reach the goal like a traveler who has gone astray and then goes the right way without knowing that he does so.'

Due to the spirit of Enlightenment, one should not just follow authorities, but remember one's doubts. The *Encyclopédie* as a whole is organized as an *event of orientation*.

The three stellar 'German idealists,' Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), do not want to leave it at collecting, testing and ordering knowledge, but, after Kant's criticism, warrant an *unconditionally true knowledge* again. In doing so, they draw on Kant's *a priori* determinations bringing them together to a 'doctrine' or 'system' of 'philosophical science' that has its own truth. Since Kant has excluded the recognizability of things as they are in themselves, and thereby truth in the traditional sense, Hegel declares this a 'state of despair,' a kind of deep philosophical disorientation which needs to be removed. This happened through *reason's self-reference* again.

For Fichte, who is raised under poor circumstances and yet becomes the first rector of the newly founded Berlin reform university, reason's self-reference is the gate to that 'reign of freedom' which was a matter of insight for Rousseau and a matter of the 'ought' for Kant (chap. 12). While Descartes (chap. 9) designs the self-reference of the 'I think' as a process which needs an underlying substance, Fichte now conceives of it as a matter of action or autonomous 'fact-act' (*Tathandlung*). It is not about a pre-given object of knowledge, but rather about a knowledge that the 'I' (*Ich*) itself produces when countering the nudges (*Anstöße*) of the world or another 'I.' Fichte emphasizes *producing*, the I producing its own limits, while the 'Not-I' that resists it impels the I to go on in producing. The I *constructs* his knowledge about itself and the rest of the world. Fichte *prepares a purely constructive theory of distinction*. His insight that the progressive fact-act of distinguishing creates its own realm of freedom and truth may have encouraged him to in fact courageous and combative actions, for instance to resolutely defend the French Revolution and later to fight against Napoleon's rule over Europe.

Schelling, who proved to be conspicuously talented already as a child, was reared in an esteemed Swabian family of pastors. In the famous *Tübinger Stift*, he studied Protestant theology together with Hölderlin and Hegel. Through Goethe's intercession, he was appointed professor of philosophy in Jena already at the age of 23. In his long life, Schelling passed through a varied and influential academic career. He worked as tutor of Bavarian princes and finally became successor of Fichte's successor at the university of Berlin, namely Hegel.

Following Spinoza (chap. 9), he urges to keep nature in mind when construing the distinctions of the self-referential 'I.' He does not believe in the spirit alone. For him, it is not only about to make the nature conceivable in the spirit, but also the spirit in the nature. Identifiable objects arise in mental production like whirls in a current that collides with obstacles. Depending on the force of the current, the whirls change their shape or disappear. Nevertheless, Schelling emphasizes the *absolute unity* or *identity* that is either presupposed in everything or brought about by distinctions. Yet, as not all things in nature can be discerned consciously, Schelling probes into a philosophical conception of *the unconscious.* Indifference (*Indifferenz*) in the unity appears as the ground of the differences of the world. The original ground (*Urgrund*) is a not-ground (*Ungrund*), from which the human freedom results. In our language, the 'point of indifference' (*Indifferenzpunkt*) mirrors the *original situation of orientation in which even unconscious decisions happen*. With this ideas Schelling converges with the German romantics, but brings about significant insights in our orientation at all. While Fichte continuously improves his system, Schelling changes the system again and again, finally arriving at a philosophy of revelation.

The German idealists closely connect to Kant and Spinoza, but especially to each other. Strongly competing with each other, they want to bring the modern European philosophy to a definitive end in a pure philosophical science (*Wissenschaft*). Hegel takes the most consistent and vigorous approach here. With his most highly developed technique of distinguishing, his 'dialectic' (chap. 15), he creates the outstanding model of a self-referential system of philosophical knowledge. He is able to unite all philosophical fields discussed in his day as well as all relevant historical and contemporary philosophical positions in a system which remains convincing for decades to come. He expounds it in his *Enzyklopädie*, the German alternative to the *Encyclopédie* of the French enlighteners whose point of view he also integrates into his system.

Hegel's academic career was slower and shorter than Schelling's. Grown up in Swabia in a family of civil servants, he studied theology in the *Tübinger Stift* together with Schelling and then worked as a home tutor. He moved to Jena because of Schelling's intercession in order to collaborate closely with him. In Napoleon invading Jena on horse he recognized the new spirit of the time. He became the chief editor of a newspaper, afterwards rector of a high school and finally professor of philosophy, first in Heidelberg, then in Berlin. He started his publications with a comparison of Fichte's and Schelling's philosophical systems,

feeling a 'speculative need' to gain a new unity out of their differences. To this end, he developed his dialectic out of the idea of *self-referential comprehending (Begreifen)* (chap. 15). He tried to exclude all leeways which urge to orient oneself in thinking that Mendelssohn and Kant had exposed (chap. 13) and Schelling had introduced in his way. In Hegel's view, speculation is to correct common sense, but common sense cannot contribute anything to speculative thought, because there must be *absolute certainty in speculative thinking*. Hegel does not use the concept of orientation in a significant sense. Yet, his philosophy is highly interesting for the philosophy of orientation.

Like Schelling, Hegel uses the concept of system in order to integrate Spinoza's and Kant's thinking: Spinoza's substance is to become a system through the Kantian transcendental subject producing its distinctions in a Fichtean logically 'necessary' way. This all-encompassing system can neither be imagined nor thought abstractly; one must go step by step the dialectical path of comprehending it. In doing so, one eliminates all personal orientation and orientation from outside. Hegel tries to prove this way or 'movement' self-supporting and self-directing, even though in fact it is him who leads his readers.

To find this way at all is the issue of Hegel's first elaboration of his system, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). It leads you out of your 'uneducated point of view,' which is your immediate situation in the sensually perceptible world that you first consider real and true, via ever-new 'experiences' which show that this kind of certainty is elusive, to the 'absolute knowing' (*absolutes Wissen*) of all necessary kinds of knowing. Continously disappointed and frustrated, you desperately seek for a sustainable certainty that arises as the familiarity with all significant kinds of certainty which makes you able to sovereignly decide which kind of certainty, sensual, self-aware, rational, spiritual or religious, is tenable in which situation. In our language, you are able to *masterfully orient yourself among various certainties*. In the sovereign orientation of 'absolute knowing' which comprehends all relevant kinds of knowing all disorientation is sublated (*aufgehoben*).

Hegel's *Enzyklopädie* systematically maps the forms of knowledge. Its title *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* was already common in Germany. A *Grundriss* is originally a geographical term with the meaning of providing an overview: Hegel wants to give an *overview of the systematic order of founding philosophical concepts*. Absolute knowing is now in the position to let the system unfold itself through the determinations of

the concepts for logical reasons alone. This begins with the most abstract and undetermined concept of 'being' (*Sein*) and ends with the most concrete concept of 'the absolute spirit' (*absoluter Geist*) in which each of the terms dealt with is systematically assigned to all others, so that each has its precisely defined place. All their differentiations are divided into three steps according to Hegel's dialectic method (chap. 15). The supreme and most surveyable differentiation consists of the three parts of the *Enzyklopädie*: *The Science of Logic, The Philosophy of Nature and The Philosophy of Spirit.* At the second level, *The Science of Logic* is divided into the 'doctrines' of being, of essence and of the concept itself; *The Philosophy of Nature* comprehends mechanics, physics and organics, while *The Philosophy of Spirit* addresses the subjective, objective and absolute spirit. At the third level, the section on the absolute spirit unfolds first art, then religion and finally the concept of philosophy itself, now of the philosophy which comprehends its comprehending itself. The system is closed and justified through leading back to its beginning: hence philosophy turns out to be the science that comprehends all sciences.

The logic that Hegel's *Enzyklopädie* starts from is no longer the formal logic on which Aristotle and Kant based their metaphysics or transcendental philosophy. Hegel's logic once again starts with the Parmenidean unity of being and thinking (chap. 2). And this is why the difficult and controversial transition from logic to nature in Hegel's system works: when the 'science' of this 'logic' is completely clear to itself, thinking displays itself as a unity which is equal to an immediate 'intuition' (*Anschauung*), which is simply given like nature. From this, philosophizing proceeds as a 'philosophy of nature,' which 'the philosophy of spirit' builds on: natural 'organics' leads to the 'animal organism' and the 'reproductive process' (*Gattungsprozess*), being the natural condition of thinking. This is followed by the 'anthropology' and the 'phenomenology' through which, as demonstrated in Hegel's earlier treatise, the spirit as 'subjective spirit' frees himself from its uncertain appearances to become a 'free spirit.' On this base, the determinations of social structures like law, morality and state develop as the 'objective spirit'; they are among the most influential parts of Hegel's philosophy. Finally, the 'absolute spirit,' which embraces the totality of all its differentiations, transcends sociality in works of art and in religious ideas through philosophy itself. *Here philosophical thinking is completely self-sustained: it cannot only orient itself masterfully about its different certainties, but also in the realm of being itself, which consists of its being-thought.*

The sections in Hegel's *Enzyklopädie* are numbered paragraphs, which indicate the successive steps of pure thinking on the different levels (altogether 577). Like the articles of the *Encyclopédie*, the paragraphs can be studied independently of each other as well; for instance, you can learn what is space and time or spirit, morality and civil society based on the relevant paragraphs. But the paragraphs obviously belong to the systematic totality in whose context they can only be really understood. The systematic context dispenses with the net of references and the metaphysical vanishing points which the *Encyclopédie* requires. Still, occasional references can also be found in Hegel's *Enzyklopädie*.

Yet, Hegel provided the paragraphs with annotations (*Anmerkungen*) that are typographically distinguished from the §§. After his death, these were in turn supplemented by additions (*Zusätze*), which were compiled from his students' lecture notes. Both the remarks and the additions help readers understand the purely conceptual connections in the §§. They can be short or long; in most cases, they refer to more detailed circumstances and to current or previous scientific or philosophical discussions; now and then, misunderstandings are warded off. In this way, the system becomes cross-linked with its non-systematic circumstances which happens without systematic stringency. Thus, crossing the borders of the system, the *Enzyklopädie* in turn creates *a graded practice of orientation*. In doing so, it integrates the scholarly and the worldly concepts of philosophy which Kant assigned to different writings (chap. 13). On the whole, the annotations multiply the coverage of the *Enzyklopädie* and threaten to make it confusing again. Nevertheless, the systematic order of the *Enzyklopädie* enables you to *philosophically orient oneself as no other work of philosophy does*.

And Hegel does more. He offers *different approaches to his system from different standpoints* (*Standpunkte*). The first is the aforementioned approach from the 'uneducated standpoint' of 'sense-certainty' which is explained in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* of 1807. The 'educated standpoint' of 'absolute knowing' is the one of *The Science of Logic*, which Hegel at first publishes separately in 1812–1816 in two volumes. It leads through the items of the absolute knowing to the 'absolute idea' which enables the transition to the concrete philosophies of nature and spirit in the *Enzyklopädie*. Yet, the *Enzyklopädie* as the completed system has its own introduction. Here Hegel starts from the realms of religion, everyday experience and the empirical sciences. For him, the three of them 'incite' philosophical thinking which converts the 'accidental' to 'necessity.' In current terms: the environment constantly irritates the autonomous system, and

the system tries to integrate the environment by means of its own concepts. In addition, Hegel writes in his introduction to the *Enzyklopädie,* every philosophy owes itself to earlier philosophies, that is, to the history of philosophy. He lectures about this topic continuously. In doing so, he shows that the history of philosophy unfolds in a similar way as his system does. History turns out to be a systematic progress leading to the recent philosophy, Hegel's own. Hence, *you can orient yourself in the system by following its history*.

As a result, one can approach the system from one's own individual standpoint, from the standpoints of religion, the empirical sciences, the absolute knowledge of logic and the history of philosophy. However, you do this only if you have the 'speculative need' for philosophical, unconditional and true knowledge. Conversely, the system is not dependent on all these standpoints and approaches. Hegel shows this by integrating them in his *Enzyklopädie* itself; the phenomenology of spirit, the science of logic and the history of philosophy become, in revised versions, parts of it. Thus, the *Enzyklopädie* disposes of the different approaches to itself and leaves them back.

Nevertheless, the *Enzyklopädie* has, in Hegel's eyes, also a 'standpoint.' Here Hegel's most famous sentence applies: 'that which is reasonable is real, and that which is real is reasonable' (*was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich, und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig*). Seen from the standpoint of the 'uneducated' individual that observes how his or her world constantly changes in more or less chaotic ways, the quote is nonsense; seen from a political standpoint, the quote is outrageous because it seems to justify the existing political circumstances (so that one could consider Hegel the philosopher of the Prussian state); yet, seen from the standpoint of philosophical knowledge, the quote is true: simply because, in Hegel's sense, you can only speak of 'reason,' 'reality,' and 'truth' if you have comprehended them in an unconditional system of knowledge. In this system, reality *is* reasonable and true. But, as Hegel shows, *all unconditioned or absolute matters are unconditioned or absolute only related to an absolute standpoint that has left behing all conditioned ones: for Hegel, this is God's standpoint which we can comprehend with our thinking.*

By justifying its own beginning through returning to its starting point which is philosophizing itself, the self-referential system is able to detach from the approaches to it. *The origin of the system is nothing but the need to orient oneself through philosophy*. Yet, this entails a decision, the decision to advance from complete disorientation to complete orientation. In the draft to his first

Berlin lecture about the *Enzyklopädie,* Hegel notes down: 'The decision to philosophize casts itself into thinking like into an endless ocean; all the bright colors, all the footholds (*Stützpunkte*) have disappeared, all the other friendly lights are extinguished. Only the one star, the *inner star* of the spirit, shines; it is the *polar star*.' Yet, Hegel is also aware of the fact that philosophy inevitably is the philosophy of a certain age. He takes the *point of view of his day* writing that philosophy is 'its time captured in thoughts.' For him it is the time in which philosophy has achieved the status of perfect science. Hegel is not as naïve as to believe that philosophy and time will end with *his* philosophy. But when philosophy has achieved the true philosophical knowledge in his sense, it will not be able to be developed further.

Nevertheless, time goes on. After having been intensely influential for decades, Hegel's philosophy has simply become outdated. From various points of view, it has been declared one-sided, incorrect, or simply 'dead'; in most cases, it has not been understood any longer. It loses its plausibility without sufficient logical reasons one could adduce for this. One just oriented oneself anew.

The philosophy of orientation has alternative models of creating permanent overviews on the knowledge of one's time in d'Alembert's & Diderot's Encyclopédie and in Hegel's Enzyklopädie. They determine the leeway of philosophical overview at all. While the one is radically randomized through its alphabetical order, the other is completely systematized through its own logic. The first helps you to quickly find the knowledge you need, the latter to deliberate the position and the relevance of your knowledge in the system of knowledge. To a certain extent, you need both for orienting yourself in thinking and also in your everyday life. But knowledge never remains what it is, but it changes over time. Hence, we must integrate time in our knowledge. This is again possible through alternative techniques of distinction and compositions of knowledge.

15. Alternative Techniques of Distinction and Compositions of Knowledge: Hegel's and Schleiermacher's Dialectic

Already in his lifetime, Hegel's dialectic is confronted with an alternative: the dialectic of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834). It starts from and stays with the individual orientation and like Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, drafts a kind of system that frames it. Son of a pastor, raised a Pietist, Schleiermacher distanced himself from Pietism, worked as a preacher and later as co-founder and professor of the Berlin University. He created a translation of Plato which is authoritative until today. He felt close to the Romantics, was very sociable and highly esteemed also as a human being. As a regular guest in the Berlin salons of intellectuals, he had a huge public influence. He courageously defended the scandalous novel *Lucinde* by Friedrich Schlegel and was engaged in defending the emancipation of the Jews. He carried out a radical reform of Protestant theology and managed to unite the Protestant churches in Prussia. He developed a progressive educational movement and had numerous successful disciples in all fields of his work. In his philosophy he competed fiercely with Hegel – a competition which their disciples continued.

Schleiermacher likewise connects to Spinoza on the one hand and to Kant on the other hand. He has a similarly broad philosophical horizon as Hegel, but wants to lead philosophy back to life. He refers to the basic conditions of orienting oneself and uses the term as well, but does not develop his theology, philosophy and pedagogy out of it. Nevertheless, he designs a realistic philosophy of orientation from idealist standards. Although they research and teach at the same university, Schleiermacher and Hegel keep their distance from each other. They elaborate alternative techniques of distinction and compositions of knowledge under the same name 'dialectic.' Hegel's dialectic sets out from the distinction itself in the form of 'A is either X or non-X.' Following Spinoza's formula 'every determination is a negation' (*omnis determinatio est negatio*) every determination is the negation of another possible determination. Conversely, every negation brings a positive determination to the fore. So negation is productive. Hegel speaks of 'determinate negation' (*bestimmte Negation*). This means: negations are actions; they advance the determination or 'move' it. Being simultaneously positions, they are paradoxical from the start. While Aristotelian

logic assumes that concepts remain the same when being determined, Hegelian logic integrates time in determination.

In his *Science of Logic*, Hegel begins with the first and most simple determination at all, the determination of the most abstract concept: that of 'being.' As 'being' can be stated of everything (be it an observable thing, a mere idea, a dream or a quality), it does not mean something specific. You only can determine it by its negation: it is not nothing. But 'nothing' is a new position (you can say 'it is nothing' or 'nothing is'), and this position equally is determined by nothing besides 'being.' So 'being' and 'nothing' are both 'being' and 'nothing,' which means: they transition one into the other. What results, is this transition itself or 'becoming.' It emerges 'necessarily' (*notwendig*), the determination holds on to itself and directs itself. Hegel calls this *Aufhebung*. The German word 'Aufhebung' has three meanings: to annul, to lift up and to preserve: 'being' and 'nothing' are annulled, lifted up and preserved through 'becoming'; in one word, they are 'sublated' (*aufgehoben*): they exist further on, but now included in the new unity of 'becoming.' After a long process of further determination, in the *Encyclopedia's* chapter on *Objective Spirit* the concept of family is initially determined as the naturally grown moral life (*Sittlichkeit*), in which all members do trusting and loving justice according to the individual needs of each of them, especially of their children. They beget children in this spirit. Yet, when from one generation to the next the family becomes bigger and bigger, the members drift apart and lose their natural attachments. The family's simple moral life is negated; family transitions into civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) with a new 'system of needs satisfaction,' regulated by markets and the division of labor; the natural value of things and the consensual participation gets lost; everything becomes ware and merchandise (chap. 12, 17). Yet, here also arises a new unity: in the long run, meeting societal needs requires regulation by a state, its order is negated and sublated by a new order. The unity of the state feeds both from families and markets, whose morals are sublated in a higher and richer one.

Comparing such examples makes it clear that Hegel's dialectic cannot be formalized (for instance by the trivial figure 'thesis – antithesis – synthesis'), but is rather, as Hegel says, 'the particular method of each subject matter itself.' The method depends on the matter and vice versa. In every constellation of concepts, the determinate negation proceeds in a peculiar way, dependent on the meanings of the respective concepts. Hence, the conceptual movement's

path still includes leeway for decisions on taking alternative directions. In principle, the movement draws on all previously accomplished concepts when producing new ones; yet, there is no algorithm in doing this. The transitions Hegel creates require an art of combination, just as Diderot describes it for finding appropriate references between the lexicon entries of the *Encyclopédie* (chap. 14). For the readers, Hegel's dialectical developments in many cases first become plausible when the name of the new concept is mentioned ('becoming,' 'state'), which uses to be familiar: obtained from everyday language, it gets a new significance in the coherent philosophical system. Hegel himself states that 'we think in names.' They are the footholds of a pre-orientation without which we can neither find anything in the alphabetical order of the *Encyclopédie* nor understand the dialectic of the *Enzyklopädie.*

In his *Speeches on Religion* of 1799, authored years before Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Schleiermacher starts a revolution in the understanding of God: He cannot be comprehended by menas of concepts, but is experienced in the 'feeling of absolute dependency' (*Gefühl schlechthinniger Abhängigkeit*, as he put it later). This is phrased deliberately in a non-religious way. It involves the undeniable fact that, despite all freedom of thought and freedom of choice in our orientation, we all around remain dependent on fortuitous circumstances and processes which we can neither free ourselves from nor put into words. Following Spinoza, this can be equally related to God and nature (chap. 9). So Schleiermacher triggers a courageous reorientation also in philosophy: with the 'feeling of absolute dependency' he emphasis the *fundamental contingency or situativity* of all human thought, judgment, decision and action, which one can never understand and determine completely, let alone comprehend in Hegel's sense. *The feeling of absolute dependency is the basic mood of human orientation in view of incessantly changing situations.*

As a feeling, it is the feeling of an individual. For Schleiermacher, the individual is and remains the locus and the basis of all possible knowledge. Involved in a world whose conditions and circumstances they cannot completely overview, individuals are for themselves as incomprehensible as is God or nature, and they can express themselves by the means of language only to a limited extent. From this, Schleiermacher's dialectic proceeds. Though in a different manner, it likewise is the core of his philosophy. He lectures on it again and again, continuously improving it on the basis of few footholds. He does not

write it down definitely; only after his death it is edited in different versions based on his own sketches and the notes of his audience.

While Kant conceives of dialectic as a flawed form of thinking or reason's lapse into illusions, which has to be removed by self-critical thinking, and Hegel, by contrast, makes a method out of the self-referential critique of reason, which produces a necessary movement of its leading concepts, Schleiermacher draws on the Platonic sense of dialectic, defining it as the 'artful conversation in the field of pure thinking' (*kunstmäßige Gesprächsführung im Gebiet des reinen Denkens*). Like the Platonic Socrates, Schleiermacher radically questions knowledge now including the principles of a common reason and universal definitions. One must always be aware of the fact that there is 'material for undiscovered dispute' and that always 'arbitrary beginnings' are possible in all fields of knowledge. Yet, knowledge only convinces others when brought into systematic shape. But this does not need to be a system à la Hegel. It is sufficient that the concepts fit together and support each other in a consistent way. In Schleiermacher's view, an absolutely certain knowledge in Hegel's sense is impossible and in fact not required. Sufficient is a common 'belief in knowledge' (*Glauben an das Wissen*). This belief is open for new developments of knowledge and may move with the times.

Yet, *distinctions* still are demanded for determinations which fix concepts for times to come and enable 'constructions' of knowledge. Schleiermacher understands distinctions in a different way, too. He speaks of 'negative' and 'positive' or, in one word, 'relative' opposites which only *contrast* things against each other. His crucial idea is: concepts do not need to be deduced from each other in a systematic or necessary way. Instead, in order to refer to each other at all, both sides of oppositions must be entailed in each other, negating *and* affirming each other: you understand 'north' only, if you understand its opposite 'south'; a man is a man in contrast to a woman like the North Pole is the North Pole in contrast to the South Pole. *Contrasts are polar distinctions that not determine things, but orient your*. This also applies to Parmenides' (non-) distinction between being and thinking. In a way, the Schleiermacherian polar contrast sublates the Hegelian determinate negation on the base of the fundamental contingency or situativity of all human thought.

Considering distinctions like being and thinking, nature and reason, the real and the ideal as such conceptual poles prevents from dogmatizing them and turning them into metaphysical opposites. In this way, Schleiermacher's

dialectic is *critical*. But there is a '*constructive'* side to it as well. Schleiermacher designs it by the poles of 'chaos' as the construction's mere material and 'highest substantial force' in shaping it. The shaping or structuring itself he conceptualizes by the poles of practical 'organizing' (*Organisieren*) and theoretical 'recognizing' (*Erkennen*) or rather 'symbolizing' (*Symbolisieren*) because all recognizing proceeds through names. The opposites can and shall not really be separated, since they cooperate in determining topics. Viewed from a theological perspective, the poles 'chaos' and 'highest substantial force' (in Spinoza's sense) as well as the poles 'fate' (understood as the incalculability of occurrences) and 'providence' (understood as total predictability) serve as divine names. Also God is conceived of by an 'oscillating procedure' in the contexts of leeways, as Aristotle described them in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (chap. 5). In this way appropriate concepts are found for unforeseeable situations in living and thinking. Such concepts are not fixed, but rather preliminary 'schemata.' In his *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant uses the term 'scheme' (*Schema*) for mediating concepts and intuitions; Schleiermacher makes it central in the construction of knowledge at all.

For him, the individuals' need to get around to a general knowledge that is valid in their living together is, ultimately, an ethical need. The difference between theoretical and practical philosophy is likewise, in his eyes, a polar opposition; the two coalesce in a *theory of human living*. Schleiermacher constructs the coexistence of individuals, too, through crossing the poles of organizing and symbolizing and of individuality or particularity (*Eigentümlichkeit*) and communal identity or communality (*Gemeinschaftlichkeit*). From this, four 'relative spheres' of coexistence ensue:

(1) the communal world of communication and social interaction (*Verkehr*) which is identically organized for everyone; the most immediate area of education (*Bildungsgebiet*) is the body of the individual and the most comprehensive area the co-inhabited world;

(2) the individually organized world of conviviality (*Geselligkeit*) which include hospitality and friendship; it lives from mutual recognition (*Anerkennung*) and opening up (*Aufschließung*) for individuality;

(3) the communal world of science which is identically symbolized for everyone; here signs are used as unambiguously as possible; and (4) the individually symbolized world of art and religion.

The 'relative' spheres are mutually dependent on each other, but there is no hierarchy among them. In current sociological systems theory terms, they are functional systems of societal communication, in terms of the philosophy of orientation *Orientierungswelten* (worlds of orientation) (chap. 24).

For Schleiermacher, just as (later) for Nietzsche (chap. 18) and (still later) for Rorty (chap. 21), philosophy is an art before it can become a science. Philosophy can be based on rules, but these rules require individual skills for being applied. Thus, in contrast to Hegel's view, philosophy as any other science can not and need not acquire a definite knowledge, since all knowledge acquired under factual conditions can be contested again or simply become obsolete. In the time of German idealism, it becomes clear that different philosophical systems can be convincing and coexist. Schleiermacher concedes that philosophizing, depending on individual living conditions, occurs in various forms and in different languages. To his opinion, they enrich knowledge acquisition and human orientation as a whole. The question is then: who can convince whom of which matter with which argument; who is interested in whose thoughts and messages? Here, Schleiermacher distinguishes between (1) 'commercial' thinking, which is directed to utility and power, (2) 'artistic' thinking, which inspires others, but leaves them free to form their opinions, and (3) 'pure' thinking, which—like Hegel's thinking—tries to acquire something steady and firm in knowledge itself. For Schleiermacher, in all cases thinking is an ethical dealing with 'foreign thisking,' and it is a 'sign of a more limited mind' when it seeks to insist on itself.

The philosophy of orientation benefits from both alternative techniques in distinguishing and composing philosophical concepts. While Hegel holds on to generality as such and therefore on to general concepts, Schleiermacher holds on to individuality as such and therefore on to individual concepts appropriate for the situation at hand. While Hegel claims to determine the leading philosophical concepts one from another by 'determinate negation' in a 'speculative' and 'necessary' way that is to grant absolute certainty or truth, Schleiermacher conceives of distinctions as preliminarily designed oppositions which work like poles that open leeways for constructing concepts case by case. While Hegel starts from the most general concept of 'being' and 'sublates' alternative orienting decisions in order to create a 'necessary' philosophical progress, Schleiermacher, who respects the 'feeling of absolute dependency' in theology and philosophy, creates leeways for them. While Hegel

constrains the leeways of thinking, Schleiermacher expands them. While Hegel's way is top down, Schleiermacher's is bottom up. Both call their way 'dialectic,' because concepts involve their opposites which keep them in motion. Both ways are required for human orientation, the Hegelian for a system that encompasses the most relevant concepts through which we comprehend our world, the Schleiermacherian for finding footholds, perspectives and spheres from which we construe such concepts. Both Hegel's and Schleiermacher's vocabularies may today appear cumbersome and obsolete in some aspects. Yet, they are still able to advance philosophical orientation as a whole. Taken together, Hegel's and Schleiermacher's philosophies outline the leeway between the ideal of human orientation promising absolute certainty and the reality of human orientation sometimes leading to despair. Human beings oscillate between these poles.

C. 19TH CENTURY AFTER HEGEL:

The Time of Losing Absolute Certainties

The 19th century is characterized by scientific and technical discoveries such as steam power and iron smelting, electricity and telegraphy, which changed social life altogether, and by political upheavals, which followed in Europe and North America. Together with the transition to a market economy, the industrial revolution changed the world of human beings faster than anything before. According to the most plausible sociological theory at present, the sociological systems theory, European society as a whole and with it North American society, reorganized itself from the 18th to the 19th century by 'functionally differentiating itself': the old corporative division of society, in which everyone has to take their place based on their birth, loses its strength and significance; the focus is now on the ability of individuals to fulfill functions in society for which they are best suited, regardless of their birth. Despite continuing repression, a liberalization and democratization of society set in. The strongest signals of these were the Declaration of Independence of the USA and its constitution and the French Revolution that soon follows. Religion became a private matter. One learned to appreciate plurality and different cultures in all areas of human life; the increasing worldwide exchange created an 'age of comparison' (Nietzsche). The long-term result was growing prosperity for all, but to a very unequal extent. In the European industrial centers, a great deal of the workforce was initially ruthlessly exploited and visibly impoverished; the American plantation economy was largely maintained by slaves. Society was divided anew, no longer

into peasants, bourgeoisie, nobility and monarchs, but into entrepreneurs and workers. There was a constant threat of class warfare, also fueled by philosophers. A pathos arose to change the world practically, propagated by slogans such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's (1809–1865) 'Property is theft' or Karl Marx's (1813–1883) 'Philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it.' In Europe, concessions were made step by step to the strengthening socialism; the USA finally achieved to abolish slavery at the cost of a civil war.

The philosophy after German idealism responded to this not only with moral-political commitment, but, in the long run, with disillusionment: with a revaluation of the universal and the individual and a liberation from metaphysics as such. On the one hand, the disillusionment comes through historicization: Leopold von Ranke's (1795–1886) question of 'how things actually were,' which can only be answered through a critical study of the historical sources, replaced the German idealists' daring historical speculations. In his 'world history,' Ranke continued to focus on political states, but now kept their history as free as possible from overarching philosophical, let alone theological interpretations: states are not designed by reason or God, but arise out of diverse interests and along diverse historical paths. Each has its own individual character, which can only be understood from its history and must be portrayed differently. Historical individualization is contrasted to philosophical generalization and universalization.

The second great disillusionment came with evolutionary biology: first with Jean-Baptiste de Lamarck (1744–1829), then, above all, with Charles Darwin (1809–1882), the evolution of human beings from animals became plausible through scientific evidence; at the end of the 19th century, philosophers such as Herbert Spencer (1820–1901), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) and William James (1842–1910) incorporated evolutionary biology into their new thinking. Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) proved highly significant for philosophy: he empirically demonstrates that the apparently constant biological species, on which Aristotle built his metaphysical concept of eternal concepts (chap. 5), continues to change its features if observed across long periods of time. There are no longer eternal essences in biological life; instead, individual animals procreate with other individual animals new individual animals under individual circumstances. What seemed to be substances, prove to be

fluctuances. While Newton's laws of 'dead' nature could, following Kant, philosophically be understood as construed or 'prescribed' by human reason (chap.11), the Darwinian evolution of living beings occurs by coincidence, and human reason itself may have occurred in this way; the process of incessant selections of variations cannot be predicted, but only described. This applies to history as well. As Dilthey shows, description also makes sense as a method of philosophy. After Newton's mechanics, no natural science has as strong an impact on philosophy as Darwin's theory of evolution.

With evolutionary biology, divine creation, governance and destination of the world, the former highest foothold of human orientation, lost their plausibility. In this sense, less in a religious one, Nietzsche coined the key phrase 'God is dead.' Philosophy now became 'experimental philosophy.' While most philosophers at universities sought to defend, extend and combine the systems of their great predecessors, first and foremost Kant's, Fichte's, Schelling's and Hegel's, it is again through outsiders who often do not know each other that new philosophical orientations were initiated. The optimistic certainty that the world would find its true, good and beautiful order in the near future, if one only listens to reason, disappears; the new philosophers' prevailing mood was pessimistic in contrast to the optimistic spirit of the Age of Enlightenment. Hegel died in 1831, his kind of philosophy was declared dead in the 1860s; 'God is dead' also means 'Hegel is dead.' With Dilthey, Schleiermacher's kind of conceiving of the world attracted increased academic interest.

One now started from life: in German philosophy, 'life' is the term for the unfathomable and no longer justifiable complexity which people experience in their orientation and which can no longer be grasped systematically from highest principles. While some tried to systematize and idealize human orientation anew, those manifold and contradictory systems soon appeared arbitrary. Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Freud uncovered the role of the unconscious in the mind so that the belief in an unconditional reason was no longer tenable. However, the more complexity grew, the more did the need for orientation. The concept of orientation was gradually coming to the fore, now often appearing in book titles.

16. Alternatives in Revaluating the Universal and the Individual: Emerson and Stirner, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard

Largely independent of each other, in the USA and in Europe Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), Max Stirner (1806–1856) and Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) initiate to resolutely revalue the universal and the individual. In individual ways, they sketch out courageous new beginnings, starting from the individual and doubting the universal.

Emerson, who was born into a Christian family of preachers, distanced himself from specific denominations and churches. He was well-traveled, also in Europe, and lived as a free orator, writer and poet. He was thoroughly educated, particularly in German philosophy. But unlike the German idealists, he counted less on theory and system than on rhetorical persuasiveness. He wrote essays and propagated his philosophy in a personal way through lectures and popular education in the so-called 'lyceum movement.' He was engaged politically in the abolition of slavery and delivered the eulogy at Abraham Lincoln's funeral. He broke with traditional topics discussed at universities and aimed at a personal conduct of life or orientation in life. From his 'intellectual declaration of independence,' as some call it, started a new and unique philosophical tradition in the USA.

At that time—like in the beginnings of Greek philosophy—a spirit of awakening prevailed in the USA: new land was acquired and developed; religious freedom was practiced; excellent universities were founded; liberated from the estates-based ossifications of European societies, democracy generated great personalities for state leadership. The frontiers and horizons were constantly expanded; economic prosperity grew; venturesome immigrants pushed the capitalism that remained unimpeded for a long time; the industrialization and the extension of infrastructure in grand style prompted the hitherto most dynamic and most successful development of any state in the world. Even though the rule of conflicting parties, corruption and moral decline spread and strong social contrasts and economic crises occurred, moral values were able to prevail economic interests, as the abolition of slavery may show. In all areas of life, one was attuned to continual reorientation.

Emerson gives philosophical expression to this spirit of reorientation. In contrast to German thinking, his own thinking appears improvising,

preliminary and fluid, sometimes close to poetry. His concepts leave wide leeway for interpretation and progression. He masters aphoristic abbreviation and essayistic unfolding of far-reaching thoughts. He often suggests alternative views and loves paradoxes. His lectures and essays feed less of philosophical scholarship than of his own life experience. He doesn't want to reserve wisdom for scholars.

Without building on the concept of orientation itself, Emerson puts crucial milestones on the way to a philosophy of orientation. As he states in his speech *The American Scholar*, he looks for a 'nearer reference to the time and to this country.' 'Instead of the sublime and beautiful,' he explores and poetizes 'the near, the low, the common.' He wants to give a 'new importance' to 'the single person.' In doing so, he reintegrates the person into nature: nature flows through human beings and causes them to speak, think and act. For Emerson, nature is not to be determined theoretically. Instead, he uses notions like 'soul,' 'over-soul,' and 'divine.' Without the need of theoretical definitions, such 'transcendental beliefs' connect everyone's solitary and idiosyncratic standpoint with the standpoints of others.

Like nature, individuals communicate immediately through signs and symbols that need no further determination or explanation. In *Nature* Emerson formulates this as follows: 'I am nothing; I see all.' Hence, a basic attitude of observing, receiving, venerating and obeying develops that opens up to a 'stairway of surprise.' Human beings may search for reassurance in conceptual determinations; yet, identifications and classifications are always preliminary: 'science is nothing but the finding of analogy, identity, in the most remote parts,' as Emerson says in *The American Scholar*. Therefore, everyone has his or her own view of principles as well and everyone can make the diversity of meanings fruitful and be creative under their specific conditions. For being creative, one must deliberately expose oneself to unsettling. Over time, a confidence in one's own progress, in the progress of mutual understanding and in the promotion of each other grows, in Emerson's words: human beings learn to trust in 'virtue' and 'love.' They *trust in the ability to orient themselves in life situations that are uncertain for everyone and they enjoy it*.

The 'genius' can do more. Out of his self-reliance, he or she can *give* orientation to others. According to Emerson, single '*representative men*'—outstanding personalities, including philosophers and poets—set *signs to which others can adhere for the sake of their own orientation under their own conditions*.

These signs or footholds cannot be theoretically generalized and dogmatically defined. For Emerson, 'complete' single human beings express the whole of human possibilities with their life. In regard to religion, they find God through finding their own center; thereby ideals like truthfulness, clarity and simplicity become lived realities.

Emerson's representative men stand out due to 'courage' in mastering daily problems. Courage is opposed to anxiety. In the persistent insecurity and endangerment of life, one must, as Emerson puts it, 'day after day overcome anxiety.' Knowledge, custom and reason may help; but courage grows in repeated coping with threatening situations, and in this way, a 'prophetic instinct that is better than all wisdom' develops, as Emerson lastly writes in *Society and Solitude*. He encourages courageous beginnings in one's own orientation.

With his *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* of 1844 (English *The Ego and Its Own* or *The Unique and Its Property*, literally *The Individual and His Property*), Max Stirner directly focuses on the revaluation of the universal and the individual. With his motto, borrowed from Goethe, 'Nothing is more to me than myself!,' he insists on the claim that everything, both the material and the spiritual, is only the property of individuals. Stirner, who studied with Hegel *and* Schleiermacher, commited himself to the circle of Left Hegelians and took up some of their ideas on social reforms and revolutions, but soon questioned them as well. Living under narrow circumstances, he had to face prohibition and persecution; yet, out of philosophical reasons he did not participate in the general revolutionary movement that went on in Germany during the times of political restauration. He wanted to stand up for himself, to rely only on himself. He appreciated *Das Wesen des Christentums* (*The Essence of Christianity*) by Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872) who unmasked God's traditional determinations as human projections: man has alienated himself from himself by attributing his own good to a transcendent God. Yet, for Stirner it was not about man or humankind in general, but about the individual human being: singular individuals appeal to other singular individuals in committed or polemical ways. He translated, among other books, Adam Smith' *The Wealth of Nations* (chap. 12), but was not successful with a dairy shop which he opened together with his second wife. Initially, Stirner caused a stir with his book; then he was forgotten for a long time.

He fights against the 'holy' universal. For him, through believing in something general or universal, individuals expropriate themselves. They submit

themselves to societal and governmental orders without reservation; through general terms under which they are subsumed they are connected and separated without their consent. It is the 'egoism' that prevails in universal subsumptions of others; yet the '*ego*' for Stirner is not a kind of substance, but *only the reference point to relate to everything else*; this is crucial for a philosophy of orientation. And Stirner doesn't simply want to abolish the general or universal which would be unthinkable, but, like Emerson, he only allows a limited function to it. So, in the long run he expects the breakdown of the state as a general order of dependencies and a life of enjoyment instead of a life of sacrifice. Hence, Stirner was considered a dangerous 'anarchist.'

Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard do not only emphasize the legitimacy and power of individual thought, but also focus on the limits of thought and universality as such. Their lives supported this intention, showing some amazing parallels. Both Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard were able to live entirely as autonomous individuals. Stemming from wealthy merchant families, they did not need to pursue a profession, but could live off their inherited assets wealth until the end. They urged themselves a comprehensive humanistic education. Headstrong characters, they cultivated a behavior strange in some aspects; many anecdotes bear witness to this. They appeared as odd mavericks, but liked to dispute in public. Both of them experienced precarious love relations and shied away from marriage. They presented their most important works in their 30s and felt disappointed with the poor reception, but did not lose courage and continued writing. When rationales became problematic, they resorted to polemics. Both wanted to achieve an employment at a university, but failed. Schopenhauer, as an unknown lecturer at the Berlin university, dared to compete with Hegel; Kierkegaard, disappointed by the lectures of aged Schelling at the Berlin university, became a public caricature in the course of a feud with a satirical magazine in his home town Copenhagen and then fought against the highly esteemed bishop Mynster. Finally, both of them became embittered. Yet, there are also striking differences. Whereas Schopenhauer was appreciated early on (due to his mother, a successful author who kept a salon in Weimar) by Goethe, the highest intellectual authority of his day, Kierkegaard was plagued by melancholia (as he wrote, due to his old father). Whereas Schopenhauer was a staunch atheist who nonetheless incorporated religious dogmas like the hereditary sin in his philosophy, Kierkegaard was a staunch Christian who nonetheless struggled against the established Christendom, the Church and

its dogmas. Whereas Schopenhauer clung to the literary form of the treatise (most of his popular *Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life* are minor treatises as well), Kierkegaard invented plenty of new literary forms of writing to express his new philosophical thinking; in regard to religion, he wrote 'uplifting discourses.' With his clearly arranged main work *The World as Will and Representation*, which first succeeded after a quarter of a century in its second edition, Schopenhauer by and large remained caught in the old (particularly Kantian) opposites, even though he resolutely revalued them, whereas Kierkegaard experimented within the short period of a decade with new conceptual opposites as well. His philosophical rank was recognized even later than Schopenhauer's; he triggers the 20th century's existentialist philosophy. Like Emerson and Stirner, both are popular in a large audience to this day.

In their respective philosophies, they resolutely dethrone self-aggrandizing reason on the basis of a Schleiermacherian feeling of absolute dependency. As an atheist, Schopenhauer regards reason as being dependent on a blind, irrational will that governs it; as a Christian, Kierkegaard considers reason dependent on the mood of anxiety caused by sin. Without having known each other (Kierkegaard became aware of Schopenhauer very late), both of them experience continual unsettlement which reason is not able to appease. They realize a fundamental need of a new orientation which no longer relies on reason and the state as Hegel did, but on personal experience in which individuals are autonomous.

On the one hand, Schopenhauer particularly addresses the corporeality of thinking. Obviously, the *body is the organ of all cognition and the point of departure of all orientation in the world*. Through the body, thinking finds itself in the world being a part of it and entangled in it. Incorporated in a body, it is both an observing subject and an observed object; Emerson emphasizes this point as well. Yet, for Schopenhauer, the body is something that incessantly 'wants to do something,' above all live and sustain itself. Schopenhauer calls this 'the will.' Its strongest expression is sexual desire, embodied in the genitals. While Emerson integrates the individuals into the continuum of nature, Schopenhauer does this into a universal drive to live. With this universal will to live or just to be there he believes to have found the thing-in-itself that Kant has addressed a shere X. He turns this X into something actually experienced: the irrational being-driven. It is the 'blind will' that utilizes reason as its 'tool' in order to provoke 'ideas' or 'representations' (*Vorstellungen*) for orienting oneself in life

which reason assumes to be its own task. Schopenhauer himself sometimes uses the notion of orientation. He writes: 'it is in the interest of the will that something is thought at all, so that one is as well-oriented as possible (*möglichst orientirt*) for all eventualities.' Orientation is needed and is possible, yet it is not rational. Schopenhauer diagnoses an ongoing self-deception of reason, following the famous metaphor 'the strong blind one bears the seeing lame one on his shoulders.' In this way, before one is able to decide anything consciously and rationally, the will has already decided on it; thus, the human being is never able to reach the truth.

Yet, Schopenhauer's conception of a universal will is still metaphysical. It is omnipotent like God, albeit unknowing, purposeless and senseless. This changes the mood of philosophical thinking: the 'optimism' that Schopenhauer would also have discovered in Emerson's philosophizing if he had known it, gives way to a deep 'pessimism' of being driven from one illusionary wish to the next. Nevertheless, with this Schopenhauer discovers the *significance of moods* for philosophy. He experiences it as 'the play of the continuous transition from the wish to its satisfaction and from the latter to the former,' considering it an agonizing malfunction. The so-called *'clearly conscious thoughts' are the mere 'surface' of an unclear and unconscious streaming of the will*. Yet, just the process of meandering, floating and fragmentary thinking which Schopenhauer regards as an 'essential imperfection of the intellect' requires ever-new reorientations. Thinking lacks, for Schopenhauer, firm footholds.

Hence, he tries to *create his own footholds*. Devaluing the blind will to live as a whole, he seeks for redemption from it. This is to be fulfilled by an opposite metaphysical item, namely the Platonic ideas. For Schopenhauer, Kant's thing-in-itself und the Platonic ideas are 'the two great dark paradoxes of the two greatest philosophers of the Occident,' and he, Schopenhauer, is able to eliminate them by assuming the Platonic ideas as the object of the will's 'pure' representation that is to stabilize representations at all. The power of the will as the thing-in-itself is to end here, the 'negation of the will to live' is expected to turn into the affirmation of idealizing thinking. The two metaphysical hypotheses ensure a 'contemplative' and calm philosophical knowledge which Schopenhauer claims for himself. They support a new and true 'gospel,' the gospel of 'fatalism.' Like Emerson, Schopenhauer finds confirmation of his ideas in Indian Buddhism; both of them deliberately cross the boundaries of European philosophy. Yet, Schopenhauer builds ethics on compassion (*Mitleid*),

understood as the common suffering from the blind will. In doing so, he fights against universal moral laws. Instead, he praises art, particularly music, as the 'quieting (*Quietiv*) of the will.' Music is, for him, an 'image' of the will in which the will can recognize itself and calm down: the 'true philosophy' would be 'a perfectly right, complete, and detailed explanation of music.' Last but not least, Schopenhauer's metaphysical doctrine of the blind will and the redemption from it is to liberate from the fear of death; death comes as 'grace' when one suffers from the will. Grace is the forgiveness of guilt that cannot be undone through one's own doing. The disbeliever Schopenhauer deeply appreciates Christianity's 'great truth' of 'hereditary sin.' In his view, Adam symbolizes the affirmation of the will to live and Christ its negation, the redemption from the will. So the ultimate truth of Schopenhauer's secular philosophy is the 'transition into the empty *nothing.*' He finds this in the 'nirvana' of Buddhism where 'peace is higher than reason.' *Schopenhauer's philosophy deals with a human orientation abandoned by reason. But it still needs footholds in order to endure this, be it in morals, in art or in religion.*

In Kierkegaard, the anxiety of faith, which is afraid of sin, corresponds to Schopenhauer's disorientation due to the blind will. For the resolute Christian Kierkegaard, sin is, in short, freedom against God, the sheer possibility of violating His will. Since God's will is concealed to human beings (like the blind will in Schopenhauer), they must assume that they are always already sinners. Even though God's will is not blind, people are blind to it; thus they live in constant anxiety of perishing in sin. Kierkegaard takes this as seriously as possible, and it is from here that he begins his *pioneering philosophical reorientation*. He recognizes that seriousness does not consist in comprehending sin in Hegelian terms, but first in doing justice to sin by consequently avoiding it; the theoretical stance toward sin provides an apparent foothold and creates a perverted mood, it is frivolous and reckless. *It does not concern one's own existence*.

With this religious approach, Kierkegaard uncovers that all concepts, not only the concept of sin, acquire different meanings when used in different moods, be it anxiety, contemplative calmness or humor. This is omitted by the theoretical determination of concepts like Hegel's. If *situative and futile moods first reveal the true meanings of concepts*, one has to start from them in philosophizing. They change human orientation as a whole. Anxiety points to disorientation; the highest degree of disorientation is despair; 'despair' is one of the founding concepts of Kierkegaard's. For him, it is the basic situation of human beings

before God: the vertigo that occurs sometimes more, sometimes less consciously turns into habitual despair. Kierkegaard traces this on theological, psychological and philosophical ways connecting them closely. A *despair* like this *cannot be appeased by thinking*, but is increased by it, and metaphysics doesn't redeem one from it. Kierkegaard newly unsettles Christian faith through philosophical thinking and philosophical thinking through Christian faith (chap. 7). In this way, he continues to discover further conditions and possibilities of the human orientation. His crucial points are:

– Thinking that is exposed to moods, becomes passion: you lose mastery over yourself, but gain courage to resolutely *decide on the alternatives of your own existence*. Being responsible for your own existence is not due to an allegedly pure thinking, but to an engaged one, and through this engagement you are initially an individual. While Schopenhauer deplores individualization because it causes struggles, Kierkegaard challenges it because it invokes a *responsibility that disappears when one relies on abstract thought* that applies equally to all and is therefore indifferent to the individual. In Kierkegaard's sense, individual human existence is self-relation not as mere theoretical reflection (as for Descartes, sec. 9), but as a continuous process of orientation and decision which is always exposed to alternative wrong decision and to disorientation and despair. Existence is an *existence at risk* also in the spiritual sense. Kierkegaard titles his first main work *Either/Or* (1843).

– The moods of anxiety and despair render all things questionable and ambiguous. Concepts become mere *signs* that can be understood in different ways. According to Kierkegaard, in Christian faith this first and foremost applies to Christ himself: he acts as the 'God-man' in whom human beings are not able to distinguish the God and the man; insofar he appears *incognito*. But likewise human beings don't have access to each other's consciousness and remain incognito for each other. A sign is, according to Kierkegaard, a 'negated immediacy'; it means something else than it is itself. Signs can only be interpreted through signs in a move of 'double reflection' on both sides that also allows double misunderstandings. They confront human beings with the choice of whether they want to believe in them or not. As such, others remain a perpetual 'offense,' and this is precisely what Christ wanted to be; for, according to Kierkegaard, only in this way could he prevent dogmatic determinations that soothe and reassure human beings, whereas Christian faith requires them to exist troubled and concerned as sinners.

– In a logical view, this offense or nuisance is paradoxical. One shall believe in sin in order to believe in Christ who redeems from it. Kierkegaard turns the *paradox* into a *revealing figure of thought*: getting annoyed by a paradox without being able to dissolve it by logical means reveals your interest in it. For Kierkegaard, philosophy is confronted with paradoxes wherever it attempts to understand how abstract opposites like finitude and infinity, temporality and eternity, freedom and necessity of which God and human beings are supposed to be syntheses, can go together at all. It is, as Kierkegaard puts it, 'the highest paradox' of thinking 'that it wants to discover something that it cannot think.' Thus, the paradox arouses the 'paradoxical passion' of thought.
– The title of Kierkegaard's book *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844) is paradoxical as well, insofar as the mood of anxiety disturbs our concepts of it. The subtitle, *A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin,* indicates that hereditary sin, which provokes the anxiety, is present only in an indirect way through footholds that are to be disclosed in *different perspectives* such as psychological, philosophical and theological ones. Through them, we can only orient ourselves to it.
– In regard to Kierkegaard's own writings, even the author and what an author is at all is not clear and defined. Kierkegaard practices a deliberately confusing philosophical 'authorship' with the help of several '*pseudonyms*' of 'authors' and 'editors' who are to indicate 'psychologically varied differences of individuality.' Sometimes, he even has them respond to each other. In this way, subjectivity is reflected by another's subjectivity without this resulting in objectivity. In addition, the pseudonyms create freedom for risky thought experiments: they allow Kierkegaard not to have to commit himself to certain opinions and doctrines and instead to give voice to opposing standpoints, sometimes even under opposite names like 'Climacus' and 'Anti-Climacus.' With his often saltatory, light-footed, apparently superficial style, Kierkegaard rejects all claims for an ultimate authority to which Stirner and Schopenhauer still cling. In his writings, Kierkegaard shows how to avoid all 'immediate communication of paragraphs in the manner of professors.' He calls his kind of writing '*indirect communication*' that is to challenge the reader's own orientation.
– In anxiety and despair, the self also loses its foothold in Stirnerian and Schopenhauerian self-reliance. In *Stages on Life's Way* (1845) Kierkegaard reflects on groundbreaking transitions in one's existence: from a sensual or aesthetic existence, in which one abandons oneself to whatever life may offer, via an ethical

existence, in which one is serious about the decision for one's own existence, to the religious existence, in which one feels responsible for one's existence before God. In his late book *The Sickness unto Death* (1849), Kierkegaard tries to grasp the *self-relation* of the sinfully existing human being by the conceptual opposites that are available for it like soul and body, infinity and finitude and so on using them like Schleiermacherian poles. He finds that our self only exists through such relations behind which there is no substance and no stable hold at all. What we can and must do is '*balance*' such relations. The figure of balance makes it plausible that we always run the risk of falling into turmoil and that we must find our balance anew, more in anxiety and despair than, as Emerson has it, in courage. For Kierkegaard, the highest form of despair is the despair of insisting on willing to be a certain self that is independent of God. True Christian faith must continuously pass through despair – *like our everyday orientation which passes through ever-new disorientation*.

The philosophy of orientation owes Emerson, Stirner, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard crucial hints, especially for being an individual: alternatives in living and succeeding by one's own means, be it by expressing one's own personality, by claiming the property of one's individuality, by looking for redemption from being geared by a blind will or by achieving an ever-new balance between decision and dependency in one's orientation. In all four alternatives, the power of thought is limited and reason is no longer considered universal. Instead, it is based on moods like joy, envy, desire and anxiety that philosophy hitherto excluded as much as possible. In fact, all thinking and acting is co-determined by moods. They imbue common concepts with individual and situational meanings. Emerson and Kierkegaard explicitly avoid general doctrines in order to challenge their audience to make their own decisions on their existence. Stirner doubts the right of seemingly pre-given general orders at all. Schopenhauer binds the mind to the body that enables and conditions it; he discovers that disturbance and reassurance is prior than truth and falsity and observes an ongoing self-deception of reason. Kierkegaard, in his simultaneous certainty and anxiety of faith, determines one's self-relation as mere keeping one's balance, in which one can succeed or fail.

The four of them present themselves as heroic lone fighters relying on their own experience. Through their courageous reorientations, reason as an equal ability in all human beings and the universals that it sustains lose a great deal of its hitherto established authority. As a consequence, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard

conceptualize the life of animals, included human beings, in a new way: species may be living universals as Aristotle conceived of them, but they emerge by time through the propagation of individuals with other individuals, stay for some time and perish again. According to Schopenhauer, individuals and the species mutually generate each other; according to Kierkegaard, within his Christian framework, 'hereditary sin' can only be understood in such a way that all human beings who descend from Adam have to take responsibility for it as individuals; they pass them on in individual ways. So dawns the notion of a temporal, ever-changing general or universal, the concept of fluctuance.

17. Alternatives in the Moral-Political Commitment of Philosophy: Marx and Mill

The French Revolution kept alive a seething revolutionary atmosphere in Europe. The industrial revolution created a hard socio-economic division between the great wealth produced by the capitalist market economy and being in the hands of a few people on the one hand and the impoverishment of the workforce on the other hand. The extremely uneven distribution of wealth provoked philosophical reactions. While in Great Britain and the United States the aim of pursuing the greatest happiness of the greatest number was proclaimed following Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism (chap. 12), in Germany Hegelian philosophy prevailed. However, Hegel's sentence 'that which is reasonable is real, and that which is real is reasonable' (chap. 14) was interpreted in alternative ways: either as loyally backing the existing Prussian state and justifying the current social, economic and political conditions or as pushing for change these conditions, since the reasonable was not yet realized in society. *Philosophy was normatively reoriented toward the future shaping of society.* The visible poverty of workers prompted a moral commitment in philosophy; taking over the place of the disappearing religion, philosophy assumed the function of the world's conscience. It no longer wanted to be mere theory, but regained new credibility through practical tests. But with its critique of the existing economic, social and political reality it exposed itself to a critique based on its success in this reality. Philosophy turned from an observer into an active participant, and as such it could either prevail

or perish. Now it is *history that proves wether a philosophy is right or wrong*. The most prominent examples hereof at this time are the philosophies of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873).

Marx, grandson of rabbis, son of a baptized lawyer, studied law and philosophy and as a journalist learned how to make use of the media. He campaigned politically in organizations of the international workers' movement, and, together with his friend Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), he dedicated himself more and more to a socio-critical philosophy. Engels was the economically successful son of a textile factory owner, earning a lot also through stock trading; he supported Marx both philosophically and financially. Marx was perpetually persecuted for political reasons and, time and again, expelled from the countries where he lived in poor circumstances, in Brussels, Paris and finally in London. Due to illness, he could not complete his large-scale magnum opus *Das Kapital* (*Capital*).

Philosophically, Marx proceeds not only from Hegel's dialectic philosophy (chap. 15), but also from Feuerbach's anthropology (chap. 16). For Marx and Engels, both Hegel's and Feuerbach's philosophies have remained pure theories; now the time has come to transform them into revolutionary practice. To this end, they sharpen Hegel's and Feuerbach's philosophies: while Feuerbach bases the essence of the human being on their sensory body, they proceed from the comprehensive societal production of the human being's means to live, using Hegel's dialectic for demonstrating a necessary historical sequence of the production of these means. With masterful reversals in their formulations they turn Hegel's dialectic upside down, put it 'from the head to the feet.' They focus philosophy's attention to the fact that *material hardships and needs determine human life to such an extent that they also dominate morals, religion, politics and even philosophical thinking itself*. They distinguish them as 'base' (Basis) and 'superstructure' (Überbau), denying thinking its alleged autonomy (with the exception of their own thinking); pure thinking again turns into mere appearance (chap. 16). But for Marx and Engels thinking is the organ and function not only of the body, of the individual's interests and faith, but rather is based of the societal circumstances of life. Thus thinking changes with these circumstances, and severe hardship provokes practical intervention even from philosophy.

Marx and Engels, who was happy to play the 'second violine' in their concert, adopt the ideas of the modern Enlightenment (chap. 8-15), such as

the emancipation of all people and a new humanism. They want to continue them through the liberation of people from the hardships and constraints to which the capitalist market economy subjects most of them. They call working painstakingly in the service of others who profit far more from their work than they do themselves 'alienation' (*Entfremdung*). By the capitalist organization of the industrial production workers are alienated from the objects of their work, from their work itself, and from themselves as human beings; they lose their dignity and become a good (*Ware*). According to dialectic materialism, this anti-humanistic economy will bring about the revolution of the proletarians, who own nothing but their force to labor, which they have to sell; in the end a classless communist society of completely emancipated human beings will abolish all alienation. This was again a highly universalizing and even totalizing thinking, and it did not pass the practical test. The scientific, propagandistic and agitating commitment of Marx and Engels had its full effect when Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924) created an ideology with mass impact for the purposes of the Russian Revolution. The proclaimed 'dictatorship of the proletariat' turned into the dictatorship of the Soviet rulers which the people finally threw off at the end of the 20th century. As real existing socialism, Marxism-Leninism failed.

Mill makes philosophy practical in an alternative way. While Marx reacts to Mill, Mill does not deal with Marx, although both of them live in the same London for a long time. Following the British tradition, Mill operates less with deductions from general propositions than with inductions from concrete observations which he justifies in his very successful *System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence, and the Methods of Scientific Investigation*. In his later treatise *On Liberty* he foregrounds not groups that fight jointly for their moral, social and political right, but rather the individuals and their freedom to do anything as long as it does not harm others. He advocates at a 'civil or social liberty' against all types of 'tyranny' leaving to the individuals their *own leeways for dealing with economy, politics, public opinion and morality*. To Mill, such leeways are important for the 'weaker members of the community' as well. Even though the powerless initially have little use for them, they can be extended over time through reforms; they need not to be established through revolutionary propaganda and violence, but rather through the parliament and legislation.

Obviously, political power is inevitable also in a democracy. Yet, it needs not assume a general will in Rousseau's sense (chap. 12). On the contrary, the

individuals must be protected against the 'tyranny of the majority.' The rule of law safeguards them against assaults from each other. Through law and morality a society must find a '*fitting adjustment between individual independence and social control*.' Mill concedes that everyone's 'standard of judgment is his own liking'; the individual knows best what is best for him or her. In contrast to Rousseau's and Marx's philosophical approaches to politics Mill's is more pragmatic. Educated by his father James Mill in the spirit of his friend Jeremy Bentham (chap. 12), he regards 'utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions.' Compared to the pathos of social revolution, he prefers a calm sense of reality which likewise with moral-political intention takes account of the closer actual circumstances. After a nervous breakdown and a depression he suffers from working too hard, he acquires a cool rationalism. He reorients utilitarianism from universality into individuality: the greatest happiness of the greatest number must not occur at the expense of the happiness of the individual; rather, it must summarize the happiness of the individuals.

Like his father, Mill was employed for decades by the *East India Company*, one of the most powerful capitalist organizations of his day. From this view, he also perceived the misery of the workforce and sought to combat it through gradual reforms, for some years also as a Member of Parliament. Inspired and supported by Harriet Taylor (1807–1858), his later wife, he advocated equal rights of men and women. He fought against the privileges of the land-owning aristocracy, believed in democracy, and tried to strengthen it by extending the right to vote. Yet, he feared the democratic drive for equality which creates dominant majorities. Like Marx he regarded the state as provisional, but did so under the banner of liberalism: the state is supposed to protect the freedom, security and welfare of the individuals, but restrict them as little as possible. Without illusions, Mill spoke up for competition and innovation not only in economy and government, but also in philosophy. He counted on independent and educated personalities (like himself, considering Emerson 'sentimental' and 'superficial') who are to represent the people in the parliaments and govern the state. He expected the greatest welfare of all from everyone's active participation in the shaping of society, but the wisdom of the people lies, for him, in the election of wise leaders.

Mill's approach to social problems proved, in the long run, more successful than Marx's. Great Britain, the premier economic power of the world at that time, in fact succeeded in avoiding radical social upheavals in the country (despite

repeated flaming protests) by carrying out gradual reforms of laws and of the parliament, to which Mill personally contributed. This turned out to be easier, since Britain got rich earnings from a worldwide colonial empire, which did not enjoy comparable parliamentary rights. In Germany and France the revolution of the workforce proclaimed by Marx and Engels did not came to pass either. Instead, the market economy that was discovered by Adam Smith (chap. 12) provided a long-term enhancement of the wealth of all over the world, even though to a very different extent and after long times of increasing exploitation of the workforce and the colonies, just as Marx and Engels predicted it.

The philosophy of orientation has in Marx's and Mill's approaches the most important alternatives concerning the moral-political commitment of philosophers in the 19th century. Instead of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, loyalism and anarchism, which often occur at that time, theirs are the alternatives of socialism or communism on the one hand and liberalism on the other hand. Both refer to economic circumstances and their consequences for the lives of individuals; their approaches prove relevant to this day. Both Marx and Mill aim to enhance the good of all, but Marx primarily focuses on the society, Mill on individuals. It may be for situational reasons that communism (as the radical variant of socialism) failed in liberating real societies from misery, coercion and violence; in countries where political leaders still cling to the communistic ideology, it can only be upheld by force. However, the historical failure of communism can also be due to the fact that the strength of universal ideas to start and maintain social revolutions is overestimated. Today, the living conditions of societies may be too complex to be revolutionized through universal ideas.

Yet, according to the Marxian distinction of 'superstructure' (Überbau) and 'base' (Basis) this statement itself is under suspicion of ideology: we can no longer refuse the fact that every philosophy that is critical of ideologies may itself have certain interests. Even philosophers cannot entirely survey the motives of their philosophizing. All orient themselves from their standpoints, which include their interests and their moral and political concerns. Thus, we have to be careful not to universalize, totalize and radicalize them. In the meantime, philosophy has become more modest when it is about changing the whole world on a grand scale. Today, we assume that there aren't any universal laws in the development of societies which would justify a necessary progress from the past into the future.

18. Alternative Ways of Liberating Philosophy from Metaphysics: Comte, Peirce, James and Dewey, Dilthey and Nietzsche

Auguste Comte (1798–1857), the leading 'positivist' and first 'sociologist,' Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), William James (1842–1910) and John Dewey (1859–1952), the three outstanding 'pragmatists,' Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), the founder of a new philosophy as 'self-interpreting of life,' and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), the groundbreaking critic of any metaphysical basis of philosophizing, join the resolute ambition for an epochal change in philosophy. All of them doubt metaphysics as a doctrine of abstract, timeless and self-assured truths. They intentionally make new philosophical orientation decisions based on the circumstances of their time and for their time. In doing so, they come across crucial conditions, structures and operating modes of orientation as such. There is a wide range of alternatives again.

Comte, member of a Catholic and monarchist family in Montpellier, studied at the *École polytechnique* in Paris and, when the *École* was temporarily closed due to its republican aspirations after 1815, studied medicine in his home town. He wanted to acquire as much of the scientific and historical knowledge of his time as possible and became an assistant to the Comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), who pursued a similar program as the later program of Comte's and opened up the intellectual circles of Paris to him. Like Marx and Mill, Comte observed that in the 19th century a new scientific-industrial world emerged and assumed that therefore philosophy had to start anew. His program was to detach philosophy from outdated theology and metaphysics and make a science out of it that is based on 'positive facts.' In this sense he spoke of 'positive philosophy.' It was supposed to support a scientifically organized division of labor. Therefore it had to become 'sociology.' Comte developed it in three phases, from the early draft *Prospectus des travaux scientifiques nécessaires pour réorganiser la société* (*Prospectus of the scientific work needed to reorganize the society*, 1822) via the plan's elaboration in the *Cours de philosophie positive* (*Course on Positive Philosophy*) in six volumes (1830–1842) to the final *Système de politique positive ou Traité de sociologie instituant la religion de l'humanité* (*System of Positive Polity, or Treatise on Sociology, Instituting the Religion of Humanity,* 1851–1854). Sociology was simultaneously developed as philosophy, politics and

religion. As a person, Comte came across as captivating, but was also considered arrogant. His efforts to obtain a chair and even a subordinate position at the *École polytechnique* failed; Peirce suffered a similar fate. Instead, like Emerson (chap. 16), Comte gave private lectures and remained dependent on personal patrons, including John Stuart Mill (chap. 17). Disappointments and overwork made him mentally ill; he repeatedly threw himself into the Seine to commit suicide. Then, out of an unfulfilled love, he created a 'religion of humanity,' a kind of Catholicism without God. His guiding concepts of 'order' and 'progress' were incorporated into the flag of the Republic of Brazil in 1889; even temples of positivism were erected. Half a century after his death, Comte was honored by a monument in front of the Sorbonne.

For him, metaphysics is an outdated stage of humanity's thinking; it has in turn overtaken the stage of theology or priestly rule. In this way, Comte makes things very surveyable: in its history, humanity has gone from supernatural via abstract to positive certainties, and the same is repeated in each individual growing up; the supernatural is for children, the abstract for young people who still have little experience of the world, and science for adults. Therefore Comte assumes a universal law of progress which, in politics, abandons revolutions. For him, the division of labor in modern industrialization only allows for marginal social conflicts that can be resolved through better organization; industry *is* the scientific organization of work. In line of the motto *savoir pour prévoir, prévoir pour pouvoir* (knowing for foreseeing, foreseeing for mastering) it requires the best overview and the strength and power to design and implement efficient orders that are useful for everyone. *Comte offers perfect orientation.* He finds the orientation skills in entrepreneurs rather than in politicians; so he marginalizes politics altogether. The concentration of capital helps to improve the means of production and increase prosperity of the society as a whole.

Yet, the market alone does not solve the problems, and for Comte, the liberal theory of the market economy is likewise insufficient. The superior orientation of entrepreneurs must be based on the positive sciences, and the task of the philosopher, or now the sociologist, is to clarify the order of the system of sciences. He does not do this by means of abstract metaphysics, but through synchronous and diachronic comparisons, just as biology, an established natural science, does. This is to create a 'social physics' that contains the *scientific guidelines for shaping society*; it also includes psychology and ethics. Since development is determined by law, individuals can only influence it to

a limited extent. In a well-organized scientific-industrial society, which for Comte encompasses the entire world population, there can be no more wars, not even for the conquest of colonies. While earlier wars may have been useful for the current state of affairs, the peaceful transfer of goods will prevail in the future. In a functional distribution of labor, everyone will find their apt place and thus a *lasting social peace* will be created. People will have their hold in the unity of society and the law of its progress. A community spirit (*esprit d'ensemble*) and 'altruism' will grow, which leaves behind any individualism and liberalism. Society gains its power through the wealth it creates. Leaders who exercise power only perform a social function.

As it is, Comte's scientific positivism turns out to be a *beautiful utopia*; he calls it 'religion of humanity.' It replaces the old transcendent metaphysics with an immanent one; the sociologist of human unity is the high priest of the 'great being' (*Le Grand Être*), which is now the human as such. Comte's extreme generalizations and dogmatizations allow for propaganda as does Marxism; Europe is to be a model for the rest of the world. All this is certainly cannot be proven 'positively.'

Comte also reassesses the role of reason. Like Marx and Mill and the philosophers to be discussed below, for Comte it is about action, and the impulse to act comes from an affect that reason merely controls (*agir par affection et penser pour agir*, acting out of affection and thinking for acting). As Mendelssohn already suggested (chap. 13), reason is an organ of control, and its criterion of controlling is now the success of action. Comte attempts to justify this 'positively' by physiology: in a *tableau cérébral*, he localizes the *various orientation functions in the brain* assuming that greater proximity of brain areas means greater interaction. This is still being studied today, albeit in a different stage of scientific research; Comte acknowledges this from the outset. However, he is so sure of his philosophical certainties that he *no longer* expects *any need for fundamental reorientations*. According to him, 'true positivity' is 'the absolute' of his sociology.

With all due respect for Comte's connection of philosophy to the empirical sciences, Peirce, James and Dewey, who call themselves 'pragmatists,' and Dilthey and Nietzsche, who are often called 'philosophers of life,' abandon even the immanent metaphysics of Comte's positive philosophy. Not only transcendent and transcendental doctrines, but also the alleged big unities of society and history Comte has dealt with are left behind over the course of

the 19th century. Whatever seems to be given beyond any experience and, as a matter of 'pure' thinking, to be part of an unconditionally certain world is now regarded as metaphysics. Religion and metaphysics are in a process of dissolution; however, they are not even disproved, but only, as James and Nietzsche say, 'put on ice.' Instead, one wants to reveal 'the whole, full, non-mutilated experience,' as Dilthey says, starting from natural life, the bodies and individual minds. Thus, more and more attention is paid to everyday human orientation.

Peirce, James and Dewey, initially most influential in the USA, later in the whole world, are close to each other, while also going their own ways. Their common courageous beginning is the idea that *our concepts and beliefs are shaped on the basis of foreseeable effects of our actions*; concepts are, in our language, always means to master situations of orientation. They do not represent things that seem to be present, but deal with *prágmata* in the ancient Greek sense as that which an action is about; a *prâgma* is not something that is, but anything that must be dealt with. Thus, concepts and beliefs respond to conducting one's life, where it becomes serious in the sense of Kierkegaard (chap. 16). Peirce still understands pragmatism in a narrower sense as a method of 'making clear our ideas'; in order to emphasize this, he later speaks of 'pragmaticism.' He is especially concerned with science which deals less with acting in everyday situations than with methods; Peirce's pragmaticism is mainly a methodic one. On the other hand, for James and Dewey 'pragmatism' likewise does not mean, in a 'vulgar' sense, to do what is convenient without any principles, but rather to develop principles for everyday actions. For the three of them, *philosophy itself is to become pragmatic*: it is the task of thinking to prepare human action through mental experiments, not to design metaphysical worlds. In terms of orientation philosophy, thinking provides circumspection (*Umsicht*), consideration (*Rücksicht*) and foresight (*Weitsicht* and *Voraussicht*) for 'rational' action (*vernünftiges Handeln*).

Peirce did not compose systems in philosophical books, but published a large number of articles and to a far greater extent wrote unpublished papers. This makes it difficult for us to overlook his thought, but allows him to develop his ideas step by step and on different paths over time, if you like, in an *ongoing* orientation process. He mostly worked as a scientist, mathematician and logician, but unlike Comte, he was less interested in gaining an overview of the sciences than to solve concrete scientific problems. It was his destiny to anticipate many ideas for which others later became famous. Son of a professor of mathematics

and astronomy at Harvard University, to which the family was deeply committed and on which they had significant influence, Charles himself was not very successful in academic affairs. He suffered from his late teens onward from trigeminal neuralgia which made him very sensitive and idiosyncratic; as a difficult personality, he attracted bitter enemies for life. His first wife, also a member of Cambridge high society, left him. He never got an employment at Harvard, but worked in the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, which was run by his father and where he was involved in gravity measurements, for which he repeatedly traveled to Europe. Together with William James he was member of the (perhaps ironically called) *Metaphysical Club*, in which he, according to James, developed his pragmatism. He eventually received a nontenured position at Johns Hopkins University, but again loose it, because he was not yet married to his second wife. He acquired a large plot of farmland to pay for his lavish lifestyle, but did not earn a lot and lived in a penurious way, writing encyclopedic dictionary entries, translations and the like on behalf of money. He also had to be supported by friends, and again it was the more successful William James who helped him most. Finally, he was allowed to publish some papers in the pioneering American philosophy journal *The Monist*. Today he is regarded as one of the most relevant American mathematicians, logicians and philosophers and sometimes the most original of them.

For Peirce, all inquiry's aim is to overcome doubt, uncertainty and anxiety, in our language: disorientation. Peirce calls it an 'uneasy and dissatisfied state from which we struggle to free ourselves and pass into the state of belief.' The philosophy of orientation starts with the *difference of unsettlement and reassuring calmness*; according to Peirce, settlement comes from a 'belief' that provides a 'calm and satisfactory state'; Dewey will confirm this. For Peirce, there are four 'methods' involved, (i) the method of tenacity and decisiveness, (ii) the method of authority, (iii) the method of apriori and (iv) the method of science. All need circumspection and caution: the first risks to disregard different and new opinions, the second to suppress different opinions, the third to think in conformity with undoubted assumptions; but the fourth enables to continuously correct one's own opinions in order to reach the most certain beliefs upon which the most successful practices can be based. For Peirce and the other pragmatists, the *method of science* is *paradigmatic in human orientation*.

However, terms used in science are prepared by everyday orientation experiences and the routines that have developed and are constantly reviewed in

communication. For Peirce, this results in an *ongoing accumulation of evidence*. A provisional '*plausibility*,' that can be achieved in everyday experience, in science becomes '*reasoned objective probability*.' Peirce is also one of the founders of statistics, assuming that science achieves statistical probabilities, not absolute certainties. Science looks for proving plausibilities as truths, but can never know whether it has achieved them. Therefore, Peirce is primarily interested in the logical processes that are involved in research. General statements that provide overview, circumspection and foresight result not only, as has often been believed, from deductions, i.e., conclusions from already assumed generalities to further generalities according to logical rules (rationalism), and from inductions, i.e., conclusions from comparable experiences to generalities at all (empiricism), but also and above all from what Peirce calls '*abductive reasoning*,' i.e., the design of hypotheses based on individual surprising observations. Generalities are usually created and applied on a case-by-case basis. Peirce once calls pragmatism simply 'the logic of abduction' and assumes a sequence of abductive hypothetical explanation, deductive prediction and inductive testing the hypotheses in science. Abductive reasoning is a logic that is less about recognizing existing laws of reasoning, as Kant had it, than to find *rules for success in our pursuit of certainty*.

Peirce's second discovery crucial for a philosophy of orientation is his *semiotics* (or semiotic, semeiotic, semeiotics). It allows to completely rethink the process of recognizing reality. Signs are central in orientation because all outcome of recognizing reality is formulated and communicated through them. Peirce's philosophy of signs overcomes metaphysical distinctions like perception and thought, subject and object, appearance and being. Here, too, *consciousness and reason become functions in the processes of discovery and inquiry*; they act like 'the fly on the wheel,' as Peirce calls it, while instincts, feelings and habits have much stronger impact. This is, for Peirce, 'philosophical sentimentalism.' He redefines the concept of signs from the ground up: *signs do not represent or picture an external reality in a distant consciousness, but rather create what one considers to be reality at all*. In our language, they are footholds of various kinds in situations of orientation and appear not only as numbers and words, but also as semblances, images, symptoms, signals, symbols and the like: 'all this universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs.'

Signs are not simple things among other things, nor do they refer to things in a two-digit relation, as was assumed so long, but *as signs* they are a three-digit process in which (i) a sign in the narrower sense (e.g., a word)

refers to (ii) an object (iii) in a certain interpretation (e.g., 'thunder' refers to a thunderstorm that can be dangerous during a boat trip). This '*triadic process*' can be symbolized itself by a triangle in which from each of the three corners, (i) the 'representamen' (the sign in the narrower sense), (ii) the 'object' to which it refers and (iii) the 'interpretant' associated with it, one can vary the reference of the other two corners: viewing from the representamen, you can change the object and the interpretant (i.e., signs can 'mean' different things when interpreted differently), viewing from the object the representamen and the interpretant (objects can be denoted by different signs in different interpretations), viewing from the interpretant the representamen and the object (an interpretation can be expressed by different signs and refer to different objects). At all points there are *alternatives*: signs can refer to different objects, these objects can be interpreted differently, and the interpretations can use different signs. The *sign process* moves on due to decisions on those alternatives, and it can be stopped at any time. While the earlier assumed two-digit nature of the relation of sign and reality implied a fixed relationship, according to which the sign is an image of reality, in the three-digit relation nothing is fixed forever. Peirce recognizes in the three-digit dialectic of Hegel's 'movement of the concept' likewise a triadic sign process or semiosis. He redefines thinking itself based on this.

Peirce also differentiates his own concepts of the semiosis in a triadical manner and through them the structures of our orders of the world. To use the three-digit figure methodically, he distinguishes 'firstness,' 'secondness,' and 'thirdness' in each trias and relates them to current distinctions such as 'possibility,' 'actuality,' and 'necessity' or 'vagueness' of ideas, 'discreteness' of observables and 'continuity' of concepts as well as logic, mathematics and philosophy. *By using triads, he not only makes clear the mobility of concepts, as Hegel did, but also of orientation in general, which is an orientation through signs*.

Signs are used not only for description but even more so for communication. This now becomes crucial. For Peirce, sign processes flow from the 'social principle': terms denoted by means of signs are not general because they represent something transcendent or metaphysical, but because people apply them to many different experiences and many share them. According to Peirce, sign processes and their logic are part of a 'general' or 'formal rhetoric,' which he also calls 'methodeutic.' It is based on the need to learn in our orientation which starts in wonder and pushes for inquiry. *Metaphysics* is not excluded, but also has a function, namely to bring one's orientation to an end with an

assertion of absolute certainty that *blocks further doubts and inquiries*. This also applies to the assumption of absolutely unknowable things such as the Kantian thing-in-itself. Being only a function in orientation, metaphysics itself may be different and can change with time. Thus, finally one has to accept '*tychism*,' the assumption that all is chance, Greek *tychāe*, even the evolution of laws. Yet, this evolution leaves room for increasing continuity; tychism and '*synechism*' (from Greek *synéchein*, 'hold together') respond to each other as sorts of Firstness and Thirdness (with discreteness as Secondness). In this point, Peirce and Nietzsche agree, who probably knew nothing of each other (Peirce's follower Josiah Royce was the first to make Nietzsche known in the USA): Nietzsche shares the Peircian connection of tychism and synechism as his methodic (not metaphysical) hypothesis of 'wills to power' (see below).

For Peirce, it is clear (i) that there is *no genuine introspection*, but all knowledge of the internal world comes from hypothetical reasoning based on known external facts, (ii) that there is *no intuition* in the sense of non-inferential cognition, but that all cognition is determined by previous cognitions and (iii) that *all thinking is in signs*; all these are also major topics of the late Wittgenstein (chap. 20), who probably knows James, but does not or hardly know Peirce. Universal doubt, as Descartes attempted it (chap. 9), is impossible: according to Peirce (and Wittgenstein), doubts are guided by preconceptions and prejudices as well, and we do not need an unconditional certainty as a paradigm of further certainties. Pierce already uses the simile of fibers that intertwine in a thread without any of them running through the whole thread, which is also made famous by Wittgenstein.

William James is one of the few fortunate people among the pioneering philosophers of the 19th century. He grew up in a wealthy and intellectual family, learned to read and speak German and French fluently, visited Europe first with his family, later often times as a scholar. Urged by his father, he studied medicine which later led him to physiology and psychology. His father was a theologian, his godfather Ralph Waldo Emerson (chap. 16), his brother the likewise famous author Henry James; Peirce was his close friend, he was happily married, had five children and enjoyed a very successful academic career: Harvard University established a new chair for him. James first pursued experimental psychology which was developed by the German Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) in order to transform psychology into an empirical science based on physiology. James expanded this with his voluminous *Principles of Psychology* of 1890, which made

him the founding father of psychology in the USA; he built up his philosophy on it. He was known for his kindness and humble attitude. Certainly, he also suffered from severe illnesses including a kind of neurasthenia which drove him to suicide early on. He kept his path to God open and published highly influential lectures on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, integrating religion into the varieties of psychology and human orientation. He coined the term of 'pragmatism' in a lecture held 1898 at the University of California in Berkeley. He called it 'Peirce's principle,' but used the term 'practicalism' as well, because he did not want to reserve pragmatism to the scientific method. He dedicated the most important of his expositions of pragmatism to John Stuart Mill (chap. 17). With James, pragmatism became a kind of happy philosophy.

For him, the term 'metaphysics' covers the Continental tradition of rationalism in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of nominalism, empiricism and utilitarism. James dares to appeal to common sense, which is rather frowned upon in German philosophy, and connects pragmatism closer to it than to scientific research. What James calls 'pragmatism' turns 'away from first things, principles, categories, supposed necessities' and 'towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts.' The '*disbelief in the Absolute*' becomes the landmark of pragmatism. The philosophy of orientation closely connects to this: one may draw on metaphysics when nothing else helps in one's orientation, e.g., on a free will or God, but these are 'doctrines of belief' and 'terms of promise' that can be countered with other doctrines and beliefs. James recommends 'linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labor' and, in doing so, maintaining a 'maximum of continuity.' This includes that all 'truths' are valid only for a certain time and can be surpassed in new situations. You always have to reckon with this, and it is sufficient for orientation. In James' pragmatism time begins to prevail.

He argues that *preliminary truths* have a 'function of agreeable leading,' i.e., an orienting function. When truths prove successful in orientation, they are consulted again in comparable situations: 'True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot.' This is their 'cash value,' as James and Peirce courageously call it, bringing down grandiose philosophical doctrines down to earth, and this cash value creates something like a *'credit system' of truth which has to prove its worth in communication*. This means: something is considered true and good as long as most relevant people agree with it. Yet, according to James there must also be '*direct face-to-face*

verification'; without it 'the fabric of truth collapses like a financial system with no cash-basis whatever. You accept my verification of one thing, I yours of another. We *trade on each other's truth*.' In this exchange, orientation finds enough foothold, without demanding unconditional certainties. Even personal temperaments, like 'tender-minded' and 'tough-minded,' matter in this ongoing play. Looking back, James finds a number of precursors in his 'pragmatic method' like Socrates, Aristotle (chap. 4-5), Locke, Berkeley and Hume (chap. 11).

His method is descriptive. Instead of holding on to principles, James observes *processes and structures of experience* and looks for the conditions under which they are possible. He considers all intellectual and spiritual life as processes of natural life. He emphasizes diversity and transformation, culture and history. For James just as for Dilthey and Nietzsche, the concept of life includes overall contexts of which we cannot have a total overview. In life, there is *no a priori*: it is always presupposed as a whole, but can never be grasped as a whole; it neither has nor allows transcendent or transcendental justification; it regulates itself. This is made clear by Dilthey (see below).

James himself calls pragmatism 'an attitude of orientation.' For him, the orientation by life contexts demands *philosophy's self-restraint.* Philosophical truths being part of life contexts emerge from experiences; new experiences are gained in self-referential processes, connected to each other by 'conductors' that offer themselves at some points. Understanding connects to observation, earlier knowledge, signs, philosophical and religious beliefs, etc. that are integrated into the *contexts of experience*. This integration makes assumptions true. Yet, there are manifold systems of integration, whereas 'the "absolutely" true, meaning what no farther experience will ever alter,' is thinkable only as 'that ideal vanishing-point towards which we imagine that all our temporary truths will some day converge.' This alludes to Peirce. In James' view, all experiences 'lean on each other,' but *the whole of experiences leans on nothing*. What remains is a '*state of relative insecurity*.'

James does not state a bad *relativism*, but rather a *realism* which philosophy must confront. This includes the Hobbesian insight (chap. 8) that you do not desire something, because it is good (and true), but you regard something as good (and true), because you desire it; you are okay with something to the extent that it fits well to the routines of your society and your own life. Most 'truths' are not named; they only catch attention when they make a difference, which means for pragmatism: when they render action more or less successful.

In their situations, people assess the *success* of their actions. Relativism is bad only when it is related to a—in James' view—bad absolutism.

Single concepts are 'only artificial short-cuts': 'Their great use is to summarize old facts and to lead to new ones.' All comes down to this *'being guided' by a concept*, and every approval of terms is 'an affair of leading.' Logical linkages which operate with abstract features are abstracted themselves from some concrete entities; which abstract feature is considered crucial in a situation depends on the purposes and interests which are relevant in this situation. Thus, one has to pragmatically question such purposes and interests. James argues that, while the terms of 'great systems of logical and mathematical truths' are very manifold, the sensible facts of experience 'eventually arrange themselves, so that our eternal truths hold good of realities also. This marriage of fact and theory is endlessly fertile.' It is never definitive.

For James, this is the place and the function of '*common sense*.' It is a collection of plausibilities that cannot and need not to be justified anymore. It is the place to rest for a while in the process of orientation. As James puts it in *The Meaning of Truth* (1909), 'the common-sense stage is a perfectly definite haltingplace of thought, primarily for purposes of action.' Seen from a rationalistic point of view, this stage is 'vague, confused and mixed,' but in concrete situations, it is 'a use usually suggested sufficiently by the circumstances of the special case.' Common sense orients us 'in an extraordinarily successful way': for James, it 'suffices for all the necessary ends of life.' In addition, the meaning of signs is usually made clear by the situation in which they are used, and no further explanation is needed. After all, the '*economy in thought*' is crucial in all situations of orientation. Nevertheless, one has to be careful with doctrines of common sense. Time goes on and with it the plausibilites of common sense.

In his psychology, James goes back to the mere '*stream of consciousness*' in which factors like attention, conception, discrimination and association, sense of time, memory and imagination, perception, reasoning, emotion, instinct and will cooperate. The image of 'stream' expresses the ongoing overlaps, changes and substitutions between its components that epistemologies try to separate. The first step to such separations is, as James observes, *typing* (or typifying) which collects some preliminary footholds of how something could be captured. Typing is a kind of generalization for further determination leaving leeway for alternative conceptualizations. Typifying is flexible; it includes decisions whom everyone making use of them is responsible for.

Dewey, the youngest of the three great pragmatists and, like James, a very successful university professor with an enormous impact also on the non-academic public, devotes himself mainly to educate people for a real democracy under pragmatic premises. In a laboratory school, he lets students directly cope with practical situations, confronts them with orientation situations in which they are to discover the problems themselves and find solutions to them. Dewey also makes '*situation*' a central term in his *Logic* or *Theory of Inquiry* (1938) and describes it as 'a whole in virtue of its immediately pervasive quality;' a situation is 'individual, indivisible and unduplicable.' Distinctions and relations are 'instituted within a situation and they are recurrent and repeatable in different situations.' One does not start from isolated objects: 'We live and act in connection with the existing environment, not in connection with isolated objects, even though a singular thing may be crucially significant in deciding how to respond to total environment.' The aim of an inquiry is to transform 'an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole.' According to this, an inquiry itself is already an action and thus pragmatic. These are helpful definitions to start a philosophy of orientation; in his *Quest for Certainty* (1929) Dewey considers all human life and within it philosophy to be forced by the search for certainty, while some philosophies have found certainty in pure thought. However, Dewey's focus is still on science which looks for its own certainty. Though metaphysics is outdated for him.

Dilthey and Nietzsche are mainly concerned with liberating science and philosophy from metaphysics. In their view, Comte's positivism with his big unities only transforms metaphysics. Nietzsche appreciates Emerson, Dilthey mentions him, discusses Mill, but both hardly know the pragmatists; Dilthey is suspicious of Nietzsche, and Nietzsche does not even mention Dilthey, even though he knows some of his work. Nonetheless, they agree in regarding metaphysics as an ongoing challenge, because it is deeply rooted in European thinking since Aristotle closely connected logic and metaphysics (chap. 5). Both are also intensively interested in the research of their time; both enter philosophy from a special academic discipline, Dilthey from theology, Nietzsche from classical philology: as can often be observed in philosophy, coming from outside encourages one to break with old philosophical traditions. Like Peirce, James and Dewey, Dilthey develops a research methodology, yet not for the natural

sciences, but for the 'human sciences,' which since his time have been called in German *Geisteswissenschaften* (humanities); Nietzsche remains a philologist in that he insists on close reading (especially his own texts). He provides a first philosophy of interpretation.

Both sons of protestant pastors, they grew up in middle-class circumstances, turned away from theology and remained critical against Christian doctrines throughout their lifetime. Both attended the very best schools, enjoyed outstanding teachers at their universities, became university professors themselves at a very young age. Dilthey's career started in Basel and ended in Berlin on Hegel's chair. Nietzsche, who was appointed to a professorship in Basel already as a student of classical philology, was forced to resign his position after ten years for reasons of severe illness; during this period, he turned to philosophy. Since then, he lived at changing places primarily in Italy, Switzerland and Southern France as an 'errant fugitive.' He continued to look for a climate he could bear; yet, also for the sake of his intellectual freedom, he never stayed for more than some months at the same place. Whereas Dilthey was happily married and had children, Nietzsche tried to marry, but after the disaster with Lou von Salomé (1861–1937), the only person in his life with whom he could philosophize on equal footing, he preferred to live alone. He avoided people because he hardly felt understood; he only maintained few close friendships. He believed himself far superior to the philosophers of his time, which has since been confirmed to a certain extent. In contrast, Dilthey was, like James, a gentle scholar closely interconnected with his colleagues. Dilthey and Nietzsche likewise were tormented by chronic illnesses that brought them periods of depression, Nietzsche more than any of the others. He made this part of his philosophizing: his illnesses kept him aware of the fact that thinking to a large extent depends on physical conditions; as he denoted, his enduring aches and pains taught him to avoid resentments against life; philosophizing helped him to survive. He gave his philosophy a personal style as a sign that all philosophy ultimately arises from a personal life and experience or his own orientation.

As is expected in science and philosophy, Dilthey refrains from personal matters, academically values his results and presents his philosophical reorientations in traditional treatises. Nietzsche instead proclaims extreme theses and creates a hitherto unknown diversity of literary forms of writing, enforcing the image of a solitary genius. Through his 'subtler laws of his style' he explicitly makes a mystery out of his texts and the author who writes them; he doubts the

possibility and authority of universal doctrines. Yet, he fascinates and irritates his audience through introducing a teacher of utmost authority, Zarathustra, a prophet who comes from a faraway country, shares an abundance of wisdom and nonetheless fails with his famous doctrines including the overman, the will to power and the eternal return of the same. As a result, it is impossible to say what Nietzsche, who also keeps his distance from his 'son' Zarathustra, actually 'teaches.' Yet (or precisely because of this) his philosophizing remains challenging to this day: after most scholars have sought a new 'system' of 'doctrines' or even a new 'metaphysics' in it, it has taken more than a century to observe and to respect his specific philosophical orientation process that proceeds with thought experiments, again and again comes up with surprises and never ends in definite and ultimate results like a 'system.' Nietzsche's philosophizing simultaneously orients and disorients people; it stimulates them to find their own orientation in it and beyond it. *Philosophizing as such becomes an orientation process which evolves differently in everyone*. This means: there is no universal orientation, equal to all human beings, which would be a metaphysical one.

In his first main work, *Introduction to the Humanities* (*Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*), Dilthey presents a detailed history of the 'rule' and the 'decay' of metaphysics; he calls its historicization, which metaphysics has always resisted, its 'euthanasia.' There isn't a law of progress which Comte believed to have recognized. Dilthey's result is that 'metaphysics cannot overcome the relativity of the circle of experiences from which its concepts are taken.' This circle of experiences which changes with the circumstances of life is 'unpredictable, relative and restricted'; its unity cannot be understood in a metaphysical way from a 'logical coherence of the world' either. This is Nietzsche's view as well. As for Comte, metaphysics was a step in the process of liberation from religious claims asserting ultimate certainties. Metaphysics has its 'historical and psychological right.' But one cannot overcome it simply by claiming to be free of it. You can succumb to metaphysics without realizing it or, as Nietzsche puts it, 'deal with the basic errors of humankind, though in such a way, as if they were basic truths.'

The obvious decay of religion and metaphysics calls for new orientation in the whole of philosophy. In Nietzsche's words, in the meantime 'we cannot appreciate our knowledge and are *not allowed* to appreciate that what we want to lie to ourselves. […] *One* interpretation,' namely the metaphysical interpretation of the world, 'perished; since it was regarded as *the* interpretation, it seems as

if existence was meaningless at all, as if everything was *in vain.'* This is what Nietzsche calls 'nihilism': the 'highest values' like God, truth and morals are 'devalued'; now, in order to get through and survive this, human beings themselves need to create new values, but may not be able to do this. Dilthey confirms Nietzsche's diagnosis; he speaks of the 'perplexity of the spirit about itself' or the 'consciousness of anarchy looming in all deeper convictions': 'Maybe the ultimate suppositions of human life and action have never been exposed to disintegration to such an extent.'

It is only a descriptive method through which this can be grasped. Dilthey and Nietzsche follow it in order to reveal the conditions and structures of human orientation that precede both metaphysical and scientific thinking, just as the American pragmatists do. Nietzsche describes these conditions and structures in the most stimulating way, Dilthey in the most differentiated way. Dilthey experiments with the notion of *Verstehen* ('understanding' in a specific German sense), Nietzsche with the notions of 'perspective' and 'interpretation.' *Verstehen* in Dilthey's sense is understanding processes of life under conditions of life: for conceiving of something in life you must also conceive of the conditions and contexts of your own conceiving in life, which results in a circle. Yet, this is not a disastrous logical circle, but a 'hermeneutic' one which reveals the whole from the parts together with the parts of the whole, here the footholds in a life situation. This means: in understanding, life reveals itself without it being determined what life itself is. This is what Dilthey calls 'self-interpreting of life' (*Selbstauslegung des Lebens*). In individuals, life unfolds itself via the three steps of experience (*Erleben*), expression (*Ausdruck*) and understanding (*Verstehen*), which may be kinds of Peirce's firstness, secondness and thirdness. This self-interpreting is, like orientation, a timely process continuously going on without pre-given rules.

Dilthey responds to the huge success of history during the 19th century on the one hand and the new experimental psychology on the other hand through developing a 'critique of historical reason' (*Kritik der historischen Vernunft*). It includes a 'descriptive psychology' that goes beyond the scientific 'explanatory' or 'analytic psychology' in order to describe coherencies in the soul-life (*Seelenleben*) that are not just 'thought out or deduced, but experienced.' As for Dewey, the title 'epistemology' is to be suspended in this respect: Dilthey's descriptive psychology proceeds no longer from dichotomies like subject and object or body and soul, but rather from functional life contexts. Nietzsche

takes psychology to be critical and debunking, and he uses it in order to disclose hidden personal motives behind all claims for absolute certainty particularly in moral philosophy. In his psychology, he finds a new way to the 'basic problems of philosophy' as well. His 'genealogy of morality' also is an example and a foundation of a critical moral psychology.

Dilthey is, after Schleiermacher (chap. 15), to whom he dedicates a lot of his work, the first to elaborate hermeneutics as the genuine method of the humanities. Hermeneutics contributes much to understand the orientation in situations; it reminds us to consider our own situations, which influence our cognitions. Dilthey also discovers fundamental structures of our orientation. Within the 'connections of life' (*Lebenszusammenhänge*) 'structure connections' (*Strukturzusammenhänge*) continuously emerge that dissociate themselves from their environment, sustain themselves within it for a while so that they can react upon its environment, like eddies that occur in brooks, when the current hits stones, move in their own paths for some time and, under significantly shifting conditions, dissipate in the water. The crucial news is: in our everyday life (and our everyday orientation) this happens spontaneously; it does not have and does not need causal explanation and metaphysical justification, but you can track it historically. Dilthey speaks of 'acquired structure connections' (*erworbene Strukturzusammenhänge*) which develop on their own terms.

Here, Nietzsche uses his keyword of '*will to power*' which appears strange, provocative and once again metaphysical. To be as brief as possible here (for the rest compare my *Orientation to the Philosophy of Nietzsche*, 2022 [Nashville: Orientations Press, 2022]): 'will to power' is Nietzsche's spectacular anti-metaphysical concept. If, in a thought experiment, you disregard general laws, transcendental orders or metaphysical entities of any kind which presuppose something equal in unequal matters, entirely individual occurrences are left which react immediately to each other, tackle, influence or overwhelm each other – as wills to power (in the plural): 'if laws are absolutely absent, every power draws its last consequence at every moment.' If, for reasons of a methodical principle of economy, you go back to one form of 'all active force,' then 'the world would be the "will to power" and nothing else.' Nietzsche uses the subjunctive and quotation marks and explicitly remarks that this is also an 'interpretation.' Nevertheless, when individuals appropriate other individuals, orders arise and vanish like the Diltheyian *erworbene Strukturzusammenhänge.* Interpretation is a kind of appropriation and in this sense a kind of will to power that creates

its own orders; in the same sense, orientation 'masters' situations. This means: everything is interpretation, including this sentence itself.

Since interpretations and orientations are bound to standpoints, they must differ; when you communicate with others from different standpoints, there is initially no criterion for a 'true' understanding, if you do not presuppose a metaphysical standpoint above the perspectives. Therefore all understanding is inevitably also a misunderstanding: everyone understands and interprets the other in his or her own way. Nietzsche here introduces the term of leeway: for him, understanding is a 'leeway and playground of misunderstanding' (*Spielraum und Tummelplatz des Missverständnisses*); true understanding is a metaphysical prejudice. But this is not bad: human life obviously always also needs deception and self-deception in order to sustain itself. One must 'admit untruth as a condition in life,' and logic, metaphysics and morality could, according to Nietzsche's approach, belong to such 'untruths.' Philosophy as it is may itself be a 'will to untruth'; in any case, it is a kind of 'world-interpretation' (*Welt-Interpretation*) which means a will to power. Dilthey deals with 'world views' (*Weltanschauungen*), none of which are simply true nor superior to the others: everyone decides (often implicitly) for such a world view according to their own preferences. This may still be hard to accept, but, seen without any embellishment or idealization, it could be true, and from the point of view of human orientation it makes sense.

As a consequence, like the pragmatists, Dilthey and Nietzsche admit only an orienting or steering function to thinking and especially abstract thinking; whatever it may be, it helps to orient oneself and others. Thinking and communicating require language; language uses signs which can abbreviate matters and again be abbreviated by signs; it shortens and accelerates human orientation. Nietzsche considers language a 'process of abbreviation' (*Abkürzungs-Prozess*) which is especially helpful in situations of common needs and hardships. Generalizations are abbreviations as well. They start with typifications. As for James, typifying is a kind of preliminary generalizing which mostly is sufficient in communication. Nietzsche in his writings prefers typifying to generalizing and defining in order to keep his concepts flexible and to be able to develop them further in his own philosophical process of orientation, which goes deeper and deeper. In his entire work he typecasts figures like the 'free spirit,' the 'last man,' the 'great man,' the 'overman,' the 'type Jesus' and so on or personalities like Socrates, Caesar, Jesus, Napoleon, Goethe and his own Zarathustra; he

does this often in a caricaturing way. He anticipates that he will again be understood in a metaphysical way (e.g., when he speaks of the 'will to power' in the singular), which is hard to avoid with general philosophical statements. Therefore he sometimes speaks with grand pathos, sometimes with irony, in order to compromise what appear as 'doctrines.' Such surfaces are intended to deceive those among his readers who are unable to grasp and bear his depths. In his style of writing, Nietzsche explicitly also breaks with the scientific treatise introduced by the greatest metaphysician, Aristotle.

The philosophy of orientation is still dealing with the problems that William James points out at the beginning and the end of his overview of pragmatism: 'Philosophy is at once the most sublime and the most trivial of human pursuits.' – 'On the one side the universe is absolutely secure, on the other it is still pursuing its adventures.' According to James the solution to both problems is 'to live on a scheme of uncertified possibilities which [one] trusts; willing to pay with his own person, if need be, for the realization of the ideals which [one] frames.' Peirce, James, Dewey, Dilthey and Nietzsche try to get by in their philosophies without metaphysics and its unconditional certainties and in doing so create a new subtlety of philosophy: they begin to reveal the conditions and structures of the real human orientation that metaphysics has concealed.

Obviously, people need a somewhat metaphysical approach in certain areas, with its comprehensive unities and unconditional certainties, as demonstrated by the 'positivist' Comte. Here, the pragmatists refer to religion with its kind of unconditional certainty, and Nietzsche, too, ultimatel pays great respect to his 'type Jesus.' However, in nihilism, which according to Nietzsche has become a 'normal state' without religion, metaphysics and belief in unconditional truth, preliminary certainties may suffice in human orientation and uncertainties should be appreciated as well when they trigger new courageous beginnings. The pragmatists and Dilthey and Nietzsche agree in the fact that all kinds of certainties and uncertainties are discovered through experience and thought experiments on the one hand and description and comparison on the other; they can be supported by logical means. For our orientation, the most common and most relevant thought experiment is abduction, which Peirce discovers besides deduction and induction and which brings general hypotheses into play from case to case. If we rely on 'truths' to the extent that they prove themselves in our actions, as the pragmatists claim, this implies that human orientation generalizes its footholds and their patterns for a time in a

preliminary manner, whereas metaphysics use to universalize their footholds and oftentimes assume hidden worlds for their universals 'behind' the realities that can be experienced. So time once again takes center stage in the 20th century's philosophy.

D. 20TH CENTURY:

The Time of Nihilism

During the 20th century, the scientific progress runs faster and faster. At its beginning, above all physics, mathematics and logic become significant for philosophy: they revolutionize their entire conceptions of nature and thinking. The macrophysical theory of relativity of Albert Einstein (1879–1955) and the microphysical uncertainty principle of Werner Heisenberg (1901–1976) trigger fundamental philosophical reflections in physics itself. Here, a further fundamental statement of Aristotle's is thrown overboard. While he derived the metaphysics of persisting substance from the relativity of motion (chap. 5), this now also becomes physically untenable: according to Einstein, there is nothing in the physical universe that remains motionless; what seems to persist relative to a motion is itself in motion; energy as the product of mass and the square of the speed of light ($E=mc^2$) can no longer be identified as a persisting substance. In the unimaginable dimensions of the speed of light, we are now dealing with a possibly infinite number of 'inertial systems,' *within* which simultaneity in the usual sense can be determined, but *among* which there are displacements of time the faster they move against each other. What appears simultaneous in one inertial system has already passed or is still pending in another; however, it can ever be observed only from one inertial system. This is *perspectivism on the largest scale*. The experience of simultaneity is one of the last seemingly absolute certainties from which we can hardly detach ourselves.

As we learned from Bernhard Riemann (1826–1866), this also applies to space: space can be represented by different geometries as well and, according to Einstein's general theory of relativity, it is curved by large masses. Its curvature also deflects light signals, and so the place from which they originate can also be somewhere other than where it appears to be. It turns out to be undecidable whether the universe expands infinitely or periodically contracts and expands again. The evidence for this is extraordinarily complex; human imagination is no longer sufficient to make its results plausible. The 'natural attitude' is irritated even more than it was by Copernicus' conversion from the geocentric to the heliocentric system; since Copernicus, Nietzsche writes, 'mankind rolls into nothingness, into the penetrating feeling of its nothingness.' For this kind of nihilism, there now is scientific evidence.

This can also be seen in the microphysical realm. According to Max Planck (1858–1947) and Niels Bohr (1885–1962), effects in nature here are not continuous, as previously assumed, but take place in quantum jumps. What appeared as an atom, i.e., an indivisible elementary particle, turns out to be increasingly differentiable and, depending on measurement, appears as a particle or a wave. Like space and time, the elementary material components of nature are no *longer fixed beings*. It becomes clear that measurement *cannot simply determine them*. According to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the location and momentum of particles or waves, just like time and energy, can only be determined *alternatively*; if one is determined, the other can no longer be determined; the respective determinacy is generated by the respective measurement. Thus, physical research must also take into account its own process of measurement; it also becomes *self-referential*.

In a fundamental crisis of mathematics and logic, self-reference proves to be fatal: Kurt Gödel (1906–1978) shows in his incompleteness theorems through mathematical means that either the completeness or the consistency of a logical or mathematical theorem can be proven, not both at the same time; even Wittgenstein finds this difficult to cope with. *Absolute certainties are ruled out in logic too*. Exactitude remains; orientation becomes increasingly difficult.

In addition, the expectation of the so-called 'Big Freeze' arises as a new kind of apocalypse: the energy that maintains physical orders would dissipate in trillions of years into mere evenly distributed heat (entropy). However, in the second half of the 20th century, the 'chaos theory' is developed, which makes it conceivable how order can emerge from disorder or more complex order from less

complex order (negentropy). This happens in the 'flow' of energy in the shape of 'flow equilibria,' as illustrated by the example of eddies in streams (chap. 18). From the physical point of view, all life is due to this. Here, even the smallest, no longer calculable deviations can lead to *alternative orders*; the processes resemble *decisions under uncertainty*, as they pervade everyday orientation. In physical thermodynamics, too, it is about 'islands of order in a sea of disorder.' Such *spontaneously emerging orders* can continue to differentiate themselves, always depending on certain initial conditions, and can also collapse with time. The philosophy of orientation here recognizes some of its founding features.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) questions the autonomy of the ego and its reason by means of his pychoanalysis: human action is also guided by experiences that have been unconsciously ingrained in our memories, which can be explored to a certain extent by interpreting dreams. On the other hand there are overpowering social authorities that may dominate it. Hence, the ego can no longer be sure of its free will. In the second half of the 20th century, brain research becomes a leading science which also questions the human free will, on which law and morality depend. Computer science creates 'artificial intelligence' which may surpass the abilities of the human brain in some respects and may make decisions instead of people. *Human reason loses the splendor of its superiority.* Here, too, apocalyptic fears arise.

These are new starting conditions for philosophy as well: as Pascal already outlined (chap. 10), human beings can never be sure of their world and of themselves; they have to cope with *undecidability, vagueness, incompleteness, unpredictability* and, to repeat it, 'to work for the uncertain, go across the sea, ride on a board.' Nevertheless, in the meantime the credibility of scientific results and the acceptability of technical achievements surmount the credibility and acceptability of philosophical statements. Less than ever, philosophy can do without orienting itself to the sciences. All the more does it look for an overview of the current state of scientific research, as Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) does in the first part of his *Philosophy*: he gives it the title *World Orientation*. Philosophers now have to cope with the '*most fundamental nihilism*' as the '*normal state*,' as Nietzsche calls it. Thus we have to make clear, how we can *live or orient ourselves in life without any absolute certainties*.

In the 20th century, nihilism initially was understood as something destructive, and indeed there proved to be a lot of hints for that: the familiar rural and artisanal world of work largely gave way to Fordism, the industrial

engineering by assembly lines; the comfortable bourgeois existence was swamped by mass movements; in Europe, there was little trust in democracy after the decay of monarchies. From the biological theory of evolution, social Darwinism and racism were derived. Communist and fascist leaders became overpowering and were able to command horrific genocides. Increasing complexity and lack of overview and manageability made simplifying ideologies or narratives attractive, which erupted in the most serious wars of all time. The new physics helped to produce atomic bombs. For decades, 'cold war' between the blocs of East and West continued to create constant fear of a World War III that would be an all-destructive nuclear war. Terrorism was spreading throughout the world and commited horrific crimes. Over time, it became clear that the human beings are destroying their own living environment through their exploitation of nature.

On the other hand, the wealth of nations increases, political democratization progresses in many countries, colonization was brought to an end and minorities could free themselves from discrimination. In the second half of the 20th century, the UN and the Declaration of Human Rights gained importance, albeit not effective power for enforcing them. Through open markets and the standardization of traffic and communication by digitization, the peoples of the world, so long devoted to aggressive nationalism, increasingly considered themselves a global society in which everyone is dependent on everyone else. Globalization raised the hope that the more costly wars become, the less likely they are to happen and that enduring peace can be achieved on a democratic basis. Partly in national competition, partly in international cooperation, the superpowers USA and Sovjet Union succeeded in setting foot on the moon and from there taking a look at the 'blue planet' Earth as a whole. This seemed to open up a new, yet unknown future. Deep despairs and great hopes intermingled more than ever.

The philosophy of the 20th century reacts to these developments only to a limited extent; the impossibility of a moon landing is still one of the last irrefutable certainties which even the later Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) holds on to, who is so open to innovation. As an established science, philosophy is primarily concerned with its own progress. With regard to its scientific nature, it is caught up in an ongoing schism. After leading representatives of the logical analysis of language such as Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970) were expelled from Europe by the Nazis, they unleashed a new strong philosophical movement in the USA and Great Britain, which became dominant at universities in the second

half of the 20th century. In contrast, other currents such as the philosophy of life, phenomenology, existential philosophy and so-called postmodern philosophy were marginalized in continental Europe as well. A warlike vocabulary was cultivated: alternative philosophies are presented as fixed positions under the name of '-isms' and their 'representatives' are assigned to 'camps' that entrench themselves against each other. While Kant who developed his *Critique of Pure Reason* in a similar 'battlefield of endless controversy' created a new common philosophical basis (chap. 11), no such attempt has been made to date. An overall reflection on the philosophical significance of the new circumstances, comparable to the works of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and Hegel in their time, was no longer considered possible. The only person who dared a pathbreaking reorientation from ground up was the sociologist and systems theorist Niklas Luhmann (1927–1998) – and was awarded the Hegel Prize. We will refer to him in the last chapter of the part (chap. 24). Yet, Juergen Habermas (born 1929) who transformed philosophical Marxism into a normative theory of communication inspired by Kant, sharply opposed Luhmann's functional theory. Ethics began to prevail: people were less concerned with what the world looks like than with how it should be. The more democracy appeared to be in danger, the more one tried to strengthen the community spirit by constituting norms.

'Grand' philosophical designs became all the more questionable as the greatest and most influential philosophers of the 20th century, as most people assume, Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein, themselves dared to reorient their drafts after decades. Philosophy continued to be an open and exciting movement. Now it has an enormous accumulation of knowledge at its disposal, much of which could be philosophically relevant, but no one can overlook it. Hence a new form of encyclopedia established itself, no longer in the Hegelian shape, but in d'Alembert's and Diderot's (chap. 14), without there still are editors with their prudence. For contemporary knowledge as a whole, digitization gave rise to the collaborative enterprise of Wikipedia, whose articles are written and constantly revised in more than thirty languages by independent authors without any common philosophical concept underlying them or to be expected of them.

In the following chapters, I proceed less historically than along factual aspects, namely the significance of time (chap. 19), language (chap. 20) and the given (chap. 21) for our orientation and the consequences for conceptualizing the human being (chap. 22), the human acting (chap. 23), society, political

power and justice (chap. 24). I will now dispense with the philosophers' personal characteristics. Whereas after German idealism the most innovative philosophers in the 19th century were still great outsiders, it was in the 20th century largely successful university professors who creatively advanced philosophy. Now we need to name more people: from close up, far more persons come into view than when looking back to more distant times. In the 20th century, women finally had the opportunity to make strong impact in philosophy.

19. Alternative Orientations in View of Time: Bergson, Whitehead, Heidegger, Ricœur, Blumenberg, Spencer-Brown

After the sciences have abandoned fundamental dogmas, mathematics the dogmas of a single, three-dimensional space in Riemann's geometry and the primacy of numbers in Cantor's set theory, physics the dogmas of material substrates of all movements, their independence from observation, their continuity and their complete calculability, Henri Bergson (1859–1941) and Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) find the core of these theoretical innovations in the abandonment of the entire scheme of Newtonian mechanism that is also part of the natural attitude. We only imagine solid bodies that can be entirely isolated and absolutely localized in space and time and are determined by completely calculable and continuously acting forces. In Kant's reconstruction, it is a transcendental subject that isolates bodies from the flow of events, localizes them through his 'pure intuitions' of space and time and connects them according to the law of cause and effect, which is one of the transcendental conditions of its own recognition of natural things. All this must now philosophically be reconsidered. Bergson and Whitehead take time as their starting point.

Bergson, whose best man is Marcel Proust, whose friend William James, whose discussion partners include Albert Einstein and who, like John Dewey in the USA and Bertrand Russell in Great Britain, becomes the leading philosopher in France with an enormous impact also on the non-academic public, attacks the old philosophical hierarchy of timeless reason and temporal experience as

such. By re-evaluating it, he hopes to advance once again to true reality. To this end he drafts a metaphysics of life: true reality is first to be found in the *life of time* that leaves open all determinations and in which nothing is certain. In this respect, we can call Bergson's new courageous beginning nihilistic (he himself doesn't call it such). His crucial idea is: when time is made an object, that is, when it is isolated, objectified and fixed by determination, its temporality disappears. The determined time is not the true time. Bergson draws on the distinction of quantity and quality: true time is only to be experienced as a quality; when it is determined by reason, 'quality' becomes calculable 'quantity.'

Hence, the task is finding appropriate concepts for the qualitative experience of time. Bergson argues that the contents of the stream of consciousness, as described by William James (chap. 18), cannot be separated from each other at all, held separately from each other and then methodically related to each other, as Descartes thought (chap. 9). In this respect, the modern philosophy of consciousness is based on a false premise. This can be particularly observed in dreams and in listening to music. In dreams, the contents are constantly transforming themselves; they can neither be separated nor held on to without being transformed. Members of an orchestra may spatially sit next to each other, but in the orchestral sound their playing becomes an indissoluble unity that permeates all its ingredients, and so does an emerging fear permeate the feelings of the whole body. Pain at one place of the body changes the entire body feeling, a single deviating note, e.g., a timpani beat in the middle of an andante or a dissonance, modifies the entire character of the piece. Sensations that are always also part of the stream of consciousness are inextricably interwoven with thoughts and color them.

'Life' is Bergson's term for the fact that nothing in it can be isolated without being transformed. Life can be experienced precisely in the mutual interpenetration (*pénétration mutuelle*) of what is experienced, and through this the original time is also experienced. Bergson calls the quantified and measurable time, which is displayed on clocks, *temps* and contrasts it with the qualitative *durée* which is felt in changing experience. He assigns *temps* to the experience of the 'outside,' *durée* to the experience of the 'inside.' While the inner world is always experienced differently (*hétérogène*), the time of clocks is standardized; while external circumstances can be restored under laboratory conditions, inner time is *irreversible*. While language, whose words are separated and recombined like separated things, supports the spatialization of the acts

of consciousness and their timeless determination, the inner self and its time can only be addressed vaguely; here we are dependent on *images and metaphors*. The insistence on clear and unambiguous determinations has made 'true' time disappear in philosophy and the sciences.

As a result, immediate consciousness (*conscience immediate*) was marginalized or completely eradicated (*écrasé*) in philosophy. Instead, Bergson contrasts theoretical *intelligence* with *intuition* as immediate experience and the external determination of cause and effect with the momentum of life (*élan vital*): before all theory, the momentum of life carries us along in a creative evolution (*évolution créatrice*) from one impression to the next, without there being a firm foothold in it. Bergson operates with categories such as tension, intensity, inconscient, instinct, vivification, all of which are to elude spatial juxtaposition. He even transposes the physical concept of energy into something like life energy. He examines how memory works with images and the like. In this way, he attempts to distance the experience of time from Newtonian mechanics and integrate it into the stream of consciousness and into the stream of life.

Nevertheless, Bergson retains the dualisms of experience and thought and of truly being and sheer appearance. We are now dealing with two egos, the inner and true and the externalized and apparent one, and with two different worlds, the inner world of individual and spontaneous intuition and the outer world of scientific and theoretical cognition. Bergson also finds in them different sources of morality and religion, a morality and religion of love on the one hand and a morality and religion of norms and constraints on the other. The freedom of human beings is not founded by a reason that becomes practical and is directed toward the universal, as Kant had it, but lies in the indeterminable realm of the inner world in which both voluntary and involuntary decisions, intermingled with each other, happen. Bergson also welcomes Darwin's theory of evolution. This opens up philosophy as a whole to unforeseen possibilities. He considers his new beginning as confirmed by Einstein's theory of relativity (Einstein only shares this to a limited extent). The ego before all social constraints will be an important starting point for French existential philosophy (chap. 22).

Whitehead first attempts, together with Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), to establish a new foundation for mathematics from logic (*Principia Mathematica*), then to provide a foundation for natural philosophy (*The Concept of Nature*), then to outline a history of science and philosophy as a whole (*Science and the Modern World*), until he creates a new foundation for philosophy on the

basis of time under the title *Process and Reality. An Essay of Cosmology* (1929). This is soon followed by his *Adventures of Ideas*, in which he turns the 'experimental adventure' itself into a philosophical concept: he also counts rationalism among such adventures. He strives for a 'sheer disclosure' of experience as the 'flux of things': for him, this is 'the one ultimate generalization around which we must wave our philosophical system.' Knowing and quoting James' and Bergson's work, Whitehead wants to frame a 'speculative,' but 'coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted.' This is the greatest speculative adventure in the 20th century.

Whitehead wants to avoid Bergson's dualisms and go deeper in philosophical thinking. Like Nietzsche, whom he carefully keeps at a distance, he uses 'interpretation' as a comprehensive concept for thinking, perceiving, feeling and willing; also for him, thinking is part of experience. Hence, it becomes an 'experimental adventure' to discover or to create logical coherence in the process of experience; Whitehead uses the image of an airplane that 'starts from the ground of particular observation, [...] makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization; and again [...] lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation.' He turns the former counter-concepts of thinking, experience, imagination, play and adventure, into concepts that include it. The *imaginative generalization* proves successful by a 'happy' use of abstractions which can 'even play with inconsistency,' if it is about finding consistent connections or fittings; in further experiments, the abstractions can be applied to other fields such as physics, physiology or psychology. They must only be linked to experience, even if in complex ways; otherwise they run the risk of being taken for something concrete. Whitehead speaks of fallacies of 'misplaced concreteness' and of 'simple location,' which can also be found in Bergson.

Yet, in order to maintain its scientific nature, the logical '*construction*' must be rigidly consistent. To this end, Whitehead creates a comprehensive and dense terminology that is difficult to grasp; he takes it from various areas of experience partly borrowing it from traditional terminology, partly setting it apart from it. With his 'system,' he also wants to freshly disclose the fields of mathematics and the natural sciences in the current state. He calls his construction 'metaphysics' in order to indicate that he goes beyond experience with it; it is not to entail 'dogmatic statements of the obvious,' but 'tentative formulations of the ultimate generalities.' It is an experimental and adventurous

metaphysics where 'the merest hint of dogmatic certainty as to finality of statement is an exhibition of folly.'

Its aim is to understand 'reality' entirely from 'process.' It is no longer about 'things,' but about 'events,' i.e., timely events that Whitehead calls '*actual entities*.' 'Actual' here has a manifold sense of 'real,' 'being performed' and 'now significant.' Whitehead alternatively uses the term '*occasion of experience*': actual entities arise from occasional experiences or 'feelings' of 'data' wherever they may come from; by that, Whitehead explicitly connects to Bergson's concept of intuition. Finally, he combines both terms into '*actual occasion*.' In our language such an actual occasion triggers one to find a hold in the orientation process, a foothold which is, to Whitehead, not a 'closed fact,' but something standing out from a vast and vague background if it is relevant for others; it is 'interest' that leads to distinctions. Relevant distinctions create, according to Whitehead, 'contrasts' that may disclose further actual occasions, and at a time a 'harmony' arises that 'requires the due coordination of chaos, vagueness, narrowness, and width' or 'the right chaos and the right vagueness' which is to be ordered by logical means. If ordered chaos happens, it is, according to Whitehead, an 'occasion' of 'enjoyment': you will decide to accept it. Then 'discrimination' comes to the fore. In this way Whitehead describes how patterns of footholds emerge in the flow of experience (or in the process of orientation), in which one recognizes a 'something' from which one can start to act. Whitehead calls it 'ontological principle.'

In his construction, actual entities can coalesce into comprehensive natural and social formations, so-called *nexus* and *societies*, and gain permanence in them; this is possible if they react to new environments in a common way. They, too, exist in time; again in Bergson's sense, they continue to create new time by changing or reinterpreting themselves and their environment under new circumstances. The process of change also is the process of experiencing time. Whitehead describes experience in such a way that actual occasions 'provoke' 'subjects' and 'objects' of interpretations which result as '*superjects*' that again provoke subjects and objects for new experiences. Subjects and objects, for their part, are not fixed entities, but continue to arise and expire. Quantified and measurable time is likewise generated by such temporal processes of interpretation. As in current relativistic physics, this makes different measurements and times philosophically conceivable.

To emphasize the connections' naturality Whitehead is concerned with, he calls his speculative metaphysics a 'philosophy of organism.' He drafts an '*epochal theory of time*' which emerges from the analogy with organic processes: every actual occasion takes over earlier actual occasions and creates new ones which persist for a while, an 'epoch'; epochs evolve from each other; so a 'succession of epochal periods of time' comes about. However, Whitehead also assumes non-temporal elements as necessary for conceptualizing permanent objects. He presupposes '*eternal objects*' that resemble Platonic ideas: 'The things which are temporal arise by their participation in the things which are eternal.' Whitehead calls this participation 'concrescence': in their becoming, actual entities integrate eternal objects and thus become determinable and comparable with each other. Whitehead speaks of 'satisfaction' like Frege (chap. 21) of the satisfaction (*Sättigung*) of mathematical functions: 'The "satisfaction" is the culmination of the concrescence into a completely determinate matter of fact.' In this way, he wants to make stability comprehensible: 'The ideal realization of potentialities in a primordial actual entity constitutes the metaphysical stability.' For Whitehead, eternal objects or general concepts do not exist by themselves, but only acquire meaning in actual entities. He does not concede a separate realm nor a predetermined order of the eternal objects. They are 'felt' in the becoming of actual entities.

Concerning their orientation, Whitehead considers actual entities as 'standpoints' from which they experience the rest of the world: there is an 'actual world of any actual entity.' He refers to Leibniz assuming that God is 'the ultimate metaphysical ground' and immanent in the world (chap. 9). However, God is no longer to guarantee a pre-stabilized harmony, but a 'creative advance into novelty.'

More than others, Heidegger deals with nihilism. Yet, he considers Nietzsche's philosophy of the will to power (chap. 18) to be metaphysics, which he hopes to overcome through an entirely 'different beginning' in philosophizing. In *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*, 1927) he anew asks about the 'meaning of being' and also attempts to understand it from the view of time. He takes Edmund Husserl's phenomenology as his methodological point of departure (chap. 20). But first he asks what is capable of asking about the meaning of being at all: the human being, which he simply calls *Dasein* (existence) in order to determine it as little as possible in advance. For the doctrine of being he uses

the old name 'ontology' and for the doctrine of *Dasein* the corresponding name 'fundamental ontology' (instead of 'anthropology'; chap. 22). This leads him to new categories for grasping time: they are oriented neither toward the creativity of life (Bergson), nor toward a new cosmology (Whitehead), nor toward the subject of consciousness (Husserl). Even though Heidegger's new beginning seems to be radically new, he owes much to important predecessors like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Dilthey. The state of scientific research does not matter for him; according to Heidegger, philosophy can and must stand on its own. Its thinking is unique and outstanding; compared to it 'science does not think.' For his contemporaries, Heidegger restores greatness to philosophy.

Dasein in Heidegger's sense is obviously temporal: people are born and die, and they are always aware of this. *Death* is not to be doubted, but it is absolutely certain; yet the nature and the time of one's own death are uncertain. Echoing Kierkegaard (chap. 16), Heidegger calls *Dasein* a *Sein zum Tode* (being toward death). According to him, this being toward death is the primordial (*ursprünglich*) quality of time: *Dasein* 'has' its own time that is full of meaning which cannot be measured by clocks. Therefore it must take care of its limited lifetime; philosophy has to analyze the conditions under which this is possible; as Heidegger puts it, *Dasein* 'in its being deals with its being.' With a German root word, which Heidegger likes referring to, *Dasein* is fundamentally *Sorge* which is simultaneously 'concern' and 'care.' Concern and care for one's own being precedes the recognition of beings.

This means: practically using things precedes theoretically recognizing them. Heidegger finds the categories of *Zuhandenheit* (being ready at hand) in contrast to *Vorhandenheit* (being observed or simply being present): for the *Dasein*, which is concerned about itself, the things of the world are first and foremost not theoretically 'present' as 'objects,' but pragmatically available as *Zeug* (tools); the first concern of *Dasein* is what it can do with the things of its world and how it may shape its life according to this. Handling things has its own connections, its own rhythms and routines, that is: its own time. Therefore the concept of the *Welt* (world) must also be redefined: no longer as the totality of simple beings, which could only be surveyed from a divine point of view, but as the *Umwelt* (environment) that is familiar to a *Dasein* or as the world *in* which it lives and *with* which it copes, not *above* which it stands. *Dasein* is *In-der-Welt-Sein* (being in the world) with its own and primordial temporality.

From this, conclusions are to be drawn in view of the 'meaning of being' as such. In *Being and Time* Heidegger holds on to the *ursprüngliche Ganzheit* (primordial entirety) of the *Dasein* which knows that it will die, but does not know how and when it will die. Again echoing Kierkegaard, *Dasein* lives in constant *Angst* (anxiety) of missing out its *eigentliche* (authentic) possibilities (*Angst* was Danish before it became German). But this *Angst* is helpful: it urges one to disclose one's own *Möglichkeiten* (possibilities) to live. Heidegger explicitly introduces and discusses the concept of *Orientierung* (orientation), thereby finding and uniting basic conditions of our everyday existence: *Dasein* (again following Kierkegaard) is always already in a certain mood and its concepts are attuned to this (chap. 16); Heidegger calls this *Befindlichkeit* (being in a mood or a state of mind). *Dasein* is *Verstehen* (understanding) (in the sense of Dilthey, chap. 18), that is simultaneously 'experience,' 'expression,' and 'understanding.' But when *Dasein* communicates to others what it understands, it inevitably falls into the conventions of language (in Nietzsche's sense, chap. 18), which can become a superficial *Gerede* (idle talk). Heidegger calls these life conditions of the *Dasein* '*existentials.*' This is why *Being and Time* is perceived as a work of existential philosophy.

The signs by means of which human beings communicate with each other are *Zeug* (tools) as well. But signs inevitably generalize things and render them ambiguous. The *Eigene* (particularity) and the *Eigentlichkeit* (authenticity) of one's Dasein get lost. The *ursprüngliche Zeitlichkeit* (primordial temporality) disappears behind the time measured by clocks as it is demonstrated by the current Fordism. For Heidegger, however, the *Eigentliche* (authentic), which usually remains hidden in the background, is what matters. He finds the authentic being in 'running ahead into one's death,' i.e., (not suicide, but) the constant awareness of one's own temporality. According to Heidegger, the authentic possibilities of one's existence are those that do not come from the *Verfallen* (falling) into public *Gerede* (idle talk). Therefore, by definition, they cannot be determined through general terms. Heidegger makes them dependent on the *Ruf des Gewissens* (call of conscience) and the personal *Entschlossenheit* (resoluteness) to realize them. For him, they are prior to all social influences. Nihilism, as the loss of all absolute general certainties that prevail in a society, throws us back to certainties of our own existence with its own temporality.

But Heidegger does not finish *Being and Time*. He realizes that he cannot make any progress in finding the meaning of 'being' and 'time' in this way. He

recognizes that his fundamental ontology is still a descendant of modern subject philosophy, according to which the subject reconstructs its objects from its own points of view. Thus the original meaning of 'being' and 'time' inevitably is obscured. So Heidegger has to start even more *ursprünglich* (primordially). He has the courage to make a *Kehre* (full turn): he reverses his way of thinking with which he has become known worldwide. His failure as the first National Socialist *Führer* (leader) of a renowned German university may also have contributed to this. The primordial temporality cannot be understood through the distinction between the individual and society. After an intensive examination of Nietzsche's alleged magnum opus *The Will to Power* (which, as he knows, does not really exist), he begins anew with 'being' itself, which, however, must be thought of in a completely different way than in traditional philosophy and to do this, thinking itself must also be thought differently. Heidegger once again goes back to the pre-Socratics, who first decided on the determinations of 'being,' 'thinking,' and 'time' (chap. 1-3). After more than 30 years of new thinking about thinking, he, in a lecture, reverses the title *Being and Time* into *Time and Being* in order to indicate his turn. At the same time, he further developes his own philosophical language in order to wrest it from the traditional language of philosophy. It no longer takes the shape of a system with definable terms, but rather of a poetic *Fügung* (join), as he puts it, of *ursprünglicheren* (more primordial) meanings of words from the languages of Greek and German, which he considers to be the most meaningful in philosophy. This language is very difficult to translate and sounds strange even in German.

Heidegger now also tries to get away from the subject-predicate scheme of 'something is something,' which is the logical basis of Aristotle's metaphysics with its alleged timelessness. Instead, he starts with the German *es gibt*, which has more connotations than the French *il y a* and the English *there is*. Heidegger takes the *es* (it) and the *gibt* (gives) at their word. *Es gibt Sein* and *es gibt Zeit* for Heidegger originally mean that there is an indeterminate *es*, which *gives* or bestows or grants being and time: they are not something that a subject determines on its own accord, but something that is received. Nor do time and being 'give' themselves to a subject who then grasps them, but they 'reach out' themselves to each other and thereby create a *Zeit-Spiel-Raum* (time-play-space) in which the *Dasein* can move with its determinations, similar to Schleiermacher's thought (chap.15). Heidegger thus leads the category of *Spielraum* (leeway; room to move) to the *Grund des Seins* (ground of being), which, according to him,

is also an *Abgrund* (abyss) because it itself cannot be justified: all justification ends at this time-play-space. Heidegger's basic concept now is *Ereignis* (event), but in a different meaning than in Bergson and Whitehead.

Heidegger gives his second magnum opus the title *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (*Contributions to Philosophy: Of the Event*). He deliberately only writes sketches for it that are not to be published until after his death. He speaks of the *Ereignis* (event) again in an etymologically 'primordial' meaning that can only be understood in German. '*Ereignis'* here means that being itself makes time and time itself makes being '*zu eigen*' (its own) in a 'play space' in which they 'play themselves to each other' (*Zeit-Spiel-Raum*). Heidegger supposes this to be a temporal event not in an external time but again as preceding all measurable time like the play space which precedes all ascertainment. Then, nothing more can be said of being and time than that they elude us when we try to define them conceptually, and that we are *verlassen* (abandoned) by them when we are not aware of this. Because philosophy itself was determined by Socrates to define things conceptually, it *vergaß* (forgot) the primordial meaning of being and instead defined it as the logically comprehensible and therefore timelessly existing highest universal, which is an abstract and empty concept of being. According to Heidegger, this *Seinsvergessenheit* (forgetfulness of being) and *Seinsverlassenheit* (to be abandoned by being) is true nihilism. Nietzsche, on the other hand, he turns into the last and greatest metaphysician through demonstrably violent misinterpretations.

Heidegger's thought of *Seinsverlassenheit* appears very strange when philosophy attempts to become a theoretical science itself, as in analytic philosophy (chap. 21). For it, the question about being is meaningless. For Heidegger, the nihilistic meaninglessness which comprises the belief in scientific certainties, has even deepened beyond Nietzsche's godlessness. From this godlessness only a god can still save us, but not Nietzsche's god Dionysus, whom he creates for his own philosophizing, nor Bergson's and Whitehead's divine creativity: Heidegger's god is one who gives *Winke* (hints) in the 'time-play-space' to those who are prepared for the different beginning. This different beginning itself can only be preliminary or a *Vor-sicht* (pre-view). Heidegger lists a number of philosophical *Entscheidungen* (decisions) in the history of philosophy that have led to his own great new decision which may rescue mankind from the deepest nihilism. In the end, he trusts in the poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) who promised that 'where the danger is, also grows something saving.'

This raises the question of a suitable language for philosophy in the age of nihilism. Speaking or writing is a temporal process as well. In it, everything appears temporal simply because one word is said or written after another and the topic that is spoken or written about builds up over time as an image which develops. This happens in a '*narrative*' and this is where Paul Ricœur (1913–2005) comes in with his three-volume work *Temps et récit* (*Time and Narrative*, 1983–1985). The temporal narrative turns everything into a 'narrated time.' Ricœur focuses on the narratives in historiography and fictional literature; in the early 20th century, great authors such as Marcel Proust in *À la recherche du temps perdue*, James Joyce in *Ulysses* and Thomas Mann in *The Magic Mountain* make the temporality of the narrative itself the subject of narratives. According to Ricœur, narratives create 'narrative identities.' Identities do not arise from timeless statements of something that would exist timelessly in itself, but, as becomes particularly clear in the case of people, from life stories that are told in current or later times. In broad periods of time, this also applies to biological species, geological formations such as mountains and continents and the formations of the universe. In such life stories, in the widest sense, those 'acquired structural contexts' of which Dilthey spoke are 'configured' (chap. 18).

With his idea of narratives, Ricœur also contributes to the problem with which Bergson, Whitehead and Heidegger struggle: how to get *from experienced time to measured time* with which science works and to which the everyday life of modern society is oriented as well. Ricœur makes interesting and plausible suggestions: firstly, there is the calendar, which was originally designed for the needs of social life like the division of the times of day, of seasons, of times for cultivating the fields, of festival times, etc. From this, over time a universal calendar developed which can also be used for scientific purposes, initially on an astronomical scale; it can always be extended and refined, both in the units of time and its measurements. Historical events can also be placed in such a calendar that presents simultaneously non-simultaneous matters for an overview. Ricœur here himself operates with the concept of orientation. Secondly, in his terms the 'concordance' and 'discordance' of the experience of time is itself experienced where generations overlap: you age together with a generation of roughly the same age and their experience of their time and simultaneously you live together with other generations and their experience of their time. This also results in a simultaneity of the non-simultaneous: you observe how contemporaries of different ages typically experience the same

time partly in the same way and partly differently. Thirdly, traces of past times remain everywhere. They are preserved in museums or conserved in other ways and dated according to the universal calendar. Ricœur understands them as traces or 'tracks' to past times, which make clear the difference of lifeworlds. In this way, we are *surrounded by different manifestations of time at the same time*, which we can relate to each other in different ways. This does not result in a uniform concept of time.

Linguistically, the simultaneity of non-simultaneities is often dealt with through *metaphors*. Metaphors are displacements of meanings; 'to displace' is the original sense of Greek *metapherein*. In his unfinished and unpublished treatise *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, Nietzsche also understands the formation of concepts from this point of view, which he in turn describes metaphorically: metaphors that continuously displace their meanings are also able to temporarily 'freeze' like a river, i.e., become solid in concepts, and then thaw and become fluid again. Concepts are fluid and therefore temporal because they are essentially metaphors. Ricœur dedicates a special essay to this, *La metaphore vive* (*The Rule of Metaphor*, 1975).

From this, Hans Blumenberg (1920–1996) draws strong conclusions about the way we live with time (without mentioning Ricœur). A likewise tremendously well-read thinker, he has the history of both philosophy and science in mind. He does not want to create a new philosophy himself, but rather examine the great upheavals or reorientations in the history of philosophy, in particular the reorientation from medieval to modern philosophy. He shows that such reorientations often take place via metaphors that cannot be replaced by 'pure' concepts and calls them 'absolute metaphors.' This also includes Aristotle's distinction between the 'form' and 'content' of concepts, the 'light' of the Enlightenment, Hegel's 'movement' of the concepts and the 'flow' of concepts in general. All the more, Blumenberg questions the situations and motives behind the solidification and liquefaction of philosophical concepts. In defined contexts, concepts can also be replaced by others at a point, e.g., Kant's concept of the 'thing-in-itself' by Schopenhauer's concept of the 'will to existence' and this in turn by Nietzsche's concept (or metaphor) of the 'will to power'; in the case of 'reason' or 'energy,' the meanings are exchanged. Blumenberg does not discuss the absolute metaphor of 'orientation,' which he frequently uses, in this context.

In Blumenberg's sense, time is also a concept that can be used in different ways and triggers a lot of displacements. In his 1986 treatise *Lebenszeit und Weltzeit* (*Lifetime and World Time*), he relates the time of Heidegger's *Dasein* to the comprehensive time of history and cosmology. Here (metaphorically) a 'scissors' opens up in human orientation: in your lifetime you are infinitely meaningful for yourself, but in terms of world time you are almost completely meaningless, as Pascal already pointed out (chap. 10). This looks like a disturbing disproportion between Heideggerian *Sorge* (concern and care) and *Gleichgültigkeit* (indifference) and an expression of nihilism: the meaningful world of your own existence becomes a tiny island in a meaningless universe. Blumenberg's conclusion from this is that one must be interested in 'doing as much as possible' with one's limited lifetime, regardless of whether these are authentic (*eigentliche*) or inauthentic possibilities. Nihilism is about profiting as much as possible from what your life in your world has to offer. A fulfilled life in the present now becomes the highest value.

From this, after the life-philosophical (Bergson), cosmological (Whitehead), fundamental-ontological (Heidegger) and narrative (Ricœur) perspectives, a *life-economic perspective on time* emerges that corresponds more to the everyday life in the 20th century: time in the sense of one's own lifetime is scarce, it is never enough to perceive and 'live out' the abundance of life possibilities that the world, and especially the modern world, offers. People now have 'with finite life-time infinite desires'; they want to gain as much time as possible in order to enjoy the *Weltangebot* (world-offer). The scarcity of time is experienced as time pressure, and the result is not an authentic life, but a faster, accelerated life. In a short space of time, most matters can only be noticed superficially, as when traveling as a tourist trips or surfing the Internet. Simultaneously, we also put each other under increasing time pressure when we compete in experiencing what the world offers.

Blumenberg draws the moral philosophical conclusion that the gap between world time and life time is the 'root of evil.' This is because one person's gain in time and life can always be at the expense of others, e.g., if you use others for unagreeable services and pays them for that. Thus, following Blumenberg's line (he himself does not do this explicitly), capitalism can be seen as nihilism in action. It fosters a strong egocentrism that many people morally struggle against (chap. 24). Yet, for some people it is a *Ärgernis* (nuisance) that the world even continues to exist after their own lives, while there is still so much of this

world to experience. Blumenberg cites Adolf Hitler as an extreme example, who conquered half the world in his lifetime and, when he was on the brink of annihilation, wanted to drag the rest of the world down with him.

While the approaches mentioned above understand time in human orientation in terms of experience, George Spencer-Brown (1923–2016), a versatile, original and controversial mathematician, provides a completely different approach: the generation of time through distinguishing itself. In his *Laws of Form*, which first appeared in 1969, he defines distinguishing as a constructive forming and form as a two-side limit such as right | left, short | long, usable | unusable, agreeable | disagreeable. As a kind of forming something, distinguishing is an activity, and Spencer-Brown therefore begins with a command, the command of 'Draw a distinction!' As an activity, distinguishing itself is to be distinguished according to its own two sides, that of a temporal process (distinguishing) and a non-temporal entity (the distinction), through which something is distinguished. The two sides must be available simultaneously. In order to determine or indicate something through a distinction, one must decide in favor of one of the two sides. The other side is excluded because it is no longer used in the subsequent determination; therefore a distinction is a selection; on one side ever remains a 'void' or 'unmarked space.' For Spencer-Brown the crucial point is: if you decide for one side of the distinction in order to determine or indicate something, the limit between both sides is 'crossed.' This crossing is the temporal process mentioned above: it is experienced when the decision is difficult and the limit is crossed several times (is that what I am looking for, to the right or to the left?). This means that when making a distinction, we are simultaneously dealing with simultaneity and non-simultaneity: with the simultaneity of the two sides of the distinction and the non-simultaneity when switching between them.

According to traditional Aristotelian logic, the simultaneity of simultaneity and non-simultaneity is a paradox. But this is precisely how time, which has always been a paradox for logic, can be understood. Aristotle himself already recognized this in the mere 'now' through which the past and the future are distinguished: the now is always the same and always different, and when one *says* 'now,' i.e., designates a now, this now itself has already passed through the process of designation. As a result, *temporal distinguishing itself produces time*. It is then possible to operate with different distinctions of time itself, depending on which distinctions are used. This makes Spencer-Brown's decision in favor

of distinguishing itself as the source of time a courageous beginning for the philosophy of orientation: because all orientation is based on distinguishing and every kind of distinguishing is a decision for one of the two sides of a distinction. Whenever you make a distinction, you change your orientation and generate time. With a motto in Chinese characters, Spencer-Brown signals that this is a first orientation in emptiness, nothingness, nihilism.

The philosophy of orientation accepts the fact that all of the world is temporal. It assumes that human orientation is able to cope with temporality of any kind. In this respect, it gains a lot from some leading philosophies of the 20th century. They all agree that time consists in the fact that it is experienced. Yet, they again provide alternative models to describe the experience of time. In terms of nihilism, 'time' is the shortest expression for the fact that nothing ensures an absolutely firm or eternal hold. This is why Parmenides (chap. 2) excluded time from philosophy. Yet, time is an extraordinarily elusive reality. For thinking, it appears to be the condition of all becoming (and, when becoming stops, of remaining as well), but not to be something in itself. Newton's assumption that time is a 'sensorium' of God's and Kant's assumption that it is a 'pure form' of human intuition can no longer be maintained today. Nietzsche's idea of 'eternal recurrence' is a thought experiment, not a reality. Philosophical thinking beyond metaphysics comes up against its limits here. Human orientation, however, deals with time without any problems. We can live with time. Our orientation is part of the world. It experiences itself as thoroughly temporal like the rest of the world. It is able to create its own hold in time in the course of time.

With Bergson's exploration of experienced time as an alternative to the metaphysically presupposed, logically determined and quantitatively measured time, rational certainties in philosophy at all begin to waver. 'Life' with its unpredictable entanglements and developments comes into view even more strongly than with the pragmatists and with Dilthey and Nietzsche (chap. 18). The great novels by Proust, Joyce and Th. Mann make the new approach plausible. Whitehead undermines Bergson's dualism of non-rational intuition and rational cognition with a new adventurous metaphysical concept of temporal entities, which are, in ontological terms, occasions of experience, in the cosmological dimension produce the world ever anew, in an epistemological view generate time and its experience through 'epochs of time' and whose 'creative advance into novelty' is supposed to be warranted by God in theological terms. As a result, Whitehead initially receives a strong theological

reception: 'creationists' and 'evolutionists' can be reconciled with his metaphysics. Yet, it is not necessary to invoke God in order to philosophically conceptualize the mere temporality of human orientation. In addition, Whitehead ascribes 'subjective aims' to the becoming of actual entities (with and without consciousness), which are fulfilled in their becoming; this results in a dubious 'panpsychism.'

Bergson's and Whitehead's common key concept is 'creativity': this means that the world is constantly being generated anew without a pre-determined direction and with an open end. Whitehead's 'eternal objects,' which are to make possible permanent determinations of entities, are strange factors in a system that seeks to understand reality entirely from temporal processes. General and permanent concepts and orders, which human orientation needs to hold on over time, to compare matters, to enable cooperation and to predict developments, do not have to transcend time at all, but can have their own time: they can change with time as well and be replaced by others, even though in longer periods of time.

As an alternative to Bergson who finds time in the lively experience of human beings and to Whitehead who places time in experiencing and experienceable things in general, HEIDEGGER *more 'ursprünglicher' founds the experience of time in the mere existence of the 'Dasein' which questions 'being' and has its own temporality in his 'being toward death.' In doing so, he focuses on individual existence, which, according to him, has to do justice to its temporality by grasping its own possibilities; if it adheres to what most people adhere to, it misses its existence. Yet, this normative distinction between authentic and non-authentic possibilities for one's own life makes sense in Kierkegaard, from whom Heidegger adopts the distinction and who is concerned with the decision for a religious life; for everyday life, however, it cannot be maintained. It is not a decaying and failing of the Dasein when it follows others in its orientation, but it inevitably happens. For people are dependent on others in most things of their lives and have to orient themselves toward others from childhood to the end, even though from a certain age they are free to decide whether and to what extent they want to follow others or not. In 'Being and Time,' Heidegger only marginally describes life in society as 'being with others' (Mitsein) and denounces orientation toward others as 'falling' into the 'mediocrity' of the 'they' (das Man).*

But he himself recognizes his approach from 'Dasein' as an aberration. After his 'turn,' which is to be a fundamental philosophical reorientation, he starts immediately with time and being themselves. His idea now is to draft a 'play-space' where time and being interplay and which cannot be grasped theoretically, because theoretical concepts themselves originate from it and simultaneously conceal it. You

must humbly content yourself with the mere 'there is time,' 'there is being': the one makes the other possible. According to the late Heidegger, if you do not respect this, you are 'abandoned' by being and time and hence miss the point of philosophy. Nevertheless, in a dark language Heidegger disclosures some basic conditions of human orientation:
– that orientation in dealings with the world in which you live precedes the theoretical attitude;
– that one must constantly attend to time in orientation, because it is a matter of life decisions;
– that one can always fall into disorientation;
– that orientation requires resoluteness;
– that orientation moves in leeways that are limited, but whose limits are not a priori justified;
– that orientation is an 'Ereignis' (event) of its own, not founded through universal concepts, but set in motion in response to given footholds.

However, these basic conditions of human orientation need to be dealt with the high pathos of the question of the meaning of being, to which Heidegger ultimately has no answer either.

Ricœur does not make a really new start in solving the problem of time, but seeks to reconcile the previous and further beginnings with each other through the concept of narration. The concept of narration not only combines the concepts of intuitive experience and conceptual determination of time, but also includes self-reference in grasping time. Narratives narrate temporal matters and are themselves temporal. Before you can ask and report on what time actually is, it is in play. Like life, time is always already behind us when we believe we have it in front of us, and just as, according to Dilthey, life interprets itself (chap. 18) when we speak of it, we can say that a narrative is a self-interpretation of time. This also applies to human orientation.

With Blumenberg's 'scissors' of life-time and world-time, Heidegger's early distinction between authentic and non-authentic life possibilities becomes meaningless: a realistic view of life in modern societies shows instead that in nihilism it is helpful or saving to 'benefit' as much as possible from the 'world's offer' in order to make the most of one's limited life-time. In the only-here-and-now life with all its randomness, ultimate goals are no longer crucial, simply because they do not exist; you can set them for yourself, but they can then be replaced by other goals every time. Most people are disillusioned with transcendence and prefer pass the time with games

when life is boring. The temporal no longer needs to be justified nor discriminated against in relation to the timeless and the superficial not against the profound.

After Niklas Luhmann (chap. 24) has taken up Spencer-Brown's *theory of distinction, it becomes well- known in philosophy, too. It is especially interesting for the philosophy of orientation. However, Spencer-Brown's mathematical or mathematics-like theory of distinction leaves open what actually motivates the drawing of distinctions. Spencer-Brown only speaks of 'motives' that emanate from different evaluations and of 'desires to distinguish.' Kant characterizes them as needs (Bedürfnisse), Nietzsche often as hardships (Nöte). In any case, they are needs for orientation in difficult situations. Human orientation starts drawing distinctions when noticing footholds in the respective situation, which become tenable if they fit to other footholds. The search for tenable footholds and the decision for them put people under 'time pressure.' Hence, the process of drawing distinctions and decision-making itself is experienced as temporal. Secondly, Spencer-Brown's theory of distinction presupposes something that distinguishes and decides, in the language of modern philosophy a 'subject,' in the language of Luhmann's systems theory an observer. But they must first be distinguished themselves in human orientation. Thirdly, something is always described in a specific language that is already given to the individual. Mathematics creates an ideal language, which guarantees unambiguity, but disregards situations in which the signs are used. However, it is their use in situations that makes signs meaningful for orientation, and situations in turn help to make signs sufficiently unambiguous.*

Thus the concept of orientation itself seems to be the key to the problem of time. In human orientation, time is initially experienced by the fact that situations in which we live are constantly changing and therefore always require new orientation. As we know today, nothing can be withdrawn from time. Hence, human orientation is shaped in such a way that it always is able to move with the time, and when something is to be distinguished it itself produces time. That is why the hold it creates for itself always remains provisional, including the standards for measuring time. The provisional nature of orientation is the strongest sign of time.

20. Alternatives in Conceptualizing the 'Given': Husserl, Gadamer, Levinas, Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze, Foucault

The philosophical decision to start from time and its origin in temporal experience and the conceptual differentiation of this experience open up new alternatives for any further orientation, including orientation about orientation itself. Firstly, the question arises of *what* is in fact experienced and differentiated or rather what *is given* to our orientation. The answer used to be: 'that what is' (*tò ón, ens, the being*). This 'that what is' was viewed from the view of God or from a fictitious standpoint beyond things or 'from nowhere' (Thomas Nagel), until Heidegger distinguished this 'being' as the 'being present' (*das Vorhandene*) from the 'being ready at hand' (*das Zuhandene*), which is what we actually deal with in our everyday orientation (chap. 19). Since the view from nowhere promises impartiality, it is attractive for science to this day. But after Dilthey's (chap. 18) and Bergson's intervention (chap. 19), we can see what is lost sight of by that: for the sake of its impartiality, science has to disregard the personal and situational conditions of experience and cognition and has to use a language regulated by a predefined logic. However, this is only one of the alternatives of human orientation which is no longer to be considered as the only standard of orientation.

Even in a broader horizon, in view of human orientation in general, it is also right what Kant, modern cognitive psychology and brain research have made clear: that nothing can be said about things as they may be in themselves: the human brain creates its own ideas of reality, whatever it may be; every psyche evaluates these ideas in its own way and every body perceives other bodies from different perspectives. Therefore, *nothing can be presupposed to be the same for everyone*. It is also largely undisputed that the ideas in our minds are directly or indirectly triggered by sensual experience: we depend on a world that we firstly perceive through our senses. The rest is thinking; Hume and Kant, empiricism and transcendental idealism, agree on this (chap. 11). During the 19th century, it became more and more evident that cultures, languages, artistic fantasies and fictions of various origins also play their parts in the constitution of what we take to be simply given or 'real.' Alternatives to this are now outdated. In any case, to human orientation something is 'given' that it does not create itself, but

that it merely processes. In this sense, the later Heidegger's speech of '*es gibt*' (an unkown 'it' 'gives' or offers something to us) may point to the way to pursue. This does not oblige us to share Heidegger's complaints about a 'forgetfulness of being' or 'being abandoned by being' and the hostility toward science and theory he sometimes expresses.

In his methodical orientation, Heidegger explicitly connects to the 'phenomenology' of Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). Husserl's overwhelming impact on 20th century philosophy also includes Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida and Niklas Luhmann in our context (chap. 24). However, they all go beyond Husserl: while he attacks 'philosophies of life' like Dilthey's, Nietzsche's and Bergson's in order to re-found philosophy as a 'rigorous science,' the kind of philosophy he wants to exclude by his 'transcendental phenomenology' returns under new names such as existentialism, post-structuralism and sociological systems theory.

Husserl starts from a *Philosophy of Artithmetic* (1887/91) and *Logical Investigations* (1900/01), by which he wants to free mathematics and logic from 'psychologism,' i.e., the attempt to trace them back to psychological mechanisms, in order to develop a *Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* (1913). Unlike Augustine (chap. 7) and along with modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant, he assumes that, if not the world as such, then at least human consciousness and its 'inner world' can be observed with complete certainty. Husserl relies entirely on this *self-observation of consciousness*, but strives to avoid all logical constructions and metaphysical speculations in favor of *pure inner experience*. In order to finally become a 'rigorous science,' philosophy shall only be about observing the 'self-giving' of what there is in the 'life of consciousness,' more precisely the 'original self-giving' of phenomena in the stream of consciousness. In this way, Husserl hopes to *advance to the 'true reality' of human orientation*.

Nevertheless, in processing his lifelong research program, Husserl is repeatedly urged to start anew from new insights. In contrast to Bergson, he introduces strict methodical standards. His aim is to precisely observe and describe how objects come about in the 'Heraclitean flow' of the stream of consciousness, as James conceived of it, in order to give both everyday orientation and science a firm hold. Since the criterion of truth can no longer be a correspondence with something 'external,' of which we can know nothing, it is the mere *evidence* or the perfect clarity of 'intuition' (*Anschauung*) which

he now conceives of as the introspection of consciousness. This evidence is to be gained through three methodical 'reductions':
– firstly the '*phenomenological reduction*' by which the 'natural attitude' is 'switched off,' i.e., the presupposition of the 'outer world';
– secondly the '*eidetical reduction*' by which the timely circumstances of the appearing things are to be disregarded so that only their *eîdos* or essence is focused;
– thirdly the '*transcendental reduction*' by which the personal and situational circumstances of the subject that observes things or the empirical givenness of consciousness itself is eliminated and an ideal subject emerges that is able to represent all other subjects in displaying the essences of things that appear in our consciousness.

The first reduction is a Cartesian, the second an Aristotelian, the third a Kantian legacy. Through the three of them, philosophy turns into a major experiment: by methodically abstaining (Greek *epoché*) from assertions about the being and value of things themselves, consciousness isolates itself for its self-observation, as in a scientific laboratory, from the 'natural world life with all its interests' in order to find out the 'essentials' of what is going on in it through 'free variation' of its contents. 'Essential' is that what can be infinitely repeated, as in a scientific experiment. As a result, *Husserl puts philosophical research into a laboratory situation in order to turn philosophy into a science that can provide the other sciences and everyday orientation with a basis of absolute certainty*.

This is Husserl's way of transforming reason (*Vernunft*) in favor of experience (*Erleben*). It is kind of nihilistic, too: by virtue of the reductions, only the 'ego' remains as a 'residuum of the destruction of the world' that nevertheless reconstructs the world with perfect evidence valid for all. This happens through a 'splitting' of the 'ego,' insofar as 'ego,' 'consciousness' and 'subject' also are objects of the investigation. Husserl bridges the split by the concept of *intention*, which he adopts from his teacher Franz Brentano (1838–1917): according to him, consciousness is always already aiming at or focusing on something. For Husserl, intention constitutes things in the Kantian sense, i.e., it provides a form that is 'fulfilled' by changing contents in changing situations. With this assumption, he draws on the Aristotelian distinction between form and content (chap. 5), which Kant, too, still bases his transcendental philosophy on (chap. 11). *Intention, constitution and form are not observed, not given and not evident, but added for methodical phenomenological analysis*.

Yet, Husserl's explicit and implicit presuppositions enable important new beginnings. According to him, the fulfillment of an intention has *leeway and degrees*; only the highest degree, the perfect fulfillment, is the evidence which is considered truth. With the concept of intention as the unity of form or act and content in consciousness, which Husserl calls *nóesis* and *nóema* in Greek, he *bridges the traditional distinction between reason and sensuality* and undermines the split of European philosophy into rationalism and empiricism. With the term *nóesis* he summarizes all acts of consciousness such as experiencing, thinking, believing, knowing, feeling, wanting, hating, loving, with the term *nóema* everything that becomes an 'object' such as something experienced, thought, believed, known, felt, wanted, hated, loved. This can be, for its part, differentiated into *sequences and layers* that overlap and underpin each other, and can again be brought together in various 'syntheses.' *Noémata* are deposited in consciousness like geological 'sediments'; they become 'unconscious' and continue to change unconsciously. Nevertheless, they provide a 'guide' for the analysis of their origins. That is to say: human orientation holds on to something *conscious on the ground of something unconscious*.

Husserl's phenomenological analysis of intentions also sheds new light on the general concept as such. He understands it, again with Aristotle, as *eîdos*, that literally is the 'evidently' persisting essence of something while its non-essential attributes change (chap. 5). For Husserl, however, this essence is no longer given by nature as it was for Aristotle, but is 'produced' through 'eidetic variation': by 'playing through' the denoting concept in different contexts and thereby finding out its 'core' and fixing it linguistically. Husserl calls this 'descriptive fixation of the essences brought to intuition by means of pure concepts.' *The invariant essence is found through free variation*. For this purpose, an 'initial example' is put into the mode of possibility in the inner world of consciousness in order to play through other possibilities. Husserl uses the traditional example of a red rose, from whose perception one imagines possible nuances of the red color before one's inner eye and, by comparing them, imagines the 'core' of the color. A similar approach is taken with a report, which is told in different versions, or with scattered values measured in a physical experiment, which are assigned to a continuous curve. The general concept made evident from the playful material is 'underlaid' to all the variants. Once the *eîdos* is made evident in this way, it appears as given itself. But it only exists in the 'interior' of consciousness.

However, the success of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, in whose phenomenology the premises that consciousness can make itself independent of the 'outside world' and by this completely transparent are not shared, challenges Husserl. So he attempts to base his transcendental-phenomenological analyses, which are intended to give science a firm fundament, for their part on the 'lifeworld' (*Lebenswelt*) and thus bridge Heidegger's new gap between 'being present' and 'being ready at hand.' In his 1936 work *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, he argues that science is in crisis because it cannot build this bridge. The 'natural attitude,' which he himself has initially 'switched off,' belongs to the 'lifeworld,' a concept created by Husserl himself. It involves 'everyday-practical situational truths' which 'practice seeks and needs in its respective projects.' It makes use of what is 'necessary for the respective purposes' and is characterized by 'self-evidence;' it is dominated by 'habitualities.' In our language it is the *everyday world of orientation, in which routines gradually become established and give hold for the time being*. Husserl no longer disparages the lifeworld as incapable of evidence and thus no longer excludes it from philosophy. Instead, sciences that disregard the researchers' personal and situational conditions now appear as 'idealizations,' which in turn can be performed in different ways and therefore are also only provisionally true. The lifeworld is always related to the body of a person which is the 'zero point' of their orientation; it is limited by horizons and is constantly changing; one inhabits it according to one's specific interests and values. Scientific research may still be the highest interest; but science must know that it emerges from a lifeworld and is inevitably grounded by it. If it fails to do so, it will be foreign to the lifeworld. For this reason, Husserl, true to his method, now analyzes the self-evident facts of the lifeworld with regard to their 'grounds of validity.'

Since Husserl has started from the 'interior' of consciousness, the problem of *intersubjectivity* arises here; Husserl also introduces this concept into philosophy. The familiar lifeworld is experienced as a common one, and this commonality must be made phenomenologically evident as well. Since no consciousness is able to look into another one and Husserl no longer simply presupposes a common reason on the basis of which one could make universally valid judgments, he must go back here to the natural attitude that he previously 'switched off.' Reconciling this with the method he has used so far requires a complex construction, which Husserl develops in his *Cartesian Meditations* of 1929. Here he starts from corporeality: on the basis of the 'externally' observable

mimic, gestural and linguistic 'expressions' that come from the others' bodies, which you encounter in the lifeworld and which are similar to your own body, you also ascribe a consciousness to them as the subject of their cognition and action. Based on this ascription, you assume to be able to speak in the others' sense as well; you consider the other human being an *alter ego*. Thus, your own subject in your own body is the 'original' of an 'intentional community' and 'transcendental intersubjectivity.'

Transcendental phenomenology obviously reaches its limits here. The deepest problem, however, remains *temporality.* This problem is convincingly solved by Husserl which remained his most important achievement in philosophy. He deals with it through an analysis of 'time consciousness' itself, first in his *Lectures on the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* which go back to 1893; Heidegger, his former assistant, publishes them in a revised version in the *Yearbook of Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* edited by Husserl in 1928, simultaneously with *Sein und Zeit*. Husserl observes the temporality of the self-giving of objects, which Bergson only vaguely describes in his 1889 *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, in English *Time and Free Will*, in such a way that in the stream of consciousness 'original impressions' (*Urimpressionen*) are retained for a time in so-called 'retentions' and further impressions are expected in 'protentions,' i.e., modifications of intentions. His leading example is listening to a melody: together with every note you still also hear the former ones and already hear the later ones in advance. Husserl calls the 'retended' and 'protended' tones 'shadows' (*Abschattungen*) of the original impressions, the tones directly heard. The melody thus sounds in a 'series of shadows' in which the tones sound one after the other and yet are heard simultaneously. This means: melodies consist of something simultaneous and non-simultaneous which also applies to the visual perception of things. Being and becoming are no longer mutually exclusive, as in Parmenides (chap. 2), but modify each other in perception and consist just in these modifications. In phenomenological observation, time itself also appears as a unity of past, present and future: the past and future are always also perceived in the present, as in Augustine (chap. 7). Husserl attributes the togetherness of succeeding perceptions to a 'longitudinal intention' (*Längsintention*) and their togetherness with simultaneous perceptions (one hears *and* sees someone playing an instrument) to a 'transverse intention' (*Querintention*), thus also incorporating his intentional analysis into the analysis

of time. Temporality as simultaneity of simultaneity and non-simultaneity also is a result of Spencer-Brown's *Laws of Form* (chap. 19).

With his 'philosophical hermeneutics,' Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) who is fully aware of Husserl's phenomenology, takes up Dilthey's 'self-interpreting of life' (chap. 18) and Heidegger's 'hermeneutics of facticity' (chap. 19). According to his 1960 magnum opus *Truth and Method*, it is precisely the method that obscures the truth of what it seeks to reveal: with its predetermined access to the original given, a method works like a prejudice. Instead, the aim must be to clarify *the conditions of the possibility of understanding the given*. Originally, hermeneutics was the art of interpreting or making comprehensible texts, especially the Bible, which are given to the readers and that are to be understood in their meaning (*Sinn*). First Schleiermacher (chap. 15), Dilthey (chap. 18) and Heidegger (chap. 19) and finally Gadamer broaden its horizon to the understanding of the given human existence. Gadamer understands it from the outset as historical and language-based, i.e., he begins where Husserl left off with his phenomenology.

His courageous beginning is the *revaluation of prejudices*: while modern Enlightenment wants to do away with them in order to arrive at an original truth, Gadamer understands that prejudices cannot only be a hindrance to knowledge, but can also provide advantages: if you consider them preliminary judgements (the literal German word *Vor-urteil*) that serve as footholds until new footholds appear in the ongoing process of orientation. Concerning authorities, which the Enlightenment generally fought against, this is particularly clear: in everyday orientation, you acknowledge them as a 'superior' orientation that can be surpassed by new orientations at a time. Authorities are helpful as long as you cannot do with your own reason, first as a child, then also in many matters of adult life.

Others who know more about something are, according to Gadamer, part of the 'history of effects' (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of the given. Social traditions of all kinds, including scientific traditions, are part of this *Wirkungsgeschichte*. They are largely not explicitly remembered, and you cannot simply shake them off in view of the authority they have gained and the help they have provided. Instead, guided by the 'historically effected consciousness' (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*), you must try to retrace such traditions and, in philosophy, pursue the history of concepts, ideas and methods. In this history, there are no longer

any absolute starting and end points, as Husserl expects them. There is also no longer an ultimate criterion for distinguishing between 'right' and 'wrong' prejudices. They also may be equally evident to you. 'Pure reason' also has its history with its prejudices. In this respect, 'understanding' as an understanding of history is a more comprehensive concept than 'reason.'

Understanding, in the sense of Peirce (chap. 18), whom Gadamer does not take into account, for him also turns out to be the thirdness in a triad of experience, expression and understanding, which interpret each other and therefore move with one another. Thus they form a circle that Gadamer calls the '*hermeneutic circle*': in it, the parts are illuminated by the whole and vice versa, so that there are no final and unambiguous determinations in it. The expression of what we understand mainly develops in *dialogues*. Hermeneutical efforts usually begin when there are different interpretations of something. Therefore, every interpretation leaves a '*distance*' to others who understand a topic differently and thus to the topic itself. This applies not only to texts, things, processes and interlocutors, but also to entire cultures or historical epochs, as Nietzsche already points out (chap. 18). This distance in understanding is not overcome as long as there are no common standards to which all adhere, and it reappears in the search for such common standards. Gadamer's pointed thesis is: 'one understands differently if one understands at all.' The fact that others understand the world differently from their own points of view is concealed by any transcendental presuppositions.

In this way, Gadamer not only frees intersubjectivity from the egocentricity of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, but also understanding from the primacy of direct evidence. It is precisely '*time distance*' that facilitates understanding: even if much is forgotten over time, the overview of the past conditions of understanding grows with time. If you are open to the 'history of effects,' gaining time can also be gaining understanding. Taking conversation as a model of understanding in general, Gadamer also considers things, processes, texts, cultures and historical epochs as if they responded when questioned about their meaning. It is then always a 'matter of fact' (*Sache*) about which one seeks to gain common understanding. In human coexistence, this is the *prāgma* in the sense of pragmatism (chap. 18). If we believe that we succeed in understanding each other, we can consider this as a '*fusion of horizons*': this is manifested by the fact that we have a similar view of the 'matter' at stake, without being able to determine the horizons themselves; the concept or metaphor of horizon

stands precisely for the fact that we can determine a clear foreground against an indeterminate background.

According to Gadamer, *language* is such a horizon. A common language, even if or precisely because it leaves a great deal of leeway, can be used by everyone in their own way to get to the heart of the matter at stake in the conversation. Only in language something is intersubjectively 'given'; only through language one can say, as Heidegger already insists, that and what something is. No one is in possession of the common language; it is given to all, but is always worked out from case to case in the dialogue among people and with regard to the *prāgma*.

Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) initially stays closer to Husserl, later more to the philosophy of dialogue. Dialogue has been a major topic in Hermann Cohen (1842–1918), Franz Rosenzweig (1868–1929) and Martin Buber (1878–1965), who place their philosophies emphatically in the Jewish tradition. Yet, they still assume a mutual goodwill and understanding in dialogue. Levinas, who came from Lithuania with its own Jewish Enlightenment, studied first in Strasbourg, then in Freiburg with Husserl and Heidegger, settled in France and had to witness from afar that his Lithuanian relatives fell victim to the Shoah, in a new way introduces the tradition of 'Jewish thought,' as it appears in the Talmud, into Greek-Christian philosophy, from which it has hitherto been largely excluded. In doing so, he reorients both of them.

According to the Torah (chap. 11), God set down his commandments by writing them on tables of stone with His own hand. God's commandments are what the Hebrews are given first and foremost; they rule their lives in detail. They forbid them to use images and concepts of God and refer to the coexistence of people. The Torah tells that no one can look straight into the face of God and escape with their life, not even Moses, who is in conversation with Him. But looking into the face of another person, as in the case of the brothers Jacob and Esau, can save them from a deep, life-threatening enmity caused by deceit. The 'face-to-face' is the most significant experience in human life: in it, you experience attraction and fear simultaneously; it can lead to goodwill, harmony and love, but begins with distance and caution. Among human beings, it is the exemplary situation of orientation, and Levinas explicitly begins philosophizing anew with the '*priority of orientation to the other*.'

Given to each other, people have to get along with each other whether they want to or not. They are most helpful and most dangerous for each other. The

Nazi genocide of the Jews shows how murderous people can be – without reasons. The Jews, scattered around the world since the destruction of their temple in the Roman Empire, always kept their distance to other peoples and were time and again persecuted and expelled; this ended with the industrially organized killing, which was willingly carried out by a people who, with their outstanding cultural and philosophical tradition, used to insist on enlightenment, pure reason and universal humanism. According to Levinas, the Shoah, the most traumatic experience in human history, forces a different beginning in philosophy, more courageous and radical than the beginnings of Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricœur (chap. 19), but also of Jaspers and Sartre (chap. 22). Levinas does this along the concepts of *Time and the Other* (*Le temps et l'autre*), which he puts in the title of his first major work that he begins as a French officer in a prisoner-of-war camp and publishes in 1947. He often refers to Jewish faith and Jewish fate, but nevertheless keeps Judaism in the background. For he wants to speak not only for Jews, but universally for all people. In this way, he deepens 'Western philosophizing' as Christianity once did (chap. 7).

He also develops his philosophical questions drawing on Descartes and Kant, Husserl and Heidegger; he translates Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* into French. In contrast to current Marxism and existentialism, he emphasizes the pleasures of human existence. His thinking is not pessimistic; as in the Jewish tradition, Levinas develops an unusually sensual and beneficial philosophy despite all hardship and distress. In a series of essays, he gradually undermines the ontological, epistemological and methodological premises of Husserl's phenomenology and Heidegger's fundamental ontology. He thwarts Husserl's construction of intersubjectivity from transcendental subjectivity, which only views the other as *alter ego*, and begins with the *face-to-face encounter* which proves as both extremely tense and revealing. The face-to-face encounter has so far been ignored in philosophy.

With reference to the young philosopher Yvonne Picard (1920–1943), who was murdered in Auschwitz, Levinas emphasizes that, according to Husserl himself, the intentions from which he proceeds can be fulfilled or disappointed, that the constitution of space as Husserl himself makes clear, is due to manifold bodily movements, and that in time-consciousness the retentions and protentions that are supposed to constitute permanent objects are incessantly carried on by the flow of primordial impressions. Thus the *temporal movement* that brings the intentions into play is the originally given. It is experienced in a peculiar

degree in the face-to-face encounter that is always interesting and surprising. The assumption of timeless transcendent or transcendental givings ignore the face-to-face encounter. Here, intentional thinking, which has been so sure of its autonomy, becomes 'passion.'

The presupposition of a transcendental subjectivity intends equality with the other. If you renounce it, the relation to others, even love, reveals an '*exteriority*' that cannot be overcome. In this, others are like God: they appear as '*traces*' that make you attentive and curious to follow them, but whose origins remain hidden to you, even if you persistently try to fathom them. As written in the Torah, Moses, who asks God to show Himself to him, is only allowed to see His back after He passed by. Nevertheless, the trace shows a way, it orients him – with all questions that he has to answer himself.

In *Time and the Other*, an almost explosive text, Levinas starts, like the later Heidegger, from the 'there is,' French *il y a*, as an anarchic, chaotic and nameless noise from which something emerges (*surgir*). Levinas calls this '*hypostasis*': something makes itself independent in a way that cannot be explained, because explanations presuppose a lot of assumptions; it separates itself from the rest (*séparer*) and offers itself for determination as an object, in Husserl's language for an intention. Here, however, everyone is and remains alone; for Levinas, the 'interior' of consciousness merely means that everyone inevitably has their own experience; in fact, the interior is *solitude* (*solitude*). Precisely because you are separated from others in this way, your experiences of others are the strongest. Thus a 'drama of being' takes the place of the apparently consensual recognition of being. This need not trigger Kierkegaardian and Heideggerian anxiety. Despite the anonymity and loneliness of the 'there is' we are able to enjoy life; it is the 'brightness of enjoyment' (*luminosité de la jouissance*), that carries us beyond solitude. The enjoyment also includes the separation of the sexes: you cannot put yourself in the place of the other sex (and in today's language: of diverse persons), which lives under different biological and socio-cultural conditions (chap. 22). *Otherness* also occurs in our self-relation. Consciousness do not exert 'dominion' (*maitrîse*) over the anonymous, nameless and conceptless 'there is' in ourselves. Levinas makes this plausible through the phenomenon of insomnia, the inability neither to remain conscious nor to fall asleep. Work, pain and suffering also show how little one is master of things, and even more so death. Heidegger's being-toward-death does not liberate us to our apparently

authentic possibilities, but rather shows how consciousness is bound to the materiality of life.

Levinas introduces the term 'not-in-difference' (*non-in-différence*) for the relationship to the other. It must be read like in Hebrew from right to left: 'difference' is the conceptual definition of the naturally given distance or separation between people with their different gifts and standpoints. The conceptual determination of this distance renders you indifferent to it in the Kierkegaardian sense (chap. 16): the unsettlement concerning the distance is settled when grasped by a concept. Yet, in the face-to-face encounter the indifference does not persist; it is thwarted by the immediate interest in the other; it becomes non-indifference. Determining this non-indifference would render it indifferent again. Instead, the non-indifference is an ethical appeal not to remain indifferent to the otherness of others when dealing with them. According to Levinas, the *nakedness of the face of the other* calls for this: you must keep your face open in order to see, hear, smell and taste things, i.e., to meet elementary needs of life; however, this also makes your face defenseless against others, who can observe it and 'read' in it and maybe spit in it. The face of the other, without actually speaking, says more than anything else when it is faced. It is, as Levinas calls it in religious language, an 'epiphany.' It is given before all reasons.

Since this applies to both sides, the face-to-face encounter becomes a dramatically risky situation in which everything is open. You may hurt the other, intentionally or unintentionally, through looks and even more through words, and such injuries can intensify to the point of wanting to get rid of and kill the other person. If you go back beyond the usual moral idealizations of dialogue, you see that with every abstract category with which you characterize others, you elevate yourself above them and seek to dominate them in a way, and if this happens with racist, anti-Semitic, misogynist, xenophobic, homophobic categories, you believe yourself entitled to classify the lives of others as 'unworthy of life.' Looking into the naked face of the other is then a last chance for ethics: the naked and defenseless face of the other seems, according to Levinas, to say 'you will not kill' (*tu ne tueras pas*): precisely its defenselessness exerts an '*ethical resistance*.' The naked face into which one looks makes violence hesitate, even if it cannot stop it.

The 'reversal of thematization into ethics' unsettles the freedom and the power of the self-assured ego, of which one was so sure in modern philosophy.

Levinas' ethics is not an ethics of general norms, it does not establish a new general certainty. On the contrary: in the immediate proximity of the face-to-face, in which it suddenly becomes clear that you can hurt the other even with concepts, a *responsibility* arises that you do not want and are not free to 'take on' on your own accord. It falls to you and, as Levinas calls it, makes you an involuntary 'hostage' of the other. The naked face of the other has a disarming effect for a moment; you are no longer in control of your decisions. Proximity as such obliges us to stand by the other in his fear and distress. As a consequence, Levinas redefines subjectivity in general (like Whitehead did from a theoretical approach, see chap. 19): one only becomes a subject in the confrontation with the other – as a subject of responsibility for the respective other. The seemingly timeless transcendental subjectivity is taken back into a *temporal, situational subjectivity*. Behind the conscious and proud autonomy or self-legislation and self-justification of the subject, which is generalized as a transcendental subjectivity, appears the *heteronomy* or legislation and justification by others whom one encounters non-indifferently. The original ethical sense of 'conscience' returns. It does not adhere to definitive determinations of essences, but points beyond them (*au-delà de l'essence*).

Nevertheless, in Levinas' approach, which focuses on solitude and otherness, the general must also have its place. Consistently, Levinas understands it from the individual. The responsibility for the needs and hardships of the other as your immediate neighbor expands as soon as additional others are in need. Thus, general standards of justice become necessary and, to guarantee them, orders and institutions such as the legal system and politics (chap. 24). However, these standards must always be oriented to justice for the individual; finally, it is the sense of the general to be understood in terms of the individual and the situation in which he or she finds him or herself, that is: to be *a general for individuals.* If ideas of justice are not to be made arbitrarily available and then may also made subservient to cruel injustice, they must always be tied back to directly given situations with the chance of face-to-face encounters. In functioning democracies, this actually happens in ordinary courts in such a way that decisions are made according to general laws, but always by individual judges on individual defendants in their individual situations. If justice is understood in this way as justice for the individual in his or her situation, racist identifications and mass killings become impossible or improbable. After the general moral standards of Greek-Christian philosophy have failed so horribly,

a philosophy of otherness could be the last chance for ethics. It was precisely the view into the face of the other that was deliberately eliminated by the industrial mechanisms of the National Socialist killings.

Levinas elaborates his bold new approach in two extensive works, *Totalité et Infini. Essai sur l'exteriorité* (*Totality et Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*) from 1961 and, following a critical intervention by Jacques Derrida, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*) from 1974. The first title points to the dissolution of all totalities into infinite horizons and interpretations, the second points to the philosophical necessity of moving beyond general statements of essence in order to arrive at the otherness in all being. As for Gadamer, this is only possible in a paradoxical and circular way. Levinas' solution is a language that is deliberately not 'neutral,' objectifying, definitively stating, but 'anarchic,' evoking and provoking. It is a 'just' language as far as it says something (*dire*) and then 'says' it 'away' again (*dédire*). Only in doing so, it can entertain and contradict universal determinations of the given, which as mere traces eludes all definitive determinations.

Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), who discovered his Jewishness when he was expelled from school at the age of 12 in Algeria and who only delved deeper in it in a later exchange with Levinas, entered the stage of philosophy in 1967 with three groundbreaking works on the question of the given at once: *De la grammatologie* (*Of Grammatology*), a large-scale reading of Rousseau's *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (chap. 12), which he precedes with a first part *L'écriture avant la lettre* (*The Writing before the Letter*); a treatise *La voix et le phénomène* (*The Voice and the Phenomenon*), in which he shows how Husserl tries to keep writing out of his intentional analyses in favor to the voice, which seems to be immediately present; and *L'écriture et la différence* (*Writing and Difference*), a collection of critical essays on the most significant philosophies of his time, including that of Levinas. He developed his own philosophizing by critically following the traces of others. His view on writing opened up a new condition of actual human orientation: while writing is crucial in the Jewish tradition, as Derrida underlines in an essay on the writer Edmond Jabès, it is marginalized in Greek-Christian philosophy. Derrida took writing and scripture as his starting point. They proved to be a primary source of hold in actual human orientation in general.

According to Husserl, the given in the 'interior' of consciousness is expressed by the voice, which, however, immediately fades away again. Aristotle assumed that things and facts (*prágmata*) are present in the soul through thoughts (*noêmata*), which express themselves through the sounds of the voice (*tà en tê phonê*). For him, things, thoughts and sounds are not arbitrarily linked to each other, while the letters (*grámmata*) by which the sounds are written down are arbitrary, so that one cannot rely on them. According to Rousseau, as Derrida shows, writing is only a supplement (*supplément*) which, however, separates culture from nature. *The supplement reverses the whole*: for what is given in being, in thought and in the voice only really comes to an enduring state in writing which shapes it in its own way. However, the written is not independent, as being seemed to be, but consists of signs that only are to refer to something other than themselves and change from language to language and from time to time. This causes it to fall behind in metaphysics. Once metaphysics has played out, it becomes all the more interesting philosophically.

Scripture is spatio-temporal: the letters and words are written and read one after the other and they remain next to each other. Thus writing, like the distinction according to George Spencer-Brown (chap. 19), unites simultaneity and non-simultaneity; writing is a mode of distinction. In Heidegger's sense, what is written is simultaneously present and ready-to-hand: you have it in front of you like a present thing and can pick it up to do something with that what it refers to. As present things, writings favor the theoretical view from nowhere: with a text in your hand, you exemplarily experience yourself as a subject in relation to an object, and others have it in front of them in the same way. Yet, letters are especially attractive in human orientation: like traces, they arouse your curiosity about what they may mean. When they are difficult to understand, you become aware that they are only footholds that need more footholds in order to understand them better. Writing is a specific means of human orientation, but also a preliminary one. Thus, Derrida's discovery of its relevance is an important step to a philosophy of orientation.

Plato precedes him in this, but he criticizes writing. Precisely because others can understand what is written differently from what the author has meant, and the author cannot control their interpretations after he has published the text, Plato writes (chap. 5, 19) that he does not want to write down his teachings, if he had any. In contrast, Derrida recognizes the gain of writing precisely in the fact that it enables two 'absences': the absence of the original

and only temporal given on which the author writes, and the absence of the author himself who assumes the exclusive right to interpret what is written. Just in this way, *writing offers an independent hold over time*. To be sure, it is open for ever-new interpretations in ever-new times; but this also applies for the (absent) original given and the (absent) author. But it itself stands over time and helps to orient you: the Torah is a prime example of this.

The French word *écriture* designates both the process and the result of writing. The term also includes handwriting, the spelling of words, the production of a document and the finished document. It entails a specific temporality: you only write on a topic after many others have done so and prepared the language for it. Hence, you inevitably 'inscribe' yourself in the former texts of others. Derrida's famous doctrines of *différance*, *dissémination*, *déconstruction and don* result from this 'inscription.' He deliberately does not form a closed system out of them, which would contradict their meaning. In terms of their relevance for human orientation, they can be connected in this way:
– *Différance* is Derrida's term for the fact that the meaning of a distinction (*différence*) shifts almost imperceptibly with every use in a new context: the meaning of what is said and written and persists for a while moves when it is 'inscribed' into new contexts. In fact, a distinction is useful in everyday orientation precisely when it can be used differently within a certain leeway, according to the respective situation. However, you only notice this in writings whose words take on new meanings by new interpretations in later situations. Derrida shows this by spelling French *différence* differently as *différance*: the orthographically incorrect spelling is only remarked when written, not when heard; the French words sounds the same, writing them down generates different meanings.
– From *différance* follows *dissémination*, the dispersion of meanings through their displacement in different contexts. This dispersion has no predetermined direction or intention; in everyday language use, the meanings of the signs spread in all directions. We only insist on a certain use of words when understandability and comprehensibility are at risk in a decisive situation; then we deliberately decide which shifts in meaning or which new signs and words we want to go along with. For the sake of the creativity of language, which is needed for going with the times, the possible links betweeen signs are defined by rules only to a limited extent (chap. 25). Instead, signs are traces for each other; one leads to the other, but leaves a great deal of leeway. Hence, *dissémination* can only be

overlooked to a very limited extent. However, a perfect overview of everyday language is not needed in everyday orientation; here, the situation in question usually makes it clear enough what is meant. If there is a particular need for unambiguity, as in science or in law, it is enforced through definitions, which are literally delimitations or finalizations: definitions are intended to stop the natural *dissémination* in order to enable terms that can be applied in the same way in various situations. Derrida calls this closure (*clôture*). To be unambiguously defined is not the final destiny of language.

– *Déconstruction* is often understood as a method of putting *dissémination* into action. Derrida pursues it not only in the field of epistemology, but also in the philosophies of art, religion, politics, law and ethics, where it seems to become dangerously 'relativistic'; for many, deconstruction is the result of haphazard playfulness that ends in aporias. But this already applies to Plato's dialogues, where Socrates destroys all seemingly true definitions. In fact, every inscription in other texts, from which no one escapes, even and especially when doing science, is *déconstruction*. The word *déconstruction* goes back to Latin *struere*, that is 'to layer.' *Construere* then means 'to layer together,' 'to pile up,' *destruere* 'to remove layers,' 'to break down,' 'to destroy.' Derrida's term *déconstruction* which combines *construere* and *destruere* indicates that in writing and also in speaking one is constantly both layering up and down meanings, i.e., rearranging or reorienting them. In courageous beginnings, this is done deliberately. In a sense, creating is destroying as well, not only in speaking and writing. If this is plausible, you are not able to methodologically subject this rearranging or reorienting to rules; otherwise you would block new orientations. With his own deconstructions, Derrida above all wants to uncover unnoticed philosophical and especially metaphysical presuppositions in what has already been written and thereby reveal alternative possibilities of understanding. This still is the spirit of the Enlightenment, but without any longer assuming a pure and general reason or transcendental subjectivity.

– French *différer* means both to distinguish factually and to postpone temporally. According to Derrida, writing gives temporal respite to factual distinctions by allowing them to stand still, until something new is inscribed into the writing. In the sense that you can hold on to it for a time, writing gives time (*donne le temps*): by giving temporary stability in orientation, it becomes a gift (*don*). This gift is without a counter-gift, i.e., a selfless gift for which no reciprocity is expected: it is a *given in a stronger sense*. Moreover, language and writing which

are able to 'accept' other meanings, are 'hospitable' to them. This also applies to ethics: as for Levinas, for Derrida ethics begins with giving beyond equality and reciprocity, which is presupposed in conventional morality. Reciprocity functions like economy, it allows a calculating behavior (I will do this to the extent that you also do it). The ethics of the gift that renounces this demands more good will, not less; in a sense, it is more ethical. Indeed, doing some good without expecting a good in return is highly respected in everyday life.

Jean-François Lyotard (1924–1998) and Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) ventured further bold new philosophical beginnings in times of nihilism. With his 1979 study *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (*La condition postmoderne*), initially a commissioned work, Lyotard popularized the notion of 'postmodernism,' which had already been used in art, literary and architectural theory. In philosophical terms, it means that the modern ambitions of absolute certainty, transcendental subjectivity, systematized totality of knowledge and progress to truth are gone and we are now ready and able to engage with given realities. 'Postmodernism' in philosophy is resolute *de-idealization* and *de-totalization*. Lyotard, who only wanted to describe what is current in philosophy, distinguished between scientific and narrative knowledge with the proviso that scientific knowledge is to be justified, whereas *narrative knowledge* does not. Yet, justification ends at some point with mere assumptions. To Lyotard, these assumptions are part of '*grand narratives*' which differentiate themselves into different types of observation, determination and justification. They do not result in a unified knowledge that would allow to identify a unified given. They leave room to alternative narratives. 'Postmodernism' is about *plurality*.

In Lyotard's own philosophical outline *Le Différend* (*The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, 1983), *différend* means a difference of opinion or dispute that cannot be decided along predetermined universal rules of law or discourse. Lyotard responds to this with his own form of philosophical writing: he writes aphorisms to which he appends notes by and on philosophers as diverse as Protagoras, Gorgias, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Levinas, without systematically linking their thoughts to one another. Yet, he keeps Auschwitz, the possible repetition of which must always be considered today, everywhere present. Even here he sticks to the topic of the unjustified narrative: ultimately, according to him, no one and nothing has the authority to either doubt or confirm that the gas chambers really existed.

In contrast, Deleuze approaches the subject of difference through a series of monographs on Hume, Nietzsche, Kant, Bergson, Proust, de Sade and Spinoza, looking for their new philosophical beginnings; books on Kafka, Bacon, Foucault and Leibniz follow later. He resolutely rejects Hegelian dialectics as a method of an (apparent) unification of differences. He affirms divergence and decentration and propagates the flow of distinctions emphasized by Nietzsche. In *Difference and Repetition* (*Différence et répétition*, 1968), he claims that identity only arises through the repetition of concepts, which in fact is only possible as a differentiated repetition under new circumstances. This converges with Derrida's *différance* and *dissémination*, which for Deleuze it is due more to Bergson than to Husserl. In his *The Logic of Sense* (*Logique du sens*, 1969), Deleuze goes back to the volatile concept of sense that can only be determined by itself. In the question of the 'sense of sense' 'sense' is only repeated in different ways; in the production of sense, acts and contents cannot be sharply distinguished; in the fluctuating differentiations, nothing preserves its sense identically. We are dealing with a Bergsonian *élan* that is driven by a Nietzschean will to power; every concept is created anew in an instant and is never given as something fixed.

This leads to a new and convincing figure in the question of the given and the knowledge of it: the *rhizome*. Deleuze develops it together with the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Felix Guattari (1930–1992) in *A Thousand Plateaus* (*Mille Plateaux*, 1980). With the rhizome metaphor, they replace the metaphor of the family tree, which Plato and still d'Alembert & Diderot use as an organizing scheme of knowledge in their *Encyclopédie*, already supplementing it with cross-references (chap. 14). 'Rhizome' indicates a network of roots branching out underground in all directions and emerging on the surface only with scattered shoots. There are no simple and hierarchically ordered distinctions, but links without beginnings and ends which can, when interrupted, be bypassed via other connections. Free differentiation creates much richer orders than previously thought possible. They are, in current terms, highly resilient: they create a flexible stability that persists under changing circumstances as well. In a rhizome, you can trace and define diverse orders, but not name anything originally given; the rhizome itself is hidden in the underground. To this, Deleuze's '*nomadic thinking*' responds, that, in contrast to 'monarchical thinking,' always seeks a land on which it can stay for a while, but avoids taking complete possession of it.

For Michel Foucault (1926–1984) it is already clear in particular by the structuralism of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), the ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) and the versatile sign, literature and media theorist Roland Barthes (1915–1980) that our world is only given to us in signs. He goes deepest in the so-called 'poststructuralism' which is a specification of 'postmodernism.' According to structuralism, we orient ourselves through signs of various kinds that are able to distinguish things by distingishing one from another: it is signs that create structures, but what they refer to is in principle 'arbitrary'; they do not express the truth of the given in Aristotle's sense. Everything can be designated one way or another by a linguistic community; the only decisive factor is the signs' distinctiveness: it precedes and determines the distinctiveness of the world. To quote Peirce again (chap. 18): in his lectures (he hardly published anything), de Saussure assumes a two-digit relation of signs, the mere relation between signifier and signified (*signifiant – signifié*), and leaves the relation between sign and reality or the 'interpretant' open. Thus it can also remain open whether the signs are used consciously or unconsciously and for what reasons; it is only the structures which they form that matter. Structures of signs each follow their own grammars, not a general logic. For de Saussure, writing remains in the background compared to spoken language (*parole*) because the written letters already drastically reduce the differences used in spoken words. The grammar of a specific language (*langue*) such as French or English is developed through the spoken language (*parole*); in it signs 'live.'

The philosophical point of this concept of structure is that in certain areas contexts of order in Dilthey's sense (chap. 18) arise that are not deliberately created and cannot simply be transferred to other areas. The Peircian interpretant of the structures of signs in the sense of poststructuralism is the everyday context of life in which signs become understandable and useful. While the everyday contexts of life on their part in Levinas, Derrida, Lyotard and Deleuze philosophically are conceived of with the terms of trace, scripture, narrative and rhizome, Foucault introduces power as a structure-forming factor. In *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique – Folie et déraison* (*Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, 1961), he begins with de-discriminating madness by showing how those deemed insane were gradually marginalized through the assumption of universal and pure reason and finally locked up by force in official institutions, whereas they were previously allowed to move freely in society. Together with the philosophy of reason, an apparatus of power

is formed against the unreasonable as such; in the structural opposition to madness, reason reveals itself as power, without the reasonable people being aware that they are exercising power. This closely connects to Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* (chap. 18). As an educational program, to become reasonable is also a program of exclusion. To demonstrate this, Foucault studies the actual treatment of those deemed insane in lunatic asylums and correctional institutions. Insofar as sexuality disturbs and misleads reason, it is also considered a kind of madness and therefore suppressed; Foucault, who himself is strongly interested in sexuality, devotes more and more attention to it in later works.

In *Les mots et les choses – une archéologie des sciences humaines* (*The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, 1966), or according to the title he himself prefers, *L'ordre des choses* (*The Order of Things*), Foucault delves even deeper. Through the concept of *episteme*, he examines the structures of what is considered knowledge in a particular epoch at all and especially knowledge of 'man,' who in the 19th century takes over the place of reason. Following the basic structuralist thesis that words do not represent things, but rather organize their orders in discourses on them, he finds the ordering schemes of biological nature, capitalist economy and Indo-European grammar in the enlightened Europe while the unity of 'the' human being created by reason dissolves. In analogy to Nietzsche's formula 'the death of God,' Foucault speaks of '*the death of man*,' i.e., of the idealized, 'humanistically' understood human being that is leaving the stage of philosophy.

Foucault does not criticize the metaphysics that stood behind the identities of 'God' and 'man,' but treats it like an archaeologist as a layer of meaning that was superimposed on older ones and has itself since been overlaid by new layers of meaning; like Derrida, he uses the *metaphor of layers* instead of the older metaphor of fundaments: layers bear each other, but also make each other non-transparent and unrecognizable. The thinking of the individual authors is incorporated into the respective multi-layered *episteme*. Thus 'the author' also loses his assumed sovereignty; Barthes and Foucault publicly exchange views on *La mort de l'auteur* (*The Death of the Author*). Persons are now only footholds in an overarching discourse on which they effect a more or less strong impact. In *L'archéologie du savoir* (*Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1969), Foucault declares the uncovering of those layers of meaning to be his method: he does not explain and justify, but digs up old layers of meaning by studying relevant sources in archives.

What is constructive in this kind of massive deconstruction is the uncovering of 'dispositifs' in the respective discourse, which for Foucault no longer simply consists of true and false statements, but rather, as for Bergson and Whitehead (chap. 19), of orders of 'events' (*événements*) which are interwoven into action and its practices; for Foucault, as for Lyotard, the later Wittgenstein's concept of 'language games,' which are part of a 'form of life,' is a key point of reference (chap. 21). As Foucault understands it, a discourse consists of what is said about a certain topic in a certain society at a certain time in certain contexts of life and action. Vice versa, *something is simply what is said about it in a discourse*. This may or may not include scientific and legal definitions. The path to the given for human orientation is then the discourse analysis, i.e., the examination of the contexts and leeways in which something is addressed in a discourse. The meanings in discourses are *not arbitrary*, as often claimed: the discourses are structured and the leeways are limited; both delimit what can be said and done and even thought; it is only not principles that rules them. As Foucault emphasizes even more strongly than Derrida, the limits are not maintained primarily by norms of reason, but simply by the fact that people who participate in a discourse control each other's use of signs for the sake of understanding them; in doing so, they sometimes use arguments that follow a mutually recognized logic, but far more often they rebuke each other and, in extreme cases, exclude each other form further communication. The late Wittgenstein calls this '*Abrichtung*' (chap. 21), which means an enforced correction.

In his 1970 inaugural address at the *Collège de France*, France's most outstanding academic institution which is most open to scientific innovation, Foucault sums up *The Order of Discourse* (*L'ordre du discours*): for him, it is now time to 'give discourse back its event character,' to accept the plurality of discourses without subjecting them to a system and to dispense with questions of origin and totality. Neither subjects, nor consciousness, nor fixed structures in the use of signs should be presupposed when understanding discourses; rather, random formations and transformations of series of signs are to be respected. Discourses are 'ensembles of discursive events,' and therefore their theories must be 'theories of discontinuous systematics' which 'allow chance, the discontinuous and materiality enter into the root of thought.'

Then, the discourse events can only be grasped with the concept of *power*, but a diffuse power that is largely anonymous like Nietzsche's will to power

(chap. 18). The societal institutions considered as effects of power spread like rhizomes: this does not only apply to institutions for education and control like schools, barracks or prisons, but also to law, morals, conceptions of man and the world, aesthetic styles, etc. This is why they respond not to systematic thoughts of certain authors, but to certain social needs. For Foucault, the strongest social need is to cope with the 'great profusion of discourse' itself, its 'incessant and orderless noise,' and this is done through ordering and abbreviating the profusion. Ultimately, then, it is about the overview that has been promised by reason for thousands of years. To Foucault, this began with the 'great Platonic delimitation' by fixing philosophy's focus on truth rather than on distinction, power and desires, which were at the forefront of the Sophists' discourse and became boundless at their time (chap. 4). With his dialogues, Plato also wanted to overcome Socrates' love of handsome and considerate young men, which constantly drove him around the city, in favor of the love to logos (*logophilia*), which promises self-control and inner hold.

In the 19th century, when the Enlightenment through reason begins to lose its credibility and nihilism arises, a new 'will to knowledge' about sexuality also emerges from the long-repressed underground: Foucault dedicates his further work to this.

The philosophy of orientation is at last faced with the question of what is originally 'given' to human orientation, and it has to ask how human orientation processes this 'given.' Here, Husserl's phenomenology provides pioneering insights:
– into evidence as the ultimate criterion of the truth that comes from observation and precedes all justification;
– into the modalities of the temporality of all experience, in which nevertheless constant objects emerge;
– into how to gain general concepts through free variation of ideas about the given;
– into the conditions of the possibility of intersubjectivity;
– into the lifeworld as the basis of all scientific abstractions and much more.

However, Husserl presupposes consciousness or the ego or the subject itself as a given object in order to be able to methodically investigate and determine how something is given to it. By 'switching off' the natural attitude, he firstly isolates the consciousness as an 'inner world' from an 'outer world,' and by assuming that consciousness is always active, he attributes intentions to it when it deals with any given. Both presuppositions remain problematic.

For in this way consciousness is paradoxically faced with the problem of the given: the given is now the given in a given consciousness, which is then solely concerned with itself. All philosophy becomes a kind of consciousness philosophy. Even though Husserl no longer regards consciousness as a separate substance, as Descartes did (chap. 9), he nevertheless separates it as a peculiar being from the body through which it lives, from the world in which it lives, and from the others with whom it lives, in order to methodically investigate how body, world and the others are given to the consciousness. Intention with which Husserl connects consciousness to the rest of the world, is focused attention. But this reduces orientation. For orientation is not always already focused on something; it can and must also wander freely in order to firstly discover what is relevant for it in a situation. By doing this, it is attracted to what is of interest for it. Intention first comes up when it is about determining that what is attractive: then attention becomes intention. In Husserl's language, the 'original impressions' from which experiences and intentions start cannot themselves be intended: they trigger the intentions.

As it turns out, Husserl has to include some non-conscious or 'passive' footholds everywhere in his approach starting with the intentional consciousness. Passive are mere 'associations' between ideas; passive is the withdrawal of the rest of an experience into the background when something is focused; passive are the 'shadows' in the temporal perception of objects, passive are the 'syntheses' when impressions from different senses are brought together to form unified objects, and passive is the embeddedness of consciousness in a lifeworld. Husserl is aware that the classification of 'passive' and 'active' or 'intentional' is difficult and the transitions between the terms hard to grasp. Thus, he ends with paradoxically summarizing the passive acts of consciousness as 'dead consciousness' (totes Bewussthaben) and 'negative attention.' Husserl's outstanding followers like Edith Stein (1891–1942), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), Eugen Fink (1905–1975), Jan Patočka (1907–1977), Hermann Schmitz (1928–2021) und Bernhard Waldenfels (born 1934) continued to intensively work especially on the modes of passivity in the experience of consciousness.

As to the philosophy of orientation, consciousness is not given as a particular being and 'inner' space, but, according to Leibniz, as a temporary state of enhanced attention, in French 'apperception,' in German 'Bewusstheit' instead of 'Bewusstsein' (chap. 9). 'Bewusstheit' firstly is the state of being awake in contrast to being asleep or faint: it cannot be switched on and off at will. Secondly, being awake you are able to direct or orient your attention. Yet, this is not always necessary and, as mentioned

above, human orientation also needs to wander freely in order to discover what is relevant for it in a situation. When orientation follows its routines, intentions also become 'passive.' The state of enhanced attention occurs when there are no established routines, when they are disrupted, or when a situation is difficult to cope with. Colloquially speaking, you then have to 'pay attention.' This always happens when you speak or read something, i.e., when you are not dealing with natural but with learned and grammatically regulated signs that you have to search for in order to find the proper term and hit the right tone. The notion of consciousness is formed primarily from the conceptual apprehesion of experience; experience drives orientation, concepts retain what is of enduring interest, and this retention of concepts in memory is regarded as conscious. Yet, it is precisely here that a mental separation of the inner and outer world is not helpful; for the signs are physically present in listening and reading and one never speaks a language alone (chap. 21). With Husserl, language plays a subordinate role, whereas Gadamer, Levinas and Derrida put it to the forefront. The philosophical approach of an actively performing consciousness in all experience with its own absolute certainties cannot be maintained. The question of what is originally given to human orientation requires further elaboration.

Gadamer abandons Husserl's initial self-assurance provided by the preconceived transcendental attitude and the phenomenological method, which were once again intended to make absolute certainty possible. He thus gains wider perspectives on what is given to human orientation. He plays off method and truth against each other in order to find new paths to truth. Returning to Schleiermacher's and Dilthey's concept of understanding and hermeneutics (chap. 15, 18), he aims to find a true understanding not only of texts, but of matters at all that is to find mainly by dialogue without preconceived methods. Hermeneutics as such and Gadamer's insights that orientation need not and cannot be free of prejudice, but that prejudices can also lead orientation further, that the concept of understanding is more comprehensive than the concept of reason, and that traditions are essential for understanding anything – all these are important new beginnings toward a philosophy of orientation. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to speak of 'truth' even in his sense.

Levinas, in his phenomenology, leaves behind Husserl's approach of intentions and brings to the fore the face-to-face situation with its extraordinary tension, indecision and danger: as the exemplary immediate given that is crucial for people. Further, he introduces the Jewish tradition into Greek-Christian philosophy and encourages

a resolute orientation toward the Other (orientation vers Autrui). He no longer assumes the idealized benevolence of mutual understanding in consensual dialogues between de-subjectified transcendental subjects, but rather the joyful expectation on the one hand and the anxiety and danger on the other that every encounter with others may trigger. He admits the singularity and solitude of the individual orientations and thus recognizes the encroachment that lies in every application of one's own concepts to others. He recognizes the responsibility that arises from this and that falls to you before you take it on yourself. As a result, others become traces for your own orientation.

If we start from the exemplary face-to-face situation, orientation no longer appears as an event above which a subject seems to stand autonomously and impartially identifying objects and ordering them according to its own rules, but as an event in which you only become a subject when responsibility for the other falls to you. This also applies to the use of categories, concepts and words when talking to or about others. The general as such is newly thought from the perspective of the individual, that articulates and corrects it; it is not a neutral something above the individuals. The neutrality that Greek-Christian thought has always claimed by insisting on scientificity and that seemed to justify it to feel responsible for the universal becomes questionable. Greek-Christian thought believed itself to be destined for 'eternal peace' and yet did not prevent the Shoah. Levinas calls this 'horrible neutrality' (horrible neutralité). He moves from a seemingly neutral morality to an ethic that is capable of dealing with other moralities.

With ' trace' and 'non-in-difference,' he finds new key concepts for the given. With traces you have footholds in your orientation that arouse your curiosity without being able to explore all the contexts they connect to. They urge, but not determine your orientation. The general uncertainty of other things and other persons calls us back from the modes of theoretical recognition to the mode of orienting ourselves, in which caution is required before theoretical determination and practical intervention. Only if you carefully engage with other orientations will you recognize the biases of your own orientation and can, also in Gadamer's sense, move beyond them. As a consequence, you will trace all generalizations, especially your own, back to the individual matters and persons to which they shall do justice.

Levinas contrasts Odysseus with Abraham: the Greek, who during his bold adventures abroad wants hear the beguiling songs of the sirens, but knows how to protect himself from their temptations by plugging his ears, who can always distinguish between the true and the false and only ever wants to return to his

homeland, and the Hebrew, who is prepared to do something incomprehensible to himself, such as sacrificing his son, at the behest of his God and who leaves his homeland to set off for a promised land that he will never get to see.

'Postmodern thinking' resolutely abandons absolute certainties or ultimate evidence. Instead, it advocates plurality and recognizes alternatives in philosophy. Recognizing alternatives in turn means that we must learn to orient ourselves in their diversity. This does not imply, as 'postmodernism' is often accused of, that one plays ironically with philosophical alternatives, but only that one is always aware of the standpoint-bound nature of one's own orientation when dealing with them.

Concerning the original given in human orientation, new alternatives arise. While, with Gadamer, Husserl's self-observation of consciousness recedes behind the 'Wirkungsgeschichte' of understanding, which you have to explore in order to understand something in its original sense, and while according to Levinas the face-to-face encounter reminds us of the otherness of the others' understanding, Derrida *demonstrates that this otherness also emerges from writings which were never supposed to be an original given, but nevertheless give orientation hold over time: they persist, while the original objects which they describe and their authors who have originally written them may further change. Scripture subverts originality. From a phenomenological point of view, everything you have read once inevitably encroaches on what you experience afterwards: for example, you experience love differently when you have read romance novels. Writing something yourself, you unavoidably write yourself into existing texts, either deliberately or because you don't remember enough of what you have heard and read. It is scripture that preserves what was originally given and expressed and now is no longer available. Thus, what remains through writings is a large text that continues to be written. In this sense, Derrida writes 'there is no outside-text' (Il n'y a pas de hors-texte). Psychologically speaking, texts push themselves in front of our experience and stores it in a way that is easier to remember.*

On the other hand, posterior writing about experiences displaces their originality. Retentions and protentions, which surround the experience of primordial impressions, as Husserl describes it, also apply to written texts: created as an aid to memory that retains the given in experience or thinking, texts transform it and expose it to new interpretations; in both cases the original meaning disappears. The need for hold in human orientation which is offered by writing changes that which we try to hold on to. In a word: there is nothing autochthonous or authentic or

originally given in human orientation. What seems to us autochthonous, authentic or original is given by signs as well and can best understood as sign processes in Peirce's sense (chap. 18). And Derrida now also refers to Peirce.

Lyotard and Deleuze push philosophy even further in the direction of differentiation and dispersion of sense in contrast to its unification and totalization. Trace, narrative, différend, rhizome and nomadic thinking become the guiding concepts and metaphors of 'postmodernism.' That which is ultimately given, is 'sense' in the sense of 'meaning.' Heidegger asks about the 'meaning of being' (German: 'Sinn von Sein', French: 'sens de l'être'). You cannot go back behind meaning when questioning the meaning of 'meaning.' Meaning (German: Sinn, French: sens) is not bound to single signs, words, sentences and texts; it emerges when distinctions are made and connections and orders arise as a result. For the philosophy of orientation, these are in turn connections between footholds that emerge in a situation; one provisionally holds on to them or one orients oneself to them in order to find further footholds for determining the situation and making decisions on successful actions. Footholds 'make sense,' as we say, when they fit together, which is: when they create plausible patterns or orders. This can happen in very different ways. Foucault who is in close contact with Lyotard and Deleuze sums these ways up with his concept of discourse. 'Discourse' is his term for everything that is communicated about something: something is something that is said about it, including with scientific terms. The production of meaning of something largely happens involuntarily and anonymously; in this, subjects and authors are involved in many ways; they do not appear as sovereign beings. With his term of discourse Foucault integrates Nietzsche's concept of the will to power, Derrida's concept of the great text and Lyotard's concept of the great narrative referring it to the topics at issue; such a discourse includes signs, techniques, customs, institutions, rules, laws, languages, institutions, morals, styles, cultures, etc. Responding to the diffusion of sense, the concept of discourse itself must be diffuse. Yet, all of this together appears as our reality; to Foucault, this is how we have to describe our given reality without embellishment; from this, we can start to delineate the manifold ways in which our communicated reality is created and continuously re-created.

In the anarchic, chaotic and nameless noise of our discourses, metaphysical, transcendental and scientific terms and theorems can help us to find our way. With regard to our discourses, they are not simply true or false, but means of disciplining and controlling discourses; their history or histories can be read as histories of the

powers they have exercised in social and political respects. From the point of view of social power, they remind each individual to control him or herself in order to make possible the control of social discourse as a whole.

As a result, every enlightenment, insofar as it operates with such concepts, is a powerful educational program for ordering society. To Foucault, philosophy in this way pursues 'bio-politics,' which is more than politics in the usual sense: in Nietzsche's sense it is 'great politics.' In it, reason works strategically, but anonymously, that is: like a power. Hence, discourses in turn become the matter of politics, i.e., of political discourses that include discourses on sexuality, nutrition, health, fitness for certain purposes and the way we conduct our lives as a whole. Bio-politics shapes human life and orientation from the ground up. The philosophy of orientation involves terms to deal with this.

In nihilism, the old metaphysical footholds have lost their plausibility: we now have to find, create and order meaning in our lives ourselves and can do it in manifold ways. We can orient ourselves in nihilism as well, now on our own responsibility. Hence, we have to learn more about the conditions and modes of human orientation. Today, many philosophers turn to ethical demands, as things should be, in order to find a firm orientation again. But demands do not mirror reality, and there is in turn a great variety of ethical approaches. Others trust in logic, which is assumed to be above all perspectivism, relativism, nihilism and diffusion of meaning, being able to provide an absolute foothold for human orientation. In this sense, if it is discourse and language that create common footholds for what is given, one has to start with the logical analysis of language:

21. Alternative Orientations in View of Language: Wittgenstein, Carnap, Popper, Quine, Putnam, Davidson, Goodman and Rorty

After various beginnings in the history of philosophy, already with the Sophists, then with Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) and again with Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), the full significance of language for human orientation was discovered at the beginning of the 20th century, so that we speak of a 'lingustic turn.' As an alternative to the phenomenology of

'inner consciousness,' one started with language as an access to the world. In doing so, one accepted that what is in consciousness can only be captured and communicated through language and that language orients human beings through the structures that have developed in it. As Humboldt said, languages represent 'views of the world' (*Weltansichten*). Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) considered language as a 'symbolic form' analogous to Kant's 'forms of pure perception' (space and time) and 'pure intellect' (categories): like myth, art and science, language creates, for him, a 'symbolic world.' In his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923–1929), Cassirer compared them in order to develop a philosophy of culture. Previously, in *Substance and Function* (*Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff*, 1910), he showed that in mathematics and the natural sciences thinking in terms of substances, i.e., independently given things, has moved to thinking in terms of functions, i.e., mere dependencies which is a further important step to depart from Aristotle's metaphysics. The language psychologist and philosopher of language Karl Bühler (1879–1963) distinguished three functions of language, the 'expression' of a speaker, the 'appeal' to others and the 'representation' of a given. These distinctions outline the framework of the following debates.

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) knows little of all these matters. His background is engineering, not philosophy and history; like Nietzsche (chap. 18), of whom he also reads little, he is an autodidact in philosophy. Yet or because of this, he courageously reorients philosophy from the ground up, not only once, but twice; both new beginnings have large schools in their wake. In his *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung*, which appears in 1921 and becomes the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* in its English translation (by Ramsey and Ogden), Wittgenstein insists, like Husserl (chap. 20), on complete clarity and unambiguity of philosophy as a strict science, and he is convinced, like Husserl, that he can solve the problems of philosophy once and for all. He begins once again with the pursuit of absolute certainty, and it is precisely this pursuit that he will again resolutely abandon at the end, in drafts for a text *On Certainty*. Unlike Husserl, however, Wittgenstein does not go into the breadth of experience and its observation, let alone 'inner' experience. Instead, he makes a short and sharp cut by declaring that what is not completely clear and unambiguous does not belong to philosophy; problems that cannot be solved clearly must be kept away from it altogether. He seeks clarity and unambiguity in logic, and logic is expressed in a language. So you have to ask about the language of logic and

about the logic of language. Wittgenstein holds onto this task for the rest of his life. But he eventually changes the concept of logic.

The principles of logic are themselves controversial at his time; they also first have to be brought to clarity, unambiguity and, if they are to be the basis for everything else, to completeness and consistency. Wittgenstein connects to Gottlob Frege (1848–1925), who is hardly known at the time, just as Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) does, who is already well-known and is writing, together with Whitehead (chap. 19), their *Principia Mathematica*. Frege develops his *Begriffsschrift: A Formula Language, Modeled Upon That of Arithmetic, for Pure Thought* (1879), Russell a *Theory of Definite Descriptions*. Both represent logical relationships by means of mathematical signs, which they invent specifically for this purpose: as far as can be calculated with them, logic becomes an unambiguous and universal language. Frege replaces the Aristotelian scheme of the Indo-European proposition 'S is P' (e.g., Socrates is dead), which is based on the assumption of independent and permanent 'substances' that change their 'accidentals' (chap. 5); in propositions, substances are attributed as 'subjects' (S), accidentals as 'predicates' (P). Instead, Frege considers the relations between them as mere 'functions' of dependency (f), in which 'arguments' are inserted (x) and thereby take on 'values' of true or false. He thereby detaches logic from the old ontology and establishes a new one: now proper names (*Eigennamen*) used as arguments in a function represent real objects. Thus, for Frege, logic itself is no longer dependent on existing objects, but rather outlines what can be an object of a proposition at all, whether it exists or not (like the present king of France). In contrast to the 'is' of the Aristotelian propositional scheme, descriptions or designations can be clearly separated from statements of existence (you can make statements about the present king of France even if there is none).

In the new logic, the truth and falsity of propositions can also be 'values' of functions, so that you can calculate possible 'truth values' for the combination of propositions and represent them in tables. The truth of statements then consist (as in structuralism, chap. 20) first in their relations to each other; in a second step, it is to be verified by those objects which correspond to proper names in propositions. These objects appear (in contrast to structuralism) in the shape of isolated objects; Russell creates a '*logical atomism*,' which Wittgenstein takes over. To Frege, words may have a different 'sense' (*Sinn*), but they still refer to a common 'meaning' (*Bedeutung*) or reference, as in the famous case of 'evening

star' and 'morning star' which both mean the planet Venus. By analogy, ideas in different consciousnesses are to refer to common 'thoughts' (*Gedanken*). In this way, ambiguity seems to disappear both in relation to communication and in relation to objects. Despite the new beginning in logic, this is still close to the Aristotelian approach.

After Russell discovers inconsistencies in Frege's calculus of truth, Wittgenstein in turn discovers inconsistencies in Russell's calculus. Wittgenstein wants to perfect the calculus by developing a mathematical formula that is to be universally valid by generating logically ordered statements about the entire possible world. The philosophical consequences that Wittgenstein draws in his *Tractatus* are still exciting today. He presents them with an unprecedented brevity, conciseness and clarity; to this contributes the decimal notation, which he himself invents, making it possible to refer precisely to each sentence and to assess its 'logical weight' (*logisches Gewicht*). Wittgenstein's *main philosophical thesis* is that the 'limits of my language' are also 'the limits of my world' (Tr 5.6): my world extends only as far as I can make it accessible through my logically clear and thus unambiguous language. This approach, too, excludes a 'subject': I myself am not part of this world, but that what it limits: 'the thinking, imagining subject' does not exist *in* the world, but is the standpoint *from* which a 'field of sight' opens up in which the world appears (Tr 5.633). Depending on the points of view, everything in the world can be different (Tr 5.634). But if the world is logically ordered and—according to the early Wittgenstein—the one valid logic applies to all people and to everything given, then my world is also the world of others.' Thus, the problem of subjectivity and intersubjectivity disappears.

From the early Wittgenstein's point of view, the logical order corresponds to the order of empirically given reality, if it is 'projected' onto reality or, in mathematical language, if the order of reality is the projected 'picture' of the logical order (*Abbildung*). This '*picture theory*' has caused some confusion; Wittgenstein is not clear enough here. In addition, he writes that logic is 'not a theory (*Lehre*), but a reflection (*Spiegelbild*) of the world' (Tr 6.13). In connection with the projection hypothesis, this can only mean that logic and its order do not exist prior to the world, as if it existed as such, but it 'shows itself' in it (Tr 5.24), i.e., that both reflect each other. Wittgenstein further writes that 'to the proposition belongs everything which belongs to the projection; but not what is projected' (Tr 3.13). Furthermore making use of the Aristotelian

form-content scheme, he conceives of logic as a 'form' in which 'contents' change; thus, contents fulfill the form and the form shows itself in the contents (Tr 5.61). The changing contents are now 'elementary propositions' (Tr 4.21), which represent real objects by proper names and can be verified or falsified by sensual acquaintance. As for Frege, for the early Wittgenstein, the 'meaning' or 'reference' (*Bedeutung*) of a logically clear sentence is the 'object' (Tr 3.203), and if there are different words for this, only their 'sense' differs (Tr 3.23). In the same way, sensually perceptible language 'disguises the thought' (*verkleidet den Gedanken*) (Tr 4.002). Thus thought itself is 'the logical picture of the facts' (Tr 3), and 'the totality of true thoughts is a picture of the world' (Tr 3.001). As a result, logic offers a new perfect certainty concerning the world.

With the form-content scheme, Wittgenstein's projection thesis is akin to Husserl's intention thesis: both imply a kind of 'fulfillment.' In addition, Wittgenstein's picture theory can also be considered as a new transcendental philosophy, yet no longer on the basis of reason, consciousness, subject and intersubjectivity, but on the basis of the logical propositional form. For Wittgenstein, not pure reason, but the mere clarity and unambiguity of logic is the basis of its universal validity. Logic therefore does not have to be assigned to a metaphysical realm of thought, as in Frege, but its propositions are simply based, as they are for Descartes (chap. 9), on rules that everyone can follow in the same way. *Wittgenstein's new beginning simultaneously reorients logic, epistemology, transcendental philosophy and metaphysics*.

It implies the consequence that the logical form, which enables correct descriptions of the world, cannot be described itself: for this could only be done in sentences that themselves presuppose the logical form; one would end up in a logical circle. Therefore, Wittgenstein insists that the logical form must 'show itself': one immediately must see it like a picture. Wittgenstein justifies this by the simple statement that 'we *cannot* think illogically'; its immediate evidence is the *a priori* character of logic (Tr 5.4731). We also colloquially say that something is 'logical' if, in whatever field, something is so clear that we can draw unambiguous conclusions; 'logical' stands for 'clear.' To put it in Wittgenstein's conciseness: 'logic must take care of itself' (Tr 5.473). This makes its reflection in consciousness irrelevant as well. For Wittgenstein, the self-reference of logic is logically inconsistent. Since it can cause contradictions, Russell tries to exclude it through his 'type theory' which Wittgenstein in turn proves to be inconsistent. This leads Wittgenstein to a *reorientation of the*

concept of logic itself: there is logic in the ordinary language as well, yet, it is to be grasped both in a more simple and complicated manner. Wittgenstein draws strong philosophical consequences from this in his subsequent work (PI § 98); it takes him decades to elaborate it.

Already in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein calls colloquial language as 'complicated' as the human organism, so that it is 'humanly impossible (*menschenunmöglich*) to gather immediately the logic of language from it' (Tr 4.002). Yet, 'all propositions of our colloquial language are actually, just as they are, logically completely in order' (Tr 5.5563; cf. PI § 98). Wittgenstein elaborates this in his later work after a long break and during two decades without publishing anything of it, being unsure whether it is clear enough. The most important results, the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI, trans. Anscombe) and the remarks *On Certainty* (OC, transl. Anscombe), only appear after his death. The reorientation requires a new form of writing. Wittgenstein does not simply abandon or replace the 'theory' of the *Tractatus* in favor of a new one, but deconstructs it in the sense of Derrida (chap. 20): he continues to refer to the *Tractatus* inscribing his new insights in its theory, thereby revising it from the ground up. He now only presents 'remarks' (*Bemerkungen*) without any systematic order in an 'album' of 'sketches of landscapes' which are to help readers to orient themselves, but for which they must first orient themselves in the album. *Wittgenstein's later work is no longer about theory (PI § 109), but about orientation, even though he doesn't use the term.* The remarks in turn must 'show' their own logic; now they are largely dialogues which leave open what Wittgenstein himself stands for. The most important results are:

– At the *Tractatus'* famous end, Wittgenstein admits that everyone who understands it must reject it as 'senseless': with its informal language, the *Tractatus* itself does not satisfy the criteria of the formal language developed in it (Tr 6.54). Wittgenstein has tried to say what can only show itself.

– Russell's logical atomism including isolated *elementary propositions* about isolated given facts is *untenable* (PI § 47). For even about a simple armchair various elementary propositions can be formulated. That which is given must be grasped in its contexts which can never be sharply delineated. The relationship of language to reality must therefore be completely redefined.

– This includes, first of all, the fact that language has *far more 'functions' than just reproducing facts*: in the famous § 23 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein lists a long series of such functions, including inventing stories,

guessing riddles, making jokes, asking, thanking, swearing, greeting and praying. Here, language obviously does not 'disguise' a 'thought,' but rather itself effects something. Therefore, one must not, as Wittgenstein did earlier, ask about *the* function of language and thus limit it to the one indicating the existence of facts, but one must observe how language 'functions' in manifold ways (PI § 2, 304). Language is not a picture of reality, but an 'instrument' to deal with it, which would not be manageable by mathematical writing alone (PI § 569). Logical analysis as in Frege, Russell and the early Wittgenstein can be compared to a high precision instrument with which one can perform certain operations without the human hand guiding it; yet the human hand can perform infinitely more than such operations. This is where the philosophy of ordinary language comes in with its speech act theory (Peter F. Strawson, 1919–2006, John Langshaw Austin, 1911–1960, John Searle, born 1932, Noam Chomsky, born 1928).

– Colloquial language, which is capable of a variety of functions, cannot be surveyed as a whole, and it is as impossible to step out of it as it is to step out of thinking. Colloquial language is not used on the basis of a theory, but in a playful way without rigid rules. To the later Wittgenstein, we play '*language games*' in this sense, which cannot be sharply defined and leave a great deal of leeway. Linked to 'forms of life,' they 'come into play' in various ways in various situations; they cannot be assessed independently of these. Embedded in certain forms of life, they are usually immediately understood. Neither language games nor forms of life are objects that can be isolated. You cannot distance yourself from them, nor can you 'switch them off'; for you also live in them, when you philosophize. So Wittgenstein's concept of life-form is close to that of the life-world, which the late Husserl arrives at, without building on Husserl's premises (chap. 20).

– The hold of thought on to language games in life forms requires a new understanding of general concepts. Wittgenstein finds that general concepts are formed on the basis of '*family resemblances*' (PI § 65-67); he shows this through the faces of his own family members displaying them in a series of photographs. There are common features, but only if you go from one photograph to the next, and none in all of them. General concepts used in everyday life do not have to apply to everything subsumed under them in the same way, but more or less to one and the other, in turn leaving leeway to them and they do not have to remain the same forever. Everyday language and human orientation in

general work with *temporal identities*, for which Wittgenstein uses the simile of a thread made of many fibers, none of which has to run through the entire thread (PI § 67). Temporally variable general concepts are sufficient for identifying individuals; we call them 'fluctuant' (chap. 11, 16). The limits of the leeway within which the meanings of concepts vary can in turn be drawn differently (PI § 68); sometimes strictly defined, sometimes vague concepts are needed (PI § 71): 'No *single* ideal of exactness has been laid down' (PI § 88). How much clarity you need depends on the situation. In Wittgenstein's frequently used example, the mere exclamation of 'Slab!' perhaps combined with a certain tone or a certain gesture, is sufficient among construction workers to say clearly what is to happen at a certain place at a certain point in time, in this case what is now to be inserted in this building (PI § 2, 8, 19-21). Cooperating people can count on the fact that they know their way around, i.e., that they are sufficiently oriented. In cases of doubt, they add further words or gestures until 'everything is clear.' Even in the case of scientific (including legal) definitions, which are created for use regardless of the situation, the leeway of meaning of terms is limited by adding further terms with their leeway until the terms are so unambiguous for use that clear judgements can be on matters. Yet, also in these cases, there is no absolute unambiguity and therefore no absolute certainty. Both are not needed. This is in line with Nietzsche (chap. 19), who himself once uses the term *Familienähnlichkeit*.

– Language games, as Wittgenstein maintains, each follow the rules of a *logic* or, as he now prefers to say, a '*grammar*.' Yet, the grammars or logics of language games again must not be uniform: each language game can be regulated by its own logic like any other game. This is the most crucial new step of the 'logician' Wittgenstein; he himself regards it as the pivotal point of his investigations: 'the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need' (PI § 108). Wittgenstein also gives *leeway to the concept of logic itself*; in the *Tractatus*, as he now sees, he fell for the misleading 'ideal' of a mathematically formulated unified logic (PI § 81, 107). If 'logical' is that which one ususally follows in speech and action without further ado, then it need neither be represented through a theory nor be explicit at all. Finally, Wittgenstein notes down: 'Practice has to speak for itself' (OC § 139). 'Practice' here means the simple use of language in a form of life.

– You can learn the *rules* of language games just by watching, e.g., when you observe people playing ball and then enter the game yourself: over time, you

'see' the rules people play by, which is mostly sufficient. When other people join a game, new rules can emerge without these rules having to be explicitly formulated (PI § 31, 83). This happens with language games that are embedded in life forms. Only when deviations from established rules are disruptive in communication, people correct each other, just as they do with children who are learning to speak; to Wittgenstein, they 'train' or 'discipline' each other (*Abrichten*, PI § 5). People merely let each other know, that one says or does something this way and not that way, without being able to explain why. Foucault (chap. 20) here speaks of anonymous power relations.

– As later for Foucault and Derrida (chap. 20), for Wittgenstein the given is revealed in language: 'What looks as if it *had* to exist, is part of the language' (PI § 50). He maintains his early projection thesis, but now without presupposing 'elementary propositions.' Instead, language contextualizes everything given in such a way that one can 'do something with it' (*etwas damit anfangen*) (PI § 71, 120): 'To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master a technique' (PI § 199). The result is: *language is used to master orientation situations*.

– Hence, the *meaning of words is derived from the simple use of language*: 'The meaning of a word is its use in the language' (PI § 43). It is not necessary to be able to point to specific objects for determining the meaning of a word. If one points to something, this is also part of a language game (PI § 9). You first must understand the sense of pointing. As Quine then explains, when you point to something, it is unclear what in an object you are pointing to without the environment of a language-game in a life-form (PI § 33-38).

– If one orients oneself to the everyday use of language, one does not have to fall back to '*inner processes*' (PI § 305) or the 'interior' of a consciousness, which one imagines as a 'visual room' (PI § 398). Language games of this kind do not explain anything, easily mislead you and raise new problems. Wittgenstein deconstructs them in detail in line of the motto 'An "inner process" stands in need of outward criteria' (PI § 580). For him, 'introspection,' which William James also supports (PI § 413), is the 'calling up of memories' (PI § 587); but only communication with others ensures you that you use the terms in the right way; there is no 'private language' (PI § 256). You understand the signs of others without having to know what they mean for them in their inner being, and you do not need to know that for the signs you use yourself either (PI § 504). If you want to know, you need more signs and then the same problem

arises again. *The meaning of signs is explained through further signs which one hopes to understand more easily.*

– Instead of obtaining final certainty (*Gewissheit*), you learn *techniques for assuring yourself* (*vergewissern*, PI § 84, 265). Wittgenstein elaborates on them throughout his later work. This begins with the observation of 'outward' footholds and finding favorable perspectives for seeing something 'as' something and continues with the use of suitable language games; the aim is to gain a *sufficient certainty in orientation*. Wittgenstein puts 'the surveyable presentation' (*übersichtliche Darstellung*) to the fore, also and especially in philosophizing (PI § 122-123). With a surveyable presentation you relate footholds when observing a situation in order to find your way in it. To Wittgenstein, a philosophical problem takes the form of disorientation: *'Ich kenne mich nicht aus'* which is 'I do not know my way about' or 'I am unable to orient myself' (PI § 123). In order to gain a survey, one looks, as Wittgenstein adds, for *Zwischenglieder* (something like 'intermediate links'), and if they are not to be found, one invents them. *Zwischenglieder* only have to fit – in whatever way (PI § 137-139, 182). Formal logic is only one criterion for such fitting; it makes it possible to prove or disprove connections of *Zwischenglieder* according to presupposed rules. For the later Wittgenstein, it is precisely there that intermediate links are invented. Yet, in most cases of everyday orientation, this kind of assessment is not asked for.

– To avoid premature statements, Wittgenstein uses to carry out *thought experiments*. In fact, they are fictions. But they are able to show that things can always be different. To a certain extent, for the later Wittgenstein all thoughts are experimental.

– In his final remarks *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein entirely temporalizes certainty. The crucial point is: orientation can never do entirely without certainties, even if philosophers like Descartes try to call them all into question. Yet, in order to question something, you must have another hold for the time being. George Edward Moore (1873–1958), Wittgenstein's predecessor in his chair at Cambridge, who became a trusted friend of his, insisted on absolute certainties to be found in common sense, e.g., that the earth is older than I am or that, as Wittgenstein still assumes, no human being can set foot on the moon. If someone would doubt this, they are simply declared mad, which is something Foucault addresses (chap. 20). But such certainties can change and it does not always have to be the same certainties on which one relies when doubting others. You may doubt one thing based on one certainty and another

based on another one and later doubt your earlier certainty from which you started. *All certainties can be called into question over time, but not all at the same time*. Descartes' certainty 'I think, I am' (chap. 9) seemed to be an absolute one; today, we no longer have to believe in it, after the concepts of thinking and being have changed. Certainties, Wittgenstein writes in another of his famous similes, not only remain in 'a state of flux' like a river (*im Fluss*), but also the 'river-bed' (*Flussbett*) that guides the flux of the river can change with time, caused by the flux of the river itself (OC § 96-99). With this, Wittgenstein goes even further than Heraclitus (chap. 2).
– He does not assume that this is the end of 'philosophizing.' He calls it 'the real discovery' that 'enables me to break off philosophizing when I want to,' even though I do not find a final certainty. Whether and where one stops philosophizing is not a question of truth or falsehood, but of unsettlement and 'peace' (*Ruhe*) (PI § 133). Philosophizing goes on where new orientation is needed.

Wittgenstein's new philosophical work goes almost unnoticed for a long time. In contrast, Frege's, Russell's and the *Tractatus'* approach is developed further: as the 'logical analysis' of language in terms of formal rules. First of all, logical analysis is emphatically demanded, then one asks whether and how it is possible at all, and finally whether it is needed at all. Wittgenstein's path of fundamental reorientation is taken once again, now as a critical analysis of logical analysis itself. The arguments are again very rich and often complicated. I have to strongly abbreviate them.

Since the 1920s, the so-called Vienna Circle, which includes logicians, mathematicians, natural scientists, social scientists and philosophers, wanted to create a logically correct scientific language in order to develop a positive and unified science based on physics; it propagated a 'Scientific World-Conception' (*wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung*). Logical analysis became a philosophical movement: every other philosophical approach is to be excluded as being pointless. The unified science is supposed to be based on those 'elementary' or 'protocol propositions' that can be empirically verified: according to a distinction of Kant's, 'logical-analytic' propositions are to become 'synthetic' propositions about reality and in this way 'positive' knowledge. Attempts were made to also win over the young Wittgenstein, but he resisted. Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970), who studied under Frege and wrote his 1928 Vienna habilitation thesis on *Der*

logische Aufbau der Welt (*The Logical Structure of the World: Pseudoproblems in Philosophy*), carried out the logical empiricism or logical positivism most resolutely and consistently. In the USA, where Carnap emigrated in 1935, it developed successfully; over time, it spread across the world at universities as analytic philosophy. It remained dominant in philosophy to this day. It is less about philosophical depth than about sharpness of argumentation.

Like Husserl (chap. 20), Carnap begins with individual 'inner' elementary experiences, but later he proceeds with 'outer' physical objects which are equally accessible to all people. The logical structure of the real world is to be reconstructed through inductive generalization. When Carnap also runs into considerable difficulties with this, he devotes himself to working on *The Logical Syntax of Language* (1934) as such. He elaborates a 'logic of science' in which he distinguishes between 'object language' and 'syntax language.' The syntax language, now 'meta-language,' allows for different object languages. In this way, all sciences that deserve this name according to logical positivism can be included.

Subsequently, however, logical positivism undergoes a cascade of immanent criticism; its presuppositions are called into question step by step, with only partial reference to the later Wittgenstein. From outside the movement, Karl Popper (1902–1994) criticizes the 'verificationism' of logical positivism in his 1934 *Logik der Forschung* (*The Logic of Scientific Discovery*): because with inductions deviating evidence continues to appear and usually only probabilistic statements can be made, it is never possible to definitively assert theories as true. Therefore, one must take a deductive approach: one starts from the theories that precede the inductions and tries to 'falsify' theories, i.e., prove them false on the basis of empirical points of reference. In terms of scientific orientation, the falsification thesis means that *theories are only true as long as they are not proven false*; therefore, they are always only provisionally true. The thesis has been readily accepted; in practice, however, scientists rarely follow it. They usually seek positive confirmation of their theories and are reluctant to give them up; Quine and later Thomas S. Kuhn (chap. 24) include this observation in their philosophies of science.

The immanent critique of logical empiricism begins, to briefly mention only the major steps, with Willard Van Orman Quine (1908–2001), one of the 20th century's most influential logicians. He shows that the Kantian distinction on which logical empiricism is based, the distinction between

logical-analytic propositions, which can be strictly deduced from each other via logical analysis, and empirical-synthetic propositions, which can be verified or falsified by experience, involves untenable premises or 'dogmas.' For when logical-analytic propositions are transformed, the meanings of their terms also change to a certain extent, because, except in mathematical signs, the different words used are never completely synonymous, which becomes particularly clear in translations. If, on the other hand, you point to something in order to verify the meaning of empirical sentences, there is also a certain amount of leeway as to what you point to, e.g., to a rabbit as a whole, the rabbit's ears or the way it puts them up; thus the reference of words and sentences is ambiguous as well. Quine recognizes as a 'myth' the idea that 'physical objects' are given as such; according to his treatise *On what there is*, this myth merely rounds off and massively simplifies the rendition of our stream of consciousness. Moreover, the 'conceptual scheme' of a particular language determines what its terms refer to: without realizing it, one has always already made certain 'ontological commitments' when using a particular language; Humboldt's thesis of language as a world view, which Nietzsche confirms, is transformed by Quine into the thesis of the 'ontological relativity' of languages. Furthermore, within a 'conceptual mechanism' a 'vague scheme of priorities' prevails: one always follows certain needs to classify things in one way or another and uses different schemes from case to case, in scientific as well as in everyday language use.

Quine's solution is '*holism*': one must not start from isolated words, sentences or schemes, but from the whole world-view in order to examine the distinctions it uses. Not only the isolation of objects and propositions, but also of conceptual schemes is untenable. Quine introduces a spatial and a temporal differentiation: in the network of scientific knowledge with its presuppositions and methods, some concepts and schemes are held on to more tenaciously than others. Hence theories can shift only at different points at a certain time; they are not, as Popper assumes, falsified as a whole if something in them proves to be untenable. In addition, Quine distinguishes between a central and peripheral sphere: you prefer to revise something at the margins in order to preserve the core. This kind of holism corresponds to everyday orientation as well: by focusing or concentrating on something, you distinguish between center and periphery; if something conspicuous happens in the periphery, you shift your focus to it. You never change your orientation as a whole, but from case to case where it is necessary and easiest to do so.

Quine's result is 'a more thorough *pragmatism*.' He, too, assumes that you cannot rely on mental entities, since they are only observable to a limited extent. He also recommends 'tolerance and an experimental spirit.' Nevertheless, he continues to insist on a firm hold in human orientation: it must not depend on the (respective) language alone, but must ultimately be based on physical reality which physiologically stimulates attention. Sure, this is plausible, but of course also in a certain conceptual scheme of physics and physiology.

Hilary Putnam (1926–2016), a student of Carnap's and later colleague of Quine, abandons their positivist and physicalist foundation of scientific knowledge. In *Reason, Truth, and History* (1981), he sets up a major thought experiment according to which our brain is located in a vat that provides it with deceptively similar information instead of that which it receives from the familiar physical outward world. In the simulated world, Putnam maintains, one would follow the same conceptual mechanisms without being able to know this: the world would look not different than if it were anchored in something external. Since the idea of a brain in a vat is also an internal one, you would not be able to really decide between external and internal. For Putnam, this results in an 'internal realism'; with it, he assumes that the notorious question of the external world's existence is settled, because it cannot be asked in any meaningful way. As a consequence, if truth is no longer anchored in external confirmation, it becomes 'idealized rational acceptability' or, with our term, plausibility within a conceptual scheme.

Putnam, who for his part continues to reorient himself in his philosophizing, allows scientific knowledge for multiple kinds of fitting. To him, the final criterion of fitting is the efficiency, simplicity and coherence of the explanatory schemes: this means that an interpretative practice simply works. You can and must leave many things open and work with a *principle of charity*: you have to interpret the footholds of your orientation and the statements of others in such a way that you can continue to work with them. In everyday orientation, you do not have to know everything about something like a scientific expert in order to be able to deal with it in a meaningful way: 'The horror of what cannot be "methodized" is nothing but method fetishism.' This points to pragmatism. But Putnam goes on to the historicity of language and the criteria of rationality and truth included in it, where Gadamer starts with his philosophical hermeneutics (chap. 20). Finally, Putnam takes up the Jewish thought of Martin

Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and Franz Rosenzweig (chap. 20) on the one hand and the late Wittgenstein on the other.

Donald Davidson (1917–2003), a critical student of Quine's, calls the distinction between conceptual schemes and empirical experience another dogma of logical empiricism. He moves entirely *from 'truth' to 'interpretation.'* To Davidson, it is no more plausible that a sentence or a conceptual scheme correspond to sensory experience than that it is simply true. He orients himself to the familiar sense of 'truth,' which the Polish logician Alfred Tarski (1902–1983) defines in the way that a sentence ('p') is true precisely if the fact (p) exists (the sentence 'it is raining' is true precisely if it is raining). For Davidson, this means that one must formulate or even only imagine the conditions under which 'p' is true in one's respective language or lifeworld. This is 'radical interpretation.' It is a radicalization of the principle of charity: in order to understand a sentence, you endow it with conditions under which it can be true. This requires the speaker to have a feeling for suitable interpretations and 'luck and skill' to present them, and the recipient to have 'taste and sympathy.'

Radical interpretation is something like a creative hermeneutics: not a determination of truth, but a methodical instruction to make something plausible; sense is made in such a way that it can be considered true. It is the statement itself that points to what makes it true, and this may differ from situation to situation: 'true' is 'true for someone in a particular language at a particular time with a particular purpose.' In the sense of Peirce (chap. 18), Davidson emphasizes the interpretant by 'relativizing' the concept of truth to 'occasions of speech.' With this criterion, a given natural language, even in its individual and situational use, is no less and even more capable of truth than a formal language. Quine's 'indeterminacy of translation' becomes indeterminacy of interpretation; there is leeway for interpretation everywhere, in a formal-logical language as well as in a conventional and an individual one. This includes that individuals can be linguistically creative at any time. Therefore, a general theory of interpretation is impossible; the hope for a 'universal method of interpretation' disappears. In other words: you simply must be able to orient yourself when you want to understand something or others.

This does not prompt Davidson to abandon the intention to find the truth at all. For in communication, truth-interpretations are permanently compared with and worked off against each other; the more sure you want to be, the more you argue about truth. But since there are always alternatives in

considering something to be true, it is a matter of decision, and Davidson also presents work on the conditions of the decision.

Nelson Goodman (1906–1998), at last also a professor at Harvard University, after a critical examination of Carnap and after his own attempt to construe a system of scientific knowledge by means of modern logic, extends, following Cassirer, his focus to non-linguistic sign systems and art: according to his *Ways of Worldmaking* (1978), different symbol systems generate different 'world-versions which are of independent interest and importance.' If they are reduced to a single 'way of worldmaking' like science, the world becomes more empty. For Goodman, human orientation is not fixed to one world, which has to be determined as unambiguously as possible, but one can describe the world of human orientation as 'multiple actual worlds' and in turn these multiple worlds as one. This is not a question of what is given, but of the schemes with which one grasps that which is given. In this respect, Goodman comes close not only to the later Wittgenstein, but also to Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze and Foucault (chap. 20), even if he hardly refers to them explicitly. With regard to the design character of the world-versions, Goodman no longer orients to mathematical science, which insists on universally valid statements, but to art, which develops individual 'styles.' Styles are usually significant and easy to distinguish, but can hardly be adequately defined. As a result, Goodman abandons 'the false hope of a firm foundation' which was supposed to be the result of the logical analysis of language. Like Nietzsche and Derrida, he deconstructs the boundary between science and art, himself adhering to the literary form of the scientific treatise. He finds the progress of philosophy precisely in the liberation from constraining premises, including the fixation of philosophy and the sciences on the search for truth.

Richard Rorty (1931–2007), who first studies with Carnap, writes his first work on Whitehead, enters philosophy with high aspirations and soon becomes professor of analytic philosophy in Princeton, completes the series of great immanent critics of analytic philosophy. In his major work *The Mirror of Nature* (1979), which makes him famous and in which he in many ways follows Wilfrid Sellars (1912–1989), who in turn follows Quine, he thoroughly dispels the idea prevalent in modern philosophy: that the mind represents nature or that mind and nature reflect each other according to certain laws. For the later Wittgenstein, this was biased by a false image, which applies even more to analytic philosophy since Frege, the early Wittgenstein and Carnap. Rorty

denies that anything 'mental' can be a key to opening up reality, that there can be such a thing as an epistemology in general, which as a theory itself and in such a theory presupposes any apodictic and *a priori*, i.e., absolute truths. He radically leaves the relationship between mind and nature to 'contingency,' i.e., alternative 'grand narratives,' as conceived by Lyotard (chap. 20), who, however, is not consistent enough for Rorty. Rorty draws his personal consequences by moving from his chair for philosophy to a chair for comparative literature and, as he demonstrates it in *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982), philosophically reconnects to pragmatism, Nietzsche, the later Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Derrida (chap. 18-20).

According to Rorty, turning away from the great philosophies of history for the sake of a formal analysis of language has not proved successful: 'Anglo-American philosophy has been repeating the history it has been refusing to read, and we need all the help we can get to break out of the time capsule within which we are gradually sealing ourselves.' But Rorty also treats the problems dealt with in the history of philosophy only 'ironically,' i.e., without taking them as seriously as they were once taken. Instead, he turns to the field of society and politics, in which the world, however one finds and interprets it, can be improved a little here and there. Philosophy can contribute to this if it is less systematic or analytic and more 'edifying.' Here, Rorty appeals to solidarity in the spirit of the American constitutional tradition. To this end, he also insists on sufficient translatability of the supposedly incommensurable languages.

Pragmatically, many things are possible that seem theoretically impossible. Rorty, like famous colleagues of his time such as Stanley Cavell (1926–2018), opens philosophy up to literature, from which, they hope, it can often learn more than from colleagues in the field. The role of philosophers is supposed to be that of brilliant intellectuals, as Rorty knew from his own parents. For many, after the 'death of the subject' and the 'death of man,' this is also the death of philosophy.

The philosophy of orientation is also in line with Wittgenstein's striking philosophical reorientation from constructing an ideal language to holding on to the everyday language which takes place once again in the continued immanent critique of logical empiricism or analytic philosophy. This is not a regression: finally everyday language is recognized as a means or medium of orientation, whose logic or grammar establishes itself through communication and continues to evolve by responding to

the orientation needs that arise. As it turns out, every theory as theory has to hold on to questionable premises in this context. J. L. Austin in particular emphasizes that a theory is neither necessary nor possible here. A meta-language in which such a theory would have to be formulated would still be part of the established language or would have to be introduced by it, which applies to formal languages as well. Wittgenstein sums this up concisely, when he returns to philosophizing after a long break: 'I cannot use language to get out of language.' Instead, orientation to language as a means of orientation is always possible: obviously, you can use language to speak about language itself holding on to footholds within language. This is what Wittgenstein does in his later philosophizing.

Wittgenstein proves to be the richest source of ideas for the philosophical orientation on language. In his Tractatus logico-philosophicus, he precisely exposes the most important premises or 'dogmas' of logical positivism, as they are later called and deconstructed step by step by Wittgenstein himself and by the main figures of analytic philosophy such as Quine, Putnam, Davidson, Goodman and Rorty. They continue to expand the scope of analytic philosophy in a way that it loses its dogmatic core. The later Wittgenstein makes it a philosophical program to engage in a therapy from philosophizing; Cavell and Rorty recommend turning to literature and politics. But this is not the death of analytic philosophy. On the contrary, it goes on: it concentrates on carefully sharpening the concepts philosophy uses, which is needed in all of its fields. It has become a method without dogmas.

Wittgenstein's own decisive step in reorienting his own early philosophy is to expand the concept of logic and make it more flexible by including in it 'grammars' or 'systems of rules' of everyday 'language games' which are embedded in certain 'forms of life.' As a philosopher, Wittgenstein continues to deal with logic; but the broader and flexible concept of logic makes it superfluous to construe an 'ideal language.' In view of the immense diversity of language games, the need for an overview grows all the more. Overview or 'surveyable presentation' (übersichtliche Darstellung), as Wittgenstein calls it, is the first need of human orientation. He places it at the forefront of any philosophizing. With an overview, you can deal with diversity and change of all kinds. Wittgenstein now dares to bring philosophizing into flow (Fluss) as only Heraclitus and Nietzsche did before him.

However, his remarks make it obvious how difficult it is to distinguish 'grammatical' (logical, analytic, a priori) propositions from 'empirical propositions.' Quine questions this distinction as 'dogma'; Moore demonstrates that empirical propositions like 'this is my hand' are able to work like a priori propositions; finally

Wittgenstein argues they may be temporary steps in doubting other certainties and regaining new ones. This results in a kind of logic of human orientation: it is about finding and using techniques for assuring oneself in order to gain sufficient certainty in orientation (Orientierungssicherheit) while situations change. Formerly, this need of certainty was fulfilled by various kinds of metaphysics. Isolating logic from experience may be metaphysics as well. In human orientation, they work together and develop in exchange with each other, being sometimes a river, sometimes a river-bed.

In addition, it proves questionable to exclude or avoid self-referential statements. Wittgenstein does so because self-referential statements may cause paradoxes, as in mathematical set theory and in Russell's and Whitehead's Principia Mathematica. Therefore, Wittgenstein does not accept Goedel's proof of the incompleteness of logical-mathematical theorems, which is based on self-referential argumentation. Self-referential statements can be used to justify theories, as Aristotle attempts to do with logic, Descartes with the existence of thinking, and in 20th century Karl-Otto Apel with 'transcendental pragmatics' (chap. 24). On the other hand, you can cancel theories by using self-referential statements, as Wittgestein himself does at the end of his Tractatus: if you understand its sentences, you see that they should not have been said at all, because they argue that the logic they are dealing with has simply to show itself instead of being argued for. Nevertheless Wittgenstein admits that the Tractatus provides a 'ladder' to an overview which helps with reorienting philosophy. Replacing the simile of ladder by the simile of orienting oneself in landscapes in his Philosophical Investigations, he puts orientation itself at the center. Investigating language games through language games does not prove problematic for Wittgenstein.

Throughout his life, in his diaries and letters Wittgenstein professes a deep faith in God without formulating it in religious doctrines and nearly without referring to it in his philosophical arguments. He considers it his personal faith which, as he continues to emphasize, keeps him alive. Instead, for the sake of orientation in philosophy Wittgenstein intensely investigates the techniques for gaining sufficient certainty. Yet, the unrelenting passion with which he strives for clarity and purity both in his philosophizing and in his conduct of life has much in common with a religious ardor. Wittgenstein professes this as well.

In the course of its self-criticism, the LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE *arrives at results many of which agree with those of the later Wittgenstein, but also with Nietzsche's discoveries. In sharpened terminology, they reveal some important basic features of human orientation:*

– the ontological relativity of the apprehension of objects,
– the decidability of conceptual schemes,
– the indeterminacy of the translation of the terms used,
– the changing priorities in determining matters,
– the distinction between central and peripheral footholds,
– the hold on to plausibilities,
– the 'functioning' of an interpretation practice,
– the principle of charity in understanding things and persons,
– the dealing with different world-versions,
– the overall leeways, in which determinations can shift over time,
– the flexibility of the conceptual networks also in scientific knowledge.

The less you can rely on undisputed certainties, the more the disputes within analytical philosophy become intellectual acrobatics, whose theoretical movements are easy to lose track of. This leads back to nihilism: even the dogma of indispensable unambiguity, which initiated the logical analysis of language and which still is a basic of analytic philosophy, is wavering more and more. It can only be maintained where mathematics is involved and actually helps to make things clear. But if you insist on it, this requires specific premises or 'dogmas' that may themselves be questionable like a realm of ideal entities, a pure truth and a theoretical standpoint beyond the world, from where a divine overview and perspicuity would be possible. If you cease to believe in such dogmas, you have to open up yourself to empirical contextuality, the alternativity of views, the temporality of conceptual schemes and the ambiguity of meanings, in short: to relativity. Then the fear of 'relativism' arises: that nothing is true, everything is permitted and of equal value. The the fear disappears when you realize that in human orientation everything is inevitably related to a point of view within the world, from which you grasp and assess it, and that therefore nothing can be the same for everyone, but that you can actually equate unequal things for certain purposes and from certain points of view. For such equalizations, e.g., the great equalization of all people before God or before the law, you are then responsible yourself: all equalizations are orientation decisions. Since everything is constantly assessed in human orientation, nothing is worthless; it is only a matter of different human assessments from different points of view. So you in turn have to get an overview of such points of view. This can be obtained by communicating with others, that is: by relating points of view to one other. Relativism in this sense is not a theoretical option, but a communicative reality.

Paul Feyerabend (1924–1994), who also connects to logical empiricism, but also to Popper, and finally engages with Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations, takes relativism to an extreme with his formula 'anything goes.' However, in an actual orientation situation in any field and even in art, not anything goes: footholds must fit to others in order to be convincing. You exclude many of them so that some fit together well. There are alternatives, which you can decide on, but only within limited leeways. The question with relativism, as with nihilism, is what you make of it or rather how you use the options of decision without an absolute certainty available. They challenge your own orientation and encourage your thinking in terms of alternatives and innovations.

As Rorty notes, philosophy largely has given up its claim to offer a firm ground for science and ethics. All the more skills are needed to survey and handle the general concepts that are necessary for orientation in the worlds one lives in, be they individual, societal, cultural or global. The more complex our manifold worlds become and the more it becomes clear that everything depends on everything else, the more professionalism is required in handling concepts, be it in their analysis or in their ordering, with which you must always bear in mind their origins and developments in the history of philosophy and the sciences. Rorty thus throws the baby out with the bathwater denying philosophy its own tasks and leaving orientation in life to literature. Analytic philosophy, with its formal approach, may sometimes be an outgrowth of the professionalization of philosophizing, as Rorty assumes. Yet, this does not justify a kind of philosophizing that only legitimizes itself through intellectual brilliance. It is the enduring task of philosophy to elucidate the ways of human orientation in a world whose complexity and decisiveness is significantly growing and where all decisions have to be made by human beings.

22. Alternatives in Conceptualizing Human Being: Scheler, Plessner and Gehlen, Jaspers and Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler

The new uncertainties in grasping reality force us to face the question of 'the' human being, who inevitably experiences and conceives of the given in its own way. The more the hold on to God gets lost, the more people have to reflect on themselves. Here, too, there are new courageous beginnings in the 20th century; here, too, one has to deal with the metaphysics of substance (chap. 5).

Aristotle classifies 'man' (*ánthropos*) as a natural substance (*physis*) that posesses reason (*zóon lógon echon*). This means: human beings strive for knowledge. Like all substances, they endeavor to equal the divine unmoved mover (*próton kinóun akínaeton*) with their movements (*kináeseis*) and actions (*práxeis*) and find their hold in doing so: for this orientation function, Aristotle introduces the divine being into philosophy in place of the confusing variety of the mythical gods. The ability to rationally think (*nóaesis*) determines the *hierarchy of animal – human – god*; the divine is thinking of thinking (*nóaesis noáeseos*); in this hierarchy, human beings enjoy a clear orientation. At the beginning of modernity, it is adopted by Descartes who distinguishes between the extended substance, the thinking substance and the unlimited thinking substance (*res extensa, res cogitans, res cogitans infinita*) (chap. 9); in varying forms, the hierarchy is maintained until German idealism. With the 'death of God' proclaimed by Nietzsche at the end of the 19th century, a fundamental reorientation is required. The pivotal point is the human being itself: Feuerbach reduces philosophical 'theology' to a philosophical 'anthropology' (chap. 16). Human beings now unite the animal and the divine in themselves; they become ambiguous to themselves. The old hierarchy no longer provides any hold. It completely collapses with Darwin's theory of evolution.

Nietzsche conceives of 'man' in view of his biological evolution as '*the not yet determined animal*.' He considers the human being a great experiment of life that may also fail. 'Consciousness' as the 'last and latest development of the organic nature' could be a sick deviation causing 'countless mistakes.' Hence, the 'sick animal' is 'the great experimenter with itself, the unsatisfied, unsatiated one who struggles for ultimate dominion with the animal, nature and the gods.' The experiment goes on. For Nietzsche, whether it succeeds depends

on the extent to which the new orientation by means of consciousness instead of instincts is also 'incorporated' like 'instincts.' With Freud, the sovereignty of reason definitively falls; with Foucault comes the 'death of man' insofar as his essence can no longer be determined (chap. 20). Even before, in order to eliminate all determinations of the essence of man Heidegger only speaks of *Dasein* or existence (chap. 19), into which the individual is 'thrown.'

Nearly simultaneously, in 1927/28, Max Scheler (1874–1928) and Helmuth Plessner (1892–1985) bring the so-called *Philosophische Anthropologie* (Philosophical Anthropology) to the fore, which is successful especially in Germany. In the meantime, biological, psychological, sociological, pedagogical and economic determinations of the human being have developed, and more and more are following suit. The scientific disciplines try to assure themselves of their image of the human being from their own perspectives, so that it becomes increasingly unclear what 'man' actually is. This is where philosophy once again feels called upon to unite the various perspectives and develop its own outline. Philosophical Anthropology provides an overall picture of the human being that no longer classifies it metaphysically and no longer idealizes it humanistically. Step by step, it becomes more sober and gets closer to life. In this regard, Arnold Gehlen's (1904–1976) draft from 1940 becomes the most influential.

Scheler derives his anthropology from Husserl's phenomenology (chap. 20). It is still oriented toward a concept of the essence of 'man': Scheler still looks for the 'eternal in the human being,' which for him includes not only metaphysics but also the reference to God, and he also still sticks to the Aristotelian hierarchy; Scheler rejects Darwin and Freud. Nevertheless, for him the essence of 'man' is precisely the fact that 'man' has become 'problematic' and therefore requires a determination of his essence. This responds to the human beings' modern relation to the world: the most striking innovation in Scheler's 1928 work *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (*The Position of Man in the Cosmos*, now translated as *The Human Place in the Cosmos*) is the use of the term *Weltoffenheit* (openness to the world) which goes back to Herder (chap. 13). Human beings are no longer simply embedded in a familiar world, but must first orient themselves in a world that is unlimitedly open. Nevertheless, for Scheler mankind retains a special metaphysical position (*metaphysische Sonderstellung*) with its 'spirit' that transcends everything natural and is 'supersingular.' Scheler now enriches it with 'vital' values such as an 'emotional urge,' 'instinct' and 'urge fantasy.'

His anthropology is still intended to be a 'springboard' to the 'metaphysics of the absolute.' It is only a beginning of the new beginning.

Plessner, a student of Scheler's, takes a further step. In his *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch* (*The Stages of the Organic and Man*, now translated as *The Levels of Organic Life and the Human*), also published in 1928, he determines the human being on the basis of more differentiated analyses of its physical and corporeal conditions and resolutely de-metaphysizes its image. His starting point is nihilistic in the sense of Nietzsche: the human being is 'positioned on nothingness' and must therefore orient itself through its own skills. Plessner moves on from the hierarchical order to an order of standpoints. He defines the human being's standpoint as 'eccentric positionality': with its consciousness, the human being is able to observe its position or standpoint both from within and without, but do not find a firm hold: there is a constant problem of finding one's balance, as Kierkegaard already saw (chap. 16). Mankind lives at a distance from itself and its situation; without the instinctive certainty of other animals, it is constantly faced with alternatives in its orientation. Thus he does not simply live, but must 'lead' its life. This life becomes precarious.

A decade later, in his 1940 work *Der Mensch. Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt* (*Man. His Nature and Place in the World*) Gehlen entirely rejects the old hierarchy, a concept of the essence and a metaphysics of 'man.' For him, the human being is a special design of nature (*Sonderentwurf der Natur*) precisely because they are a deficient being (*Mängelwesen*), which in many ways performs worse than other animals, but whose world has expanded infinitely. Because human beings have lost their instinctive certainty through the development of consciousness, they have to 'compensate' for the deficiencies through cultural institutions that provide hold. The term 'deficient being' also goes back to Herder; in addition, Gehlen explicitly uses the concept of orientation. Cultural institutions, beginning with language, help to relieve (*entlasten*) the human being from the excessive sensory overload (*Reizüberflutung*) through abbreviation and routine. As a result, the human world does not emerge from noble motives, but from the needs of life, and it is also needs that govern its further development. With Gehlen, philosophical anthropology arrives at sober orientation needs.

Philosophical anthropology was politically controversial during the 20th century: there is a strong Catholicism in the background of Scheler's conception; Plessner is forced to emigrate from Germany in 1933 because his father is Jewish; Gehlen is a member of the National Socialist party since 1933 and agrees with

the educational ideals of Alfred Rosenberg, the chief idealogue of the National Socialists, but without surrendering to nationalist and racist thinking. The Nazi empire soon demontrates what human beings are capable of in the worst extreme. After the Holocaust, philosophical anthropology gradually falls silent.

If nihilism is considered the loss of all absolute certainties, including moral ones, *existential philosophy* is a resolute response to it: the aim is to withdraw all philosophical, anthropological and ethical assumptions in order to start anew in philosophy. The most important alternatives are the existential philosophies of Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980). They start with the mere distinction between essence and existence; existence as such, without any essential determination, is undisputed; it becomes the basic concept. Every further determination is based on a decision, and every individual who makes use of such determinations is responsible for each of these decisions. A general reason, in which all human beings would be equal, is no longer assumed: it would relieve the individuals of their decisions and their responsibility. In this respect, existential philosophy is a philosophy of individual human beings.

Jaspers, initiallly a physician and psychiatrist, simply calls his philosophical opus magnum *Philosophie* (translated as *Philosophy of Existence*) in order to announce an entirely new beginning. It is published some years after Heidegger's *Being and Time* and the works of Scheler and Plessner on philosophical anthropology; Jaspers is friends with Heidegger. He divides his new comprehensive philosophy into three parts: *Weltorientierung* (world orientation), *Existenzerhellung* (elucidation of one's existence) and *Metaphysik* (metaphysics). Beginning explicitly with 'orientation,' he starts with the present 'situation' in which 'I orient myself' and seek *Halt* (hold) in Kierkegaard's 'anxiety.' However, Jaspers limits orientation to the scientific orientation about the objects of the present world; it is 'only' orientation, because the scientific investigation can never be complete. 'Philosophizing,' however, does not need to deliver results in the shape of 'doctrines'; general doctrines enable a 'deceptive escape from the situation.' Instead, it provides an 'elucidation' (not the traditional 'enlightenment') of the situation 'in a restless movement,' which operates in an 'indeterminable darkness' and never comes to an end.

Philosophizing as an elucidation of existence consists just in 'transcending' the objecthood of objects. In the sense of Kant's transcendental philosophy (chap. 11), Jaspers asks about the 'conditions of the possibility' of objects, yet

no longer in order to arrive at *a priori* statements, but to open up alternatives to their determination. It is precisely in the transcendence of objecthood that true philosophizing is realized; thereby, the scientific world orientation transforms into a philosophical world orientation by detaching itself from seemingly final determinations. While all scientific results can be questioned again, the elucidation of existence creates a peculiar *Seinsgewissheit* (certainty of existence) in the *Augenblick* (moment), which then becomes *Ewigkeit* (eternity). This kind of certainty is a *Zeiger* (pointer) that points 'beyond all objectivity.' From it, nothing can be derived. As for Pascal (chap. 10) and the later Wittgenstein (chap. 21), for Jaspers philosophizing *beunruhigt* (disquiets) us and comes to rest again. Jaspers also no longer wants to justify and prove something, but only describe things. Nevertheless, he still speaks in a pathetic manner.

Jaspers' third mode of philosophy is 'metaphysical thinking' which up to now has been concerned with 'absolute' matters detached from all empirical experience. In existential philosophizing, they can only be *Chiffren* (ciphers), i.e., signs whose sense can only be guessed at. Philosophizing 'fails' the more, when metaphysical doctrines are expected. This is especially clear in *Grenzsituationen* (limit situations) such as death, suffering, struggle and guilt. Philosophizing is able to show where existence itself is in question, and it is precisely then that it is called for.

Yet, Jaspers cannot resist the temptation to systematically present the results of his elucidations in another, even more extensive work entitled *Philosophical Logic*. But he does not finish it. The first volume, published 1947, is entitled *Von der Wahrheit* (*On Truth*); the following volumes were supposed to deal with *Kategorienlehre* (Doctrine of Categories) and *Wissenschaftslehre* (Doctrine of Science); both topics go back to German idealism, from which Jaspers otherwise distances himself, as he does from positivism. Instead, he makes the *Umgreifende* (the encompassing) the key concept of a 'periechontology' (from Greek *periéchein*, 'encompass'), in which being, world, consciousness, reason, mind and transcendence as the *Urgrund des Seins* (primordial ground of being) are given their place in the elucidation of existence. Philosophical logic as a whole is supposed to have an 'orienting character' and truth to be a path to 'highest moments,' but ultimately leads to 'despair.' With this, Jaspers hardly succeeds.

This changes with Sartre, who soon takes on the leading role in existential philosophy. He initially succeeds as a writer. Together with Simone de Beauvoir, he lives an economically, institutionally and morally independent existence

in intellectual Paris; for a while, he works a teacher at schools in different places, but never takes up a chair at a university. He gains a such degree of international fame that he can afford to turn down even the Nobel Prize for Literature. After immersing himself (not too deeply) in works of Husserl, Scheler, Jaspers and Heidegger during studies at Berlin and later as a prisoner of war, he publishes his first major philosophical work *L'être et le néant. Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (*Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*) in 1943.

He strongly reshapes the concepts he adopts. In his Heidegger-like title, he replaces 'time' with 'nothingness,' thus aligning his work directly with nihilism. With the phenomenological method, he combines a Hegelian dialectic, which allows him to construct a dialectical movement from the *en-soi* (being-in-itself) via the *pour-soi* (being-for-itself) to the *pour-autrui* (being-for-the-other). Like Jaspers', his book is very detailed, but provides far more concrete phenomenological analysis, including unembellished examples from war, stock market trading and sexuality. In his preceding novel *La nausée* (*Nausea*), he describes the existential experience of disgust, a nihilistic experience of the intrusiveness of existence, which, as an intellectual, he sets in the library of an ugly small town. He deliberately disillusions idealizing humanism; unlike Jaspers, he leaves no room for God. Instead of 'I am given to myself in my freedom' like Jaspers, he writes 'the human being is condemned to be free' (*l'homme est condamné à être libre*). For Sartre, being free means having to decide on all matters on one's own and taking responsibility for doing so. There is no longer any metaphysical instance or sphere of justification, no binding orientation for all human beings, no 'sign on earth that orients one' (*signe donné, sur terre, qui l'orientera*). Sartre resets human orientation to zero. Contemporary existentialist philosophers like José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) think along similar lines.

In his 'search of being' (*à la recherche de l'être*, alluding to Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*), Sartre begins with the ontological distinction between being-in-itself and being-for-itself, both of which refer to human existence. Being-for-itself is conscious existence that reflects the possibilities of the respective existence. Sartre demands that everyone faces their (good and evil) possibilities with unreserved truthfulness in order to exist 'authentically' in this sense. He discovers all the more that human beings fall into untruthfulness and self-deception (*mauvaise foi*) in order to escape the burdensome freedom of their

own existence and their responsibility for it. Other human beings play both a disturbing and elucidating role: unlike Levinas with the face-to-face (chap. 20), Sartre starts with being seen (*être regardé*), i.e., with the experience of the gaze of others on me, which makes me an object and evokes my shame and disgust at my naked being-in-itself. He creates a scene in which I am caught eavesdropping on others with my ear to the door: suddenly seeing myself made an object, I find myself in a 'situation' that triggers an instant reorientation to self-relationship or being-for-itself. No one is 'master' of this situation (*maître de la situation*), too: here, I oscillate between observing others and being observed by others. For Sartre, a power game comes up, in which I have to *situer* (situate) myself anew with fear, shame and pride. This is not about objectivity, nor is it about morality, but about existence. For Sartre, it would be a 'useless passion' to want to resolve the tension between being-in-itself and being-for-itself in a Hegelian manner into a balanced 'being-in-and-for-itself'; being-for-others is and remains a conflictual relationship from the ground up.

In his later lecture *Existentialism is a Humanism*, which is intended to popularize the results of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre gives an optimistic version of them: he turns existentialism into a new humanism in the form of an anthropology. The path that leads to it is the argument that each of us always already decides on the general image of humanity with our individual actions; in this way we all are kind of legislators for the whole of humanity (not in the sense of Kant's categorical imperative, a general norm of pure practical reason, which Sartre rejects). Human beings prove themselves and humanity through their actions in their situations. Sartre himself exemplifies this by his political engagements and in doing so coins the French type of a public intellectual. His engagements can take very different directions, including extreme ones. Sartre, even though his existence is far from the members of the proletariat, initially opts for Marxism, claiming that it is the 'insurmountable philosophy of our time,' and later for Maoism, until he also abandons this too. Existential philosophy as such does not set political guidelines.

Like Jaspers, Sartre later produces a comprehensive work: in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), he wants to demonstrate how existentialism and Marxism are able to advance each other despite their apparent opposition; he hopes to break up the totalizing tendency of Marxism through the individualistic existentialism. This is supposed to lead to a permanently revolutionary Marxism. Yet, it has not withstood the test of history.

Instead, Sartre's plays, novels and huge biographical studies of Jean Genet (1952) and Gustave Flaubert (1972) offer rich illustrative material for understanding his philosophy, for which, vice versa, his philosophy provides frameworks of interpretation. In his literature, his philosophical setting loses its abstract character and is demonstrated in a lively way. This equally and even more applies to Albert Camus (1913–1960) and Samuel Beckett, who bring existentialism as nihilism into each and every mouth. In Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), Sisyphus, whom the gods punish for their disregard by forcing him to heave a rock to the top of a mountain, from where it then rolls down again, consciously chooses this fate; in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1952), people persist to almost silently wait for someone who could save them from their nihilistic situation, but who never comes. In both, the 'absurdity' of a nihilistic existence takes center stage; since then, it has remained in the background of all debates concerning the 'meaning of life.' Instead of thinking, the absurd becomes the first certainty and, as Beckett drastically shows in his play *Happy Days* (1961), even something normal. While nihilism for Jaspers is still something demonic, 'a timeless abyss that pulls everything into its vortex,' an 'urge to ruin oneself in the world in order to perfect oneself in the depth of worldlessness' and the 'pleasure in this miserable world being smashed,' for Beckett it becomes, in Nietzsche's sense, a 'normal state' (chap. 18), out of which human beings have to make the best. For existentialism, what is best depends on the decision and responsibility of each individual. Existential philosophy proves to be the philosophy of the time.

It is a personal affiliation that now drives the philosophy forward. In 1949, out of existentialism Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986) forcefully brings the problem of the sexes to the fore. To name it with Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre, the sex with which you are born seems to be a 'being thrown-into.' In addition, the history of 'man' has established a cultural dominance of men over women: the man is (mostly) master of the woman, the woman's destiny is (mostly) to take care of the household and to bear and raise children. Women are (mostly) subjugated and demonized as well; male literature in the early 20th century still indulges in abstruse assertions of the essential superiority of the male sex over the female 'second' sex, which is nevertheless dangerous to the male one. In *Le deuxième sexe* (*The Second Sex*), Simone de Beauvoir demonstrates in a striking way that what is considered the essence of women

is imposed on their existence by male-dominated social norms. But women are just as capable of deciding and taking responsibility for what they want to do with their existence. Like Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir exemplifies this in her own personal way: the 'free relationship' of the two without the promise of a firm and exclusive commitment demands far more courage from her than from Sartre in the bourgeois milieu of the time. She does not hide her adventurous existence from the public; on the contrary, she writes remarkably open memoirs and is both admired and attacked for doing so.

It is the philosophical significance of the sexual difference that it seems to be unbridgeable. The male human being does not represent the human being as such, as men liked to believe. Due to their different biological make-up, women could also have a different kind of awareness of themselves and differently experience the world as a whole. Nobody, not even those who do not wish to identify themselves with a particular sex, can be sure of their male or female or other worldview. By emphasizing the other view of the other sex, Simone de Beauvoir becomes the pioneer of feminism, i.e., the struggle for legal and social equality and equal respect for women all over the world. Originally, 'feminism' was a medical term for 'feminized' men. The feminist movement, which grows in several waves, successfully recasts the term (Beauvoir does not yet use it). Other courageous beginnings also came from women, earlier, stronger and more progressive in the USA than in Europe:

– Following the footsteps of Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett (1934–2017) in *Sexual Politics* (1971) and Shulamith Firestone (1945–2012) in *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970) passionately attack the sexual class system which manifests itself in the dominance of men over women and often in physical violence. Firestone wants to entirely separate sex from reproduction, which has enslaved women and can now be taken over by artificial reproduction; the upbringing of children is to be detached from the family system.

– Luce Irigaray (born 1930) connects in her 1977 work *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (*This Sex Which Is Not One*) to Freud, Lacan and Derrida. She advances Derrida's critique of 'logocentrism' to a critique of 'phallogocentrism,' according to which women are weak images of men. For her, language about women is also male-dominated. This must be countered by an *écriture féminine* (female writing).

– Carol Gilligan (born 1936) in *In a Different Voice*: *Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982) takes the so-called 'difference feminism' further: women not only have different, but also higher-valued qualities; in their traditional roles, they have developed an ethic of care that is oriented toward individuals living together rather than toward principles and hierarchies. To be sure, this is difficult to prove and can in turn be seen as a reinforcement of traditional female roles. Nevertheless, many of the ethics previously presented by men now become questionable as only one voice in contrast to other possible ones, in this case the female voice.
– Nancy Fraser (born 1947) pushes forward feminism's self-criticism: as a political movement, feminism is inevitably exposed to political usurpation, according to Fraser especially by the capitalist neoliberalism (*Cannibal Capitalism*, 2022). In their quest to achieve their own economic and political success, women of the rich North and West of the earth leave their old roles to poor migrant women of color. Feminism thus raises global questions of justice. It is not only about 'misrecognition,' but still also about 'maldistribution.'
– The black feminist critique of anti-discrimination by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (born 1959) also goes in this direction. According to *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color* (2010), there are 'intersectional overlapping systems of oppression and discrimination that women face due to their ethnicity, sexuality and economic background': anti-discrimination laws again work with certain identities that must not be judged separately.
– Martha Nussbaum (born 1947) who is honored with a plethora of awards both at home and abroad, calls for a return to a liberal and universal attitude, pleading for a sufficiently defined humanism that can provide political orientation. She finds it in her capability approach, according to which everyone should be respected and supported in their own abilities (chap. 24).

The struggle for the emancipation of women has been very successful. It has expanded to the fight against discrimination in general and overlaps and allies itself with movements against discrimination of deviant sexual orientations of any kind and also of people of color, immigrants and indigenous people, who are disadvantaged in their own ways. Respect for every human being of any kind, however different they may be, becomes the moral stance of modern democracies and the benchmark of a new humanism of difference.

But this is not the end. Judith Butler (born 1956) in turn questions the difference of sexes, which still seems to be the most obvious biological and societal distinction between people: she also overcomes the dogma of the binary nature of gender. For Butler, biological sexual difference is by no means unambiguous, not even as a 'natural fact,' as recent scientific research confirm. She makes it clear that not only the socially determined gender roles, but also the biological sexes are ultimately social constructs. Butler calls this *Gender Trouble*, subtitling her groundbreaking work *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). The differences within a gender can be stronger than the differences between the genders. As a result, biological sex falls as a bastion of one's own identity. Hence, identity as such becomes a problem that deeply affects the existence of the individual human being. Yor are not simply 'thrown' into a sex, you can decide on your kind of gender. While the decision about a person's gender identity has so far been made by doctors, parents and authorities, it is also to be left to the responsibility of the person concerned: existentialism has created the philosophical framework for this.

For the philosophy of orientation, also existential philosophy and feminist philosophy are new courageous beginnings. They are philosophies of a difficult freedom: they liberate the individual human beings to face their own possibilities, i.e., to decide themselves on all their matters, included what they are and want to be, and to take responsibility for that. This raises the problem of identity, which the philosophical anthropology tries to solve by countering nihilism with a general definition of 'man.' In fact, a lot of diverse definitions are provided over time: while until the 19th century, 'man' was primarily defined as 'animal rationale' or 'homo sapiens,' later typifications such as 'homo faber,' 'animal symbolicum,' 'homo oeconomicus,' 'homo viator' etc. continue to replace each other. In times of nihilism, it is no longer assumed that 'man' is the very image of God (as he thinks of Him), nor is a pure reason presupposed that is the same for all people. Instead, the physical, social and cultural conditions under which people orient themselves are to be respected. Under these circumstances, people are what they regard to be themselves, what they themselves identify with, or which identity they choose. Identifying oneself by definitions, whichever they may be, is now a means of relieving oneself of the immense and ever growing complexity of human existence.

Existential philosophy completely renounces a general definition of the human being, pointing to the fact that definitions of what human beings are have to be taken

on by the individual human beings themselves. Jaspers contrasts philosophy or, as he prefers to say, philosophizing with scientifically defining matters in the shape of general objectifications and with metaphysical universalizations. By 'transcending' the objecthood of objects, philosophizing frees itself for alternatives and thereby 'elucidates' the possibilities of human 'existence.' This gives rise to a new kind of certainty: the certainty of being able to orient oneself on one's own. This orientation is not only concerned with objects, but even more so with other people. For Jaspers as a philosopher, these other people are especially great philosophers and sages (not only Western ones); they become personal authorities, even if their teachings can no longer be upheld. Jaspers orients himself primarily to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, on whom he writes one of the best books to date. As an existentialist philosopher, he does not pin Nietzsche down to specific doctrines and a 'system' of them, as was mostly done before, but describes the process of his personal philosophizing. This is still elucidating today.

He does not abandon the concept of 'Vernunft' (reason), yet he re-interprets it as a 'Vernehmen' (receiving), which grasps everything 'Umgreifende' (encompassing), connects, moves and transcends it in diverse ways, being itself not fixed, but in flux. As before, reason is to create unprejudiced unities in the communication with others. Nevertheless, for Jaspers it is now a mere ideal image of a 'total will to communicate' that also involves strange matters, being unlimitedly open and in this sense honest and just. This requires specific virtues of communication, which, according to the philosophy of orientation, extend to virtues of orientation such as prudence and consideration. Jaspers always reflects on the communicability of philosophizing as well.

He also maintains the distinction between the outer and the inner world, but now understands the inner world as the space for the individual's own decisions for his or her own possibilities. As far as truth is concerned, the concept of which Jaspers also wants to hold on to, he claims in pathetic words that it can ultimately only be one, despite all diversity of its elucidation, and that it is to be discovered in a 'loving struggle' from the 'ground of being.' His levels of world orientation, existential elucidation and metaphysics, behind which the old Aristotelian order of being still shines through, allow him a 'philosophical faith' in God, from whom he still expects 'guidance.' Yet, for him philosophizing must always 'fail' in the end, because nothing can be established with absolute certainty. In doing so, he himself fails to recognize the potential of the concept of orientation, to whose prominence in the 20th century he contributes a great deal: human orientation is not limited to

an overview of the results of the sciences and to the elucidation of their significance for human existence; it creates sufficient hold in most situations; only under special conditions does it lapse into disorientation.

Sartre, who for his part resolutely detaches himself from the demands for consistency in a philosophical 'system' modelled on the sciences, emphasizes the importance of the situation in human orientation and repeatedly attempts new beginnings, which often remain unfinished. At the same time, he demonstrates how his philosophizing asserts itself in the realms of literature and politics. His philosophical orientation decisions, which are easier to understand in this way, make him of lasting interest to a large public and one of the most influential intellectuals of the 20th century. While Jaspers leaves it at 'appeals,' Sartre moves on to 'engagements' by signing manifestos, partaking in demonstrations and appearing in the media. He encourages the Résistance during the German occupation of France and exposes anti-Semitism as an omnipresent resentment; yet, from today's perspective he is seriously mistaken when he sometimes glorifies the Stalinist Soviet Union and Maoism. His existentialist humanism is plausible only to a limited extent; it is questionable especially in view of the Nazi era whether there can be a common conscience of humanity which makes all human beings responsible for all others.

Nevertheless, existential philosophy encourages people to embark on the adventure of their own view, judgment, decision and responsibility. Kant already calls for this in his essay 'What is Enlightenment?' and human orientation needs this courage. But its freedom is based on the need and the ability to choose between orientation decisions in changing situations rather than on a pure reason of all people in all situations. As feminism points out, the freedom of choice was only granted to a limited extent to the 'second sex' in most cultures for the longest time. While there may be a difference of world views caused by the different biological sexes, this does not justify the social subordination of women to men. Starting with Simone de Beauvoir and again with Judith Butler, feminism debunks such justifications as identity politics. Identity politics are possible, since identities do not simply exist, but arise from identifications: you constantly are identified by others, but you are free to identify with these identifications or not; identities are only identities when you identify with them yourself, unless they are forced on you by the authorities. Butler's 'subversion of identity' calls for a cautious and responsible approach to identities and identifications in general. In our orientation, identities are highly attractive since they seem to provide firm footholds in our communication. They relieve from the immense complexity of human existence. In times of digitization, you are also

able to easily create identities for public self-presentation. However, when you accept identities, you are also committed to them and have to defend them against attacks. Thus, even with identities, there is no peace of mind; you cannot rest with them. In addition, identifications of others can hurt them through discrimination, and discrimination can destroy the existence of people concerned.

Since women have finally entered philosophy with courageous new beginnings and have made themselves heard, they have achieved an enormous amount far beyond philosophy. This results in a thoroughgoing 'existential elucidation,' if you may use the term in this way, of all social institutions: all social institutions must be 'transcended' in Jaspers' sense, reflected upon and re-ordered. For this, the ideal humanism of the past, which fixed 'man' in a certain essence, is no longer sufficient. Instead, a human being is fundamentally recognized by the fast that she or he performs a human-like orientation; for this, certain footholds that may be divers with divers people are sufficient instead of general definitions that standardize overall qualities of being human. Given the human orientations' own complexity, humans can still be sufficiently distinguished from robots.

Because human beings are at the center of the human world, everyone inevitably forms their concept of being human. Even if such concepts usually are not made explicit, they guide every person's further experiences with other human beings and with themselves. Every experience may correct one's current concept. In view of conceptualizing human beings it is particularly evident that in human orientation the individual being is not subordinated to pre-defined general concepts, but is permanently being re-defined or now: re-identified along a continuous exchange with others. What is said about 'the human being' in everyday life and in philosophy moves in the constant flow of a discourse as Foucault understands it (chap. 20). Fixations now are easily discernible as dogmatic or ideological. As the 20th century in particular has shown, such fixations have their time. While existential and feminist philosophy insist on individual choice and responsibility for all identifications, totalitarian states, which increasingly occur in the world, want to administer identities to the extent that they decide who should have the right to live and who should not. Whether such states can exist, in turn depends ultimately on the individual human beings. This is easily hidden through their acting in groups and organizations and through justifications by values, norms, religions, ideologies and philosophies. Even if people are guided in their decisions by general guidelines, they still have leeway to choose

between them. Otherwise they become, voluntarily or not, mere followers of other persons who use or abuse them for their own purposes.

This raises the problems of acting (chap. 23) and society (chap. 24).

23. Alternatives in Conceiving Action: Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, Parsons and Bourdieu

Following the later Wittgenstein, speech act theory makes it clear that speaking is an action (chap. 21); in the sense of existential philosophy, mere existence necessitates decisions to act (chap. 22). Hence, not only being and thinking, but also acting must philosophically be rethought. Action, as the term is used, is externally visible. It is distinguished from mere behavior by the fact that a goal or intention is attributed to it, i.e., again something 'internal' like thinking that cannot be observed externally. The intention is that what acting persons think with their planned actions. In contrast to thinking, acting has an immediate effect; it visibly changes the situation. Since it can be dangerous for others, reasons are expected for the intentions of people's actions. If the reasons are plausible, the actions are considered rational, i.e., understandable, calculable and measured against acceptable values and norms. On the rationality and moral acceptance of actions, social institutions can be built which people can hold to in their orientation and which they can be forced to comply with. Thus, rational and moral action is a condition of social orders which range from everyday routines to formal law.

It is again Aristotle who provides the basic determinations for this. According to his *Nicomachean Ethics*, action is a philosophical topic of its own kind. Acting can have its purpose (*télos*) within itself, as in walking, sightseeing or philosophizing, then it is a *prâxis*; or its purpose lies outside itself, then acting is a technique (*téchnae*) with a certain result, as fitness is trained through gymnastics. In both cases, there is a 'good' (*agathón*) to achieve. However, the distinction is not clear-cut; often both sides of it can apply to an action. According to Aristotle, the purposes are ranked: the highest purpose is pursued for its own sake and must be a *prâxis*; for Aristotle, it is happiness (*eudaimonía*). Since the rational animal (*zóon lógon échon*) lives in a community (*zóon politikón*), its happiness is only complete in a community (*pólis*). The highest good of a

pólis is justice (*dikaiosynae*), which is the purpose of all people. In view of the diversity of social and political life, the realization and achievement of justice requires experience and wisdom, which for Aristotle culminates in philosophy. Thus, the good life (*eû zâen*) at last depends on good action (*eû práttein*), which is learned over time. For Aristotle, social orders largely establish themselves. For him, they are more of a pragmatic nature.

In the modern age, Kant provides the strongest alternative to this. Coined by the spirit of Protestant Christianity, he does not focus on happiness, but on people's duty, i.e., on the observance of norms based on people's own insight and responsibility. Here, too, Kant looks for an ultimate certainty. However, happiness and the success of actions are dependent on coincidences that cannot be foreseen and for which one cannot be called responsible. As with thought, Kant therefore moves from the context of description to the context of justification. By doing this, he relies on the modern causal scheme, according to which not only natural processes but also human actions must have a cause and an effect. In order to be able to conceive of the human action's independence from happenstance and of people's own responsibility for it, Kant assumes a special, not externally ascertainable causality, a 'causality out of freedom' that he again attributes to pure reason (chap. 11). He also makes the duties independent of all individual and situational conditions of human beings, their sensualities, moods, feelings, pleasures and displeasures and desires and also of their social and cultural living conditions. As a result, the freedom of human action, under whatever external and internal circumstances it may take place, consists in the fact that the person acting listens to his mere reason. Mere reason expresses itself as a 'categorical imperative,' i.e., as a command to only act according to rules which may be valid for all other people. In this way, assuming a pure reason also allows a strict generalization of rules of action. Therefore, according to Kant the categorical imperative is to be the very motive for action in the shape of the 'good will': the intention of action must be the actualization of pure reason. Kant assumes that it is reason that speaks to my free will in my mind ('Act in such a way that you ...') as a 'fact' of its own kind, which cannot be ascertained externally. As a result, for Kant social orders are to be based entirely on rationality.

Both major alternatives, the Aristotelian-pragmatic and the Kantian-rational, start from an intention in acting as being-oriented toward a goal. This is where Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe (1919–2001), a student

first of Gilbert Ryle (1900–1976) and then of Wittgenstein (chap. 21), sets in once again, now using the tools of analytic philosophy. In doing so, she does not begin with a definition, but carefully and critically analyzes the language game of intention also of her teachers. She suspends the old certainties, the Kantian more than the Aristotelian, and brings together the approaches of the earlier and later Wittgenstein, finding new certainties and uncertainties.

In her 1957 monograph *Intention*, Anscombe distinguishes between intention command on the one hand and between intention and prediction on the other; since internal and external processes interact here, a confusing picture emerges (§ 1-3). It turns out that the best way to say with certainty what someone's intention is is to see what he or she actually does. However, since you cannot recognize their intentions from their actions and the intentions can change in the course of the actions, you cannot be certain here either (§ 4). One must therefore ask the actor directly about his or her intention: 'Why are you doing this?' For the doers themselves, as Anscombe assumes, must know without further ado what they are intending to do. However, the reasons for their actions must be distinguished from their causes in the circumstances. But there is no clear evidence either for this distinction, and Kant's distinction between natural causality and causality out of freedom does not help here either (§ 5). On closer inspection, the intentions can also be manifold and the agent may not even be aware of this. In Anscombe's example, someone saws a board and makes noise in the process. The second may be unintentional, but it also can be or become the actual intention: perhaps the person just wants to draw attention to her or himself with the noise and doesn't want to admit it. Further, he or she may or may not know whose wood it is and what it was intended for, which may have legal consequences (§ 6). In such cases, intention is not simply a question of description, but of ascription, also for the agents themselves (§ 7-8). In addition, intentions are difficult to distinguish from mental causes and motives like feelings, greed for profit or revenge. They may decide on the choice of intentions, but it is unclear, if and how they trigger an action (§ 12). To ascribe a motive to an action then means little more than casting a certain light on the action (§ 13-15).

Anscombe does not simply dismiss the matter with 'family resemblances' like the later Wittgenstein does (chap. 21); nor does she want to engage in therapy with philosophizing, but to bring order into the thinking of action.

From Anscombe's further complex considerations, the following can be noted for our purposes:
– The use of the term 'action' is tied to intentions. Yet, intention is not a property of the action, but an attribution to it when it is asked about (§ 19).
– An intention is a kind of a purpose in the mind. However, contrary to Aristotle, you can also simply do what you do without a purpose. A purpose or intention is only stated in special cases, e.g., if you want to inspire others with a plan or have to justify a plan if it has failed (§ 20).
– Human acting need not have an ultimate goal either; Aristotle only assumes this because he wants to avoid an infinite regress (§ 21).
– An action can be broken down into several actions with respective intentions. In Anscombe's (here simplified) example, someone draws water from a well and thereby poisons people who drink it: poisoning can be the leading intention, but the person drawing the water may also know nothing about the poison (§ 23).
– One must distinguish intentions *of* the action from intentions *in* the action (§ 26). However, we cannot say definitively how one intention includes another, in the example the intention of drawing water and that of poisoning (§ 24).
– There could be such a thing as practical cognition, which was spoken of in antiquity and Middle Ages and which has been forgotten in modernity due to the orientation of cognition toward objects of nature. Practical cognition would be an insight through which something becomes real (§ 32): according to Socrates, if you know that something is good, you do it. But even this is only partially true in the modern age.
– Thus, stating an intention is one form of describing actions alongside with others. Some actions can only be described as intentional (e.g., signing), some as both intentional and unintentional (e.g., insulting), some only as unintentional (§ 47).
– 'Intentional action,' according to Anscombe, often fails to achieve that what is intended. Then, you admit failure or you do not use the intentional description at all. But '"intentional action" always presupposes what might be called "knowledge one's way about" the matters described in the description under which an action can called be intentional' (§ 48). For us, this simply is orientation.

Davidson, who is for a long time better known than Anscombe and whose contributions still dominate the analytical debate on action, also follows his approach of radical interpretation here (chap. 21). In his *Essays on Actions and*

Events, which he begins in 1963, he dispenses with the separation of reasons and causes of actions, treating intentions also as causes. According to his 1987 presentation *Problems in the Explanation of Action*, actions are simply described by relations of cause and effect; the example is already in Wittgenstein the raising of one's own arm, which Davidson refines by a variety of thought experiments. He demonstrates that 'under a description' the cause of an event can be extended back to infinity and the event can be broken down into several events. Since intentions and actions can be far apart in time, the intentions may not be actualized at all. Nevertheless, they cannot be left out. Instead, we have to ask about their origins precisely when we believe we simply have them. For beliefs and desires have a strong impact here which are difficult to grasp. There are no evident laws for linking them to intentions.

This may be a bit confusing; in any case, it is sobering, as also pointed out by Anscombe. Davidson draws serious consequences from it:
– Mental events are, as in later Wittgenstein (chap. 21), conceptual distinctions that are intended to help explain other events, nothing more. This includes intentions.
– Mental phenomena cannot, as Quine wants (chap. 21), be convincingly traced back to physical events. For a science oriented toward physical laws, they remain black boxes.
– Phenomena are identified in such a way that they can be explained through suitable concepts. Concerning acting, identifications are also based on the 'principle of charity' (chap. 21): to understand an action, it is not sufficient to state intentions; instead, certain 'pro-attitudes' or 'primary causes' such as needs, desires, impulses, aesthetic, moral and economic attitudes, social conventions are to be added. Only under such conditions, are practical conclusions possible. Yet, such conclusions only formalize what one already knows and must know in order to understand the formalizations.

So you need more perspectives to understand action. From a sociological perspective, the theory of action is part of a theory of society. The question here is how individual actions relate to a social order or how they determine each other. This rules out any isolation of actions and their reduction to personal intentions. Talcott Parsons (1902–1979) provides the relevant terminology for this. In basic points, he follows the new 'classics' of sociology, Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) and Max Weber (1864–1920):

the general intention of human action is not the pursuit of happiness, as assumed by Aristotle, British utilitarianism and, to a certain extent, Marxism (chap. 12, 17), but the pursuit of a social order that gives support to one's needs and desires, with norms and values having a strong impact.

According to Durkheim, the integration of individuals into a society is neither conceivable through the conclusion of contracts à la Smith (chap. 8) or Rousseau (chap. 12). For in order to conclude a social contract, whatever form it may take, there must already be a 'collective consciousness' and 'solidarity.' In the shape of morality, which is a peculiarly social fact (*fait social*), a collective consciousness exercises social control over individuals, having an integrating effect in this way. As a matter of fact, when a significant part of a society no longer adheres to the current norms and values, a 'pathological' state or 'anomia,' in our language a disorientation arises. For Durkheim, this can happen in the European societies of his time. As the current norms and values are no longer stable, he uses statistical methods in order to capture them based on externally observable sociological facts, regardless of how they are experienced internally; his studies on the division of labor and the occurrence of suicide in different cultural areas are famous. Justifying norms and values is problematic; it could rather make them more unsure than sure. Instead, as also the later Wittgenstein assumes (chap. 21), the members of a society are disciplined to comply with them; thereby the norms and values take on a coercive character. Pareto and Weber work on 'demystifying' religious and metaphysical justifications and tracing the rule of a social order back to 'purposive-rational' (*zweckrational*), 'value-oriented' (*wertrational*), 'emotional' or 'traditional' reasons.

Parsons also includes Darwin and Freud in his sociological analysis. He adopts the idea of evolution, which Durkheim still resists, and the idea of unconscious drive structures, which make action difficult to predict. For him, nothing in modern society is a foregone conclusion. He will not leave it at assumptions such as a collective consciousness or a sense of solidarity, but searches for the 'structures' in which a society 'functions.' To this end, he develops the conceptual tools of a 'structural functionalism.' He is also familiar with Europe and Germany in particular. However, he has the US in mind as a concrete example of a dynamically developing society.

He begins, still explicitly following his predecessors, with a 'voluntaristic action theory.' In *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) he holds that 'the social system is made up of the actions of individuals.' The actor chooses between

options for action at his or her own will, taking into account the circumstances of the situation and the expectations of others. What unites them are the norms and values that guide them; the norms and values have developed historically and may continue to change. The values of a society function as structures of expectation that individuals have internalized and that are institutionalized in society, e.g., in educational institutions and in law. Parsons is able to dispense with the concept of intention because, like his predecessors, he assumes that the members of a society want to realize the values and norms of that society through their actions.

He conceives of the 'unit act' through an 'action frame of reference' that consists of the four factors actor, end, situation and norms. The frame is to be a mere analysis scheme that leaves open which concepts and observable facts it is filled with. It is not intended to define actions, but to differentiate possibilities for action. In this sense, it is an orientation scheme: Parsons now uses the concept of orientation throughout. It is then about alternative 'action-orientations' in 'pattern variables' that allow leeway for decisions. Parsons calls the alternatives 'pattern variables.' For him, there are alternatives of

– *affectivity* and *affective neutrality*: action decisions can be made with or without emotions;
– *particularism* and *universalism*: action decisions can have an individual or a supra-individual significance;
– *ascription* and *achievement*: action decisions can be about belonging to a certain group or about one's own achievements;
– *diffuseness* and *specificity*: actions can be vaguely or sharply defined;
– *collectivity-orientation* and *self-orientation*: actions can be oriented to personal relationships or to one's own exploration of the situation.

The variables outline the scope of action orientation within the action structure. Their extent ranges from individual actions via the 'habits of choice' of individuals, social groups and their institutions to cultures as a whole. With the concept of 'culture,' Parsons encompasses that what Durkheim calls 'collective consciousness' and 'forms of solidarity.' The distinctions' left-hand side in the above list represent the traditional, the right-hand side the modern and, in Weber's sense, rational alternative.

Later, in his 1951 magnum opus *The Social System* Parsons transforms his structural theory into a systems theory. With it, systems as unit acts can be demarcated from their environment, to which they react: the system-environment

difference becomes crucial. It allows to think that the structures of a system change when dealing with a changing environment without asking for point-by-point cause-and-effect relationships. The environment is the 'situation' which an 'action system' can survey and deal with, may it be larger or smaller. The system of society as a whole can be differentiated into sub-systems such as the behavioral system, personality system, social system and cultural system; they are in turn environments for each other, deal with each other in different ways and adapt to each other responding to their challenges. As a result, the social systems theory is able to analyze structures of action and society in different fields through a standardized tool. Parsons now summarizes it with the formula 'AGIL scheme': A(daptation) through G(oal attainment) and I(ntegration) of its norms and values, thereby maintaining the L(atent) pattern of a culture.

In a human context, adaptation occurs as an 'orientation' in a 'situation' that always remains problematic. It proceeds simultaneously 'cognitively,' 'teleologically,' and 'affectively'; this corresponds to the traditional division of human orientation into thinking, willing and feeling. 'Cognitive' is the mode of knowing about one's actions and being able to express this knowledge in language if necessary. For this, 'awareness' must be methodologically presupposed, but not ontologically asserted. This also applies to the factors of ends, norms and values, choice and decision. Parsons calls 'teleological' the orientation to ends that arise in situations, which is otherwise called intention. Under the term 'affective' he subsumes feelings and attitudes such as pleasure and pain, love and hate. 'Normative' are patterns of action that suggest a certain action which is expected by others; other actors are a significant part of the situation. Among the sub-systems, the behavioral system achieves adaptation (A), the personality system goal selection and implementation (G), the social system the integration of norms and values (I) and the cultural system the maintainance of the latent pattern (L). The constant exchange between the systems is all that is needed to maintain the social order in terms of a general balance of powers. It is not necessary to assume a supreme control center; for Parsons, the stabilizing factor is the integration through values.

The social systems can again be differentiated in line of functions like economy, which achieves A(daptation), polity, which deals with G(oal attainment), or the judiciary system, which takes care of the enforcement of I(ntegration). They each have their own generalized symbolic media, like money in economy and power in polity. In turn, they are each other's environments, which explains

their mobile exchange. Their evolution requires growing adaptability (A), differentiation of goals (G) and therefore also growing integration capacity (I) and generalizability of values (L). Together, they generate growing complexity and respond to it as well. As a result, the intentions of individuals to act are functions within such systems; they can be identified and categorized within the leeway opened up by the AGIL scheme which works with attributions without ontological claims and in this way applies to various contexts.

Finally, Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) developep a sociology not only without, but against the concept of intention and the concepts that support it. This enabled him to conceive of human acting and differentiate social norms and values in a new way. Taking actual and observable action as his starting point, he held on to the concept of 'habitus': with it he described a persistent behavior that becomes routine for people (habitus) due to their personal dispositions, their social position and their cultural background with which they become recognizable in society (the 'Latent' in Parsons' scheme). A habitus is brought about both by the society's effects on the individual person and the individual's effect on society; there is a balance between the two which is constantly being rebalanced. This makes it possible to draw a nuanced picture of the orders of today's highly individualized societies, which are no longer characterized by class struggles but remain capitalist: the struggles change. On the basis of his own extensive empirical studies, Bourdieu was able to compare the highly developed French society with the Algerian one in former colonial North Africa.

A habitus is not a deliberate action, but establishes itself and changes over time in the everyday orientation of each individual, constantly observed by the respective person and their social environment. Traditional philosophical and sociological oppositions such as subject and object, freedom and determinism, macro- and micro-social levels are of no use here. Instead, Bourdieu also draws on the later Wittgenstein's concept of play (*enjeu*) which indicates that rules are dealt with in a wide range of leeways: you, as the person you are, explore your 'rooms of play' (*espaces d'enjeu*) in your society with a 'sense of play'; you fight for them; you try to expand them in order to achieve more possibilities for acting. This happens in different ways in the different fields of 'social space' (*espace social*), where the struggle is not only for income, but also and even more so for attention and recognition. Bourdieu expands the concepts of economy and capital into an 'economy of cultural capital' (*capital culturel*). You can also

capitalize attention and recognition as prestige, reputation and authority, and your cultural capital can also easily get lost again on the market.

Here, too, classes establish themselves as groups who share 'life styles' (*styles de vie*) through which they distinguish themselves from others and which are created and defended by 'struggle plays' (*enjeux de lutte*). In his central 1979 work *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement* (*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*), Bourdieu demonstrates that distinctions are not simply theoretical and innocent, but also function as social demarcations that are about 'gaining distinction.' In this respect, social orders are symbolic orders or orders by sheer distinctions. People fight—and especially intellectuals like Bourdieu himself fights—for 'symbolic power' (*pouvoir symbolique*), i.e., for the power to interpret social conditions of 'worldmaking' in Goodman's sense (chap. 21), and thus for increasing one's own symbolic capital. One example of this is the predominance of the male gender in language (chap. 22), which was hardly noticed for a long time; for example, the traditionally female activity of cooking is ennobled when men take it on as 'chef cuisiniers'; they skim off the symbolic capital. Symbolic power can even become 'symbolic violence' (*violence symbolique*). It prepares men for physical violence and facilitates it. The large lower classes (*classes populaires*) have little choice in this kind of cultural class struggle; they have to take care of what is necessary to survive (*choix du nécessaire*). And this also determines their schemes of perception and action (*schèmes de perception et des pratiques*).

Since language games largely establish themselves, they create the 'illusion' of their evidence and thus also of the evidence of one's own actions, which are guided by them. Insofar as language games are always already attuned to other speakers (in the sense of Parsons' adaptation), for Bourdieu they are also 'conformist': as routines, they tend to persist and avoid change. In this way, the habitus itself creates the impression of an evidence, against which everything else appears to be in need of explanation. What seems to be a timeless being is the result of a de-historicization, a forgetting or suppression of its history. This is where Bourdieu connects to Nietzsche, too.

The philosophy of orientation also finds confirmation by the fact that acting can hardly be grasped by means of theories, since it is interwoven into the contexts life to an extent that theories reach their limits. Therefore theories are transformed into orientation schemes. One has to distinguish between the context of acting itself and of

its justification, as already Pareto *points out: while philosophical theories of action usually focus on the latter, sociological theories focus on the former; a philosophy of orientation draws on both. Its horizon is broad enough for this.*

In the immediate context of acting, the actor explores the footholds and leeways of the action situation that enable successful acting. In this respect, an action does not have to be based on previous intentions: you often also spontaneously act without a plan, e.g., suddenly start smiling or burst out laughing, and you initially try out possible approaches to acting in the respective situation altogether in order to find out which of the possibilities could be successful, e.g., when communicating sensitive messages or risking adventures. Following Anscombe*, intentional acting may also include unintentional acting, e.g., making noise when sawing wood, and unintentional action can become intentional over time and vice versa. Even for the persons acting, it can be unclear whether they have an intention with their acting and of which it actually consists of; intentions can be so manifold that they cannot be identified for sure. Oftentimes you simultaneously have more than one intention for an action; when walking, you may be interested in fresh air, physical exercise, seeing beautiful scenery, letting your mind wander, meeting people and so on; you make it dependent on the situation which of the manifold possible intentions is fulfilled.*

In the context of action, it also does not matter where and when an action begins, e.g., by planning to walk or by walking itself, and likewise where and when the action ends; these are artificial theoretical questions as long as they do not play a role in contexts of justification. In contrast, if an action has several motives, reasons or intentions, this reduces the probability of disappointment when the action does not fulfill an intention. One then holds on to the other intention; this is part of the leeways of orientation. This may also become necessary when situations change or when the means prove difficult to achieve an end: you may then change the means, but also the ends. You may also lose sight of your goals altogether and just let yourself drift. When you minimize the likelihood of disappointment through multiple motivation, your satisfaction with your acting increases and the feeling of orientation security grows. Everyday orientation is not limited to acting that is determined by deliberate intentions alone.

After all, orientation itself is an action which can be done according to a plan and predetermined goals (e.g., finding a hotel in a foreign city) as well as playfully (you first look around the city and happen to come across a suitable hotel). According to Gerd Gigerenzer *(born 1947), if the circumstances are too complex for a deliberate decision, it may be better to follow your 'gut feelings.' From the view of orientation*

this means: previous experiences in your orientation have been condensed into such feelings that can now guide your orientation without you yourself being able to remember the previous orientation experiences or explain them in detail. As a result, human acting in particular is best and most easily understood as part of human orientation, which is able to respond differently to different contexts. Theories of action usually do not take this into account. With fixed intentions, human actions are determined too narrowly.

The justification context, in which theories of action often operate, is mostly only entered when an action has caused harm, be it to the actor himself or to others (someone going for a walk has left his ill wife alone and a calamity has happened to her). Now the actor must present plausible reasons for his action (his going for a walk), which must stand before his conscience and perhaps also before a court. Yet, the circumstances now change. With a distance of time, the action's context is perceived differently (chap. 19): the action is now considered as something already given that must be clearly defined; but an action is an even more complex object embedded in a situation than a natural object (chap. 20). Therefore, many situational conditions of the action are disregarded; you are then again dealing with a laboratory situation and run into similar problems as with elementary propositions (chap. 21). It is in the justification context that a conscious intention and a free will are assumed through which the agent decides in favor of the intention, in order to make the agent responsible for the action which seems to be clearly defined (chap. 22): the assumption of a free will could have its most important origin in the retrospective justification. For by making someone responsible for something, the search for causes of an action, which could always be traced back to infinity, is stopped: 'free will' means that there are no further causes. For example, several cars are involved in an accident, the course of which is difficult to clarify; a certain driver is held responsible, who demonstrably made a mistake, but certainly did not intend to cause a mass accident in which many circumstances interacted unfortunately. To make someone responsible for something that has resulted in harm, is less a question of justice than of social necessity.

Parsons, who strongly advocates the stabilization of social order through the integration of norms and values, is accused of political conservatism, even though he positions himself differently. In fact, it is plausible to assume that the acting individuals that what they consider to be their own intentions are the current norms and values that support the persistence of the society's social order in which they live. On the other hand, value semantics, as Niklas Luhmann, who draws

on Parsons, makes clear (chap. 24), allows for different values to be invoked in the value system of a society. The values only have to be positive, i.e., in Western societies truth, not lie, justice, not injustice, equality, not inequality, order, not disorder, peace, not war, etc. However, as we know, such values can be at odds with each other (out of politeness, you may renounce truth for the sake of peace), and abstract as they are, they can be related to different actions with great leeway, as Parson's analysis scheme makes clear. you can do very different things by invoking the same values, especially in questions of morality, education and politics. This also applies to political right-left evaluations. You orient to values, but you decide yourself what value you assign to which action.

With his focus on the integration of society, Parsons certainly takes too little account of the role of conflicts and thus also of power. For him, power above all is an authority's power to enforce norms and is legitimized by this. Here, the concept of orientation also helps. Especially in conflicts, one has to reckon with different points of view and can therefore neither expect an equality of views and assessments of the situation nor common attributions of intentions and common justifications through reasons and motives. Instead, you have to pay attention to how the other side orients itself in order to be capable of responding to it successfully. You then will see whether you can assert your point of view or not. Thus, an authority's power is always in competition with other power; authority, too, is rarely uncontested, including the authority of judges, which can be challenged by other judges.

This complex situation of justification is made evident by Bourdieu's *analytical instrument of habitus, which starts immediately with the orientation practice of individuals in their social environment. Here, the role of routine as a means of orientation comes to the fore. Bourdieu demonstrates in detail that people also compete for social, symbolic and cultural capital through the routines they practice; the respective routines are also an expression of more or less latent power, as Foucault suggests (chap. 20). For Bourdieu, as already for Nietzsche, social norms and values are no longer innocent in a moral sense: they are not valid in themselves; by asserting them, one attempts to assert oneself in a society. This brings the issues of power and justice to the fore. Here, too, there is a broad array of alternative theories in the 20th century.*

24. Alternatives in View of Society, Power and Justice: Horkheimer and Adorno, Tarde and Goffman, Luhmann vs. Habermas, from Rawls to Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, Hannah Arendt

In political and sociological terms, the 20th century is known for the rise and fall of great empires, rapid social upheavals, ideological mass movements, racial discrimination and the alternative of democracy and totalitarianism. Mass movements drastically change the orientation of the people involved; people think and act significantly differently in society than they do on their own, and ethical problems also appear differently. In the period of nihilism, the problems of society, power and justice were initially taken up in psychology, sociology and political theory, which developed out of philosophy in the transition to the 20th century, but remained closely linked to it. Thus the courageous beginnings in this field oscillated between empirical research, philosophical reflection on basic principles, and personal practice. For an overview, I first provide the frame of reference in terms of the philosophy of orientation in which the problems arise and according to which I select the approaches discussed below.

For the philosophy of orientation, it is sufficient for the time being to understand society, which can be defined in various ways depending on sociological, political and philosophical views, as a multitude of individuals who live together permanently and develop common practices and techniques of providing for the everyday necessities of life, measures of maintaining internal order and external security and rights, norms and values for their coexistence. A large number of people turn into a mass when the living conditions and habits of a significant majority of the population align strongly; by the elite that leads them masses are regarded as 'simple, uneducated people.' There is a wide scope of mass orientation, starting with exuberance at festivals and enthusiasm at public games and ending with death-defying war euphoria and revolutionary political uprisings, when dissatisfaction with the living conditions grows to a certain extent. The military doctor, anthropologist, ethnologist and social psychologist Gustave Le Bon (1841–1931) observed in his 1895 inquiry 'Psychology of the Masses' how people lose control of themselves in mass movements, becoming capable of actions that they would not be able or willing to perform alone and on

their own. For Le Bon, the result was above all devastation; he witnessed the wild destruction of the Louvre during the Paris Commune in 1871. The frenzy of masses frightens the elites. They have to find ways and means to control the mass orientation, also in favor of their own exercise of power. This can end in totalitarian rule.

Through mass orientation, a mass itself become a subject of action, following its own drives that can no longer be controlled by the individuals involved. What drives masses is often described as an irrational mood or feeling; Le Bon even assumes a 'mass soul.' Yet, acting in masses can be described more soberly. Just as human orientation temporarily shifts from routine behavior to a state of awareness in which one's own actions are carefully controlled (chap. 20), it can also temporarily shift to the state of mass orientation in which it largely relinquishes its own control. This shifting occurs on the basis of specific situations. Routine behavior, conscious behavior and mass behavior are orientation modes *in which the perception of the world and the behavior can entirely change. When turning from routine to conscious orientation, people act in a more deliberate and differentiated way, turning from self-orientation to mass orientation, they act in a more rousing and uniform way which includes following to social norms and values. When individual orientations are aligned, otherness and strangeness among them are no longer felt: they stop asking each other questions, but do what others do without criticism.*

This is often experienced as both liberating and affirming oneself. People are relieved of their own orientation efforts; they do not need to orient themselves in the respective situation, but can devote themselves to a common orientation for which they do not have to take responsibility. This already applies to community orientation*, which enjoys a better reputation than mass orientation. One of the founders of German sociology,* Ferdinand Tönnies *(1855–1936), distinguished between 'community' (Gemeinschaft) and 'society' (Gesellschaft): the community, in which people live and work together with others like in a family, creates closer and more enduring bonds than society, in which people do not know each other personally, remain strangers to each other and often merely use each other. In the community you feel 'protected' (geborgen), in society 'lost' (verloren). Tönnies' highly idealized approach connected to traditional familiarity, contrasting it to the capitalist society of exchange. Here, the entire mode of orientation is different, too: the mere experience of togetherness in communal behavior and action creates an unquestioned and seductive certainty of orientation, while the experience of being lost in a confusing society causes uncertainty of orientation. Even when people do things in pairs, they feel more confident that they are doing things right; the fact*

that they are doing things in a community or in a mass increases their self-esteem and gives them a new sense of power.

By switching to a community or a mass orientation, human orientation takes on a political dimension *in addition to its social dimension. Communities as well as masses raise* questions of leadership, power and domination. *In order for common or uniform orientations to emerge, they must be massively abbreviated and simplified: everything must be immediately and easily understandable to everyone (chap. 18). Communities rely on authorities, heads of families, associations, congregations, who take care of things for them and rule them in part through consultation and in part through commands. In a mass movement, there is no time for calm reflection, differentiated argumentation and individual consideration; the face-to-face approach (chap. 20) hardly matters; people look, think and act in the same direction. In everyday life, this also begins on a small scale and spontaneously. When people get into trouble together and are unable to help themselves – a hiker or a hiking group gets lost in rough terrain, many car occupants are injured after a mass accident, a large number of people flee from a city that has been bombed –, anyone who can advise concisely, clearly and convincingly what needs to be done is welcome. Such people prevent panic, i.e., severe disorientation that renders people incapable of acting. Then leaders are required. It is superior orientation skills which people capable of leadership demonstrate in emergency situations: they are able to 'give orientation' to others who have lost their bearings. An intoxicating mass experience such as a rave needs little guidance (apart from the organizers and the DJ), but a mass panic that breaks out there all the more.*

To become a leader gives someone power at this moment: the power to decide on the fate of others. For example, an emergency doctor decides after a mass accident who is treated and rescued first and who is not. In times of great need, this kind of power is welcome. Thus, power is not, as the Swiss Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897) once said, 'evil in itself.' It is good when it comes from the superiority of orientation. This also applies to all everyday life cases in which orders need to be created and maintained. Groups or societies must have orders for living together; the lack of order as such is often already an emergency situation. This ranges from house rules and traffic regulations to the government of a country; it must be clear to all involved how to proceed in certain situations. As the sociologist Heinrich Popitz (1925–2002) explained in his 1986 inquiry 'Phänomene der Macht' (Phenomena of Power: Authority, Domination, and Violence), the maintenance of social orders requires the permanent exercise of power in various ways, from the house keeper via

the sheriff to the president. They are also expected to know their areas best, i.e., to be superior in terms of orientation. Here, in order to exercise the respective power, permanent positions must be established. However, where people occupy permanent positions, they no longer have to prove their orientation superiority from situation to situation. Instead, they can also use their power for their own interests, favoring personal acquaintances, their own business partners, etc.: power often is corrupted through making it permanent. It is by ensuring its duration that power can become evil when people own it who abuse it for their own purposes. Here too, time is the deciding factor.

Power owned in permanence becomes rule *or* domination. *The types of ruling countries have been intensively discussed since the ancient Greeks. In modern democracies, political power is distributed among separate 'powers' of a country's government that are to be brought into a 'balance' in which they check each other; government offices are only awarded for a fixed term, and the population, i.e., the ruled ones periodically vote on who is appointed to the highest offices. This leaves the rulers sufficient leeway for responsible government action; but it is now complex to an extent that the ruled can no longer vote on a case-by-case basis (in ancient Athens this was still possible, and in little Switzerland it is still possible today).* Temporary rule within leeways defined by law *is the up-to-date solution to the problem of political governance that most people in the world appreciate. It is most plausible to a philosophy of orientation as well.*

Those in power also face the problem of gaining an overview: they are supported in this by employees in their offices, who in turn must be particularly well versed in their specific fields. Permanent rule enforces its own rules for exercising power, the yardstick for which is, or should be, again the superiority of orientation. Max Weber (1864–1920) calls this 'bureaucratic' or 'rational rule.' Yet, his famous definition of power as the 'opportunity to assert one's own will within a social relationship, even against resistance, regardless of what this opportunity is based on' is only valid to a limited extent here: power that creates order and emerges from orientation superiority hardly has to reckon with resistance. Order-creating power on the grand scale of a country is also considered good if it is based on orientation superiority. This means: orientation superiority is considered rational. It does not work solely through hierarchies, but requires and allows multifarious leeways and networks of checks and balances. As a result, those political orders themselves are stable due to their flexibility.

Yet, when democratic regulations and government decisions prove to be too complex and people can no longer survey and understand them, they often feel disoriented and long for simplification and concentration in their political orientation and this means for most of them: they long for leaders endowed with a complete overview and power to act, in short: for autocratic rulers. *They want them, as Max Weber calls it, to be 'charismatic.' The rule of charismatic leaders has been highly appreciated throughout history. If they create lasting political orders or 'empires,' they are still called 'great' today, like the Greek Alexander, the Romans Caesar and Augustus, the Frank Charlemagne, the Prussian Frederick II and the Corsican Napoleon, even when they waged many bloody wars. During their reigns, even in the 20th century, world-historical greatness was found in the Italian Mussolini, the Russians Lenin and Stalin, the Austrian Adolf Hitler, the Chinese Mao Zedong and others. But the brutal and terrible political crimes they committed, the wars they lost and the mass murders they ordered later destroyed their reputation and that of power in general. In the 21st century, autocratic political leaders continue to jeopardize democracy; because many people cannot cope with the modern conditions of human orientation, they increasingly prefer autocracy to democracy. But lasting political greatness based on extraordinary superiority of orientation and leadership is also possible in a democratic framework, as was the case with the founding president of the United States, George Washington or the British savior from Hitler, Winston Churchill.*

Autocrats, formerly called tyrants or dictators, who seek to secure their enduring rule by all means, even the most brutal, create 'total rule.' *Even this can be supported by the masses: autocratic rulers often are elected in a democratic way which the autocrats later restrict or abolish. The restriction of democratic freedoms can provide a high level of inner and outer political security: vice versa, this security is the graveyard of freedom. Mass orientation then completely dominates self-orientation. To this end, total rulers employ an* ideology *that evokes fears which, as their propaganda proclaims, they are the only ones who can overcome (Hitler, for example, the legend of 'Jewish Bolshevism,' which will take over world domination, if he himself will not win his 'struggle'). In this sense, ideologies are dogmatic offers of orientation designed for the masses in order to guide them to act together whatever form this may take. This works best through a friend-enemy mentality without regard for differences, as described by Carl Schmitt (1888–1985), the temporary lawyer and legal philosopher of the Nazi empire, as a basic feature of politics at all. Friend-enemy thinking simplifies the mutual orientation of people in the most brutal way: if you*

only fight for or against others, you immediately are sure how to behave toward them, and you may see yourself supported in this by masses that are pre-ideologized in the same way. The old standards of enlightenment, truth and justice, are themselves drawn into the ideologies and thus lose their reputation for incorruptibility and reliability. Many people in many countries seem to tolerate or even welcome this today, even after the criminal total regimes in Germany and Russia have failed. Nothing makes the difficulties of political orientation clearer. However, they cannot simply be remedied by normative admonitions, as philosophers often attempt to do.

The sociologists, philosophers and political theorists Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) and Theodor W. Adorno (1903–1969) established standards in intellectual resistance to authoritarianism and totalitarianism in 20th century. The two stemmed from an upper middle-class Jewish background and, like Engels and Marx, worked together in a decades-long friendship. After being forced to emigrate by the National Socialists, they observed events in Europe from the USA and cultivated a philosophical, non-activist Marxism. Politically and morally blameless, they gained a high level of respect and appreciation after their return to Germany. In the face of totalitarianism, Adorno turned Hegel's message 'The true is the whole' into the resigned statement 'The whole is the untrue.' Horkheimer initiated a major empirical-sociological research project of the *Institute of Social Research*, which was established by a private foundation at the University of Frankfurt am Main in 1923 and then relocated first to New York and later to Los Angeles; its task was to investigate why and how people can willingly surrender to authoritarianism despite all the enlightenment that Kant had made the program of philosophy. Funded by the American Jewish Committee (1943–1949), a survey-, interview- and test-based study on authoritarian personality by psychoanalysts, sociologists, social psychologists and developmental psychologists was organized to investigate the connections between structures in thought and character that cause political prejudice. The result was that an 'authoritarian,' i.e., on the one hand submissive, on the other imperious, personality structure that use to differentiate between 'strong and weak' makes people susceptible to anti-Semitism and totalitarianism. A character like this adheres to firm certainties that immunize against the observation of facts and the acceptance of the arguments of others. Such a character internalizes mechanisms of oppression in family and society structures and redirects the repressed aggression toward ethnic, political and religious minorities who are

already socially discriminated against. The authoritarian character becomes dominant in the German Empire, which also allows racism and anti-Semitism to flourish. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, these ideologies take on a 'functional character.'

At the same time, Horkheimer developed a 'critical theory of society.' He avoids the name 'philosophy' because philosophy in the Marxist sense is part of the 'superstructure' of the existing capitalist society (chap. 17). Theory in Horkheimer's sense is to gain a critical distance from the society, but not again as a theory of the whole, nor as a utopia, as Ernst Bloch (1885–1977) attempted. He strives for the greatest possible sobriety, also incorporating the philosophy of life and psychoanalysis into his moderate Marxism. He wants to keep theory flexible so that it can react to current changes in society.

During the Second World War, while in American emigration, Horkheimer and Adorno together wrote the *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*) with the subtitle *Philosophical Fragments*. It proved to be the key work of the 'Frankfurt School.' Here, too, there is a variety of methods without a system and consistent development of thought; instead 'fragments' like essays, digressions and aphorisms are compiled. They are to shake things up, shatter certainties, create suspicion on all sides without providing a positive lesson. The guiding thesis is: the European Enlightenment has been totalitarian since the Greeks in so far as it first demythologizes thinking, then formalizes and mathematizes it while excluding everything mythical, personal, accidental and inexplicable from it. In modernity, it installs a free subject, which it opposes it to the nature bound by natural law. In this way, reason turns into an instrument of domination and industrial exploitation of nature and then, through the capitalist social order, of the people working on nature. In the 20th century, with the help of the new mass media, intellectual domination over people is added: the 'culture industry' develops as the instrument for the 'total deception of the masses' through stereotypical entertainment that captures attention and distracts from the really important things. The Enlightenment's claim to total intellectual freedom turns into total lack of intellectual freedom.

Horkheimer and Adorno also dare to make a strong case for Marquis De Sade (1740–1814) and Nietzsche. Both showed in their own way how sexuality and morality turn into instruments of domination. They did 'not conceal, but shout it out to the whole world that it is impossible to put forward a fundamental argument against murder on the basis of reason.' Since them, reason

and morality are no longer innocent: they did not prevent authoritarianism and totalitarianism, perhaps they even promoted them. According to Adorno, morality is now only plausible in small portions; it must origin from one's own insight. Adorno summarizes his own insights in aphorisms for Horkheimer in *Minima Moralia*.

Like Jaspers, Sartre and Foucault (chap. 21-22), from whom, however, he keeps his distance, Adorno subsequently provides a 'methodology' of his philosophizing under the name *Negative Dialectics*. It was written between 1959 and 1966 in the wake of Auschwitz. Adorno questions all philosophizing, indeed all culture: 'Auschwitz irrefutably proved the failure of culture. That it could happen in the midst of all the tradition of philosophy, art and the enlightening sciences says more than just that this tradition, the spirit as a whole, was not able to seize people and change them.' The Enlightenment had its peak in Hegel's dialectical philosophy; yet, Marx's dialectical materialism, which proceeded from it, failed in its intention to change the world because of the practice of Stalinist terror. Dialectics must therefore now be 'negative,' i.e., no longer follow the 'principle of unity' in order to create a consistent system out of concepts, but rather deny the concept its right to truth: Adorno agrees with Heidegger, whom he fiercely opposes for the rest, that concepts make the given available, bringing about an 'omnipotence of the superior concept' through conceptual superordination and subordination. With Nietzsche, concepts are less an instrument of knowledge than of power. The industrially organized killing of people for racist reasons is the extreme consequence of identifying, defining and fixing something through concepts. Therefore, we must now leave it at the non-identified or 'non-identical' and allow ourselves to be affected and irritated by it without wanting to capture it in conceptual systems.

In this way, Adorno for his part takes much of what has been outlined in the previous chapters to an extreme. He refers to Bergson and Husserl, but wants to think more radical, more thorough and more consistent. He also points to the literature that can show the non-identical as such. Philosophical oppositions such as individual vs. society, nature vs. history, concept vs. object, theory vs. practice, ideology vs. reality are neither to be believed in nor to be reconciled, but only serve as instruments of analysis. The 'antisystem' of negative dialectics is to lead back to the experience of reality, to release the accidental in it again and to increase a sensitivity for what Nietzsche called the 'music of life.'

Adorno writes: 'The utopia of knowledge would be to open up the non-conceptual with concepts, without making it their equal.' This is precisely what happens in what we call 'orientation.' Everything conceptual presupposes the non-conceptual, but the power of the concept that Adorno has in mind runs the risk of excluding the non-conceptual, of declaring it meaningless, and thereby rendering it powerless. In fact, it is the non-conceptual that encourages comprehension – in our language as a foothold in the search for orientation.

To Adorno, the 'conceptual essence' (begriffliche Wesen) of philosophy 'despite its inescapability is not its absolute' (sein Absolutes). It is, in our language, only a means of (human) orientation. Adorno demands 'to change the direction of conceptuality in one's language, i.e., to direct it toward the non-identical'; this corresponds to the later Wittgenstein's 'do not think, but look.' Like Nietzsche, Adorno emphasizes the feature of play in philosophizing and thus brings it close to art. However, the capitalist 'culture industry' that overwhelms one's own orientation by mass orientation causes a basic mood of disgust in Adorno: the functionalization of people produces pseudo-personalities along prefabricated schemes. For Adorno, there is 'no right life in the wrong one.'

During this time and before, sociologists work to show how social order is created and maintained on a small scale. Micro-sociology investigates types of power that are exercised in subtle ways in inter-individual interaction and communication; morality also appears as a means of social control.

The Frenchman Gabriel Tarde (1843–1904), another pioneer of sociology, starts from the simple observation which is confirmed everywhere in social life: that people primarily imitate each other in their orientation. In his initial 1890 work *Les lois de l'imitation* (*The Laws of Imitation*), he refers to Darwin's theory of evolution and follows positivist methods like 'statistics' and 'archaeology' which are to take stock of the present and past behavior of people. He assumes as a 'universal' thesis that the most efficient motive of social evolution is imitation of the 'superior one by the inferior one.' Imitation is varying repetition, which to Tarde determines the reproduction of reality at all: in physical nature, which ultimately consists of oscillations, in biological nature, in the neurophysiological reproduction of the human brain and in mental reproduction, i.e., memory. In contrast, new developments arise from deviations. The varying repetition is conscious only to a very small extent; in this respect, there is no fundamental difference between animals and humans.

As a child, you are integrated into a society above all by imitating its behaviors. Conscious and normative behavior is lalso argely conformist; it is expressed in dogmas, which gain their own power: 'what unites people is dogma or power.' The power of dogmas is forceless, since they are simply adopted.

The deviations or *contre-imitations* which can lead to new developments, do not have to be intentional or conscious either. They turn into 'inventions' when they continue to be imitated by others. This includes seemingly trivial things, mere grips and tricks, handicraft practices, new ways of speaking and behaving and so on, whatever makes life somewhat easier. Like variations in biological evolution, most of such low-key cultural inventions may disappear unnoticed in social life. However, if they are imitated permanently, the accidental turns into the normal: to Tarde the normal and also the norms origin from the accidental and therefore require no 'higher' justification.

They spread spontaneously; the spread accelerates the more people adopt them; they vary all the more as circumstances vary; they fluctuate as they spread. Tarde takes his examples from the whole of social life: food, clothing, shelter, and also ideas, languages, education practices, economic and political strategies, arts, institutions such as law, morality, religion; their 'inventors' are only mentioned and known by name in special cases. In addition, there are manifold 'overlappings' and 'interferences' of 'imitation patterns.' What seems to be individual are individual combinations of imitated inventions: to Tarde, individuals are 'nuances' of social imitations.

In macro-sociological terms, different strands of imitation can cause social dissent, mass movements, opposing ideologies and finally wars. In conflicts, both sides can arm themselves with a suitable logic; hence, logic only helps to a certain extent. Nevertheless, Tarde expects the spontaneously spreading imitation will lead to a growing social harmonization of life in the world that may end with a global harmony of social faith: 'both humanity and the individual human being are always moving in the direction [...] of the greatest faith to be established.' Yet, the growing harmonization makes the 'injustice of privileges' more conspicuous. As a result, to Tarde the superior one is imitated, which in the long run brings forth a gradual leveling – upwards.

This global upward leveling caused by orientation superiority did indeed occur in the 20th century. This may affirm that varying imitations in social life or, in our language, orientations to other orientations drive social evolution to a great extent.

Yet, there was no global harmony of humankind experienced in the 20th century: instead the most horrific measures of totalitarian rule were imitated.

Without explicitly following Tarde, the Canadian Erving Goffman (1922–1982) takes the thesis of varying imitation further in the second half of the 20th century in the way that social games of consent are played. In micro-sociological studies close to everyday practices, which he largely presents as reports on his own observations, he shows the way how normal social orders are established and conflicts are avoided as far as possible. Using face-to-face situations in inter-individual interaction and communication, Goffman in his initial 1959 work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, which he expands by extensive volumes such as *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (1967), *Relations in Public. Microstudies of Public Order* (1971) and again a methodological addendum under the title *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (1974), observes that the first thing people do for avoiding trouble is to create a consensual atmosphere. In doing so, we all 'play theater.' 'Social reality' largely consists in the fact that we play roles using facades and masks as well as deception and disguise, which are considered legitimate as kinds of politeness and tact. This affords a 'dramaturgical sense' on all sides.

Thus Goffman, too, does not justify social order in terms of norms, but examines how norms arise in everyday life, how they come into play, what determines them and what leeway they leave. Also for him these are problems of 'orientation.' They are solved in a half-conscious, half-unconscious double game: consciously, you express statements on what you mean and intend, and unconsciously, you provide footholds like facial expressions, gestures and posture on how sincere your statements are. 'The ultimate behavioral materials are the glances, gestures, positionings, and verbal statements that people continuously feed into the situation, whether intended or not. These are the external signs of orientation and involvement – states of mind and body not ordinarily examined with respect to their social organization.' While you concentrate on your own statements, others can observe the unconscious footholds and use them to assess how the statements are to be understood. In face-to-face situations, people do initially not test the statements against reality, which is not yet clear to both sides, but rather behavior and statements against each other.

In this way, interacting people control each other. This mutual control gives rise to rules of behavior in order to orient oneself in a situation: 'A rule

of conduct may be defined as a guide for action, recommended not because it is pleasant, cheap or effective, but because it is suitable or just.' Hence, the main concern is 'facework:' you do it not only for your own sake, but also for the sake of the other and for the common communication. To Goffman, inter-individual communication is a 'working consensus' that we always have to 'save' each other's 'faces': we help each other to maintain the identities we want to display, and this is to continue the communication in an agreeable manner and to enable a longer-term cooperation where it may be beneficial. Even if he doesn't call it that, Goffman describes something like a principle of charity in interaction which is not only politeness: people assure each other of their appreciation, goodwill and willingness to cooperate. This creates a win-win-situation in mutual orientation.

If such a game does not succeed straight away, you have to explain your actions with certain intentions: you enter the situation of justification (chap. 23) – in order to 'save the situation.' Following Goffman's observations, to gloss over the fact of irregular behavior 'false good explanations' can also be used. However, this requires a more sophisticated theater play. If the play is seen through, you can ask for apologies with such remorse that the others feel compelled to put an end to this kind of self-humiliation and reassure you of an acceptable self-image. The game is maintained and only abandoned completely in exceptional cases, which is very risky for both sides: as it is, being completely honest jeopardizes communication altogether.

This may sound cynical, but it describes the social reality that we have to cope with. Even morality is included in this. In the Goffmanian play morality arises as the parties' claim to be taken for who they want to present themselves as. In this view, morality refers less to the actions themselves or to the norms that guide them, than to the fact that your 'impression management' is credible. This means that it does not stand out as a management, but provides the impression of sincerity, authenticity or integrity. Integrity, too, must be performed in the play. For example, you can observe this in medical teams, especially when doctors talk to dying people about their imminent death. Integrity then includes playing the game in such a way that it helps the patients, and often it can help them not to learn the truth. The patients then may distrust or see through the play. Nevertheless it is played. Moral values and norms are recognized, but people in most situations know how much theatrical play is involved. Thus,

your alternative is to play the game with sincerity or with cynicism – you 'sell' morality either way: 'As performers we are merchants of morality.'

From this point of view, power is 'dramatic and directive dominance' in the play. But even this dominance can be a pretense, for example, when a merely representative king enters the stage, while the scene is dominated from the backstage. However, this applies to any kind of power: 'Power of any kind must be clothed in effective means of displaying it, and it will have different effects depending upon how it is dramatized.' To Goffman, there is no 'real' social existence 'behind' the role play.

Goffman himself 'sells' his insights, which only seem to be new but have been current since morality was demanded, as impartially as possible. Nevertheless, being aware that they provoke moralists who want to believe in the sincerity and truth of their morality, he tactfully maintains an ironic tone that allows readers not to take him too seriously. As he openly admits, he also has to play a theater play with his readers, and no author, not even one who considers him or herself to be entirely sincere, can completely rule this out for him or herself. The certainty and security that morality is supposed to create in order to establish a good social order rests on this uncertain and insecure ground. Philosophy will have to recognize this, and the philosophy of orientation can recognize it.

Both Niklas Luhmann (1927–1998) and Jürgen Habermas (born 1929) take up Goffman's approach to micro-sociology, which also shares many insights with Nietzsche, but categorize it very differently. Both develop a philosophical-sociological theory of communication that extends universally and in itself becomes a universe that is difficult to grasp. But they start from alternative premises which, precisely because they contrast with each other, are particularly interesting and stimulating for a philosophy of orientation. All further details must be left aside here.

Luhmann connects to Parsons' sociological systems theory (chap. 23). After studying law and working in public administration for several years, he studies with Parsons at Harvard for a while with the help of a research grant. Developing the sociological systems theory further, he focuses entirely on the system-environment difference. This enables him to also question Parsons' AGIL-scheme with regard to its own functionality. In doing so, Luhmann breaks away from the concept of action and instead adopts the thesis of *'autopoiesis'* of systems from the Chilean biologists, neuroscientists and philosophers

Humberto Maturana (1928–2021) and Francisco Varela (1946–2001): 'autopoiesis' means the self-production and self-maintenance of systems in ongoing interaction with their environment. This renders the traditional concepts of subject philosophy altogether superfluous.

Luhmann therefore no longer considers people or individuals as 'members' of society when addressing the question of social order. The reason is: the human being only seems to be a single unit. If you adhere to the still plausible Aristotelian levels of *physis* (body), *psycháe* (mind) and *nûs* (spirit), then in terms of systems theory the human being consists of three observation systems. The *psycháe* or the 'inner' perceives the 'outer world' through bodily processes without perceiving these processes themselves (unless they are disturbed). The ideas, affects, feelings, thoughts and also dreams, that are triggered by your sensory perceptions in your mind, are expressed in a language that belongs to the societal communication which is in turn a different observation system with its own modes of functioning. To Luhmann, the *three observation systems of body, mind and societal communication* are environments for each other insofar as their modes of observation are fundamentally different and only selectively relate to each other. They simultaneously are 'open' and 'closed' to each other: the body pays attention to sensory stimuli from the outer world that are vital for it, e.g., temperature, food sources, sexual attractiveness; the mind reflects and decides what is to do according to its own ideas; and in the societal communication decisions are made according to societal rules as to what of the mind's ideas is allowed to be communicated to others and in which way. The crucial factor is that the three observation systems are only selectively accessible to each other. This happens via certain information channels: the psychological system connects to the physical system on the one hand through the nervous system and to the social system through a language system on the other.

Luhmann calls these channels, which enable and select communications between the three observation systems, '*structural couplings*.' Such structural couplings are necessary and sufficient for the human beings' orientation as a whole: the physical system signals to the psychological system via the nervous system where the body can be consciously controlled (e.g., movements, but not digestion), while the psychological system observes and controlls what happens in societal communication (what is said and displayed, but not what is thought). This includes strong selections: the vast majority of physical processes take place without the (at least direct) involvement of the mental system and the vast

majority of mental processes take place without the (at least direct) involvement of the social system of communication. This is how human orientation works: anything else would overstrain the capacities of human orientation. If all of its parts successfully work together, our orientation appears as a unit; if the interplay does not work, its differentiation into the various observation systems becomes apparent. In societal communication, people are already assumed to be units under the name of 'individuals' who sum up to the society as a whole. These alleged units are presented in the Goffmanian social plays of identity management as *saying 'I'*: saying 'I' signals there is someone 'in' whom everything fits together. Hence, he or she acts as a unit and can be made responsible for everything that is caused by this unit which in fact consists of three coupled autonomous observation systems. It is for societal reasons, that the 'I' is treated as the sovereign of everything that happens in it and through it, even if the person itself does not feel sovereign him or herself.

The system-theoretical dissolution of the human being's alleged unity into different observation systems makes it understandable why people know so little about themselves and about each other, why they are so ambiguous for each other and constantly surprise each other. They must therefore make complex efforts to 'master themselves' in order to master situations in which other people they deal with are the main factor. They have to present themselves as units that are acceptable to others; in this way they are able to get along with each other. This is a profound sociological analysis of human orientation to other orientations. From this it follows that human orientation to other orientations requires a 'reduction of the complexity of human communication' in order to create and organize social orders. But this does not exclude an increase in complexity: on the contrary, every reduction of complexity enables the development of new orders on the basis of the reduced ones and thus a higher complexity of social communication at higher levels in various networks. And the more complexity there is, the more there are alternative ways and leeways of acting, which we need and love in modern times. From the view of the philosophy of orientation, Luhmann's theory is the most comprehensive and deepest theory of contemporary life.

Luhmann recognizes that society only exists in the communication about it: society is both the communication of and about society. This may seem strange, but is evident and consistent, as it was the Copernican revolution first in astronomy, then in Kantian transcendental philosophy: societal communication orders itself through

its self-reference or in an autopoietic way; there is nothing 'behind' or 'beyond' it. The even more disconcerting consequence from this is that individual people with their bodies and their minds are then the environment of the societal communication and vice versa. Yet, this means that their relationships are not regulated a priori in any way, but they must continuously adjust to each other: people can always be both compliant participants and unpredictable disruptive factors in an established societal communication. Hence, theories of society must also be flexible or able to continuously correct themselves. Luhmann therefore presents his sociological systems theory as a 'supertheory' which includes and reflects its leeways for decision-making and its own possible alternatives (and is not, as is sometimes assumed, a theory above and beyond all other theories). If a theory includes its negations, as Hegel's system did before (chap. 15), it can hardly be criticized 'from the outside.' The numerous objections that are raised against Luhmann's sociological systems theory, can easily be refuted on the basis of this supertheoretical structure. Most of the objections start from metaphysical or ethical presuppositions.

Along the difference of system and environment, Luhmann's sociological systems theory is also able to *differentiate itself*. Thereby specific 'functional systems' emerge, i.e., autonomous orders that function in line with their own rules like economy, politics, law, media, science, education, art and religion. A functional system gains its autonomy when structures emerge in a field that are decoupled from those of other fields; it was Dilthey, who first conceptualized such 'acquired structure connections' (chap. 18). To Luhmann, in modern times the 'functional differentiation' replaced two earlier modes of differentiation (as mentioned in the introduction to part C): first the 'segmentary' differentiation of a society through which small social units such as families and tribes all perform similar work such as agriculture and animal husbandry and are ruled by an authoritarian head, then the 'stratificatory' differentiation into larger social units, in which people no longer know each other personally and different social levels such as farmers, merchants, clerics, administrative officials and princes arise, to which people belong by birth and throughout their lives and which enable a hierarchical rule. In very large societies, functional differentiation makes it possible, by means of the division of labor and capitalist organization, to allow everyone to perform the function that he or she is capable of due to his or her own living conditions. People enter in one of the specific functional systems, are determined by them and determine them as well. The functional

systems also use their own 'codes' for communication, e.g., economy the code of money, science the code of truth etc.; they are in turn 'structurally coupled' with each other and influence each other like systems and their environments. The functional differentiation of the social system has helped ton increase complexity, productivity and prosperity.

It is then no longer a question of knowledge about the communication of society as a whole, but all certainties are limited to the functional systems. The sciences and philosophy, too, have only their own specific orientation. Luhmann uses the concept of orientation constantly, but not as basic concept of his theory. Yet, the difference between system and environment is the system-theoretical specification of the difference between orientation and situation; vice versa, human orientation is a manifold observation system. Both in the functional differentiation of the societal communication and in the human orientation there isn't any center which would control societal communication or rather human orientation altogether. When, in the case of the societal communication, the political system tries to govern the other systems or to impair them, this fails which is sufficiently proven by the totalitarian and authoritarian systems of the 20th century. Apart from its theoretical strength, Luhmann's systems theory stands against all totalitarianism.

This does not exclude the exercise of *power*. Even in genuine modern democracies, power is at play everywhere. To Luhmann, power is a momentum of every communication and 'a life-world universal of social existence' (*lebensweltliches Universale gesellschaftlicher Existenz*). Under the conditions of functional differentiation, however, power appears neither as authoritarian nor, as with Foucault, as diffuse or latent, but has its own limited function that can be clearly described in terms of systems theory. Luhmann here focuses on organizations in the various functional systems. By establishing permanent positions in them, which are only occupied for a limited period of time, power is transferred into an order in which 'responsibilities' for certain functions are defined and the people who are to occupy the positions are (in principle) selected on the basis of their abilities for performing the respective functions (innovative entrepreneurs create their own leadership position). If you prove your ability to function in your position, being successful in this sense, you feel comfortable instead of exploited and alienated, as Marxism assumes. In their functions, employees exercise a certain amount of power over those for whom they are responsible, but they are themselves constantly monitored by their superiors, colleagues,

and, at least in modern constitutional systems, by all those affected. Power in functionally differentiated organizations is controlled in manifold ways: the staff also have power over their managers, provided they are better informed and trained in the details. Luhmann distinguishes here between *formal and informal power*. This results in a power cycle instead of authoritarian rule.

As Luhmann shows, power is subject to a peculiar dialectic: it is always endangered by the fact that is made use of it. For then resistance in Max Weber's sense is to be expected and power can be overwhelmed by counter-powers. This is exacerbated when power is enforced by coercion or even violence. According to Luhmann's sober analysis, violence differs from power in the fact that, in personal as well as administrative, political and military relations, it doesn't leave any further alternative to the person on whom it is exercised, but also to the person exercising it. Violence restricts the leeway of action to the utmost. This is also largely avoided as far as possible by those who exercise violence, too, as they can then only win or lose. Violence does not pay off: in the long run, things are more easily achieved without it and to a certain extent this protects against it. The use of violence proves less power than the helplessness in exercising power. Thus, to Luhmann the *threat of violence* it is usually all that remains; violence is the 'avoidance alternative' when exercising power. Instead, agreement and consensus are sought as far as possible so that violence does not occur, e.g., in education, police operations, politics etc. Where power appears as superiority of orientation through authority and leadership, it reduces the complexity of the situation and creates more leeway for acting. From this view, power is 'uncertainty absorption' (*Unsicherheitsabsorption*): if there is deliberate use of it, it makes orientation easier. Luhmann therefore prefers to speak of (helpful) 'influence' rather than (restricting) 'power.'

Luhmann re-evaluates power through its functional aspects without a moral assessment and, in doing this, delimits it. Nevertheless, power remains 'amorphous' for him, too; in fact, it plays its role not only in every existing order, but also in every 'mastering of a situation,' i.e., in every orientation effort. This makes evident that exerting force and violence stifles orientation. In Luhmann's differentiation of functional systems, power cannot be segregated into a specific system that would be an environment for the other systems. Certainly, in the functional system of politics, the exercise of power is deliberately organized. However, this does not exhaust the function of power in the communication of society as a whole, in which orientation

superiorities and inferiorities and violent enforcement of power occur everywhere. The fact that power is at work in all functional systems it shares with morality. They have also in common that both of them demand respect for others: one respects those who are superior in orientation anyway, and it would be narrow-minded to despise those who are inferior in orientation; for everyone can be superior or inferior in their orientation in different areas. In addition, both morality and power stabilize the orientation to other orientations. Hence, they can therefore work happily together, and there is no reason to consider power as evil in itself. As Nietzsche demonstrates in 'On the Genealogy of Morality' and is in fact evident in everyday life, morality is itself a power: everyone feels stronger when he or she is supported by a current morality. To Luhmann, it requires a 'higher immorality' to see and accept this: his sociological systems theory claims a moral impartiality toward morality. To continue the functional comparison of power and morality: both power and morality do not already determine what people do, but rather function as media that can take on different forms, in the case of power the form of goals for action, in the case of morality the form of values and norms. Stabilizing the orientation to other orientations, power binds the orientation of others, morality one's own orientation; absorbing uncertainty, they 'give' orientation. Being 'functional equivalents' in these respects, power and morality can be used interchangeably: you can sometimes try power and sometimes morality; if your power doesn't match your goal, you may apply morality; if morality doesn't help, you may apply power. In everyday orientation, you often switch between the two, oscillate between them.

Luhmann's functional systems theory finally dispenses with the metaphysical and transcendental premise of a 'pure' reason common to all. He calls this – using a German pun – the *Abklärung der Aufklärung* (the clarification of the Enlightenment). However he keeps his distance from 'postmodernism'; for him, there is no 'post' to 'modernism,' but there only are new alternatives in modern thought. In contrast, Habermas wants to continue the Kantian Enlightenment in a modified form. For this, in his 'communication theory' he switches from the 'is' to the 'ought.' Morality shall take the place of power in the communication of society as a whole; for Habermas, morality means emancipation from power. With this, he continues to intervene in public debates or provokes them, earning great public success. He does this in a well-informed manner: in his sociology, political theory and philosophy, he intensively explores the most important approaches of his time and brings them together through a

superior overview and a masterfully ordering hand. Like first Marx and Engels, then Adorno and Horkheimer, he always has the 'totality' of society in mind. After the historical experiences with Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union, China and elsewhere, in 'late capitalism,' as the Frankfurt School calls it, he no longer finds a realistic alternative to a 'deliberative democracy' in order to ensure peace, freedom and justice.

For Habermas' rescue of the 'occidental rationalism' of modernity for the present, the core is the Kantian 'categorical imperative' (chap. 12, 23). This implies that, in his view on society, Habermas, like Adorno and Horkheimer, opposes all orientation not only to power, but also to everything functional. In contrast to Luhmann's focus on difference, which enables him to compare functions in the different functional systems, Habermas continues to favor unity in order to ensure the cohesion of society as a whole. While Luhmann only wants to be the observer of the society, Habermas presents himself as its preceptor and educator; while Luhmann retains moral judgment and, like Goffman, cultivates an ironic tone, Habermas manifests great moral endeavor and seriousness; while he appreciates Parsons' sociological systems theory for its orientation to values and norms, he presents Luhmann's systems theory as mere 'social technology,' thereby consciously discrediting it. Even more harshly, he rejects Nietzsche's alleged 'irrationalism,' which according to him paved the way for the dreaded 'postmodernism.'

Thus, Habermas considers the order of modern society as regulated by *moral norms*. Moral norms remain valid, even if they are not followed; the commandment not to lie does not become invalid even if, as Goffman shows, everyone more or less lies in their routined theater plays. For Habermas, as for Kant, norms are not about concrete action, which no theory can arrive at, but about a universal 'coordination of action,' which for Habermas involves a common understanding of the premises of all actions that affect everyone. He distinguishes, also with Adorno and Horkheimer, (i) 'norm-regulated' action that, in Kant's sense, aims neither for power nor for profit, but for 'consensus' with all those affected, from (ii) 'instrumental' and 'strategic' or 'purposive-rational' action in Max Weber's sense that aims for success according to particular interests and (iii) 'dramaturgical' action in Goffman's sense that serves self-expression. However, consensus on norms cannot be taken for granted, but must be achieved through discourse. The result is a 'discourse ethics,' a 'morality' for the discourse.

Habermas thus focuses on the *context of justification* (chap. 23). To him, however, justification should not take place retrospectively, but in advance; it is to provide legitimacy for action from the outset. In the discourse of justification, 'validity claims' (*Geltungsansprüche*) are made for statements to be proved by others; everyone subjects their proposals for norms of action to examination by the other participants of the discourse. For this examination, some norms must be presupposed that cannot further be questioned, namely the general intentions of communicative comprehensibility, theoretical truth, practical rightness and personal sincerity. Insofar as these superior norms are fulfilled, an '*ideal speech situation*' arises in which claims to validity are not enforced with power, but are discursively enacted with 'good arguments.' This would be a 'domination-free communication' (*herrschaftsfreie Kommunikation*) in which the only kind of enforcement is the 'unforced force of the better argument' (*zwanglose Zwang des besseren Arguments*).

In this way, Habermas also creates a laboratory situation, here the situation of an academic seminar or a court hearing, which are only about true insights and well-founded decisions and from which all kinds of sensual stimuli, affects and power relations are carefully eliminated. However, for discourse ethics, the concept of justice is also up for discussion, as is the concept of reason. To this extent, Habermas also pays tribute to the nihilism of the 20th century. For him, power is supposed to be only 'communicative' power. To Habermas, this kind of power arises through *consensus*, insofar as it enables and motivates a group or society to act in accordance with the agreed norms. Habermas distinguishes it from 'social power,' which people or groups exercise over others for their own benefit, especially in economics and politics, and from 'administrative power,' which is exercised by organizations, in borderline cases also with police force. The core of communicative power is the 'superior insight' that can also be required to reach consensus, especially in legislation and jurisdiction. For Habermas, this is the last remaining 'legitimate power.'

The question then is how such an ideal discourse can be realized in concrete situations; for there is no time to debate endlessly about how to emancipate oneself from the real conditions of the respective discourse. To answer this question, Habermas takes on the concept of the '*lifeworld,*' which he contrasts with the 'system' (in the singular), which means for him the 'general system of action' that is regulated by the factors of 'culture,' 'society,' and 'personality.' He calls 'culture' the 'stock of knowledge' which has accumulated in history

and from which the actors draw their 'interpretations'; it functions as a 'social a priori' in which people are always already in agreement. By the term 'society' he summarizes the legitimate orders on which the participants also agree, but with good reasons, and by 'personality' he understands that which makes 'subjects' capable of 'intersubjective' argumentative communication. This in turn already includes normative guidelines. In order for the three factors to harmonize with each other, they are not to be 'environments' to each other, as they are for Luhmann. Instead, Habermas conceives of the lifeworld as the unity of the three in the form of their common 'horizon,' 'ground' or 'background.' Regarding the 'world' in which people live, he distinguishes between the 'objective world' of empirically ascertainable facts according to truth criteria, the 'social world' of legitimate or 'normatively correct' orders, and the 'subjective' or 'inner' world of consciousness, which has to express itself honestly. In this way, he is able to base the consensus among the subjects on the lifeworld itself: a consensus is tenable when all three worlds correspond to each other, i.e., when sincere participants in the discourse speak in normatively correct orders about objectively ascertainable facts. This is not to be expected in 'instrumental' and 'strategic' action which also permits lies and deception. Without such consensus, for Habermas there is a threat of crises in the lifeworld in Husserl's sense and a loss of meaning, disorientation and anomia in Durkheim's sense. Such crises can in turn only be overcome through consensus.

Here, too, Habermas holds on to a unity under ideal conditions. In a distant reminder of Marx, he explains the occurrence of crises use by the fact that instrumental and strategic thinking '*colonizes*' the lifeworld, i.e., illegitimately subjugates it through money and power which tend to destroy it. To Habermas, the differentiation of functional systems in the sense of Luhmann's sociological systems theory also dissolves the established contexts of the lifeworld into 'expert cultures' and causes a 'fragmented consciousness' that is incapable of unbiased discourse. Since not all those affected in a society and, as far as Habermas' approach is a universal one, in the world society, can be involved in justification discourses, this must be done in a representative manner, i.e., through a democracy that is in turn rooted as deeply as possible in society and is oriented to 'deliberation' rather than to power, i.e., to achieving consensus in common deliberations. In current political crises, Habermas always calls for such a democracy; he does not trust in the 'political system,' but in sincere democrats.

For him, nihilism also affects *religion*. Religion can still give a society a kind of consensus; Habermas even entered into a discourse with the later Pope Joseph Ratzinger. However, after religion is no longer credible to many people, society must find its own hold, i.e., through its relationship to itself. This is where Habermas reunites with Luhmann, who eventually dedicates an extensive work to religion. But, even though Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* has shown the frailty of its reason, while Luhmann now relies on the interrelation of the differentiated functional systems of the societal communication and the checks and balances between them, Habermas wants to continue to rely on the Enlightenment's reason, now turned into a discursive one.

In an ideal discourse free of domination, as Habermas envisions it, one orients oneself to those who have the 'better arguments.' However, there are disputes as well on which argument is the better one, and furthermore on what the criteria for better arguments are. This causes an infinite regress, which ends in the insight that there are no good arguments as such, just as there are no things in themselves, but everyone can consider other arguments to be convincing from their own point of view. Habermas, unlike his fellow proponent Karl-Otto Apel (1922-2017), does not attempt an ultimate justification (*Letztbegründung*) of discourse ethics. Thus, here too, the superiority of orientation, with which the better argument is asserted, remains the final authority as 'good' power.

Habermas' ideal of domination-free communication as the norm of a 'Critical Theory of Society' is intended to make a 'right' life possible even in the 'wrong life' despite Adorno's pith verdict. In view of the difficulties of political decisions in modern democratic societies and the unrestrained striving for power of many leaders, the Habermasian ideal is therefore well received by the Western intellectual public. It is expected to be a normative bulwark against autocracies and dictatorships and to deepen democracy. In reality, however, modern functioning democracies reckon with an irreconcilable diversity of opinions and rely on compromise rather than consensus. Philosophically, the ideal of domination-free communication is based on traditional concepts and is still only plausible as a norm for, not as a description of reality. Since reaching a consensus among all those affected in a highly differentiated society would lead to endless debates, it is not feasible in practice. Instead, the 'counterfactual' general ideal exerts constant pressure on individual orientations to justify themselves to everyone else. Thus it once again evokes a mood of disappointment, indignation

and defensiveness, in Adorno's sense the basic mood of the falsity of life. From the view of the philosophy of orientation, the worldwide reception of Habermas' theory shows that even in times of nihilism many want to approach the new realities of human orientation through traditional concepts.

In view of Habermas' plea for consensus, we should ask where the desire for power comes from. It has always been assumed that it consists in the desire to overpower others: then it is certainly not morally good. But if, in everyday life, power already manifests itself in 'mastering' a difficult situation in order to prevent being 'overwhelmed' by it, and if it is mainly other people who cause difficulties and hardships instead of cooperation and listening to 'good arguments,' we are ourselves forced to exercise power in some way; and if we prove strategic superiority in doing so, we may also acquire a desire for power: after all, if strategic superiority has its origin in a superiority of orientation, it makes sense for such people to lead others and for others to be led by them, within the scope of democratic rules. Democratic decision-making bodies also like to follow personalities of superior orientation; as such, they are welcome. This also applies to scientific debates which are often oriented to personalities of high reputation. Power as orientation superiority is needed and welcome in all social concerns, if it is based on the aforementioned variety of orientation virtues such as overview, insight, circumspection, prudence, consideration, precaution, foresight and confidence (chap. 22). The philosophy of orientation therefore keeps open the leeways which societal orders leave to individual human beings. For it is individuals who open up opportunities to change the orders, adapting them to new times.

The need to change social orders mostly occurs when the orders are perceived as unjust. This raises the question of *justice*. In Habermas' discourse ethics, justice is a supreme norm to be negotiated discursively, from which also procedures of political justification are developed. Ultimately, it is *procedures* that create legitimacy, and it makes sense to negotiate these procedures discursively in advance. Procedures keep open what will ultimately be decided in terms of content, and it is easier to reach agreement on procedures that keep decisions on content open, i.e., postpone them to an undefined future, than on the content itself. They not only help to create legitimacy, but also to gain time. Luhmann agrees with this and also the most important contemporary theorist of justice, the American John Rawls (1921-2002), who deliberately develops his theory with the USA in mind.

The pragmatic preliminary decision in favor of legitimacy through procedures replaces metaphysical and religious foundations of justice. In this way, it helps to cope with nihilism in the field of law and politics or, in Luhmann's terms, in the functional system of politics. Rawls asks according to which ethical principles justice here is to be thought and which improvements to political reality follow from them. He attempts to find a basic orientation in which theory and reality gradually correct each other, just as Moses Mendelssohn once thought (chap. 13). Rawls' theory is open to pragmatism and, in keeping with the Anglo-Saxon tradition, is itself intended for the orientation of politics (chap. 12, 17). Rawls is described as a dispassionate, honest and self-critical personality, the likes of which few can match. His 1971 work *A Theory of Justice* immediately turns out to be the most important new beginning in social, moral and legal philosophy. However, Rawls does not claim any originality. He only wants to bring the problems of justice in society into a general system with 'certain simplifications.'

He renews the *thought experiment of a social contract*, but breaks away from the assumptions that Hobbes (chap. 8) on the one hand and Rousseau (chap. 12) on the other associated with it. He does not conceive of a bad (Hobbes) or good (Rousseau) state of nature. He presupposes nothing more than the ability of people to consider what a society that can be called just must look like. He does not eliminate the individuals' interests by means of a norm, as Habermas does, but by means of a '*veil of ignorance*': people are simply assumed to know nothing of their individual interests. In this way, they can judge things without benevolence and envy, love and hate to each other and without fear and time pressure.

Rawls thus once again adopts a transcendental-like point of view, but now simply under the heading of complete impartiality. He also creates a *laboratory situation* in which the different conditions of judgment are suspended. Thus, he presents his thought experiment not as a moral demand, but again as a methodical procedure that everyone can accept in advance as 'fair.' Fairness, for which there is no word in German, does not require consensus, but allows for differences within justice. Rawls also relies on Kant's categorical imperative, asking how it can be implemented in modern economic and political institutions, but into the procedure of proving one's intentions whether they can be generalized in a universal way, he also includes economic decisions and game theories of rational

prudential choice. He hopes that this will provide 'the most appropriate moral basis for a democratic society.'

In a democratic society, primary social goods such as liberty, rights, opportunities, wealth and respect must be distributed fairly. It can be expected that everyone desires them, even if they may have different ideas about them. There will be good arguments for each of these ideas, among which it will not be possible to make a definitive impartial decision. But they will balance each other out in a '*reflective equilibrium*.' In his extensive theoretical considerations, Rawls includes difficult topics such as tolerance toward intolerance, justice between generations, and the justification of civil disobedience. His result is that while equality is usually considered the first criterion of justice in regard to the distribution of material goods, Rawls relates it to freedom rights, opportunities and self-respect, but not to wealth. From both an economic and moral point of view, there may well be differences here if only the minimum subsistence level of everyone is guaranteed. For in the modern market economy, the wealth of society as a whole is not limited, but can be increased if its productivity rises: productivity increases if inequality is permitted. Therefore, inequality is acceptable to the extent that everyone benefits from the increase in wealth, albeit to a greater or lesser extent, but always in such a way that the minimum subsistence level is also increased for those who are the worst off. To Rawls, everyone can be content with this and consider it fair, at least under the veil of ignorance about their actual circumstances. Otherwise they would want people to acquire excessive wealth at the expense of others, exercise power over others for their own benefit or even establish a dictatorship on a grand scale. In an impartial and prudent consideration, nobody wants to be disadvantaged in this way.

Rawls assumes this average and everyday sense of justice. According to this, freedom rights and equality of opportunity must never be restricted, but there may be differences in prosperity under this condition. Rawls thus distinguishes a '*universal principle*' from a '*difference principle*': the universal principle of liberty opens up and defines the leeway for the differences of people. For Aristotle, the principle of equality is paradoxical: equality can also mean inequality, as equality for the equal and inequality for the unequal. Rawls solves the paradox by splitting it into the two principles and relating them to different circumstances. In addition, in order to allow tolerance for inequality, he assumes a '*principle of redress*': because you owe the development of the skills and endowments, which

you received without merit, to society, you also owe it to society to use these talents for it, that is, specifically for everyone else. Acquired wealth is likewise supposed to benefit society. This principle of redress unites the universal and the difference principle and makes fairness perfect.

Thus, from the mere fiction of a thought experiment a realistic, politically manageable, *liberal and social model of societal order* emerges. It is based neither on an absolute certainty nor on an ideal; the norms do not precede it, but emerge from it. It does not morally discriminate the desire for profit and power insofar as they also benefit society as a whole. After extensive critical discussions of his theory, in *Political Liberalism* (1993) Rawls leaves the 'original position' of the social contract in the background. As there are no judgments which would equally convince all and therefore be definitive in political contexts anyway, he now also includes different religious or ideological concepts of justice. If they are not dogmatically defined by the state, there is enough leeway for individual interpretations. Thus, we have to say goodbye to 'comprehensive doctrines' and leave it at an 'overlapping consensus' in which personal reasonableness, rather than a universal reason, is crucial.

For the philosophy of orientation, Rawls' conception of justice is plausible not only because of its realistic character, which reflects the then current conditions in the USA and in other modern democracies, but also because it deliberately works with clearly defined leeways. As a reminder, leeways are rooms with regulated limits for unregulated behavior. According to Rawls, the state-guaranteed civil liberties limit their economic activity, which is not hindered by the state as long as it raises the subsistence level of all: legal equality creates the leeway for limited economic inequality. Under the name of 'pluralism,' Rawls' theory explicitly allows for philosophically diverse approaches, including dogmatic 'metaphysics'; however, metaphysics is not part of the theory itself.

Rawls' theory, for its part, can be considered as the center of a leeway whose outer positions are marked by Robert Nozick's (1938-2002) liberalism and Michael Walzer's (born 1935) communitarianism. In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974), Nozick takes political *liberalism* to an extreme. With his doctrine of a minimal state, he responds directly to Rawls: insisting on the 'self-ownership' of the individual citizen, he affirms the rights of freedom, but rejects the welfare or social state. The state, which guarantees rights with its monopoly on the use of force, is only justified by the natural need for protection; by redistributing the

goods of its citizens, it violates their rights to freedom. According to Nozick's 'entitlement theory,' everyone has a full claim to what he or she acquires through his or her own work or through trade with others, when this is done voluntarily; acquisition, transfer and rectification are legitimate as such. Only monopolies on the distribution of essential goods are to be prohibited.

In *Strong Democracy* (1984), Benjamin Barber (1939-2017) reduces the justification of the state even further while approaching communitarianism as the other side of the spectrum. He emphasizes that the American people have built their democracy on the principles of neighborhood and the participation of all individual citizens in the course of the gradual expansion and development of the states; this makes collectivism and conformism and even any representation questionable. Instead, decisions on common concerns must be made in an ongoing, common, and public 'talk' of 'civil society,' which in reality does not follow formal norms à la Habermas: 'in reality it is precisely the absence of such norms that gives rise to politics.' This makes it all the more important to ensure that democracy is not destroyed by the market economy.

The Canadian philosopher and observant Catholic Charles Taylor (born 1931) revisits the history of modern philosophy as a whole in order to derive from it the current communitarianism in place of the liberalism of the Enlightenment. He does so by proceeding form the constitution of the modern self: Taylor no longer bases it, like Descartes, on the self-reference of thought, but with Hegel on recognition by others, embedding it with Husserl in a life-world and with Wittgenstein in forms of life (chap. 20, 21). In doing so, he can build on the multiculturalism that is well established in Canada. What matters here is the individual's own authenticity, which, however, may conflict with legal equality. According to Taylor, a sense of community and solidarity, which are strengthened by works of Christian charity, are all the more needed.

Michael Walzer (born 1935) has the sharpest profile of communitarianism, orienting it most strongly toward real conditions. He, too, wants to replace 'ideal speech' with 'real talk,' in which there may be contradictions, but which results in decisions; consensus on the basis of common reason is not to be expected. In *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (1983), Walzer argues for a 'complex equality' in justice: it takes different forms in different 'spheres' of the community, such as the mere belonging to it, which migrants do not initially share, the security and welfare made possible by the community, the money that enables an easy exchange of goods, the organization of work that

increases productivity, followed by the spheres of leisure and education; the distribution and exercise of political power are also assessed according to their own criteria. In order to understand political justice, it is therefore necessary to clearly separate these spheres from one another. Medical services for the sick, for example, are to be allocated according to their need for treatment and political offices according to the qualifications of the candidates. Even each community can represent a special sphere of justice.

Finally, in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (1982), Michael J. Sandel (born 1953) questions Rawls' thought experiment of an 'original position' from the outset: the 'veil of ignorance' presupposes an 'unencumbered self,' thus excluding the fact that people always already live in worlds from which they cannot easily detach themselves. Sandel therefore gives priority to the good that is lived in a society over a good that is constructed from principles, rights and norms. For him, reason is all the more to affirm the principle of redress, according to which a special endowment of individuals obligates them to the common good.

Amartya Sen (born 1933) takes the principle of redress and compensation beyond national borders, fighting to establish it in the global world. Originally from poor Bengal, where his family belongs to the elite, he is likewise appointed as a professor at Harvard, but retains an outside perspective on the life-world of the USA and the other highly developed countries; he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics and is highly esteemed by the UN. Together with Martha Nussbaum (born 1947, chap. 22), he once again clearly shifts the orientation on society, power and justice. On the basis of developments in recent decades, he shows that it is not so much about the distribution of income, but about the support of '*capabilities*' to generate income on one's own. If income is self-earned, satisfaction increases, even if it is lower than that of others; money is worth as much as one can do with it under one's own living conditions; *it is not equality that is decisive, but the difference to those with whom one compares oneself*. Sen and Nussbaum speak of 'effective freedoms' that concretely expand freedom of action and decision-making. Therefore, the opportunities for the development of individuals are to be improved through infrastructure measures. This relativizes Rawls' universal principle, reinforces his difference principle and supplements it with the principle of creating suitable living conditions.

While the polarization of liberalism and communitarianism in the USA has become a kind of cultural struggle that also involves education, science, religion and art, in Europe people still more or less appreciate social-democratic communitarianism. The more populist parties gain influence, social-democratic endeavors decline; the more philosophy turns to the question of a good life, which for most people means a good life in communities, the more they increase. Rawls himself has also moved closer to communitarianism over time. The argument about the liberation of individuals vs. their integration into communities is an expression of the paradox of justice itself: everyone should be treated according to the same standards, but their natural, social and cultural inequalities always should be taken into account. In principle, the paradox is undecidable. Nevertheless, it marks the leeway of political action, in which decisions must be made in the respective situation as to which principles of justice are to be applied. The starting point is the situation itself, in which a choice is made between the appropriate principles, whereby, in Rawls' sense, the alternative principles and, in Walzer's sense, the spheres of justice must always be taken into account.

In this way, fairness, i.e., justice by means of general principles for individuals in their individual situations, is possible. Sen's capability approach extends the horizon of fairness to the inhabited earth as a whole and makes it less dependent on the respective political regimes. For their part, the prospect of growing prosperity may persuade these regimes not simply to increase the incomes of their citizens, but to improve the chances of them being able to generate their income themselves. In this way, the capability approach drives people economically toward a market economy and politically toward democracy. As a result, as the debate on liberalism and communitarianism progresses, the concrete problems of the world are measured less against universal philosophical concepts than the philosophical concepts are measured against what they can contribute to solving the problems. If practice is smarter than theory, theory is to be oriented toward practice. The philosophy of orientation makes this plausible.

In its perspective, situation and orientation are always related to each other and the theoretical extremes are considered as a leeway for practice. However, the philosophy of orientation does not distinguish subject areas as spheres of justice, because they are difficult to delimit from one another and can be extended infinitely, but rather four different 'worlds of orientation' whose social horizons expand step by step, from the individual one to that of global society. Schleiermacher prepared the

distinction between worlds of orientation, but defined them differently according to his system (chap. 15). For the philosophy of orientation, these are
(1) one's individual orientation world*, in which you try to fulfill your own desires, wishes, plans and life rhythms, arranging your life as you like. Here, individual routines, values and norms develop, through which your life stabilizes; you don't need principles for that.*
(2) inter-individual or communal orientation worlds*, in which you adapt your ways of living to the conditions and needs of other people with whom you have chosen to 'share your life': family, friends, clubs and so on. Here, interindividually shared routines, values and norms develop through which the communities stabilize. To sustain the established orders, sometimes you need rules that are agreed in the respective communities.*
(3) the societal orientation world*, in which you have to adapt to the living conditions and needs of other people, whom you have not chosen yourself: classmates in schools, colleagues in companies, military comrades, members of political parties and, with increasing distance and less and less surveyable, all the members of the society in your country. Here, you have to adopt not only common routines, norms and values, but also laws that are not based on your own decision, but enforced by mighty public institutions. Norms and values become equally valid for all, principles for justifying them become abstract, power becomes manifest.*
– (4) The global orientation world*, which you share with all people on earth, most of whom you do not know personally and whose cultures are often unfamiliar and strange to you. Here, universal human rights and duties are proclaimed, but often cannot be enforced. You usually appreciate global aid in emergencies such as famines, natural disasters and wars, but you have little or no influence on the respective decisions. The impact of applying principles always is bound to concrete living conditions in the various countries.*

In our everyday life, it usually takes no effort to move back and forth between these worlds of orientation. However, you only switch between them on specific occasions. If you are happy and your friend is unhappy, you turn your attention to his hardships; if you are wealthy, but surrounded by poverty, you think about how everyone's prosperity could be improved; if one country is being invaded by another, you try to help strengthen international law. But you must have specific reasons for expanding your horizons in each case, be they moral, economic or political ones. As an individual, you usually start from your own individual orientation world when shifting to further horizons, and you return to it and its routines as soon as possible,

unless you have specific functions in the inter-individual, social or global world, e.g., permanent care for someone or a political office. In people's everyday orientation, the universal horizon is not the decisive one from the outset, as European philosophy has long assumed and many philosophers still assume today. You always weigh up the costs, material and immaterial, before you enter the broader and ultimately the global horizon. In this way, the social and universal principles of justice are always embedded in your own individual and inter-individual lifeworld. Walzer also points this out in his later work 'Nation and Universe.' As Sen and Nussbaum show, philosophical, moral, economic and political orientation are so strongly intertwined that it is questionable with what right they can be separated at all. In the concept of orientation itself, they can be plausibly integrated and assigned to one another.

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), who is appreciated to be one of the most important philosophers of the 20th century, draws the consequences from this: she does not separate philosophical, moral, economic and political orientation. She was not allowed to separate them because of the time she lived in and which she faced like hardly anyone else in her philosophy. She represents it not through an elaborated conceptual system, but through her own person. In philosophical terms, she fearlessly tackles the most burning current political problems.

She did this as a native Jew, without being a religious believer or a political Zionist. As a student of Martin Heidegger (chap. 19) on the one hand and Karl Jaspers (chap. 22) on the other, she was influenced by existential philosophy, taking responsibility for the existence into which she was 'thrown' and thus also for the continued existence of Judaism. She was arrested by the Gestapo, but was able to flee, first to France, where she worked for an escape aid organization for young Jews, then, after being interned in a French collection camp, to New York, where she lived as a publicist and continued to work for Jewish causes; at the same time, she expanded her horizons for questions of global justice. In the USA, she was able to speak freely about the Third Reich. Her predominant topics were anti-Semitism, imperialism and totalitarianism, which became increasingly murderous. It proved difficult to separate power and violence.

To Arendt, 'radical evil' appears in the 'banal' figure of Adolf Eichmann, who organized the industrial-scale mass murder of the Jews of Europe by the National Socialists over years, an educated and culture-loving man, who claimed to have acted only out of obedience to orders. Through his example, free will as an enlightened instance of deliberately and responsively deciding on good

and evil proves untenable in a frightening way. The trivial and—at the same time—horrible man, against whom Arendt cannot even harbor feelings of hatred or revenge, shows what becomes possible when one's own orientation is eliminated in favor of a 'command,' not only the command of a political party and its overpowering leader, but also of the Kantian categorical imperative, in which Eichmann claimed to believe. This points to the authoritarian character described by Adorno and Horkheimer that is not accessible to Enlightenment, but performs his official duties to the best of his ability.

Arendt strives to use philosophical categories to understand what is happening to the Jewish people and humanity in general in her time; she struggles for philosophical orientation without arriving at general and definite solutions. She gives a lot of lectures, writes many essays and books, but hesitates to integrate her strong statements into a coherent doctrine of consistent dogmas. Nor does she commit herself to a lifelong appointment, even when this is offered to her. She is a woman who does not need feminism to assert herself. Winning as a person, she is friends with many of the best of her time, but she remains controversial, even among Jews. Adorno and Arendt keep distance to each other.

Despite this, or precisely because of this, Arendt becomes a role model as someone whose personal judgment gives orientation to an entire generation. In ethics, she believes it is best to continue orienting oneself to Socrates (chap. 4), who formulated the strongest and most difficult principle of ethics, i.e., that it is better to suffer injustice than to do injustice, and followed it with his whole person without developing a theory for it. For Arendt, Socrates was courageous enough and also capable of orienting himself to himself; she recommends to her students to follow his model of self-orientation even under completely different conditions. She asks all the more about the conditions of orientation in thought and action during dark times. She introduces the concept of 'nativity' that includes not only existential 'thrownness,' but also the chance of a new beginning of orientation with every new birth.

E. 21ST CENTURY:

The Time of Deciding between Orientations

As we enter the 21st century, we experience the bipolar world order dissolving, which, despite some dangerous and horrible events, has provided a somewhat secure political orientation during the Cold War in the second half of the 20th century. After the economic and political collapse of the Soviet Union, initially the world appears to be completely free for unrestricted global trade and democratization according to Western patterns and values. Science and technology are developing at an increasingly rapid pace. The ongoing digitization of the human orientation boosts this development; it could change people's lives from the ground up. Yet, the hopeful outlook for a prosperous future of humanity is overshadowed by the environmental degradation, which is becoming increasingly apparent in many parts of the world due to natural disasters such as drought and flooding. Therefore the global economy must be reorganized at great cost, but also with new expectations for profit. Populous and economically growing nations such as China and India are pushing forward; a world order with five poles, the USA, China, India, Russia and Europe, and a precarious balance between them seems to be emerging, which is to be continuously rebalanced but can also easily collapse. In addition, international terrorism and cyber warfare are on the rise. Democracies are slipping into autocracies and dictatorships; the emergence of unaccountable rulers, increasing disruptions of global trade, the outbreak of a severe pandemic and above all the return of wars in the middle of Europe and soon afterwards in the Middle East, with a constant threat of

escalation into a globally destructive nuclear war, are creating a persistent mood of crisis. The life-threatening crises are interrelated in incalculable ways; they are able to intensify and accelerate as well as dampen each other in the shortest period of time. We have no experience of polycrises on such a global scale; we find ourselves in a worldwide hyper-critical orientation situation and have to work hard in order to develop political instruments to master it. The United Nations achieve a number of things, but are not able to create something like a coordinated and effective world government in the near future. The future, which is now the future of the globe as a whole, is more open than ever, and the need for orientation is growing all the more.

Philosophy as the universal science par excellence can respond to this situation by clarifying the conditions of the possibility of orientation itself through a philosophy of orientation. Nihilism, which lurks behind all philosophical efforts in the 20th century, is gradually moving out of focus: it has now been seen that it is possible to live with it and, first and foremost, orient oneself within it, and that it is precisely in nihilism that an orientation without ultimate certainties is required. As this overview of the courageous beginnings in the history of philosophy toward a philosophy of orientation may show, there are many ways to connect to the work done so far, whereby one is always faced with alternatives, between which you have to decide in turn without certain criteria; and Eastern philosophy has not even been considered here. Thus, the philosophy of orientation could be a philosophy for the 21st century – with possible alternatives.

A philosophy of orientation proves itself to be a new courageous beginning. For it presupposes nothing but the human need for orientation, which we all share (even with animals) and which grows with the increasing complexity of our human world. Many of the old philosophical assumptions regarding time, the given, language, consciousness, thought, knowledge, man, action, society, legality and justice have turned out to be partly obsolete and partly superfluous. In contrast, the terminology for describing the structures of human orientation such as situation, overview, leeway, choice, decision, hold, sign, routine, respect, etc., is largely available in everyday language; it itself stems from the needs of orientation, does not have to be reinvented, but only taken up by philosophy in an appropriate way and supplemented in some points.

However, philosophical orientation goes beyond everyday language. In all its varieties, it has shown its ability to deal with dimensions in thinking that transcend everyday experience and the sciences that methodically acquire their knowledge. Philosophical orientation has developed suitable concepts for the most general contexts of human life, constantly testing their plausibility, and has undergone a sharp selection of them in an evolution-like process. Philosophical orientation has identified problems that it has been able to solve, but has also asked questions for which there are no satisfying answers. It has interpreted the human world in order to understand it; it tried to understand it in order to change it; it has developed suitable concepts for both; it has related the divergent scientific disciplines to each other; it has proposed, justified and propagated values, norms and principles in ethics in order to make people better; it has explained how something successful and beautiful can be seen and created in the world; where philosophy threatened to overwhelm people, it has also proposed means of therapy; it has given people orientation in the great dimensions of living and thinking and, since Kant, has self-critically shown that what has been understood as 'reason' for millennia is one of the means of orientation among others; and with all this it has been successful and often failed as well.

Whereas for a long time, reason was supposed to find or create ultimate certainties, now, in an age of unsurveyable complexity and disorienting polycrises, the first priority is to create 'surveyable presentations' (Wittgenstein). It is the original meaning of the term 'orientation' to turn to where the sun rises (sol oriens) in order to be able to assign the other cardinal points to the east, use maps and thus find one's way (chap. 13). The distinction between cardinal points and the right-left distinction is dependent on the respective point of view of the observer, which must first be determined, but can also be changed; the individual observer is thus always the variable starting point of orientation to which the others in turn have to orient themselves. This mutual orientation precedes everything else in everyday life and also in all scientific and philosophical cognition and action. In this sense, orientation is both primordial and preliminary and it must be so: in this way, it keeps open the ability to deal with new situations that arise, new footholds and new points of view that emerge and can make the situation appear completely different. As a result, orientation always is and has to be restless, only reassuring itself with plausibilities for some time, which it holds on to whithout being able to definitely justify them (chap. 21).

This is precisely what has entered the stage in the philosophy of science with the turn to the 20th century. The philosophy of science begins to understand itself historically and engages with the entire complexity of history in which it situates itself as well. Thomas S. Kuhn has been decisive in this; Karin Knorr Cetina, Lorraine Daston and, most recently, Rahel Jaeggi have taken his approach further into the present.

25. Alternative Orientations to Objectivity, Rules and Progress in Science and History: Karin Knorr Cetina, Lorraine Daston and Rahel Jaeggi

The historian of science Thomas S. Kuhn (1922-1996) established the term '*paradigm shift*' in his 1969 work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. He applied it to examples of physics, in particular Copernicus' shift from the geocentric to the heliocentric model of astronomy and that from Newtonian mechanics to relativistic physics and quantum physics; over time, the concept of the paradigm is also used for fundamental cultural reorientations. For Kuhn, a paradigm is a certain model of science that becomes 'normal' over time, when its topics and methods are no longer questioned but become self-evident. Then, only that which happens within its framework is considered scientific; as Quine already observed (chap. 21), one sticks to this framework for as long as possible. However, when fundamentally new results of the respective science can no longer be integrated into the frame, its reorientation becomes necessary, which can also affect the basic concepts. In the case of relativistic and quantum physics, this includes concepts of space, time, energy, mass, measurement and continuity. Kuhn calls such a radical change 'revolutionary.'

Such paradigms do not simply replace each other by the falsification of certain theories, as Karl Popper (1902-1994) envisions it in his 1934 work *Logic of Scientific Discovery*. The 'normal' paradigm is not given up without further ado, but the new and the old one stand side by side as alternatives for a while, and the scientists individually decide in favor of one of them. The more 'revolutionary' the new paradigm is, the less it is adopted through argumentative persuasion and the more 'biologically' through the generational change of researchers; younger scientists are more likely to follow the new paradigm. This severely challenges

the assumption that there are a common rationality and equally convincing arguments even in the natural sciences; not even Albert Einstein was convinced of the consequences of quantum physics which are beyond doubt today. Here, too, we observe fixed orientations that resist innovation. Historians of science can affirm this more easily than theorists of science: with Kuhn, there is also a paradigm shift from the theory of science, whose main problem is how truth comes about in a science, to the history of science, which examines how changing conceptions or formations of 'truth' come about.

The innovative approaches I have selected for this presentation of 'courageous beginnings' in philosophy are all revolutionary in Kuhn's sense; they create new paradigms of philosophical thought. They do not constitute a progress that continually leads to a certain goal, as Hegel thought (chap. 15), which would be the truth of philosophy as such. Instead, they create a discontinuous history full of shifts between alternatives: not only the solutions change, but also the problems. Not only can none of them be deduced from the other, but according to Kuhn none of them is 'commensurable' with the other. For it is precisely the basic concepts and thus the standards of comparison that change. In the sense of Wittgenstein's metaphor of fibers in threads (chap. 21), we are dealing with structures of shifting continuities. This only can be grasped by the conception of changing orientations.

The sociologist of science Karin Knorr Cetina (born 1944) opens a new chapter here. She considers herself an 'ethnographer' of science, describing different '*epistemic cultures*' within the sciences themselves. She illustrates them by the alternative examples of high-energy physics and molecular biology. Dispensing with the 'view from above,' i.e., a seemingly uninvolved and impartial theoretical standpoint, she compares differences, drawing on the French philosophy of difference (chap. 20). She stays for years with the scientists observing their word; in the course of this, she resolutely de-idealizes the research processes just in leading scientific disciplines by showing what really happens. In her first pioneering 1981 work *The Manufacture of Knowledge*, Knorr Cetina describes scientific knowledge as the result of a complex process that is not only methodical, but also economic, institutional, social and personal, which only in the end is presented for publication as if it had arisen from 'pure' science. There is some *laboratory opportunism*: scientific decisions and results also depend on what opportunities are available in the form of laboratory equipment, funding, career opportunities for researchers, etc. For sure, people strive to explore the

'truth,' but they are also guided by such external conditions. In this way, specific *Epistemic Cultures* are emerging, as Knorr Cetina titles her second major 1999 work. Even within scientific paradigms in the sense of fixed models of scientific research, the 'cognitive and procedural orientations' vary and produce different scientific results. Knorr Cetina describes the *leeways of orientation in science.*

She speaks of 'epistemic cultures' instead of scientific 'disciplines,' because the standards of scientific research are often unintentionally familiarized and become guiding as mere routines; according to Knorr Cetina, cultures are *patterns of established routines*. In her descriptions based on her own observations and interviews over many years, 'landscapes—or markets—of independent epistemic monopolies' appear which 'produce vastly different products.' The most interesting case here is high-energy physics, which investigates the elementary processes of nature and is only possible through extremely expensive large-scale laboratories including the particle accelerator *Large Hadron Collider* near Geneva with its tunnel of approximately 17 miles. Many thousands of scientists from over hundred countries around the world are involved in this project. Because it is economically so costly and scientifically so complex, the work has to be differentiated in parts that the participants can hardly overview, sometimes no longer being acquainted with each other. Groups of scientists divide into those who provide theories, those who work experimentally on the collider itself, those who evaluate the results on mainframe computers and so on. The groups exchange ideas and results with each other, but also compete with each other for money and reputation. The ways of interaction and communication differ significantly. In order to be productive, the groups have to focus on their own areas; in terms of Luhmann's sociological systems theory, observation systems arise which are environments for each other, interacting like 'structurally coupled systems' (chap. 24). Within them, the individual researchers are more or less committed, successful and renowned. For in the published results, their specific performance is largely disregarded, which can create free-rider effects for some and demotivate others.

Knorr Cetina also describes how *the scientific practices form the objects and subjects of scientific research*. In high-energy physics, due to its highly complex apparatus, the 'objects,' i.e., the subatomic particles, can no longer be observed directly; they become, in the sense of Peirce (chap. 18), 'object images': 'These phantasmic, historical, constantly changing occurrences can be established only indirectly, by the footprints they leave when they fly through different pieces of

equipment.' What the objects consist of depends on interpretative measurements and calculations: they only appear as 'traces' in complex 'detectors,' which can make the signals unclear. The complex measurements enable, but also compromise the identification of the objects. It proves very difficult to isolate them from their 'background' whose 'noise' drowns them out. In order to penetrate this noise, thresholds and filters must be deliberately installed, as unconsciously between orientation worlds; through this threshold-setting process 'only some events in numerous interactions are retained and selected out of the detector.' There are series of such selection processes: scientists use the vocabulary of 'killing' and 'suppression.' 'Ghosts' appear everywhere: untenable but disturbing particle identifications, 'fake tracks of particles misinterpreted as real tracks.' In order to go ahead, you have to intentionally include so-called 'Monte Carlo calculations,' which produce false results, but nevertheless help to find your way; they function as a kind of physical thought experiment that can help to uncover misleading structures.

Knorr Cetina wants to 'see through the thick growth of experimental manipulations in the hope of finding the *cultural switchboard* that sets the direction of the project': in our language, she tries to see at what point and in what way orientation decisions are made for the scientific project as a whole. To her, this can only happen in a 'kaleidoscopic' way; she 'looks at conjunctions of activities by means of a succession of shifts in focus.' She also observes the function of 'strong leaders,' who have authority and power, but a limited one, because they are even more dependent on the cooperation with others than in politics (chap. 24). The seemingly objective order is 'overhauled' by the social order of the researchers; the social order itself turns into an epistemic device: 'Laboratory processes align natural orders with social orders by creating reconfigured, workable objects in relation to agents of a given time and place.'

The subjects are likewise reconfigured in the process. The scientists 'switch, for large stretches of the experiment, from the analysis of objects to the analysis of the self.' Knorr Cetina here draws on Foucault's concept of 'care of the self.' She illustrates the *transformation of the scientific subject* with the comparatively simple conditions in medicine. In the transition from 'bedside medicine' to the 'clinic,' sick people in their domestic environment are transformed from partners of the (most single) doctor into objects of medical teams, and the clinical doctors orient themselves less to the patients than to the working

conditions of the team and their division of labor; in the clinic, they become 'bodily measurement devices.'

The result is no longer a comprehensive 'truth,' but rather scattered 'truth effects' at certain points of the research process. Knorr Cetina calls this 'liminal' or 'negative' knowledge, which is knowledge of the limits of knowledge in specific cases. It reveals the *uncertainties that surround positive knowledge*. Blind spots and gaps are illuminated, the acceptance of every insight is to be 'calculated.' In experimental high-energy physics, both theories and experience resemble occasional touchstones that throw the system back on itself, and 'success' depends on how the system interacts with itself. The data are 'firmly embedded in a web of anticipation, simulation and recalculation.' The outcome is 'a mosaic of working bits and pieces, including human interfaces and human function devices'; it is 'a mosaic that remains forever incomplete, precarious, and liable to fall apart in certain corners and segments.' It is more and more *routines* that carry and guide the experiment: 'An experiment transforms itself "in midflight," one might say, as it proceeds through the stages of detector building, software engineering and physics analyzing; and as it transforms itself it poses ever new tasks of routinization and automation. It is based on many principles and layers of foundation, which increase rather than decrease the complexity of its thriving and throbbing dynamics.' One must rely on *trust* in one's own work and in cooperation, but can never completely rely on 'whose work can one build upon, whose results are "believable," and who does one wish to "cooperate with," and, alternatively, who does one wish to avoid.' 'Confidence pathways and gossip circles' can become crucial.

Lorraine Daston (born 1951) and Peter Galison (born 1955), both historians of science, follow on from this (without referring to Knorr Cetina). In their 2007 work on *Objectivity*, they find in what is called 'objectivity' less well-defined 'meanings' of the term than 'practices' that have come about historically as 'gestures, techniques, habits, and temperament ingrained by training and daily repetition.' Objectivity is looked for less as a kind of truth than in order to exclude errors in everyday and scientific research, which means: to erase situational conditions and the researching people's personal traces in order to arrive at tenable generalizations. This is the concrete sense of Kant's de-subjectivization of the empirical subject (like impartialiy in politics; chap. 24; for Kant, too,

objectivity is not a property of nature whose truth remains unknown even to the transcendental subject, but the property of scientific constructions (chap. 12).

Daston and Galison start where the state of objective knowledge is presented in a surveyable way: with atlases as compilations of illustrated overviews. The images in such atlases are supposed to convey the strongest *impression of objectivity*. But they are adjusted and manipulated: 'natural' objects like plants, birds and bones are standardized through drawings which are to make them well observable, easily comparable and generalizable; they depict not real, but 'working objects.' By reducing the real details to general 'essentials' they are supposed to reflect the 'truth of nature.' Later, in order to eliminate such manipulations, the 'mechanical objectivity' of photography is preferred. However, since photographical views can also be selected and manipulated, finally 'trained judgment' becomes the criterion of objectivity: that is the competence to assess images in view of their real contents even on modern screens. Not everyone's judgment is trained: there is once again a competition between individuals at play.

This brings the rules of communication and the social orders they create onto the scene. In her 2022 work *Rules: A Short History of What We Live By*, Daston expands the focus to rules beyond science and asks again about their history. Rules in general enable repeatability and, the more they are tightened, increasing accuracy. They are 'sturdy guard rails that keep our lives on track' and ensure common orientations. The order they create is 'an island of stability and predictability in a tumultuous world.' They are framed by the 'extremes of certainty and chance, generality and specificity, perfect order and utter chaos.' In 'explosions of uncertainty' they can 'temporarily lose their hold.' They stabilize orientations for a time, and this also applies to general concepts (chap. 12).

Etymologically and historically, 'rule' is initially 'model,' in Greek *parádeigma*. If the paradigm is taken as a standard, it becomes Greek *kanóon*, which is cane, ruler, straightedge or norm. *Kanóon* is rendered *regula* in Latin; from *regula* comes 'rule.' Rules are used as practical instructions in crafts, arts and for behavior in all kinds of communities. So there is a great variety of sets of rules like manuals, monastery and military rules, legal compendia and so on. However, there is *no rule for the formulation of rules*, as Daston points out with reference to the later Wittgenstein (chap. 21). For rules must always leave leeway in order to be applicable to specific situations: 'Rules rally judgment because their application must bridge universals and particulars.' In court rulings and

medical diagnoses, for example, it is in question which rule must be applied in a specific case. So rules alone are not sufficient; they are not autonomous, not valid straight away. You can only orient yourself to them and do so by always reserving leeway in relation to them. According to Daston, this requires in Latin *discretio*, which originally means 'discernment' or 'judgment,' the capability to distinguish matters in specific situations in a suitable way.

Daston uses the *regula* of St. Benedict, which became the model for many medieval monasteries, to show in detail how many exceptions such a rule reserves for the abbot with his *discretio*. The more situations are to be mastered and exceptions to be mentioned, the 'thicker' the rule grows. In contrast, the modern natural sciences try to arrive at the 'thinnest' possible *regula*, which were a rule without exceptions: the thinnest ones are mathematical algorithms. Natural science becomes mathematical because it finds the thinnest and clearest rules in mathematics. Mathematical algorithms themselves in turn primarily emerge as practices in state administration and astronomy. In order to generate logarithmic tables that shorten computation, large-scale projects, which afford a lot of people and division of labor, are created over time; later this is left to calculating machines when you can rely on them in the second half of the 20th century. Rules align, accelerate, and make common approaches more effective – unless there are exceptions. As Daston shows in detail, the distinction between 'thick' and 'thin' rules intersects with the distinction between 'high' and 'low' ones. Rules are ranked: on the highest level are the simple and universal 'laws' like the 'Divine Law,' the 'laws of nature' and the 'natural rights,' on the lowest level are the '*regulations*' of everyday life. The latter become increasingly detailed, are only partly explicit and only partly enforced. To Daston, they are successful in the long run only if they are internalized as norms which continue to be valid even if they are *not* followed. So their range is limited. The effective validity of regulations depends on their surveyability and enforceability.

The persistent problem is the exceptions: according to the Holy Bible God himself makes a first exception from his command not to kill, when he commands Abraham to ritually sacrifice his son, later when Moses and Joshua are instructed to exterminate the Amalekites by war and so on. Since human beings can never foresee all cases of applying a rule, their regulations must be *flexible* and need people able to flexibly deal with them, in bureaucracies and courts as well as in religious communities; in everyday life this happens anyway. Therefore, regulations are not only made thicker or thinner and ranked

differently, but also handled more loosely or rigidly. Daston's conclusion is that rules do not simply make the world safer—they do—but in turn a safe world is necessary for especially applying thin rules. In our language, this means that thin rules must be embedded in routines. In the end, the incorporation of rules makes them 'superfluous': they become self-evident and are only noticed when they are violated. You then follow them, as Wittgenstein puts it in his *Philosophical Investigations* (§ 219), 'blindly.'

Rules as routines can also change over time, more or less unnoticed. According to Daston, the oldest and non-formalized 'rules,' the personal paradigms, have proven to be the most pliable: with them it is clear from the outset that you cannot simply repeat them, but only orient yourself to them under your own conditions and that they can change over time. Lorraine Daston's point is that 'discretion, judgment, and reasoning by analogy' that are essential to human orientation are to be rendered superfluous by ever thinner and clearer rules. Yet, in fact this discretion, judgment and reasoning by analogy is increasingly necessary for designing and applying rules. This also applies to digitization, which is based on 'thin' algorithms throughout.

Is *progress* still conceivable under such conditions of multiply networked and complexly regulated scientific and social cultures? According to Rahel Jaeggi (born 1967) it is, but 'progress' must also be rethought. Jaeggi is a granddaughter of the Frankfurt School, which has internalized Hegelian and Marxian progress. However in face of the 20th century's horrible events Adorno deeply doubts progress. He is Jaeggi's guide; even the title of her 2023 work *Fortschritt und Regression* (*Progress and Regression*) goes back to him. She courageously orients her thinking of progress to orientation itself: her goal is 'practical orientation.' She argues: According to Hegel and Marx progress necessarily goes on; they consider it a 'subject of action' that 'irresistibly' drives history forward to the better; it has a clear goal and, even in its dialectical way, advances linearly to the predefined end. Yet, 'progress' is a 'figure of interpretation' which may differently be applied to 'improvements' in economic, scientific, technical, industrial, social, artistic and cultural developments; finding progress toward a given goal motivates creating further progress. This has been proven in the great emancipation movements since the 18th century, the emancipation first of citizens, then of Jews, workers, women, people of color, not-heterosexual people and other discriminated groups; a shining example to this day is the

liberation of slaves. However, economic, scientific, technical and industrial progress has also become increasingly dubious in the 20th century, as it has obviously caused serious ecological damage and permanent destruction of the natural environment.

In modernity, it is difficult to get by without the interpretative figure of progress; without it, stagnation, decay or regression are perceived. Jaeggi therefore approaches progress less as progress toward a good than away from a bad. Progress then happens from case to case and leads in different directions. To Jaeggi, we must therefore stop assuming the continuity of progress and instead focus on 'crisis situations' that force us to reorient ourselves: crisis situations generate 'reflexivity that opens up new options for action.' Habermas' discourse theory (chap. 24), which focuses on progress toward the fulfillment of its norms, does not help here: in Jaeggi's 'crisis-theoretical-pragmatist model,' societies do not have a goal toward which they strive, but rather solve problems on a case-by-case basis. You therefore have to engage with the 'dynamics of change' of a certain society itself and observe how 'fittings' (*Passungen*) or discrepancies arise between current 'social practices' and 'moral views' at a time, leading to cooperation or conflict. With her 'theory of crisis-driven social change as a process of learning and experience,' Jaeggi explicitly aligns herself to Durkheim and Dewey instead of Habermas (chap. 24). The solution to the problem of progress today is then: *what appears to be a solution to a crisis is considered progress, what worsens it is considered regression*. To Jaeggi, regressions emerge from 'blockades of experience,' i.e., the inability to perceive the change of circumstances in a certain time or the inability to reorient oneself in a changing situation.

Thus there is progress, but not continuous progress; there is change, but also a 'change of change'; goals are pursued, but not toward a single predetermined goal. Morals change as well; assuming a fixed morality is an 'ideology': 'The new comes because the old no longer works.' Everything ultimately depends on the 'forms of life.' They are 'inert ensembles of practices' that change with 'mismatches.' 'Crisis-induced reflexivity' can bring about progress in one respect and regression in another one. Progress also proceeds in *structures of shifting continuities*.

The philosophy of orientation finds new confirmation in the latest new beginnings in the philosophy of science that integrate its points of view and its modes of thinking, still without using 'orientation' as their founding concept. In Karin Knorr Cetina's

description of the research processes in the significant field of high-energy physics, which investigates the elementary processes of nature, the description of everyday orientation processes return in a surprising way. The strong analogy calls into question the sharp distinction between science and everyday life. They both prove to be modes of orientation. This involves a great philosophical reorientation: science is no longer the measure of everyday orientation processes, but a part of them; it is encompassed by them and cannot be understood without them. The systems of science may colonize the human lifeworld according to Habermas (chap. 24), but scientists themselves operate in a lifeworld that is not fundamentally different from the everyday world.

Lorraine Daston carries on the de-idealization and re-orientation of science: scientific objectivity founded on rules emerges from practices for managing complex situations in everdaylife orientation. Even in research processes you have to leave large leeways in applying rules and need personal judgment in order to find out methods and measurements suitable for specific situations. Judgment is also needed to identify exceptions from the rule and do justice to them; exceptions from the rule may necessitate reorientations of the whole. There are no definitive standards, neither for formulating nor for applying rules: rules are also used for preliminary orientation, and people only orient themselves to them maintaining their distance from them. What is ultimately crucial is whether rules help to manage situations, and since situations can even be different under laboratory conditions, the rules must be flexible and handled flexibly. Mathematical algorithms must also be constantly developed further in order to remain useful for the digitization of communication. After all, rules are most effective when embedded in routines. This is the solution to the famous problem of how to follow rules 'blindly' according to the late Wittgenstein: we mostly act according to routines that make further reflection on rules superfluous; in this sense you follow them blindly. According to the philosophy of orientation, it is routines in which human orientation mostly finds its reliable hold.

According to Rahel Jaeggi, this does not rule out progress, but progress must be rethought: no longer as a steady progress toward a desired good goal, but only as an improvement of manifestly bad things in a state of crisis. For as controversial as it is to define what the good in the shape of truth, freedom, justice, prosperity, health etc. positively means and which paths lead to them, it is usually easy and clear to identify lies, oppression, injustice, misery, illness etc. (chap. 23): whatever liberates from something manifestly negative is understood as a progress. You then have to decide on a case-by-case basis what progress and regression consists of and

reorient yourself. This also applies to scientific rationality and objectivity which develops over time, as can be seen in Knorr Cetina and Daston, whom Jaeggi in turn does not refer to. Evolutions of social life and scientific research are always open to multifarious interpretation; thus even fascism in Italy and Germany conveyed traits of modernization. If, to Jaeggi, regression entails a 'blockade of experience' and a blockade of experience consists in the inability of reorienting yourself, all is up to the skills of orientation. If you have learned to reorient yourself in a crisis, you can be confident to be able to manage further crises, including polycrises. You will make progress in orientation itself.

Conclusion:

Deciding between Orientations without an Alternative?

In the current (2024) political, economic, ecological and social crises we may keep this confidence that we will make progress in orientation itself which means that our orientation skills will grow and new reorientation routines will develop. We have learned that there are always alternatives for and against which we must and can decide and about which we can argue, and after a century in which nihilism has become the normal state of affairs, we have learned that we cannot expect any ultimate certainties.

The ability and readiness to undergo fundamental reorientations in philosophy has been a hallmark of great philosophers. For a long time, it was assumed that philosophical reorientations were simply undertaken on the basis of new insights. For Nietzsche, they themselves became a main subject of his philosophizing under the heading of 'revaluation of all values.' In the 20th century, Wittgenstein and Heidegger, who both achieved world fame with their early philosophies, fundamentally reoriented themselves after decades of further reflection, replacing the former plausibilities with new ones. They realized that their early approaches were based on assumptions that no longer seemed tenable to them. They deliberately moved from assumed certainties to provisional orientations that include fundamental uncertainties and leave room for alternatives.

Today, there no longer seems to be an alternative to deciding between alternatives. It has become common practice to speak of 'positions' under the name of '-isms,' such as rationalism and empiricism, idealism and materialism, criticism and positivism, cognitivism and emotivism and so on. They have since multiplied ad infinitum; it has become routine to name them. Subsuming philosophies under such -isms simplifies the orientation about alternative philosophies; it is a kind of abbreviating the orientation in the wide field of philosophizing itself. In this way, philosophies are pinned down to certain footholds which they hold on to, e.g., reason or experience; the rest of the respective philosophies is assigned to them. Then, one philosopher also has to represent what others says under the label of the same -ism. The '-isms' are in turn assigned to 'camps,' which are assumed to fight against each other; in them, the philosophers themselves become nameless fighters for a common,

but always one-sided cause. So Kant's simile of philosophy as a 'battlefield of endless controversy' (chap. 11) is renewed.

In addition, this 'positionalism' is often undertaken with the intent to denunciation. Positioning is a means not only of briefly identifying other philosophies and putting them up for discussion, but also of eliminating them from one's own scope of philosophizing. One wants nothing to do with this or that -ism; one excludes it in order to make one's own overview and orientation easier. There is also self-positioning: from the outset, authors connect to an -ism and in order to fight together with its camp. This makes it easy for others to identify them and in turn join them or not. But this self-positioning is also a 'blockade,' as Jaeggi calls it, to further orientation: by committing oneself to a position or a camp, one continues to stay on one side of the respective distinction and stops one's own orientation process.

I have made as little use as possible of such -isms here and instead focused on the individual philosophers. 'Nihilism,' which has often been mentioned, is not meant as a philosophical position, but as a fact; 'relativism' and 'absolutism' are positioned against it as alternatives. The philosophy of orientation is not designed as such an -ism: instead, it is to make clear how one-sided positionings come about at all and how untenable they are in view of the fact that alternatives are always available. It may show how different philosophies in the past and present refer to different structures of human orientation. It creates a map showing how paths can be found between them. If we assume that philosophies that are still plausible today on the basis of their fearless findings are 'reasonable' in the sense of the philosophy of orientation (chap. 13, 24), then we may suppose that their representatives, were they alive today, would be able communicate with each other and accept each other without splitting into hostile camps. Since human orientation always leaves leeway for alternatives and the philosophy of orientation can clarify the practice of operating with leeways, it also enables exchange and understanding among different philosophies without presupposing more than the ability to orient oneself in changing situations.

In this way, the philosophy of orientation becomes a kind of meta-philosophy which in turn leaves leeway for alternative meta-philosophies. It appreciates all philosophies which help to explore the structures of human orientation and may be 'courageous beginnings' to a further development of philosophy.

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