

Opinion

Homo Philosophicus: Reflections on the Nature and Function of Philosophical Thought

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Abstract: The philosopher is a fundamental mode of existence of the human being, yet it is experienced only by a minority, an elite. Those constitute, among themselves, a subspecies of *Homo sapiens* that is sometimes dubbed *Homo philosophicus*. Our goal here is to investigate, in depth, the philosophical foundations of this ontological-anthropological concept. We analyze the concept of the philosopher into three basic components: the thinker, the artist, and the mathematician, arguing that the three fundamentally participate in maintaining the operation of the philosopher machine. The following text can be considered a contribution to metaphilosophy, written as a structured opinion piece, encompassing a series of reflections drawn from the writer's own experience as a philosopher. The mode of the presentation is a mixture of personal and experimental writing styles, intentionally avoiding the rigid form of overtly analytical and argumentative discussions. Although numerous philosophers will be discussed below, four key figures, Nietzsche, Russell, Heidegger, and Guattari, occupy a special position in our overall opinionated view on the nature of philosophy.

Keywords: what is philosophy; what is thinking; metaphilosophy; Nietzsche; Heidegger; Guattari; philosophy of nature



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1. Introduction

Philosophy's aim is neither the reproduction of the Real's fundamental structures, nor the prediction of coming events. Nor is philosophy an attempt to provide a series of systematic interpretations of past systems of thought. Philosophy is also neither a pragmatic quest for the real, nor a search for truth. In our field of inquiry, truth *as such* is suspect. Better to stick with Nietzsche's *untruth* than truth [1]. The whole vocation of the thinker revolves around re-establishing *points of departure*, not reviewing, disputing, or verifying some existing viewpoints. In this sense, we only march forward, always on the lookout for freshly-brewed ideas and novel concepts; the motto of the philosopher, that eternal nomadic intellectual, being this: 'I Improvise, then Improvise, then Improvise'. He—the *thinker*—becomes an *artist*. The artist feeds on ideas procured by the thinker. Both merge into one being, that of the philosopher. Amid all of this, the *mathematician* enters into the picture to supply his own contribution. The philosopher watches the others, deeply absorbed into his own inner perpetual flux of cosmic explorations and artistic escapades, but without ever feeling obliged to adhere to any particular cause or agenda. He asks questions, receives answers, then moves ahead. What is his role in the middle of all of this? He does not know yet, but he will.

Those three players, the thinker, the artist, and the mathematician, are the fundamental components of that vast and complex conceptual formula we call *the philosopher*. The philosopher is the nominal name we deploy to baptize the philosophical *machine*. Yes, for eventually only machines exist in the intellectual sphere. That man or woman thinks, a person over there creates artworks, and this mathematician becomes the abstract poet unifying both, but the three are one. The three are lovers of truth and haters of wisdom. No, the three are lovers of wisdom and truth haters. No, the three do not care about anything coming from society. The Holy Three are one: They are what makes the intellectual

who he is, a unified functioning whole devoted to an honourable mission and respected vocation. Bohemian mathematicians mixing with wild thinkers and diligent artists. The place is eternity, or maybe just its long-awaited shadow. However, here is no place for the eternal in you and I. Together we march forward, eyeing truth but laughing, yes, laughing like a Dickensian madman, for, to us, truth is a marginal structure emerging within the infinite horizon of discovery. Truth is manufactured by society and its subterranean power relations [2–4]. Truth is a joke [5–7]. Who is the philosopher? Someone searching for some abstract term like ‘truth’? However, what if there has never been any truth “out there” waiting for us to unconceal and disclose? What if life as such is not truth-like? Has anyone considered a possibility such as this? Aside from Nietzsche [5,6,8] and Heidegger [9,10], who else?

However, we continue to look for ideas. According to Deleuze, the philosopher invents concepts [11]. According to Guattari [12], the philosopher is a militant reformist with a fundamental political “duty” to perform: To change our present world into a better one [13]. Both were dreamers. What about the grand old man? Well, Heidegger knew nothing about the excitement of becoming part of society. He had always been a loner. For him, philosophy is a mission, to be a *guide* [14,15]. The concept is fundamental for our understanding of the entire trajectory of his thinking. To be a guide means—for Heidegger—exactly the opposite of being a writer or public intellectual. Philosophy itself is now suspect since philosophizing requires merging with the real and the real is manufactured by society. What does a philosopher do then? He withdraws. Others did exactly the same. Abraham, Buddha, Mohammad, Nietzsche, they all had to move into the fringes of the populated world in order to think. Various products came out, some of them—such as religions—succeeded for a while, then—philosophically speaking—died out. Others—such as philosophical systems—run out of fuel and stagnated. I say that the philosopher has nothing to do with truth. I say that the philosopher is a loner, someone who can no longer interact with real structures because he cannot be part of the others. Let us call him someone who prefers to keep his own company instead of diving into the clamour of communality. However, was he true to himself, even while affirming the impotence of the concept of truth?

Let us hope that something will come out of this. I believe the mathematician is a good compromise. He is someone who is neither a thinker nor an artist, but, by becoming both he is superior to any other mathematician. To start with, his enemy is the professional mainstream mathematician, though he also dislikes professional philosophers and artists alike. In some sense, he is a sublimation of the thinker and artist combined. His output is mathematical thinking, not mathematical results [16]. His method is that of the artist, creative liberating improvisation. He does not look around for ready-made ideas. He generates his own mathematics from the inside of his private world. In particular, our philosophized mathematician does not copy nature, for nature herself will eventually copy him. I sometimes like to say that the mathematician turning to a philosopher, what is celebrated as the *mathematical philosopher* [17,18], is the noblest man or woman in existence. He is a dreamer and worshipper of beauty, not truth or the good. He is a loner, like the great philosophers, but also, being an artist, is right in the middle of that perplexing perpetual carnival called Life.

In conformity with the intended scope and style of this work, we will not attempt anything resembling an analytical argumentation regarding this triadic division or analysis of the inner structure of the philosopher into three components (thinker, artist, mathematician). In fact, the very spirit of this approach is that a fundamental grasp of the nature and function of the philosopher machine as a self-reflection or auto-analysis requires surpassing and bypassing any explicit third-person analytical endeavour whatsoever. In other words, one needs to eschew rigid typologies based on premeditated descriptive analysis aiming at “proving” that the philosopher is “also an artist” or “also a thinker,” etc. Instead, our triadic formula is presupposed and taken for granted as a starting point or an ultimate *limit form* of what a perfect philosophical machine *should* look like, after which it is then

developed and expanded into multiple directions at the same time. The key objective of our admittedly non-analytical and unconventional approach is to demonstrate the very possibility of an alternative philosophical worldview.

2. The Thinker: Deep Solitude and the Philosophy Machine

Everyone knows that life is unbearable under mass capitalism, consumerism, privatization, commercialism, short-term profit ideologies, and so on. However, the unbearable must be lived through, and to do so, modern men and women have no other choice but this: He and she must plunge the self deep into the matrix of the Other, and this is to be done without actually making any contact with the Other. We are not advancing paradoxes here. Sadly, reality cannot be easily integrated into the fabric of the self unless the very person making the attempt transforms himself into an agent of destruction, wreaking havoc and ravaging his own self and its complementary poles in society. To avoid this absolute horror, those living in today's world must learn how to *temporarily withdraw*. Buddhists, Pythagoreans, Stoics, and Early Christians are very good examples, illustrating how, at the critical point of the complete breakdown of degenerate civilizations, the fundamentally gregarious instinct of a selected class of humans would automatically shut down, leading to an elite living in self-imposed isolation, evolving their own modes of thinking and contemplation. Under normal conditions, this would only lead to the formation of a new regime of social and intellectual fascism, that of the sect, the ethnic group, closed cultures, etc. However, what we are after here is something totally different: It is the lonely man living in the middle of the crowd. Imagine that man who walks alone in the largest cities of the world, surrounded by tens of millions of egomaniacal men and women, all screaming and shouting and yelling, only to end up celebrating their own rotten egos. This is urban life, the modern moment of our life-hood taken into its most concrete realization. However, it is exactly in and through such viewpoints where we find the philosopher screening, filtering, and interpreting the world around. He is not responsible for others, society does not care about him, but he is also independent and free. He roams around, observes, records, analyzes, and deduces the consequences. Like Seneca [19], the philosopher is a citizen of the world: He belongs to no one but to everyone. The entire cosmos is his playground, and while dwelling amid the majesty of creation he thrives and cheers in intellectual joy. I think of someone like Spinoza [20], even though Spinoza has not influenced the philosophical mobs as a thinker. I think of Wittgenstein [21], even while he no longer fires our imagination. I think of Akhenaton [22], Buddha [23], Zarathustra [24], and the Abrahamic Prophets [25,26].

For the thinker, philosophy is to be welcomed as a much needed salvation, an alternative to death by non-thinking. A thinker does not believe in the afterlife, and hence he is free to live his own life in any manner he prefers. However, freedom is bought with high price, and the heavy penalty perpetuated by society is that there are no vacant positions available for supporting free spirits. Hence comes the well known story of rebel philosophers, starting with the Stoics [19,27–29], Epicureans [30,31], and Cynics [32,33], and ending with Schopenhauer [34,35] and Nietzsche [24,36,37]. After the latter's death in 1900—that symbol-laden year—the world entered into a new phase. Now there are no rebels, because great philosophers, such as Russell and Heidegger, became essentially loners living in the big crowds of the urbanized modern capitalist world. They cannot afford the moral and intellectual luxury possessed by the American Transcendentalists [38], and, hence, must press forward on their own, making their philosophical living by relying on the sweat and toil of their own self-labor. A philosopher then can become a writer selling books (Russell [39–41]), or a teacher selling lectures (Heidegger) [42], but in every case the creative impulse will dwell in the untrodden realm of the thinker's private sphere. No one is admitted, not even lovable wives and intimate friends (or pets).

The thinker does not roam the cities of the world searching for “inspired ideas” (a ridiculous picture anyway). The philosopher—in the capacity of a thinker—creates those very powerful ideas that city dwellers will devour and consume, but only in the future time

of the philosopher's life span. There are few Picassos in the world of ideas who were able to enjoy, during their own time, the global success that the Catalan–Parisian gentleman had been able to secure and consume. For a true radical, for a Nietzsche or a Heidegger, one must wait till death takes away anger and hatred, bury them all in Hades, then rise again victorious. For the entirety of what the philosopher will have by then is his name. He will be remembered by that iconic resonance that symbols provoke. Or she will entertain the popularity of a venerated celebrity. Modern society's greed knows no limit, and so too is the unbounded and ever expanding lives of its best sons and daughters: the lone philosophers, those whose inner intellectual richness keeps growing while modern culture is decaying and shrinking.

The thinker falls into the infinite loop of consumption and production. The philosopher becomes nothing but the *philosophy machine*. The history of ideas is mainly the history of philosophy, but the latter is the story of various philosophical machines incidentally co-existing within intersecting chronological epochs. There once has been the Mesopotamian machine. Then the Egyptian machine. Then the Phoenician machine. Then the Greeks. Then the Romans. Then the Neoplatonic. Then the Christian machines. Then the Leibnitz machine. The Heidegger machine. The Russell machine. The Jung machine. However, there was no Spinoza machine. There were massive non-philosophical machines, notably those of Wittgenstein [43]. We finally end with the French machines of Foucault [44] and Guattari [13,45], but what kind of machine is theirs?

A philosophy machine is an enigma. It acts and produces philosophy, but while producing ideas, it devours its own outcomes in a baffling acrobatic maneuver of autopoiesis. This implies that a philosophical machine is incapable of stopping, for halting procures an immediate state of certain death. The machine short-circuits its own Self, imprisoned inside a single enclosed container: the framework of that madness captured by one obsessive idea: *indefinite production-for-the-sake-of-production-itself*. A thinker may then become enslaved to the machinic apparatuses of writing (Nietzsche, Stanislaw Lem, Russell, Heidegger), speaking (Stoics, Cynics), music (Keith Jarrett, Bach, Wagner, Pink Floyd), painting (van Gogh, Tom Thomson, Pollock, Soutine, Hans Hofmann, de Kooning), or acting (Brando, Hopkins, de Niro, Day-Lewis, Nicholson). For them, life cannot be exhausted, but it must be fully lived through to the end, where "to end" means merely to expire on biological grounds.

Why does he produce, that singular person we call the philosopher machine? Most of the time he or she is ignorant of the cause, since it appears that work for him or her is an essential need that simply cannot be dispensed with. Life is empty, life is beautiful. Life is nasty, life is supreme. Life can mean everything and nothing at the same time. Or life is an infinite field of possibilities. Or life is the potential to surpass death by producing the novel and new. For sure, life is the open. Life is the self-expanding horizon of creation grounding that productivity. We do not make exceptions. Everything can be connected with everything else. An idea is not a thought invented in the philosopher's mind, but the active germ of a subsequent process unleashed therein, yet while perfectly capable of either connecting with any other nearby or distant idea, or standing on its own. There is no subjective "lived experience" inside some transcendental subjective structure called the philosopher's ego-consciousness waiting to be communicated with a surrounding lively community, such as cultures or ethnic groups. Instead, the philosopher is a limit standing on its own, but also the unfinished process of appropriation and assimilation that distinguishes even solitary and lone free spirits. He knows that his mission is short, but there are others who one day will step in into the all-embracing field of creativity proper for philosophizing and thinking. Pragmatic considerations, that is, the *praxis* of social movements, are all nothing but noise or trivial matters for the philosopher machine. He knows how to push forward regardless of established conventions and norms of the literary or intellectual spheres. Reality, for the philosopher, transcends the given. A machine makes its own fuel. A machine self-feeds on its private domain. A machine is a self-subsisting totality, yet always running in the open mode of reaching out for other machines. In this sense, the philosopher machine enacts two contradictory roles at the same time, one through which

it ignores existing practice for the sake of its own intoxicating self-expression, and on the other via the unique but non-predetermined manner of its forging ahead through filiations and alliances with other functioning or dormant machines. We can see several examples of such machinic production of the new in the thought of Leibniz [46], Heidegger [14,47,48], Russell [16–18], and Guattari [49–51]. However, such machinic proclivity may unfold, it is one of the major traits of the universal social regime of modern capitalism. It appears there is no avoiding of unifying ontology and politics [52–55].

3. The Philosopher Machine: A First Close Look

So, what is the philosopher machine? Is it, to start with, precisely that linguistic manipulation of some thinking material germinating inside the philosopher's head? However, the structure of society is not reflected in language, hence the collapse of the "postmodernist modernist" turn of philosophy, in particular that movement exemplified by the post-war French school [56]. If our present century has anything to do with its predecessors, that would be in the latter's lasting effort to revitalize philosophical thinking by going back to its original matrix in Greek thinking. This was accomplished mainly by Nietzsche and Heidegger. This celebrated "return to the beloved Greeks" has no direct connection with the deceptively similar movement in Western Europe throughout the Renaissance and Enlightenment. The impact of the Heideggerian input was focused—among other things—on steering modern philosophy away from the linguistic impasse that it started to drift into during the first decades of the twentieth century. However, in the Anglo-American camp this attempt by Heidegger to save Western thinking has not been able to succeed. The reasons behind this failure will not be discussed here, but they form an integral part of the hidden sociopolitical narrative informing the main threads of several forthcoming reflections. In what follows below, we will get the chance to revisit this problematic, at least on various occasions, but for the time being the main concern is to try to determine the exact relation between thinking and writing (the main mode of doing philosophy since Plato).

We take the philosopher as a producer of texts or verbal utterances dealing with "philosophical themes". In history, "philosophers" such as the Buddha, the Abrahamic Prophets, Pythagoras, Socrates, Epictetus, all worked orally, *not* merely for the reason that they wrote nothing, but more in the sense that the center of their creative productivity can be identified with their uncanny power of composing-while-thinking when blessed by the protective privacy of deep solitude. For us, this is not just one accidental event occurring in their lives among others, but an integral component of what we believe to be the complex and polyvocal character of the species named 'the philosopher machine', *Homo philosophicus*, to which those rare masters belonged.

It was part of the great legacy of Nietzsche and Heidegger that they brought to our attention what the Greeks and Goethe had already struggled in vain to achieve: a unification of art and philosophy capable of surpassing the spiritual needs of man and woman by transforming the individual into an independent thinker relying on the products of his, and only his, own mind. How can we see this happening? By bypassing the "God-hypothesis" altogether. We see this, most strikingly, in the Prophets Buddha and Mohammed, both who advocated original and powerful concepts of divinity so abstract to the degree that it triggered the deterioration of their teachings, almost immediately after their deaths, to "organized religions" not essentially different in their formal structure from Judaism and Christianity. In the career of artists mistaken as founders of religion—men like Plato, Wagner, Tolstoy—one always faces the same problematic so brilliantly observed and analyzed by the young Nietzsche: The incapacity of civilization to distinguish between knowledge and art, and the tendency to let the former dominate and overshadow the latter [36,57–59]. The works bequeathed on us by those great thinkers were both pure art *and* pure philosophy. However, when they died, their followers, who were no match to their great masters, had stubbornly refused to let the art component speak for itself *philosophically*. Instead, the followers became "pious", which means non-thinkers, since

in their hands the artworks of the founding fathers had become ‘sacred texts’, spoken to us by the genius or the prophet or the seer. Western civilization is still functioning in the same way: the Cartesian subject is the ultimate referential condensation point of thinking proper, and ‘knowledge’ is the master keyword into which both art and philosophy have to subsume. It is precisely in the brutal manner by which both the Christian Church and capitalism have used art for propaganda and “the education of the consumer” where one may encounter all of the essential modalities of decadence involved: how mechanized culture loathes true art but adores controlled knowledge; how the ruling elite “enjoys the arts”, even if this very art is the revolt of the masses against those who have been exploiting and destroying Earth.

Moving to modernity, philosophy has risen up again, but this time in order to replace science, the latter which had already supplanted religion at an earlier stage of history. However, this philosophy is now allied with *art*, while the way forward is that revealed by the proposed synthesis of mathematics, art, and thinking in one activity. The artist and the mathematician are not thinkers in the proper sense. They both create their work without actual premeditation or deliberate planing. They also do not operate based on specific social consequences of their creative activity. The thinker is the one who is concerned with how new creations will interact with existing cultural and historical parameters, and he is always the master surveyor of all related fields, while the artist and the mathematician are occupied with the small technical details.

We may then imagine the task of the new philosopher after the collapse of both modernity and postmodernity: To fall back onto philosophy, but now without science, without religion, only art is fundamental. Art will replace religion, and mathematics will replace science. Therefore, the thinker emerges as the one taking up the responsibility of ensuring that both art and mathematics do not stray far away, and this triadic organization combining the three together is the new global structure of philosophy we currently have in mind.

How does the philosopher work? He is certainly inspired by art, but is mere inspiration enough? Early Nietzsche explicitly denied this [58,59]. The main issue—or at least one of the main issues—is the collapse of traditional religion and its failure to continue to be relevant to the life and experience of modern men and women [60]. In the beginning, an art-based approach to culture and life is advanced in order to provide a spiritual substitute for the mysticism inherent in Christianity. But this would not last for a long time; for soon after, Nietzsche began to question the very medium of traditional art itself, best represented in *his* case by Wagner’s music coupled with Schopenhauerian aesthetic theory [36,57,58], by leaning toward a more “positivist” philosophical attitude [61]. One cannot in this way simply equate art and philosophy because the new rising star of the nineteenth century, modern science (Helmholtz [62], William Thomson [63], Darwin [64], Boltzmann [65]), must be integrated into the picture. Throughout his middle period, Nietzsche then appeared to be partially moving away from art toward science, where art—as exemplified by his early Schopenhauer-dominated period—is increasingly seen as not fully adequate for providing complete and full foundations for modernity. However, for Nietzsche, science is not exactly the same suspect as that despised *mainstream* science soon to be singled out by Heidegger and subjected to a devastating critique that nearly destroyed it. In Nietzsche, and this is clear in the late final period associated with the *Will to Power* project [5–7], ‘science’ should really be compared with Aristotle’s *Physics* [66], a work on the *metaphysics* of nature, not on what is now called “natural science” [67–69]; or more precisely, Nietzsche’s science and Aristotle’s *Physics* represent new foundations for *ontology*, at least when seen through some of the special technical aspects to be developed in the philosophy of nature.

On the other hand, this is why, for Heidegger, the collapse of the new religion of modern science is an inevitable outcome effectuated by the advent of modernity as such [70]. The young former theology student who recently switched to philosophy had studied physics and mathematics in college by enlisting in a large number of graduate lecture courses and seminars on mathematical physics and closely related subjects, only to revolt

later against the whole program of mainstream natural science [71]. He just could not swallow that bitter pill called mathematical physics [70,72,73]. It is in his own way, maybe as an “enlightened peasant”, the new “Germanic” thinker building up momentum for the next generation, whose destiny or “mission” is to have had reflected and thought and fought a grand battle of ideas against society, spirit against civilization. Almost during the same time, his fellow German genius and intellectual equal, Thomas Mann, was also passing through a roughly parallel phase of mixing nationalism with creative productivity, albeit in a very different manner [74]. Both men learned and taught independently of the others. In his private correspondence with Hannah Arendt (with whom he had an affair at that time), Heidegger openly admitted his profound admiration of Thomas Mann’s genius after reading *The Magic Mountain* [75]. They were loners, surreptitiously nurturing inside their private selves larger-than-life figures that would never give in to any earthly temptation such as fame or fate. What was their common secret weapon? Language, and no other thing than language: the power to speak, to act, to think in words what is utterly unthinkable; to attempt the impossible of naming the unnameable; and so on. Sometimes we imagine that the whole affair had been nothing but a bad dream, that one day we will wake up in the morning to realize that it was “all in our head”, that men like Heidegger and Mann never existed. But dreams do not come true. Whether we agree or not on joining dissenters like Heidegger and Mann does not change the real outcome of the game of life: Their thinking *is* real, for our present life is probably unimaginable without at least one of the two, to say nothing of their joint impact on modern society, culture, and art when all are taken in together, synthesized and digested, without bias or prejudice. I cannot very easily pinpoint that which is singularly attractive in the vocations of the two men. Was it their brilliant respective careers? Certainly not, for others had enjoyed more glamorous itineraries, only think of Dali [76], Beckett [77], or Artaud [78]. For me, what sets Heidegger and Mann apart from everyone else is the enigma of their overall literary texts, the almost otherworldly single-handedness of their idiosyncratic prose style, and that infinite jest of unlimited self-assurance through which they have always been capable of surprising us every time we decide to set and labor through their dense and complex worlds. In such a remarkable career, the writer becoming the thinker becoming the artist becoming the philosopher, in such total sum of everything that is possibly positive and mutant, in only such circumstances one finds himself facing the pro-modern philosopher in his utmost authentic revelation. Thinking and being, writing and creating, and the militant maestro orchestrating his full oeuvre by few key masterful stokes.

Setting up the question about the so-called “drive for knowledge”, Nietzsche had proceeded in his early career toward a total re-examination of the role of the intellectual in modern society, and how the latter should be understood with respect to the position of the genius. The idea is original and new, but the “solution” offered by Nietzsche has never been convincing, at least no longer for *us*, those inhabiting the present historical conjuncture. It is not our goal to reinvent the role of the philosopher in life. In the way contemporary life is currently proceeding, one can talk intelligibly about neither philosophers nor clergymen. Both classes became irrelevant or even extinct. A thinker is a temporary solution to a contemporary problem. The thinker is not responsible of anything. He is an isolated figure, a solitary ghost left alone in his wanderings amid the wilderness of modern society. In other words, civilization should not expect magic solutions coming from solitary people. There are no longer forthcoming bearded Nietzschean Zaras emerging from out of their long voluntary confinement in a dark and damp cave or a secluded monastery on a mountaintop, only to bless humanity with a salvation through their thought. We are simply on our own here, and that practically applies to *everyone*. Yet the situation is grave. There is no light. Wherever you go, you encounter the Other. The Other demands attention, care, love, and devotion. You cannot remain on your own for long, and life as we know it may turn out any second to be completely different from what we used to think. The thinker, in his capacity as a philosopher, attempts to bridge the gap. The relation between the two “roles” indicated here is very strange. It is not clear whether the thinker and the philosopher

are identical. In antiquity, the philosopher signifies the greater side of the formula, but beginning with post-modernity, starting with Heidegger and his progeny, we are now in the process of re-evaluating the entire equation. For example, we may venture to ask: Could not it be that the thinker is the great synthesis of the philosopher with others, like artists? However, what if thinking and art are not mutually contractible to each other? What if mathematics heralds a totally new sphere on its own, irreducible to neither thinking nor mathematics? We are forced to consider this last alternative situation, strange as it is, and this we do mainly as a response to the exacting peculiarity of post-modernity. We have proposed then that a philosopher is someone who combines thinking, art, and mathematics. This has never been the mainstream view of the subject nurtured in the past; yet currently, particularly after the notorious phenomenon of “knowledge explosion” so characteristic of our modern times [79], one is forced to endorse a radically new view of life that is not necessarily fully continuous with the past. A philosopher now is incarnated in the thinker, but the thinker’s main fields of activity is to be shifted away from ethics, moving closer to art and mathematics. We are addressing a new world of possibilities, a place where only divine minds can exist. The Other, the typical person you meet in the street, is relegated to the distant algebraic permutations of the others. He and the others become one in the mind of the philosopher, who overshadows—in his thinking and creative output—institutions and social structures. The philosopher is the world, and the word ‘culture’ is defined by the manner a philosopher had lived and existed throughout his open solitary career.

4. The Ontologist

We may think of the world as a nexus of events interwoven into each other, a perpetual flux of becoming-other, never failing to either surprise its interlocutors or to disappoint the watchers. Nature guards her secret, but she is seldom malicious. No, of course not! It is true that nature guards her secrets, but she is always wicked and ignominious. Where did we get the idea that the gods are good? Maybe God is good, but who can boast about the perfection of creation without falling into the trap of becoming indoctrinated, becoming either a capitalist or religious or fascist fanatic? Philosophy stands against the others, and, in doing so, “Mother Wisdom/Nature” shields man from himself, protecting the intellectual from his own ego, while thrusting all of them into the infinite loop of production for the sake of destroying production as such. But look: Capitalism is the grand structural formula of production-for-the-sake-of-production [80,81]. Enter, then, the philosopher, with his different thinking and contrasting mood. Now, what prevails is this: I, the philosopher, in the capacity of a thinker, becomes that who produces for no reason other than the destruction of production as such. Production in philosophy is more of destruction than anything else. Against integrated world capitalism and institutionalized organized religion we witness *philosophy*—in its immortal symbiotic affair with art—standing on the other shore of experience, where deconstruction and de-synthesis rule the game, and where minds and souls part company just in order to be reborn again in the flesh of everything authentic and concrete and real. Eventually, only what is real is destined to remain true, but truth here has very little to do with either that irrational justice of afterlife propounded by the oriental religions, or the dogmatic supremacy of the ideal self, subject, the I-ego-consciousness pole in Western metaphysics. Against the Occidental Self and the Oriental Just, a new statue is erected, that dedicated to thinking being and contemplating the becoming-other of everything that may lay claim to the concrete. The world is populated by an infinite configuration of singularities [82,83]. These prominent zones of differentiation act on the creative space of nature via the agency of fields, not forces, nor particles of matter, nor signs. No rigid lumps of condensable phyla composed of some primordial unperceived fluid, such as ether or dark energy, but only pure form in the mold of relational becomings and transformational devices acting on themselves and leading the observer—if any—toward a post-religious, post-capitalistic order that is still yet to be discovered. The world is constructed from events [84]. Every event is an abstract relational whole that has been collapsing into itself, becoming a total unit capable

of staying the course on its own. The world of the philosopher is real, even though most of its histrionics take place on the virtual dramatic stage of Becoming. That which *was* now become true in and through the present; but then its singular futurological essence would begin to dominate. You watch in amazement how people manage to continue holding on their routine dull daily affairs when, in actuality, everything that happens happens only once and never again. (In this sense, probably the greatest postmodern metaphysical thinker was no one except Edgar Allan Poe, whom I am prepared to consider superior even to a Heidegger or a Russell).

Let me explain how reality can be constructed out of the stuff of life, *matter*. Matter as standing against that sterile binarization of beings into animate and inanimate stuff. There is no fundamental difference between the two, only a slow, stoic gradation in degrees and intensities, a quantitative ascent or descent of one ladder leading up or down, taking us either to higher or lower regimes of complexity. A piece of stone is not “dead matter” but is full of life, though we, naive non-philosophical humans, do not see it [85]. A squeaking frog is not merely an instance of a behaviorally-programmed animal machine, but primary matter actualized by contingent potential fields in the frog’s biosemiotic milieu [86]. The All as One-Multiple is constructed from one basic set of building blocks: *events*. Anything may happen through inter-evental communication links and mutual interactions, and that would lead to an increase or decrease in the event assemblage’s complexity. The event-as-flow is the dynamic atom of life. However, life is much more complex than what is implied by either materialism or vitalism when taken separately, and certainly being overflows any dreamed of synthesis of the two. You can *not* get being by just adding life to matter. Being is more than the sum of life and matter. Being is life and matter *and* something *else*. The philosophy of nature is about precisely this ontological residual surplus of the “something else”: the Beckettian Unnamable [87], Schelling Absolute [88], Heidegger’s Ontological Difference [9], Russell Space [84], Deleuze and Guattari’s Chaos [11], or Foucault’s Murmur [44,89,90]. Or maybe about all these things at the same time.

We may ask ourselves: What is Being? What is Eternity? and where will we all be after Death? However, this is the wrong way of speaking. In philosophy, we do not pay attention to what will happen after “this” life. For us, “This life” is ephemeral; it is only the life of the mind that matters. Following Aristotle [91,92], the Stoics [19,27–29], and Plotinus [93], the entire direction of questioning has transformed into a totally new possibility, *the life of the intellect*. However, only to be nipped in the bud by the rise of the Abrahamic religions, which, in their own manner, have changed the course of philosophy beyond recognition. Now, instead of speaking about the problem of the mind, the problem of the soul, the problem of matter, one begins to rattle—with Socrates—about the problem of the person, the problem of the individual, the problem of society, and so on. Religion, under the guise of ethics, unmasked: The forms of meditations, prayers, salvation, and submission displace contemplation and virtue, leading their new man, the believer, who enslaves everyone else—women and children and animals included, besides “barbarians” and “men of color”—to doubt the relevance and significance of pure thinking as such, that which we understand here by the term ‘ontology’. For us, ontology *is* the keyword to unlocking the future. There is no other possible path. Politics, economics, sociology, psychology, and so on, all will restructure their entire career in order to come into terms with that in Life which is ontological *per se*. What is most fundamental and important is neither the scientific nor the religious, but the *beyondness of being beyond mere material sensation*; or, to put it almost literally, that which moves into the surpassing of the real, the transcendence of sense that elevates us to nonsense and untruth. To repeat Nietzsche’s formula, life is nothing but the struggle to affirm life [94], and nowhere there would be anything more life-denying than the organized religions’ doctrines of institutionalized truth and validity, the founding stones of idealism, mainstream religions, capitalism, and royal science [53].

So now we need to re-examine the content of thinking in light of philosophy. Idealism, especially in its latest resurgence in and through the machination of Hegel and his throng, has wandered far away from ontology's original track, verging on what, in modernity, has come to be known as the philosophy of mind and epistemology. *Metaphysics* simply dropped off the map and became suspect. For a professional philosopher to make a living today, he or she has to muster and appropriate various Socratic–Platonic forays into the subjective world of perception and introspection, a carefully calculated politico-academic move executed in order to return the investigator into the “civilized world”, but now while immunized by the administration of a lively dose of “epistemological truth” to protect against the “diseases of metaphysical thinking”, after which one becomes capable of going back to “normal work”, ultimately sustaining the academic bourgeoisie in their quest for the expansion of reproduction and its concomitant sphere of the cultural spirit of capitalism. Unheeded, the philosopher comes and goes, seen by neither society at large nor the devoted avant-garde of its self-proclaimed intellectual vanguard. As a matter of fact, in today's big cities, for example London, Paris, New York, there are no real thinking intelligentsia anymore; only the autochthonous parts-and-parcels of the system itself can be located now in such urban wastelands, that is, immanent components of the existing regime that have been defending the status quo since time immemorial, which will continue to struggle for the preservation of the last feeble spasms left of the stamina of mankind's original creative power.

5. The Philosophical Machine and Politics: Heidegger's Becoming-Mad

After the miserable failure of his mad “political revolution”, Heidegger's infamous *ontological* turn has not been able to bear out its full fruits, maybe due to the deliberate politicization of the German philosopher by his ideological foes (I am speaking of *philosophical* ideology), which kept the field of Heidegger studies in a state that is, frankly, confusing and disoriented, notwithstanding some original attempts to restore Heidegger by a selected elite of his former students and entourage, such as Zubiri [95,96] and Gadamer [97–99], but without apparent global success though. In the French camp, which, until recently, has dominated Western philosophy in the post-WWII era, the misuse of Heidegger in the hand of best-selling philosophers, such as Sartre [100] and Merleau-Ponty [101], helped subside the already existing drift in Anglo-American scholarship toward a reinstatement of the very doctrines of idealism that Heidegger (and Russell [102] and Whitehead [103]) have fought extremely hard to demolish during their lifetimes. For instance, Heidegger became mainly “the writer of *Being and Time*”, a book that is advertised by Heidegger, Inc, as being supposedly all about “the philosophical foundations of the psychology of existentialism”, a superficial claim that was repudiated by even Heidegger himself several times [104,105].

In the transition from a metaphysics-driven to a politics-driven philosophy, Guattari signaled the onset of the present state of post-modernity, the moment of the New (not necessary the Onto-New), celebrated nowadays under half-pessimistic, half-optimistic banners such as ‘21st-century philosophy’ and the like [45,55,106]. Guattari himself does not seem very conscious of the Heideggerian tradition inside where he lived and thrived. In his career, it is mainly *practices* what matters, the ability of the intellectual to convey both theoretical and pragmatic stands on the “life of the mind” as conceived by the Greeks [11]. This is neither a double standard nor an advocating of another dualist mission like the one pronounced by organized religion and capitalism. What is happening here is very different. Guattari, probably unknowingly to himself, was returning to the original standpoint of the Heidegger of the 1920s, the one who wanted to fight society with the help of the massive reservoir of tools, weapons, and apparatuses of Western metaphysics that he managed to amass during his student years. In the mid 1930s, after his almost immediate failure to participate in the public events surrounding the advent of National Socialism, and, in particular, after he resigned from his absurd Rectorship position and withdrew from the public [42,71], Heidegger turned his back on society and the modern world altogether, something, however, that Guattari had never done to the end of his life. What can we learn

from this? Heidegger or Guattari? I am proposing here a surprising answer: Guattari is not another alternative to Heidegger; Guattari is fundamentally a continuation of Heidegger by new means, and this is true whether or not he was conscious of that strange philosophical role he found himself forced to impersonate. The Paris of the post-war period is unthinkable without the German philosophical thinking that preceded it. In order to cover up their indebtedness to Heidegger, the people of France appended Hegel and Husserl to their celebrated list of the big three Hs. This, incidentally, only helped to further confirm the unique singularity of the Heideggerian trajectory, for by juxtaposing his name with the other two, it was only a matter of time before a new, younger generation began to see the enormous *ontological* advance that Heidegger has achieved compared with the others.

We may come back afterwards to the arduous task of trying our hands at doing something Guattari himself never cared about doing anyway: thinking the religious in and for itself, for he was probably the most irreligious major philosopher of the modern West; yet, mainly in terms of the Heideggerian, something strange turns out and does not feel right or even smell good: the politico-ontotheological structure of the Heideggerian itinerary of twentieth-century thought, its nature, content, and scope. What was the ultimate aim of Heidegger's philosophy? Was it ideological? Why is very little understood about the relation between Heidegger and Marx? Marxism integrated into Gigantism, absorbed into capitalism; even Americanism is treated as a chapter of Gigantism. It is all in the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger's greatest criticism and attack on National Socialism, Bolshevism, and capitalism when the three are rigorously and consistently combined and projected onto one meta-ontological category: the Gigantic [107–109]. That is why there are many common elements shared by the Guattarian and the Heideggerian systems of the World, just consider how the former's integrated world capitalism comes so close, at least at the abstract ontological level, to the Gigantic. However, there yet remains a difference, which is encapsulated by the fundamental importance of *ontotheology* in Heidegger's project, an importance *not* reciprocated by Guattari's thought, which remains extremely hostile and indifferent to all kinds of religious experiences not rooted in philosophy, politics, and social praxis. Heidegger the abstract Hiker–Peasant–Thinker. Guattari the Urban–Militant–Creator-of-Concepts. Two strange formulaic Stoic philosophical machines, one oriented toward the Black Forest and the Rhine, while the other, more globalist, reaches the Amazon Jungle and Japan. One philosopher is rooted in the soil, the land, the backyard; the other is seen thriving in the infinite joy of perpetual flying, his homeland is the open sky, his method is Nomadism, just see him, Cousin Félix, chasing wild and exotic cultures and minorities scattered all around the world. Guattari's becoming-woman, becoming-child, becoming-orchard, becoming-bird, is transposed into Heidegger's becoming-mad, the failed political revolution and its onto-theological repercussions are still current, making all of us, active philosophers, extremely uncomfortable whenever the unmentionable sacred Name of Being is pronounced.

6. Art, Philosophy, Ontology: Borges and Poe

A proposition: a generic philosopher may learn much more from Poe and Borges [110–113] than the sum total of all knowledge bequeathed on us by a whole line of those “illustrious predecessors” advocated by the academic industry of university and museum institutions. Philosophy is ontology. Postmodern thinking is ontology. Poe and Borges are the two most striking builders of vast ontological edifices erected on shaky and shifting sand: that of the *artist's* experience. We do not know what they had really seen during their brief existence in time; the itineraries of only two men living in the new world of North and South Americas, does that mean much? For us it remains ephemeral, transitory, almost dreamlike and surreal. However, their labyrinthine work continues to affirm the presence of their names. Poe and Borges are as relevant as ever. One of them, Poe, created an entirely new intellectual writing sphere, while the other cemented this achievement in new tongue, new continent, and new culture. North America and South America. The North and the South. The New World at large. See them both, writing, thinking, observing, loving,

fighting, and dying. One lost his life in his early forties, the other went blind in his early fifties. Both consigned into darkness at the climax of middle age. Poe and Borges never seemed to be young; they were born wise and different, nature just setting them apart from all the others. We love them, we ignore them, and then we come back to them. Why now? Why not yesterday? They somehow belong to the future. They have not been truly discovered yet. The genius of a Western man such as Poe cannot be gauged by the West itself. Borges, who is half-Western, half-“third-worlder”, would laugh at the classification. What difference does it make to talk about East or West? Borges the man of the South always looking up for the Eternal North: Old Norse, and Germanic or North European folk literature [114]. Poe, who mentally combed the Southern Seas, was at home in both Europe and the Caribbean. He could possibly be claimed by every single country on earth. Poe and Borges are the nuclei of the Universal Citizen heralded by the Roman Stoic Seneca. I see in them the only healthy continuation of that grand mixture of philosophy and religion, *Hellenic Stoicism*. Will they speak to us again, the Ancients, via the mediating agency of a Poe and a Borges? I do not know; frankly: I do not care. Borges is a new beginning. Borges inspired Foucault [89]. This is not a coincidence. It is destiny. Borges is our fate. Borges as ontology stripped to its ultimate bare minimum.

It is then again the vexing question about the relationship between thinking and art, or here philosophy and literature. Making images (the essence of art) versus the production of ideas (the vocation of the philosopher-as-thinker). The thinker as a total being comprising and integrating philosophy, art, and mathematics. The artist is that who practices the art of living. Philosophy has nothing to do with ethics. Contrary to academic thinking, it is art that teaches us how to live and die. The founders of religions and ethical systems were not philosophers, but artists, yet in a very peculiar sense, for they had been predominantly artists of *living*. The art of living is praxis. *Praxis* dominates *theoria* in precisely that special field of *living-as-lived-experience*. After all, Stoicism had been a “theory of praxis”, and, hence, a contradiction in terms that the masses could not swallow up, so they turned toward the easier path offered by faith, and hence the widespread appeal of the Abrahamic religions. Was Borges a stoic? Possibly, but not as a person. He was a Stoic in the capacity of a budding ontologist, and there he excelled other post-War philosophers. I think of Borges as the first great philosopher coming after Heidegger. In order to understand men such as Guattari or Deleuze or Foucault, you must go through people like Beckett [77,87] and Borges. Poe and Beckett and Borges as metaphysicians. Art making ideas by images. Art molding the real via the imaginary logos of the idea? No, not really, it has never been sanguinely Platonic with the three great postmodernists. Poe, Beckett, and Borges are all anti-Platonists in and through. They loathe the idea, they abhor the subject, and there is nothing they love as much as that delightful concrete abstraction of the singular erupting event.

7. Nature, Ontology, and History

Our provisional formula: The Philosopher is composed of the meeting of three lines of attacks, thinking, art, and mathematics. However, the thinker, being one of the three personas dwelling in the philosopher, is very different from the Thinker. The Thinker is above the philosopher, while the latter comprises the thinker. The Thinker and the thinker are then mediated by the philosopher. The Thinker is sometimes projected onto universal functional categories, such as God, the Prophet, the People, and the Absolute. Each time we represent the Thinker we lose contact with the real, for the real is not the opposite to the fictitious or imaginary, but is linked to topologically-driven categories like the global, the entire, the total, the collective, and the holistic in nature as such. The Real and the real do not correspond to the Thinker and the thinker, though it is good to act as if they are, at least occasionally. The Thinker belongs to the dominion of the religious; hence, at the moment, ontology is not directly concerned with the treacherous machinations of the Big Think and its vicissitudes. In other words, our main subject of investigation is the concept of nature, and the essence of the natural is the ontological as such. The Thinker searches for

ultimate answers, for example, the metaphysics of being or the cosmology of life; but while we should make some contact with problematic fields of inquiry like these, they do not in any way dominate our thinking process. Thinking is to be understood here as a provision falling under anti-globalist dicta, set not by the Thinker but the thinker, where the latter is subsumed under philosophy. Consequently, we are all philosophers, and the philosophy of nature is a return to philosophy in the *ancient* sense developed by the Egyptians and the Ionian Greeks. This is the *historical* sense of ontology that we would like to touch on here.

Life is perfectly capable of totally withdrawing into the background of nature. Experience then ceases to be lived experience, transforming instead into natural experience. What is this latter mode of experiencing the real? Can we call it feeling, or does it have anything to do with tonalities of being? As always, ontology replaces religion, the key to achieving this being a full embrace of philosophy, not faith. We think by “using” our brain as a mind, but the mind thinks out our very plan of existence as holistic human beings. Being is thought by mind, and mind resides in nature [85,115]. Life is an expression of an underlying, non-personal noological force, a feeling-tone that is attached to neither psyche nor ego nor consciousness [103]. Life and mind are one in nature [20]. Nature is not passive matter. Matter is infused with life, form, soul, *Nous*, intellect. The problem resides in the neoplatonist abuse of this theory [93], not in the theory as such. Ontology needs to start looking into the material that mysticism, Sufism, and religions have been *exploiting* for millennia. Their core faith-based doctrines are now *philosophically* irrelevant and sometimes even bankrupt; but some of the arsenals they have been deploying in their fierce battle against philosophy are thoroughly reliable and might even be serviceable to thinkers and free spirits. No, those ideas were originally created by artists, myth-makers, and soul-searchers alike (the writers of Gilgamesh, the Egyptian Book of the Dead, Homer, Hesiod, and so on). Therefore, we only see that religion and mysticism need to surrender back to philosophy what already belonged to the philosopher, and the latter can walk out unburdened by guilt and even become positively enchanted, for only then he will become a true free thinker. We love philosophy, but, alas, she is not winning hearts. Hearts cannot be persuaded by thinking intellects. This is why Greekness have gradually faded out as a cultural life force, incrementally replaced by the Abrahamic religions, Buddhism, and capitalism. Worse, even the magnificent *Koine* of Hellas had gone blank after its widespread cancerous disuse, misuse, and abuse in modern tongues. The same happened before with Aramaic, Sanskrit, Latin [116], and is now taking place again with the other few remaining spoken ancient languages (like Arabic) that are being eroded through natural language change [117] and the progressive commercialization and urbanization of modern society greatly accelerated by the global transition to consumerism and mass culture [118,119]. The forces of time cannot be reversed. The erosion of tradition is unidirectional. We just sit there and watch in horror the destruction of the past dealt by the present, all at the same time while bewildered by the chaotic manner in which some unformed latent future begins to emerge out of the aleatory conjunctures and mutations of historical evolution.

There is a need to reconquer Antiquity, the ancient way of being here and there, travelling back in time to even before the Stoics, for only at the location of such strange, distant primogenitors one may find enough meat and milk to nourish his starved intellect. The Greeks themselves are not enough; we must dig deeper into the older Egypto-Sumero-Akkadian historico-cultural strata, the earliest deposits of civilization and organized thinking as such. We need to learn how to learn from people such as the Phoenicians, who, acting first as mediators between Mesopotamia and Egypt, East and West, had effected the first major grand synthesis of the Egypto-Mesopotamian complex, starting by inventing the alphabet, just to inaugurate a series of discoveries that we still do not fully appreciate or even recognize, hidden landmarks scattered throughout the large-scale structure of the history of ideas [117,120]. Then, backward, you retrace your steps in reverse to rejoin the present, pushing forward, indifferent, only passing to the futurity of everything that was or will be, vanishing. Mind, ascending; thoughts supreme. Where is everyone? The collective *Geist* of Mother Nature, is *that* you? Not really, for something tiny and novel is taking

shape, an abstract materialistic machine, a diagrammatic schema for particle-signs is taking over, rising, then vanishing into Earth, only to form and rise again [11,53]. So from the inception of civilization in the Urstaat of Mesopotamia [52,121–123] to the dissolution of modernity in integrated world capitalism [51,124], what is happening is that we learn how Mind as Nous remains relevant, brutal, and astonishingly effective.

When we equate life with Mind with Nature [85], the intent is not to advocate some form of a return to anthropomorphism; not at all, for the latter position is nothing but *the* signature of idealism, Neoplatonism, and Western thinking in general [83]. Postmodernism, including its early roots, say some constructions found in Schopenhauer for example, is to a large degree a non-Western intellectual movement that had arisen recently in the West only after the universal war that destroyed Europe and hence the West as such. It is quite insane to believe that some European thinkers during the last two centuries have independently discovered what Asiatic thinkers, for instance Buddhists, have already directly sensed and known for thousands of years. In our conception of the history of ideas, multiple *independent* inventions by unconnected people is not a very serious hypothesis, for it seems somehow ideas *can* propagate and travel long distances even without the presence of those conventional physical and social pathways of communication and cultural exchange typically presupposed in circumstances like these. An idea is invented only once, and then it spreads everywhere like a pandemic where the process of *infection* in the latter is played by *imitation* in the former. Creative ideas *are* infectious. As Nietzsche wrote in the *Will to Power* notebooks, Life's main trait is its desire to *assimilate* anything that falls into its domain, re-adapting it for its own use (and misuse). Jung, probably the first to realize this, was forced by purely empirical historical and chronological data to postulate the existence of a universal memory, the collective unconscious, into which various traces of accumulated group experience could be safely deposited for potential redeployment by future generations [125–129]. Shortly before Jung, Bergson, it now appears to us, suggested something similar, though on a somehow vaguer grounds. Within this context, the concept of *onto-memory* had emerged through the unique manner in which the past is infused—by a special projective process—into the present, then passing over to futurity [130]. Heidegger would develop the abstract conception of *temporality*, already considered by previous thinkers like Bergson and Kierkegaard, but now elevating it to a much wider historical framework [9,131]. The Platonist idea, then, giving in to authentic post-Aristotelian ontological structures. Instead of talking about a community of Platonic Ideals populating some exterior ethereal realm, Heidegger and Jung had worked out two alternative formulations that are as breathtaking as they are mutually distinct. Jung thought mainly as a historian of culture and civilization, while Heidegger remained within the very abstract (ideological?) sphere of a post-metaphysical critique of the very possibility of metaphysics as such, toying, therefore, mainly with *ideas*, rather than cultures or civilizations [104]. Against both we contrast Hegelian idealism [132], which conflated historical ideas with the purely chronological advance of “spirit” or *Geist* [133], a German expression of ‘culture’ (among others). Heidegger and Jung, being inherently postmodernists, have stood against the reactionary authoritarian appeal of the Hegelian Supreme, which they, rightly, saw as the last death spasm of idealism proper. Life now *can* be seen as the history of mind, but not in the subjective garb of Cartesianism, Kantianism, Hegelinaism, Husserlism, and so on. It is the *later* Heidegger who discoursed on Thinking in the deepest and richest ontological sense of the term that we have experienced in the history of philosophy-as-thinking so far, proclaiming that *to think* is the most essential structure of authentic being [47]. However, this happens precisely when we refuse to think in the mode of a personalistic objectified subject, but through the onto-phenomenological method of onto-seeing. This onto-seeing is not the Hegelian seeing of the Other as a reflection of the subject's gazing eye. There is no self-identical pole emanating essence and supplying the idea with its individualistic cover. Onto-seeing and historico-seeing, the Heideggerian and Jungian ways of thinking, are modalities of being-with or communal becoming-self in the presence of the other. Seeing is grasping. Life is that which reaches out into the other, soaking it in, and then

producing the compounded “nonpersonalistic person” whose main domain of genesis is that which we call *subjectivization*. The other is not another person. The presence or absence of personalities is not the major issue here. The entire story is ontological. Humans are late, optional arrivals at the orb of lived existence. Everything in the struggle to grasp life in nature can be reduced to that furious interplay between the mind and the other, not in the form of I-You relationship (idealism’s signature ontological structure), but more in the shape taken by interactions between non-objectified mental acts and external envioning fields. The other is a *field* of action, and the mental is not the organism’s mind, but the detached, free-floating thinking process in nature that may later evolve—accidentally—to become a fully-developed human mind, the latter being contingent and secondary. In other words, nature is conceivable without humans, but incomprehensible without mind.

8. Space, Process, Postmodernism, and the Rhizome

The process of becoming in nature is governed by “laws” that are neither physical nor chemical nor biological, but in the main ontological, though not entirely mathematical. It is certain that such “laws” are not computational, in spite of the fact that by being ontological they can be taken for something formal. Formal is not formalistic. Ontology, even in its most abstract mode that we call *mathematics* or *mathematical philosophy*, cannot be considered purely analytical or axiomatic. Mathematics and ontology are both rooted in life. What we do and see while living in the capacity of being humans reflects and shapes our understanding of being in the world. I think, therefore I live. Life is the thinking process in nature. Or thinking is creating. Or creating is production, the production of the new, the becoming other of the incomplete self striving for something transcending its own limited existence. The transition from the local to the global, the slow but confident drift from the small toward the large: *that* is the crux of life. We become who we are only by becoming others. We love by creating, never by staying in the same place with eyes fixed only on the banal and the familiar. The new philosophy must learn how to adapt itself to the rules of being and becoming. Even chaos proceeds under its own gravity. Metaphysics and physics work together, Nietzsche knew this very well, just read his notebooks. The mystic thinks that we do not love life, but life loves us. They say that life is nothing but supreme love. The pre-Platonic thinkers thought for us this mother of all thoughts. When the Greeks entered the scene, it was already “in the air”. However, what does mysticism and organized religions contribute in this regard? What is Love? What is cosmic sympathy? What is that if nothing but Heideggerian care (*Sorge*) [9]? Well, will that lead us into light? What if life is nothing but Mind, and Mind is merely the process of thinking in nature? How can you see the transition from the Early Heidegger’s concept of Care [9,131] to the Late Heidegger’s concept of Thinking [47]? We started above by reflecting on mind and nature only to end up invoking more profound concepts such as *process* and *movement*.

However, this last conclusion does *not* bring us closer to what modern science understands by the term ‘physics’ (certainly not Greek *physis* [134]). The concept of *movement*, ontologically speaking, is considerably more general (and more interesting) than physical displacements taking place in abstract Euclidean space. We think of pure motion free of dimensions and directions [135], something in line with an *onto-phenomenological* reading of the young Aristotle, for instance the one who penned *Physics* [66,67]. The new philosophy can substantially learn something from Heidegger, who, in turn, struggled hard to learn from the Greeks; a contemporary thinker attempting to probe ancient Greek thinking using his own modern grasp of the German language. Yet it is not about linguistics or philology, but the encounter will shape (or at least modify) the entire course of the history of ideas when viewed from our present vantagepoint. *Change* and *movement* are primitive or elemental ontological concepts that cannot be explained away by referring to some absolute background space. When Heidegger reopened the Aristotelian discourse of physics and motion, he effectively completed what Leibniz [46,136,137], Nietzsche [5–7,94], and Bergson [130,135,138] had just started: Revolutionizing physics by turning away from static Parmenidean Being, facing instead the *dynamic* perpetual flux of becoming: Philoso-

phy becomes ontology; and ontology is a theory, or meta-theory, of dynamic vicissitude and metamorphoses: Yes, everything is capable of transforming into anything else; no hierarchical structuration of Being into a sequential chain of beings; neither branching, nor bifurcation, nor tree-like structures are to be posited as the ultimate blueprint of evolution and progress; no centralization by a Universal Signifier, nor top-down consolidation of diversity and change. What is happening here is best explained by the metaphor of endless connectors multiplying in all directions and propagating “in infinite speed” by making sure that every locus of being is conditioned by and is conditioning other loci corresponding to other beings. Images of the global Bakhtinian Carnavalesque [139,140], or the Deleuzo-Guattarian *Rhizome* [53], immediately leap into our mind’s eyes while trying to fathom this post-idealistic ontology of nature. What is this “connection” or “pathway” latent in the concept of the rhizome? What is implied by going from “here” to “there”? However, there is no essential “place” or “position”, because Euclidean space, and the very psychic-mental endowment that made the concept of space itself possible, are both under attack at the postmodern moment. Philosophy will annihilate sensation, perception, and introspection, only to replace them by *ontological* “feeling” and non-personal thinking processes, the ultimate goal being the erection of non-subjective, non-signifying, non-semiotic, non-idealistic, non-universalist orders [52,53]. It is precisely the unwavering negation of referential and canonical meaning, the destruction of grammaticality and axiomatic systematization, what ontology is after. However, this cannot happen in one happy evening, the Night of Philosophy being so long and gloomy; yet there is no escape, one must begin anew, though after taking up and assimilating what has already been attained by past thinkers. Nietzsche and Bergson, Heidegger and Jung, they only pointed out latent *directions*, but never formulated *systems*. Artists such as Mann and Borges kick-started their illustrious careers by first shaking up the entire existing tradition from *outside* academic philosophy. Nevertheless, their lifeworks have been unable to reach their natural climax points, remaining, in the main, not fully conclusive.

Now, all of the key terms discussed in this Section so far, where each one can be seen as finely capturing a subtle gradation in the infernal spectrum of the ontological incandescence of *dynamism* (for example, say to yourself: ‘movement’, ‘direction’, ‘pathway’, ‘position’, ‘place’), would betray, on its own, and whenever that term is *not* grasped through the ever-shifting dynamic flux of Bergsonian processuality, the untold depths of postmodernist *Space*, the *Spatium*, *Topos*; but *not* the hallucinatory murmur of Foucault’s and Joyce’s time. This moment of postmodernity has a very specific tag name: Deleuze and Guattari. However, contrary to this recently canonized position [53], we struggle to resist the temptation to devour their sometime overtly *spatialized* noological pictures and images of thought. Their philosophies of nature are grounded in the ontological re-appropriation of the concept of *cartography*, and hence, to our judgement, is still not radical enough for today’s needs. The situation is similar to Peirce’s [141] and Guattari’s [51] concept of the *diagram*, which remains bound to the ecstasy of space and its associated atmosphere of spatialization and positioning. Naturally, there is the legitimate question regarding whether there could ever exist any philosopher capable of completely and fully breaking away from space representations. It could be, it is sometimes argued, that the very essence of our thinking—whether pre- or post-modernist—is spatial in and through. For instance, one may imagine a Kantian reconstruction of the *a priori* schema of understanding in which spatiality and temporality play the major ontological role. Although modernism has toyed with temporality, postmodernism certainly appears to be embracing space. For example, *Being and Time* [9] may be readily viewed as an ontology of space [142], even while most of the explicit text appears to be dealing with time and temporality. In the case of Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari, the turn toward space is simply the major pronounced theme to be found in their works. However, the most advanced and sophisticated form that this return to space has achieved so far, namely that of the *rhizome* [53], cannot be considered a complete success in its own. Although rhizomatic connections must not be understood as some sort of a hypostatized grid in Euclidean space, such ontologized networks remain

faithful to the concept of the *map* espoused by the new style of cartographic thinking so characteristic of French Theory [51]. The goal in our case will be leaning more toward Heidegger's *dynamism* by divesting ourselves of rhizomes altogether for the sake of *processuality* and *openness*; or at least attempting to surpass rhizomatic thought by upgrading the structure into the next, higher-up level in the ramified hierarchy of its deterritorialized ontological types. Being is not structured like a map, but is more akin to the process of *changing* existing connections. The rhizome is only a *transitory* stage giving rise to *another* rhizome, but what remains most fundamental is the *metamorphoses* of one such rhizome to others. *Transformism* and *modifiability* constitute then the hallmarks of this new ontology of nature, something that was already foreseen by early thinkers, such as Heraclitus [143,144] and Aristotle [145] in antiquity, or Leibniz [46] and Lamarck [146] in modernity.

9. Conclusions

Philosophy is metaphysics. Metaphysics is old-fashioned philosophy. After Kant, who is doing metaphysics anyway? the question goes. Heidegger and the invention of postmetaphysical thinking. The cheap recapture of the same (the Frankfurt School): Adorno [147], Habermas [148–150], and company [151,152]. Well, where are we now? Can we rethink the Heideggerian original move? Can we identify his impact on this entire line of thinking? It is hard enough to be a philosopher, so imagine becoming a metaphysician. In the being-historical thinking that Heidegger named *beyng* [10,153], one finds himself facing the impossible moment of interrogating thinking as such. Then, there was that strange projected, “metaphysically delayed encounter” with the Future Ones, or the Last Gods, Those Yet To Come, the familiar eschatological Centaurs always supposedly “awaiting” us at some point in the future constantly evading our attempt to pin it down. Or ponder Heidegger's Name of those gods-who-are-not-with-us, will *never* become-present-in-time, probably an onto-theological construction that is inherently negative by design since it aims at overcoming its own concept of ontology by the very construction evoked as such. Who are those Gods predicted by Heidegger, in the Fourfold, with Earth, sky, humans, and others? [10,14,154,155]. That does not imply that we know what we are doing, but it is too bad to the degree of leaving you dazzled, perplexed, hollow, and impaired. Eternally. Where after that? What does philosophy do for you? Does it make you a better person? Hardly so? Then guess what: We quit. Quit being what? A philosopher? However, you have never been one. Then life can continue to move on, without us, we, Nietzsche's alleged Free Spirits. The problem is this: Heidegger, and before him Nietzsche, unknowingly betrayed philosophy by attempting to integrate it with theology. They did this though both were critical of Hegel, the ultimate Western theologian. Philosophy is not religion. Religion and philosophy are two parallel developments that sometimes inter-cross and meet throughout their respective itineraries, but such occasional joining-in-together along intersecting lines of flight need not deceive us into thinking of them as identical or even similar. Philosophy and religions are rivals. Heidegger and Nietzsche committed a great mistake: they taught us how to think, true enough, but their eyes were fixed on the ultimate goal of replacing the Christian lifeworld by a new one, a fresh “spiritual” venue that, in fact, has more to do with *paganism* than anything else. Reality is not continuous with the religious outlook. Reality is brutal, savage, and wild; religion is dreamy, otherworldly, and utopian. Reality and religion meet in the violent moment of conversion and war. Philosophy has nothing to do with the machinations of conversion and war. Philosophy is pure but not simple; religion is incoherent and simplistic. Religion is the doctrine of light; philosophy is the experience of deep solitude. Christianity speaks of love, and philosophy counteracts by withdrawing to the interiors of nature's mind. The philosopher lives in nature; the religious dwells in his God's kingdom. The *topos* of thinking is the abode of philosophizing. Clergymen relive betrayal and despair, re-enacting their own tragedy, hence foretelling their inevitable doom. This is why Heidegger and Nietzsche erred: They thought it is possible to salvage the religious by a home-going-back embrace of the pre-Platonic Greeks. Did they know about those who

preceded the Greeks? Did they learn of you and me? We, humans dwelling in the future of their world, those passing through wars and social collapse, surrounded by the failed progeny of Heidegger-and-Nietzsche's time, do we feel safe, or even relevant? However, why "doing philosophy"? Certainly not in order to merge with the Godhead of a new world-theology; no, we are not Hegels or Augustines, for at least we do possess the courage to register our differences with respect to Heidegger and Nietzsche. Philosophy proceeds in the non-linear form of a strange segmented, meandering zigzag between traversing the abyss separating the thinker's private dwellings and his environing Socius, a love-and-hate relationship that, if left unhinged, may eventually lead to the destruction of the particular human being residing in the philosopher's thinking machine. We cannot think like Heidegger. Heidegger and Nietzsche knew what is at stake in thinking. Well, who were they? Other fellow travellers on the same path? Maybe not, maybe this life is irrelevant, maybe it is immoral and insidious. However, philosophy always manages to press forward, propelled by its own force, indifferent to that which lies outside its own private sphere. This is why the postmodern thinker despises subjectivity and representation and Hegel: Life as such is a fundamentally non-subjective unconscious drive toward that which does not resemble the self. To re-establish philosophy on new grounds, we must annihilate the vicious circle of idealism once and for all. There is no self; there is no ownmost self; there is no I-hood; there is no ego; there is no consciousness. There are persons, posthuman persona without subjects. The self surrendered to its creators, the human power lurking behind anthropomorphism. In place of that, we hail the new and different, philosophy becoming the destruction of the familiar and intimate in you and me. How can we accomplish this? Not by praying, not through world-theology building, but rather via the uncontested reasoning of the collective impulse toward creative advance and spontaneous production of the non-identical. Avoid erecting supreme points of reference. Evade becoming too close to your subject of study. Become detached, fear no god, and plunge yourself right into the heart of the divine. This is how we dream the other end, or this is how we picture immortality without eternity.

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