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PHILOSOPHY AS A LITERARY GENRE EXEMPLIFIED MAINLY ON HEIDEGGER

*Man, in the analytical finitude, is a strange
empirico-transcendental doublet.*

Michel Foucault, The Order of Things

I – Once upon a time in his famous Theses 11 on Feuerbach, Marx wrote, that philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world, and it is now up to us to change it.

The first part of the thesis describes – in my view – exactly the specificity of philosophy as a literary genre.

Philosophy, at least traditional philosophy regards, indeed, world-interpretation as its proper mission. Better to say, philosophers have always aspired to world-interpretation. Philosophy resembles in one respect all other literary genres. Once it exists, that is, once it is embodied in at least a few works of philosophy, everyone with philosophical aspiration needs to enter the same kind of world description, even if no two philosophers will do it in the same way. Every new work of philosophy modifies the genre without changing it.

What characterizes philosophy as a literary genre? First, that it is literature. Literature written in prose. There are certainly exceptions, like Lucretius, who wrote his work in verse. Yet, disregarding exceptions, philosophy, at least since Aristotle, belongs to the genre of erudite prose.

One could object, that philosophy develops in dialogues, in discussions between master and his disciples. That it is an oral genre, similarly to the epos, the folktale and the joke, although not entirely, for the philosophical situation is not that of one teller confronted with all the listeners, but a community of men, who enter into dialogue with one another. There is some truth in the objection, yet it is still not convincing. Then even if philosophy develops in dialogues, those dialogues (from Aristotle onwards) are based on a written text or few texts, read and interpreted. A new, an initiating world interpretation relies heavily, on the acknowledged as also on the rejected texts. Philosophy has anyhow an intimate relations to the ancestors, all embodied in texts. It is the only literary genre to which also included its own history. And this has always been so, not just only since the emergence of the so called history of philosophy in the XIX century.

One could also object that philosophy does not interpret the world but explains it, since the specificity of the philosophic genre is demonstration, argumentation. Analytical philosophers and not just they point at argumentation as the *differentia specifica* of philosophy. Of course, they know too, that not only philosophers employ argumentation but so do the actors of a drama and also we all in our everyday life. Thus they specify, that convincing argument

is the essence of philosophy. Yet, convincing whom? An argument which is convincing for a Platonist is unconvincing for an Aristotelian.

To define the characteristic of the philosophical genre by pointing at the convincing argument is not wrong and misleading only for the reason, that whether an argument is convincing or unconvincing depends on the addressee of the argument, but also for a deeper reason. It presupposes namely that a philosophy can be falsified by good arguments. One could say, that perhaps it can be, but this does hurt a philosophy at all. Has it hurt Plato that Aristotle has refuted it with good arguments, or has it hurt Spinoza that Leibniz refuted him, or Leibniz that Kant refuted him, or Kant that Hegel falsified him, all of them with good arguments? Most modern philosophers, among them also Heidegger, have not even bothered to refute the arguments of others, they simply stepped beside them. They rather tried to tell us to turn away from them and turn towards were namely aware towards someone or something else. The later Heidegger invites his readers to turn away from metaphysical thinking, to overcome it (*überwinden*) and turn rather towards “originary” thinking (*ursprüngliches Denken*).

The argumentative “falsification” of a philosophy turns out to be impossible also for the reason that philosophical thoughts and formulations can be understood and interpreted only in the very context where they appear. Here is for example the famous “Being towards death” within the context of *Being and Time*.

When Heidegger says that no one can replace us in our death, we could easily retort, that this is not something specific, since no one can replace us in our love making either. And that this has been also known by the Greeks, for example in the histories of Alcestis and Amphitryon. Only that Heidegger does not use the impossibility of replacing me in my death as an argument, only as the illumination of an everyday experience of philosophical significance.

He says also, that we buy death by being born, but this necessary connection could also have been known by us without his presentation. Here is for example the story of rabbi Hillel. Once a young man visited him and asked what he should do to live a pious life. The rabbi answered that he should ask for the forgiveness of his sins before his death. But when the young man asks how should he know when his death will occur, the rabbi answered that it can occur every minute of his life. But Heidegger offers a philosophical illumination on an old wisdom.

But from this point the boat of Heidegger’s story enters deep waters. On traditional philosophical waters, into the turmoil of totality. Only in death do we attain totality.

If one accompanies Heidegger in his travels around *Being and Time*, this solution sounds not just sensible but also entirely convincing. It is convincing. It fits well into the composition of the book, into the before and the after. And since it is convincing, they will also accept the accompanying conception that whoever forgets about his own death as only others were dying, lives an inauthentic life.

Let us take, for example a follower of Freud, who will accept the proposition that there is no time in the unconscious, only in repression and in the repression and the return of the repressed. If there is no time in the unconscious then the fear of death if repressed is expressed as non-believing in our own death. We know it, but we do not believe. If this is the case, the non believing in our own death is not inauthentic, but belongs to the human condition (*Dasein*).

I could also refer to another, equally significant passage of the same work. Heidegger

speaks here about the call of conscience. Conscience calls us out from our everydayness, from the Fall into the mere “*das Man*”. Conscience calls, but does not tell anything. Hans Jonas draws from this the conclusion, that Heidegger has not ethics at all. Taking Jonas’s ethics of responsibility, this statement is true. There is no place in *Being and Time* for an ethics of responsibility, but from this does not follow that Heidegger has no ethics at all. The above mentioned passage expresses clearly the conception of a merely formal ethics of personality. This ethics cannot be refuted, yet one can turn away from it. Jonas suggests the later, although he believes to have presented a refutation.

So much about the irrefutability of philosophies and about the doctrine that the *differentia specifica* of philosophy as a literary genre as convincing argumentation.

The followers of Hannah Arendt suggests – in opposition to the former presented view – that philosophy has nothing to do with argumentation, yet characterized by pure thinking. According to Arendt Socrates never argued, a view totally unconvincing, if based on Plato’s presentation of his master. (In the metaphor by Heidegger Socrates stood in the draft of *Being*). To this Arendt adds, that philosophy after Socrates, under the weight of metaphysics, could not remain true to “pure” thinking. The statement sounds funny, for “pure” belongs exactly to the basic words of metaphysics. “Pure” means a priori, not based on experience, sensation, perception, prior knowledge. True, philosophy which invented the ground word “pure” has never been pure in the sense of purity created by itself. Hegel’s bon mot, that philosophy expresses its own time in thoughts puts an end to the adoration of “purity”, yet does not annul the priority of thinking as against all kinds of argumentation.

Let me return to the beginning. I said that philosophy is a literary genre characterized by the ambition of world description, world interpretation. Yet, what do I mean by “world” and what by “interpretation”?

The world, the philosopher’s own world, can be imagined as a building, a fictitious space including the questions raised by the ancestors to which the philosophers presents his answers. The questions can be latent, yet they are sometimes formulated quite openly. This can be said also about philosophies which replaced the fictitious space by fictitious time. From Hegel to Heidegger. Some readers are disturbed by the catechism-like style of many of Heidegger’s works. He asks questions from himself he immediately also answers. The resemblance to catechism is but formal. Surely, Heidegger too ask questions to himself the answers to which he already knows, like in the case of catechism. Yet one is he answers is that the questions cannot be answered, and if he gives an answer, it is just his own. He makes thus explicit the secret of philosophy, namely to ask only question to which the answer has been already present before the question raised within the idiosyncratic world of a particular philosophy.

The world of philosophy traditionally embraces also the description and interpretation of the cosmic order, offering answers to the question formulated by Leibniz “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Within this also the question concerning human destiny. And the one concerning knowledge, “how do we know what we know, how do we know that what we know is true?”.

I repeat that all philosophies have their own world. With Hegel, however, the spatial organization of the philosopher’s world, the hierarchical one (climbing the ladder from down to up) where time had no place, came to a halt or an end (Augustine was a great exception,

since he was the combined traditional metaphysic with the *Book of Creation* of the *Bible*).

The spatial construction was demanded by the ambition to present the Eternal as embodied in the philosophical world. When Hegel transformed metaphysic from a spatial into a temporal construction, he opened the way to the destruction of metaphysics altogether. This is the meaning of the slogan of “end of philosophy”. When Marx or Kierkegaard spoke about philosophy they were always thinking on Hegel. The so called decomposition of the hegelian philosophy turned out to be the first stage of the destruction of metaphysics.

World interpretation in prose is thus the general characteristic of philosophies.

But within this general frame many things are possible. Although ceased to dialogues play a major role after Aristotle, there are still philosophical works from Bruno to Leibniz written in dialogues. There is also the subgenre of aphorism within the genre, there is, more than ever, narrative philosophy, and, of course, there also philosophical works centering around arguments and problem solving. The borders of the genre are elastic, but they exist. To stay within the scope of literary genres. A novel is not a work of philosophy, neither is a drama. Not even if the reader finds in them the expression of the wisest philosophical ideas. And a work philosophy is not a novel or a poem, because it is beautifully written.

Yet why not? One could surely say, that also a novel is world description or world interpretation?

Yet, philosophy, as a special kind of world description, interpretation has its own personae and its own grammar.

Traditionally, we call these personae “categories”. Heidegger called them ground words. Traditionally, the grammar is termed by “method” and “system”. Before Hegel “system” and “method” had to fit entirely together. And, at the end, in the final chapter of his *Science of Logic* Hegel also bets on the absolute unity (as Heidegger remarks, the absoluteness of the absolute is presupposed).

It is not entirely without interest from which particular language a philosopher distills its main characters. Heidegger is right when he declares that the Latin translation of the main Greek ground words have changed the coloring and the shades of their original meaning. This happens also, of course, if they are translated into German or French. These possible misunderstanding want some philosophers avoid when they introduce their characters with a nominal definition to explicate the role they are going to play in their world theater. Like Spinoza begins his *Ethics*: «By *causa sui* I understand [...]».

Talking about post metaphysical philosophy Foucault reminds one should resist that it is not philosophy, but philosophical language which is in the state of crisis. And this indeed true both about the ground words and the grammar. As far as grammar is concerned its two constituents, system and method get torn apart. In case of the ground words the situation is more complicated, as in Heidegger, my test case, to which I presently return. To this I would add, that it is very difficult to resist the temptation of system building and the more significant the philosopher the less will he be able to resist (Wittgenstein between the two kinds, the early Heidegger, Foucault). Needless to say, I don't see this as a failure. Why should one resist all temptations?

Let me return, for the last time, to Marx's 11 thesis on Feuerbach. The first part of the thesis (philosophers hitherto only interpreted the world) I already added, that they continue to do it, for this is the specificity of philosophy. In post metaphysical philosophy, however,

interpretation does not mean understanding in terms of knowledge. Heidegger, for example, distinguishes two kinds of understanding. Understanding as meaning rendering and understanding “as I understand it” (*Auslegung*). The difference between the two kinds of understanding can be easily exemplified by the possibility of impossibility of cumulation. The first kind of understanding is not cumulative, the second is cumulative for I can understand, as we can understand something more and more, better and better. Yet, may I ask, can the first kind of understanding, the always changing and new interpretation not cumulate through the experience in the very Self of the thinker? In the Self experience yes, but in the world description not.

And what about the second part of the contested sentence? Is it only now that philosophy is up to change the world or has it been always the case? Let me return again to Foucault. In every man created world different powers are in action. These powers operate in a force field, or several force fields. Every objectivation, every institution operates in one or the other force field. All of them exercises power. This is as true about philosophy, as about arts. How much force power philosophy mobilizes in a force field depends among others also on the force field in which it operates. If Socrates had not been a power he would not have been killed.

There are some important differences between the role of arts and of philosophy in a given force field. Some branches of arts, for example, architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry are used as excellent tools for the glorification and immortalization of kings, emperors, dictators, noblemen, men of wealth. Philosophy plays rarely, if at all such a role, even if philosophers as persons may do. The effect of philosophy is mostly subversive, even if the philosophers has no subversive intentions, although they frequently have. It is subversive already by questioning and testing the truth, justice or relevance, reasonableness of venerated customs, and especially opinions which were generally regarded unquestionably true in his times.

Indeed, philosophers often contributed to the change of their world while using their power in the force field. Not the total recipients of a philosophy, but their partial recipients, who, if you like, distort the message, function as mediators within the force field. The radical philosophers of the XIX century, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, contributed grossly to the change of our world through the constant push of their power – mediated by partial and sometimes ideological recipients – in the force fields of the XX century.

II – I would return now in more concrete terms to the question of the modern crisis of the philosophical language. After Hegel, philosophers tried to replace their traditional categories with new, sometimes idiosyncratic ground words. Hegel was in fact the first to try this, in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, but he gave up the experience later in his *Logic* and preserved only to the grammar of his early work, dialectics and the substitution of temporality for spatiality in system building. All radical philosophers of the XIX century, such as Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud have designed several new ground words, some of them remained in use throughout the XX century.

To remain just with Heidegger, beside creating ground words of his own, he also borrowed lavishly from the new ground words of the XIX century, specially from Kierkegaard's vocabulary. Philosophical ground words coined by Kierkegaard, such as anxiety, leap, de-

spair, the choice of myself remained ground words also in *Being and Time*. Some ground words, like “existence” preserve also the Kierkegaard’s interpretation. After his so called turn, Heidegger coins also further ground words or expression like forgetfulness of Being (*Seinsvergessenheit*), clearing (*Lichtung*), though he frequently uses also traditional categories yet in an entirely new understanding, such as *physis*, origin, *aletheia*, essence and also everyday words like thing (*Ding*). All this proves, if it needs proof at all, that one cannot simply leave behind for good the traditional vocabulary.

Thus I believe, that the specificity of the literary genre called philosophy can be identified to the combination of the ground words of world description with an adequate grammar. The grammar of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, is, as well known, phenomenology of the husserlian type employed as hermeneutics. In his later writings not only ground words are changing, so does also the grammar. Heidegger asks one question about in thing and begins thinking about it, that is, he walks around it, encircles it hermeneutically. Historism, which was no represented by *Being and Time*, but in the wake of it the works still stood, is now regarded as the obstacle to thinking, the bastion of metaphysics. What Heidegger calls the “forgetfulness of Being” is tied to the beginning of historical thinking in Rome. (At some point Heidegger ties it back to Plato, which is in my view a very problematic step). But what will be most important is the even more radical rejection of the traditional philosophical grammar.

The central philosophical position of subject-predicate (*hypokeimenon*, *ousia*, *symbebekoi*) has been rejected not just by Heidegger, but by all significant philosophers of the XX century. But as far as their sentences are concerned, they still employ it. The later Heidegger dismisses the compromise. The speech speaks (*die Sprache spricht*), the nothing nothings (*das Nicht nichtet*) and so on. I would add, that several significant philosophers make their grammar (as well as the change in their grammar) quite explicit. Thus speaks the later Wittgenstein about language games, Derrida about deconstruction, Foucault about archeology, and later about genealogy.

What are the traditional pair of categories a XX century philosopher wants to avoid at all costs? Subject-object, empirical-transcendental. Which is the category pair which must be evaluated? Mediation-immediacy. Which are the categories that should not be? *Arché*, fundamental principles, foundation.

Hegel already wanted to avoid foundation. His main ambition was to create a system without *arché*, without one or some fundamental principle. Hegel claimed that his system is not based on a fundamental principle, since it is without presupposition, it is self founding. Many critics accused Hegel with self delusion, but this is not the point. The main message is that he recognized that modern philosophy cannot be based on something “outside” it, something eternally valid, as its justification, for it has to establish its own truth in itself and by itself. Otto Héviži exemplifies on the works of representative modern philosophers the necessity of self grounding.

Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is an outstanding experiment in self grounding. I speak about experiment only, because the author of the book himself turned away from his book. In my view, all philosophical systems are experiments. There is only one difference. The ancients did not know this, whereas the moderns do.

Many a philosopher experimented with the radical overcoming of the epistemological subject. Some of them replaced the subject as “I” by a collective, universal subject, like the

world spirit or the transcendental Ego, whereas others operated with the conception of the ultimate subject-object identity. In terms of the latter, it turns finally out that the subject does not get to know an object outside itself, but itself. These two conceptions were joined once in Hegel's philosophy, but Hegel's own solution was unacceptable already in the XIX century, for the task was performed by closing the system. Although, as Foucault said in his inaugural speech at the Collège de France, none of us can rid oneself entirely from Hegel. I would add to it, that this remark is true also in view of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Attentive readers will notice that the ground structures presented in the first part of the book, are going to be determined further in the second part, very much like it happens in Hegel's main works.

Another branch of the conception that the subject does not get to know something outside itself, but itself, has burst into blossom in Kierkegaard's philosophy. In his orchestration to choose ourselves means to know ourselves (*gnoti szeauton*). Some even tried to join the two traditions. The thought that the subject does not get to know something outside itself but itself (subject object identity) could also be paired with the concept of a collective subject. This is what Lukács did in his *History and Class Consciousness*. Heidegger, too, experimented briefly with the idea in the early thirties when he suggested that the German People chooses itself. Yet, except this intermezzo, Heidegger follows the simple Kierkegaard model when speaking about the call of conscience: «It summons the Self to its potentiality-for being its Self». (§ 56).

In this move the understanding of the "subject" and the task this ground word was supposed to perform, has already been changed. It is no more the subject of the sentence or the logical assertion (*hypokeimenon*), neither is it the immanent conscious substance of the accidents (*ousia*). If the Self is the subject/object better to say, if the two concepts can be understood philosophically only in this way, then the traditional distinction between theory and practice becomes irrelevant. For the act of choosing myself, an action, is itself the recognition, the understanding of myself, the self founding foundation, and this the final end (*goal*). Lukács bases the famous chapter on reification in his *History and Class Consciousness* on this thought or solution. The so called imputed consciousness of the proletariat (*zugerechnetes Bewusstsein*), that is the recognition of its own essential calling, the absolute knowledge is the ultimate praxis. In the above mentioned classic text by Lukács the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental level becomes central. In his project the transcendental ceases to be transcendental in the kantian understanding (it is not a priori). Whereas the empirical consciousness of the proletariat is empirical in the traditional understanding, as being rooted in everydayness, the transcendental consciousness cannot be a priori, for it is not unchanging, eternal, but historical, ultimate self understanding as the historical product. In the quarrel between immediacy and mediation Lukács sides with the latter unconditionally. Thinking and action resulting from immediate experience is by definition reified, fetishized. The call of an imputed, mediated consciousness calls out the proletariat, the collective subject, from the consciousness of its fetishized everyday empirical reality. In one stroke Lukács has left behind historicism, the conception of historical progress, while preserving the conception of historical end. Something similar will happen, also in different terms, in Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history, by contrasting the ruins of past history with the *Messianic Jetztzeit*.

Several scholars debated, that Lukács's book has influenced Heidegger. It does not make

any difference. At some point certain ideas are somehow in the air. And as Nietzsche asserted, philosophers can have a good nose. Heidegger could have arrived to similar ideas without having read Lukács's then famous book. He also takes side with mediation as against immediacy, and he too addresses himself to the traditional puzzle of the bipolar oppositions of mediation-immediacy, subject-object, he also needs to reject historicism, without sidestepping history, yet he does all this in an entirely different orchestration.

Heidegger must have had a unique capacity of intuition to find, or rather create, a ground word, which enables him to put a new light on all the above mentioned puzzles. This wonderful ground word, this trump card is *Dasein*.

The category is fairly old. Yet the direct ancestor of Heidegger's *Dasein* might be found in Hegel, in the second chapter of his *Science of Logic*. *Dasein* is, in Hegel, the first determination of Being (*Sein*). The term *Dasein*, (which, as Hegel emphasizes, can be in etymologically also understood as Being-Here) stands always against the Other, it is a limited, finite and transient concrete quality, reality. All this can also be said about Heidegger's *Dasein*. Still, his interpretation is innovative. Not all transient, finite beings limited by others are termed *Dasein*, but only the unique entity which is not only transient and limited, but also mortal the sole mortal entity. This characterization is, however, not entirely apt. The almost apt philosophical "translation" of *Dasein* stems from Arendt. She speaks of "human condition". Yet, not even this philosophical translation sounds entirely apt.

The concept or ground word is entirely shaped to the purpose to address and to illuminate the three – above mentioned – puzzles. One of the greatest merit of the ground word *Dasein* is that it includes both the transcendental and the empirical levels. It is an ontological concept and in this sense transcendental, for – in this understanding – it includes the necessary and sufficient constituents of human existence, elaborated one after the other. It offers answer to the question of how is human life possible at all. It is transcendental, yet not a priori, moreover, its explication excludes the a priori itself. Yet *Dasein* is not just ontological, but ontic-ontological, whereas the "ontic" points at the variety of the empirical level. Although the empirical level cannot be fully empirical, entirely accidental, yet it includes "care" also as singular (the life of singulars). Since *Dasein* can be authentic or inauthentic in the ontological level, so can it be on the ontic level. Heidegger analyzes *Dasein* in the grammar or phenomenology as hermeneutics. Starting with the evident gambit of the throw, as having been thrown into the world (or a world). Thus *Dasein* is being-in-the-world. This gambit kills not only two, but already three flies at one single stroke.

Thus Foucault's witty description fits perfectly well. *Dasein* is "a strange empirico-transcendental doublet".

How are the puzzles, which were also Lukács's puzzles, treated?

Dasein is being-in-the, and if we are thrown ontologically speaking into the world, ontically speaking into a world there are all the three fundamental pun the epistemological contrast between subject and objects that makes no sense at all. As Heidegger sums up in paragraph 69 «If the 'subject' gets conceived as an existing *Dasein* whose Being is grounded in temporality, then one must say that the world is 'subjective'. But in that case, 'subjective' world is more 'objective' than any possible 'Object'». *Dasein* itself is temporal, historical. Historicity, temporality is thus being-in-the-world itself. Due to this, historicism has lost ground, for history is grounded in *Dasein*'s historicity itself. What I wanted to show briefly,

how Heidegger's newly shaped ground word *Dasein* made him possible to address all the three fundamental puzzles of his time successfully. By success I mean that all the three puzzles were tackled in a satisfying way while being fitted together Heidegger could preserve the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental level without their separation, through his reinterpretation of the transcendental. He could also get rid of the epistemological subject without abandoning the "subject" in the sense of the Self. Finally, he liberates historicity from philosophy of history. The later Heidegger will do also the same (without *Dasein*), through narrating the history of Being, or rather the history of the Forgetfulness of Being. Immediacy had a bad reputation in the radical philosophy of XIX century, with the possible exception of Nietzsche. Marx describes the world of immediacy in the chapter on the fetishism of commodities. In Kierkegaard immediacy is discussed as the lowest existential stage within the aesthetic stage in human life. Heidegger too, joined this engagement. Everydayness is the world of immediacy. A *Dasein* who gets fallen into mere everydayness, it is alienated (Heidegger also uses this term occasionally). The self of everydayness is the Everyone (*das Man*). *Dasein* as fallen into mere everydayness is inauthentic, that is, guilty.

Since fundamental ontology does not make use of the collective subject (*Dasein* is certainly not one) the person, the singular, the individual has to appear as a problem. The "I", the subject of "Ego cogito" which has lost its central place already in the radical philosophy of the XIX century, by now became a burden. Lukács had no need for it. Heidegger, in wake of Kierkegaard replaced it by the Self, translating the persons' identity from an epistemological category into an existential one. Foucault has chosen the same path, he was, however, not particularly interested the neither in the authentic-inauthentic, nor in the everyday-non everyday distinction. For the simple reason that one of his main ground words "savoir", contrasted to "connaissance", was supposed to be present in everyday thinking as well as in sciences, literature, or in institutions of all kinds. His myself, the Self (*soi*), is also a historical ground word, because the Self is also constituted in discourses, different ones in different times, in different discourses. Thus the subject, as epistemological category contrasted to the object, had lost not just its relevance, but also its meaningfulness by Foucault. Whether we speak of the truth about knowledge, power or of the self, all of them are constituted in and by discourses. However, Foucault does not want to avoid the use of words like "subject" or the "I". Only that there is no place left for the epistemological subject, individual or collective, for the "I" as an entity, for historicism or for the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental entity or even level.

Wittgenstein too, employs several ground words of everyday language use, if they appear in understandable, sensful sentences. To return to the issue at stake. I wanted to show, although not to demonstrate, that representative thinkers of the XX century begin to play with new characters in the world theater, and that all of them will be confronted with the same puzzles left behind by traditional philosophies. In this sense we could say that they point at the same referents, even if they deny that there are referents in a philosophical discussion at all. The referents are indeed, not things "out there", but stories and puzzles formulated by one or the other of the ancestors, and in this, secondary sense, still out there, in form of world descriptions which on their part are sources of other world descriptions. They are the sources of world understanding as self-understanding of the philosophers of the XX century and vice versa. Yet, even if many a XX century philosophy share referents they also unshared them, since the messages of the referents are put into entirely different context, reshaped by unique

ground words and a unique grammar.

All ground words can be new. But there are two ground words no philosophy can get rid of unless by self-delusion. These two are Being and Truth. They cannot be overcome, rejected or replaced, even if some philosophers believe that they succeeded (if this may be called a success) to overcome them. In paragraph 69 of *Being and Time* Heidegger said that the disclosure of the relation between Being and Truth is the central philosophical issue. But he faces this issue in all its seriousness only later, after his “*Kehre*”, several times, and in my mind in the deepest sense in his paper *The Essence of Truth*. In this work, the Greek understanding of truth as *aletheia*, (*Unverborgenheit*) is no more the answer to the question what truth is, since truth becomes the protagonist of the history of Being, or that of the forgetfulness of Being. In this paper Heidegger describes the state of the present world in dark colours. He does not concentrate anymore on the correspondence theory of truth, as the dominating concept of truth, inherited from metaphysics, but he visions beyond this point the dying out of the question of truth altogether. If questions concerning Being and Truth disappear for good, philosophy will beyond doubt arrive at its end. The disappearance of a literary genre is always a great loss, and in this case, so I think as a participant, it would be an irrecoverable loss.

The XX century became, despite all the bad omens, a great century for philosophy. A few great minds gave the lie to all the gloomy predictions, since they succeeded to present new philosophical worlds with new characters and new grammars, worlds able to give new meanings even if not frequently also much hope. They did it against the tradition, still, as the continuation of the tradition. Once upon a time Kant spoke about the need for metaphysics. Today, we can rather speak about the need for philosophy. To repeat with the early Heidegger, many of us listens to the call of conscience, to the very call which calls us out from our Fallenness into our Selfness. And one may add, that philosophy, mediated by philosophical thinking, may help the meaning seekers to recognize what they desired to see, the prospect of their own way of life as good life. With this desire of our hearts and this hope of our minds, do we wait the arrival of the philosophers of the XXI century.