

English translation of Ch. 1 of the book: Carlo Cellucci, *Perché ancora la filosofia* [*Why Still Philosophy*], Laterza, Rome 2008.

# 1

## The Heuristic View

*And the Limitations of Analytic Philosophy*

### 1. *What is Philosophy?*

Every philosophy book should begin by stating on what view of philosophy it is based, for this would permit the reader to realize immediately what sort of book he has to deal with.

This is what this first chapter does, listing the characters that philosophy should have and comparing them with those of analytic philosophy, since the latter is the kind of philosophy which is still the most widespread in the world.

### 2. *Philosophy and the World*

Philosophy is an inquiry into the world. It is aimed at dealing with major issues, essential in the sense of science, and is justified only insofar as it deals with them.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which problems of this kind do not exist.

For example, Wittgenstein states that “according to the old conception – for instance that of the (great) western philosophers – there have been two kinds of problems in the scientific sense: the essential, great, universal ones, and the non-essential, quasi-accidental problems. We, on the other hand, hold that there are no *great* essential problems in the sense of science.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, “philosophy is a tool which is useful only against philosophers.”<sup>2</sup>

But, if in philosophy there are no *great* essential problems in the sense of science, if philosophy deals only with small inessential problems, if it a tool which is useful only against philosophers, why should one continue to practice it?

Russell himself, while being one of the acknowledged fathers of analytic philosophy, complains that, while “philosophers from Thales onwards have tried to understand the world” and, “even when they have failed, they have supplied material to their successors and an incentive to new efforts,” one cannot say that analytic “philosophy is carrying on this tradition.”<sup>3</sup> It seems “to have abandoned, without necessity, that grave and important task which philosophy throughout the ages has hitherto pursued.”<sup>4</sup> It “seems to concern itself, not with the world and our relation to it, but only with the different ways in which silly people can say silly

<sup>1</sup> Wittgenstein 2005, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Wittgenstein 1932–33, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Russell 1997c, p. 170.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

things. If this is all that philosophy has to offer, I cannot think that it is a worthy subject of study.”<sup>5</sup>

Some analytic philosophers acknowledge that philosophy should give answers to deep questions, questions of great importance for the understanding of the world, and that philosophy is nothing if does not try to do so. But they claim that philosophy is incapable of giving such answers.

For example, Dummett states that the layman “expects philosophers to answer deep questions of great import for an understanding of the world,” and “the layman is quite right: if philosophy does not aim at answering such questions, it is worth nothing.”<sup>6</sup> The layman, however, “finds most writing by philosophers of the analytic school disconcertingly remote from these concerns. Their writing treat” of matters “that apparently have no bearing on the great questions with which philosophy ought to deal.”<sup>7</sup> This complaint is unjustified since “philosophy can take us no further than enabling us to command a clear view of the concepts by means of which we think about the world.”<sup>8</sup>

But if philosophy is incapable of giving answers to deep questions, questions of great importance for the understanding of the world, how can one then avoid concluding that philosophy is worth nothing, that it is only a crossroads of many routes leading nowhere, and that therefore “philosophers are half-dead already”?<sup>9</sup>

### 3. *Philosophy and Globality*

Philosophy provides a global view. It is not limited to sectorial questions, so there cannot be a philosophy of mathematics alone, or physics alone, or biology alone, and so on.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which philosophers must confine themselves to sectorial questions.

For example, Carnap says that the single individual can no longer “erect in one bold stroke an entire system of philosophy,” but must confine himself to sectorial questions because, “if in the philosophical work we will entrust the single individual a particular task only, as it happens in scientific specialization,” then we “gain knowledge and knowledge in a slow and cautious construction, and each contributes what he can justify only.”<sup>10</sup>

But, by confining themselves to sectorial questions, analytic philosophers have no overall plan. This leads them to focus on smaller and smaller questions, thus confirming the motto: Some people know more and more about less and less, until they know everything about nothing, and these are the philosophers.

Analytic philosophy uses the Socratic method of questions and answers, but preserves only its outward form, not the substance, that is, the serious search for general definitions. There is no evidence that a pedantic work on sectorial questions may lead to what is essential. By such work, as Plato says, one risks being “only a word maker, incapable of carrying out any work.”<sup>11</sup>

Contrary to the claims of analytic philosophy, philosophers cannot confine themselves to sectorial questions, they must give a global view.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Dummett 1991, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Williams 2001, p. 12, footnote 6.

<sup>10</sup> Carnap 1979, p. XIX.

<sup>11</sup> Plato, *Letters*, VII 328 c 5–6.

Again as Plato says, “anyone who can have a global view is a philosopher, and anyone who can’t isn’t.”<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. *Centrality of Questions About Knowledge*

Being an inquiry into the world, philosophy aims primarily at knowledge. Therefore, questions about knowledge are central in philosophy and have priority over all other philosophical questions.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which questions about knowledge are not central in philosophy.

For example, Searle states that “it seems reasonable that in the seventeenth century” philosophers “took epistemology as the central element of the entire philosophical enterprise, because while they were in the midst of a scientific revolution, at the same time the possibility of certain, objective, universal knowledge seemed problematic.”<sup>13</sup> For such reason “we had three and a half centuries in which epistemology was at the center of philosophy.”<sup>14</sup> But today, “because of the sheer growth of certain, objective, and universal knowledge, the possibility of knowledge is no longer a central question in philosophy,” so epistemological questions no longer “lie at the heart of the philosophical enterprise.”<sup>15</sup>

But these statements are unjustified because they reduce the questions about knowledge to the question of the possibility of certain, objective, universal knowledge. This is proper of a particular view of knowledge, the foundationalist view which, as we shall see, is untenable. That it is untenable means that it is unwarranted to say that the questions about knowledge are no longer central in philosophy. Simply, they do not consist in the question of the possibility of certain, objective, universal knowledge.

#### 5. *Continuity with Sciences*

Philosophy is continuous with sciences. The kind of knowledge at which it aims does not essentially differ from scientific knowledge and is not limited to any field of knowledge. Therefore, the objectives of philosophy are not essentially different from those of the sciences, and philosophy is a kind of activity which is not essentially different from the sciences.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which the methods, objectives and results of philosophy are completely different from those of the sciences. Unlike the sciences, philosophy needs no input from experience, it requires only thought.

For example, Dummett says that for Wittgenstein “philosophy stands in complete contrast with sciences: its methods wholly diverge from those of science, and its objective differs to an equal extent. Probably most philosophers practicing today would agree with this, and would add that the results of philosophy differ fundamentally in character from those of the sciences.”<sup>16</sup> Like mathematics, philosophy is “a discipline that makes no observations, conducts no experiments, and needs no input from experience: an armchair subject, requiring only thought.”<sup>17</sup>

But if the methods, objectives and results of philosophy are completely different in character from those of sciences, if philosophy needs no input from experience and requires only thought, how could it

<sup>12</sup> Plato, *Republic*, VII 537 c 7.

<sup>13</sup> Searle 2008, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Dummett 2010, 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

possibly contribute to the knowledge of reality? And, if it doesn't, why should one continue to practice it?

Analytic philosophers themselves seem sometimes aware of the risks of their position, but do not draw the necessary consequences from it.

For example, Dennett – for which, as for Dummett, “philosophy is an a priori discipline, like mathematics,” which “excuses philosophers from spending tedious hours in the lab or the field” – acknowledges that “many projects in contemporary philosophy are artifactual puzzles of no abiding significance.”<sup>18</sup> But the only indication he provides to test whether one’s own philosophical work is not of that kind, is “seeing if folks outside philosophy, or bright undergraduates, can be made to care.”<sup>19</sup> And he himself acknowledges that such tests are “not definitive.”<sup>20</sup>

Contrary to the claims of analytic philosophy, philosophy is not a discipline which needs no input from experience and requires only thought. Not even mathematics is such a discipline. Philosophical work is important only if it deals with major problems, essential, in the sense of science, and these need inputs from experience.

Dummett criticizes the view that philosophy is continuous with sciences using the argument that such view is a form of scientism, where “scientism is the disposition to regard the natural sciences as the only true channel of knowledge.”<sup>21</sup> It implies that “the idea that philosophy has a subject matter or a method of its own must be discarded: if it is to contribute to knowledge at all, it must be continuous with the natural sciences.”<sup>22</sup> Thus the task of philosophy reduces “to that of adding ornamentation to the theories of the scientists.”<sup>23</sup>

But saying that philosophy is continuous with the sciences does not amount to considering the presently existing sciences as the only real source of knowledge, nor to reduce the task of philosophy to the addition of ornamental elements to the theories produced by scientists. There are areas of experience which the presently existing sciences are incapable of dealing with. Dealing with them requires new ideas, not devised by any of the presently existing sciences, and it is the task of philosophy to do that. In this sense, the objectives of philosophy are not essentially different from those of the sciences, and philosophy is an activity that is not essentially different from the sciences. Therefore it needs inputs from experience and does not require only thought. Depending on the latter alone we could at most reformulate in other terms what we already know. But philosophy must deal with what we do not already know, otherwise it is pedantry.

## *6. Making Use of Results of Sciences*

Philosophy makes use of results of sciences. This is not accessory to it, on the contrary it is essential to its progress. For philosophy mainly aims at knowledge, and to acquire it must start from the presently existing knowledge.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which scientific knowledge is not relevant to philosophy. Progress in the latter is independent of any scientific discovery.

<sup>18</sup> Dennett 2006, p. 39.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Dummett 2010, p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

For example, Wittgenstein states that “one might also give the name ‘philosophy’ to what is possible before all new discoveries and inventions.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore philosophy is independent of any scientific discovery, in particular “no mathematical discovery can advance it.”<sup>25</sup>

But if, in dealing with philosophical problems, no use is made of results of sciences, one ends up with repeating old idioms, neglecting that they are often based on an obsolete view of the world. This is not only acknowledged but even theorized by Wittgenstein who states that “no new words have to be used in philosophy – the old, ordinary words of language suffice.”<sup>26</sup>

Contrary to the claims of analytic philosophy, to deal with new philosophical problems one must make use of whatever is known, starting from results of the sciences, introducing new idioms adequate to the questions dealt with. Old idioms are based on common sense, which is a stratification of beliefs based on obsolete scientific theories, or simply on prejudices.

### *7. Method of Philosophy and Method of Sciences*

The method of philosophy is the same as that of sciences. This follows from the fact that, since philosophy is an activity which is not essentially different from the sciences, its method too cannot be different.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which the method of philosophy is different from that of the sciences. It consists in the analysis of propositions, which is grammatical analysis, therefore the method the philosophy is grammatical analysis.

For example, Wittgenstein says that, since philosophers are not aimed “at the same target as the scientists,” the philosophers’s “way of thinking is different from theirs.”<sup>27</sup> The aim of philosophy is the clarification of propositions by analysis, so its method is the analysis of propositions. Now, the analysis of propositions is grammatical analysis since “that proposition is completely logically analysed whose grammar has been completely clarified.”<sup>28</sup> For “essence is expressed by grammar.”<sup>29</sup> Therefore the method of philosophy is grammatical analysis, that is, “the clearly surveyable representation of grammatical facts.”<sup>30</sup>

Austin even claims that the method of philosophy consists in using a “dictionary – quite a concise one will do, but the use must be thorough.”<sup>31</sup>

As a matter of fact, the method of using a dictionary has been widely used not only within analytic philosophy but also within hermeneutic philosophy, where Heidegger and its epigones have sought the sense of Being in a Greek dictionary.

But the method of philosophy cannot be grammatical analysis because philosophy is an inquiry into the world, and grammatical analysis is inadequate to such an inquiry. For it is based on common sense, whose limitations have already been pointed out. The questions philosophy raises do not concern the use of language, they are questions about the world. As Kant points out, in those fields, “and especially in

<sup>24</sup> Wittgenstein 1958, I, § 126.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, I, § 124.

<sup>26</sup> Wittgenstein 2005, p. 309.

<sup>27</sup> Wittgenstein 1980, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Wittgenstein 2005, p. 308.

<sup>29</sup> Wittgenstein 1958, I, § 371.

<sup>30</sup> Wittgenstein 2005, p. 306.

<sup>31</sup> Austin 1970, p. 186.

philosophy, where a dispute has raged for a long time, at its basis there has never been merely a question of words, but always a genuine question of things.”<sup>32</sup>

#### 8. *Philosophy and the Search for New Knowledge*

Philosophy seeks new knowledge. Being and activity not essentially different from the sciences, seeking new knowledge is part of the deepest nature of philosophy.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which philosophy does not seek new knowledge, it merely wants to make us understand better what we already know.

For example Wittgenstein, concerning philosophy, says that “we do not seek to learn anything new by it.”<sup>33</sup> Philosophy has no impact on the growth of knowledge, “it leaves everything as it is.”<sup>34</sup> It “simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything.”<sup>35</sup>

But a philosophy thus meant has no reason to exist, and in fact analytic philosophy is unable to find any reason for its existence.

For example, Dummett points out that “the history of Western universities goes back 900 years” and “philosophy has always been one of the subjects taught and studied in them.”<sup>36</sup> But today philosophers “must count themselves extremely fortunate that the state, which funds many of the universities, is willing to pay that they may devote themselves to the pursuit of their subject,” for “it is by no means obvious that universities, and thus ultimately the state, should support philosophy but for” such “historical precedent.”<sup>37</sup> In fact, “when the first Western universities came into being,” philosophy “was not sharply differentiated from what we call ‘natural science’,” the “quest for truth was a single activity.”<sup>38</sup> It was then easy to find a justification for philosophy. But in the twentieth century “the distinction between philosophy and the natural sciences came to be generally admitted.”<sup>39</sup> Then, finding a justification for philosophy has become difficult. Indeed, “if universities had been an invention of the second half of the twentieth century, would anyone have thought to include philosophy among the subjects that they taught and studied? It seems very doubtful.”<sup>40</sup> It “would be easy to conclude that this is an anachronism.”<sup>41</sup>

This is the conclusion to which one is led by the assumption that philosophy does not seek new knowledge.

Contrary to Dummett’s belief, for universities and states it is convenient to finance philosophy because philosophy seeks new knowledge, it seeks it in fields of experience that the existing sciences are incapable of dealing with, and, whenever it finds new knowledge, this produces an advancement that can even have practical returns.

#### 9. *Philosophy and the Search for New Methods of Discovery*

<sup>32</sup> Kant 1900–, VIII, p. 152.

<sup>33</sup> Wittgenstein 1958, I, § 89.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, I, § 124.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, I, § 126.

<sup>36</sup> Dummett 2010, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

Philosophy seeks new discovery methods. Since it seeks new knowledge and nothing guarantees that new knowledge can be obtained by the existing methods, it is natural for it to seek new methods in order to obtain it.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which philosophy cannot seek new discovery methods for there are no such methods. The only way for finding new hypotheses is intuition.

For example, Hempel states that new hypotheses cannot be obtained by “any process of systematic inference.”<sup>42</sup> One may arrive at them only through “imaginative, insightful guessing.”<sup>43</sup>

Hempel supports this claim by referring to Kekulé who one evening, while sitting by a fire, sank into half-sleep and saw atoms fluttering before his eyes. Long chains often combined in a denser fashion, all in motion, twisting and turning like snakes, until one of the snakes seized its own tail. This suggested Kekulé the hypothesis that benzene forms a closed ring of six carbon atoms.



According to Hempel, Kekulé's case shows that, to solve a problem, scientists essentially depend on intuition, thanks to which only they may arrive at “the discovery of important, fruitful theories in empirical science.”<sup>44</sup>

But Kekulé's case does not show that. At Kekulé's time it was well known that the behavior of a molecule depended on its structure, and the structures already tried for benzene were inadequate. Therefore Kekulé was well aware of the need to find a new structure, and had already considered various possibilities on that regard. To see that a snake biting its tail formed a stable structure suggested him, by an analogical inference, the idea that a structure for benzene could be of the same kind.

That Kekulé saw a snake biting its tail in half-sleep is inessential, he could have seen it in an illustration. For the image of the *ouroboros* – a snake biting its tail – goes back to ancient Egypt and has always been widespread. Moreover, Kekulé put forward the hypothesis that the structure of benzene is a closed ring only after comparing the hypothesis with the existing data. Therefore, he formed his hypothesis through a rational process.

In addition, there is the question whether Kekulé's report of the event was reliable. It has been maintained that Kekulé made up the all episode.<sup>45</sup> This has been subject of some controversy.<sup>46</sup>

#### 10. *Philosophy and The Birth of New Sciences*

Philosophy tries unexplored routes and, by so doing, it may even give origin to new sciences. Its greatest value consists in this.

<sup>42</sup> Hempel 1966, p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> Ivi, p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> See Wotiz 1993.

<sup>46</sup> See Ramsay and Rocke 1984, Strunz 1993.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which philosophy cannot try unexplored routes nor can give origin to new sciences. Even less its greatest value consists in this.

For example, Dummett states that “no practicing philosopher would explain the value of the subject merely as a matrix out of which new disciplines could develop.”<sup>47</sup> Philosophy is “what is left when the disciplines to which it gave birth have left the parental home.”<sup>48</sup> For such reason “it was not until the nineteenth century that it made sense to ask for an example of a philosophical problem, as opposed to a problem of some other kind.”<sup>49</sup>

But, contrary to the claims of analytic philosophy, trying unexplored routes, possibly giving origin to new sciences, is part of the deepest nature of philosophy. This holds not only of the past centuries but also of the last one. Then, for example, the theoretical foundations of computer science originated from Turing’s attempt to analyze the computational behavior of humans. Cognitive science originated from the interaction between traditional philosophical speculation on mind and again Turing’s analysis. Bayesian statistics originated from the philosophical efforts to clarify what a rational belief is. And it is reasonable to expect that this will continue in the future.

Denying this, one deprives philosophy of its greatest attractive: the capability of moving on still vague and indeterminate grounds, which however, precisely for this reason, may be open to fruitful developments, and may even give rise to new sciences.

### 11. *Philosophy and History of Philosophy*

Philosophy makes use of the experience of philosophers of the past. This is an important experience which must be taken into account. For it may make us understand where certain ideas lead, avoiding us to try routes which have already revealed impracticable.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which philosophy cannot make any use of the experience of philosophers of the past.

For example, Wittgenstein states: “What has history to do with me? Mine is the first and only world! I want to report how I found the world. What others in the world have told me about the world is a very small and incidental part of my experience of the world.”<sup>50</sup> Philosophers must behave like a king “brought up in the belief that the world began with him.”<sup>51</sup>

Actually, in formulating problems and dealing with them, analytic philosophers behave exactly like that king, not only with respect to the philosophical tradition but also with respect to their own history. For each new generation of analytic philosophers considers only the problems and solutions it proposes, ignoring those of the previous generation. It ignores them not only in the sense that it overlooks them, but sometimes even in the stronger sense that it does not know them.

By so doing, analytic philosophers believe to behave like those scientists who, while knowing only the most recent literature in their field, can give a contribution to their discipline. But it is not so. For those scientists deal with questions posed by the world, though very limited and, being very limited, in some cases knowledge of the most recent

<sup>47</sup> Dummett 2010, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> Wittgenstein 1979, p. 82.

<sup>51</sup> Wittgenstein 1969, 92.

literature alone may be sufficient to deal with them. On the contrary, analytic philosophers who only know the most recent literature, do not deal with question posed by the world but only with puzzles posed by their next door colleagues, whose solution is irrelevant for an inquiry over the world.

### 12. *Conclusiveness of Solutions of Philosophical Problems*

A conclusive solution of philosophical problems is impossible. Their solutions are always temporary and are bound to be replaced sooner or later by others. Progress exists everywhere, even in philosophy.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which philosophical problems must be solvable once for all but their solution is no real progress. There is no real progress in philosophy because philosophy deals with language, which has remained essentially the same since the Greeks and hence leads us to raise the same questions again and again.

For example, Wittgenstein states that “philosophical problems must be solvable really completely, in contrast to all others.”<sup>52</sup> But their solution is no real progress, for all we are doing in philosophy is that we are destroying “houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stand.”<sup>53</sup> Thus there is no real progress in philosophy. Whoever complains about that, on the ground that “the same philosophical problems that occupied the Greeks keep occupying us,” does not understand that this is necessary, for “our language has remained the same and keeps seducing us into asking the same questions.”<sup>54</sup> And, as long as language will remain the same, “humans will continue to bump up against the same mysterious difficulties, and stare at something that no explanation seems able to remove.”<sup>55</sup>

But, contrary to the claims of analytic philosophy, a conclusive solution of philosophical problems is impossible, because philosophical problems, being problems about the world, are similar to scientific problems, and the latter cannot be solved conclusively. Each solution is based on hypotheses, and hence is always temporary and bound to be replaced by another one as new data arise.

Even allowing that language has remained essentially the same since the Greeks, and hence leads us to ask the same questions again and again, the world changes all the time, there are no two instants in which it is exactly the same. As Heraclitus said, the sun “is new each day.”<sup>56</sup> For that reason, it leads us to ask ever new questions.

In particular, it is unjustified to believe, as analytic philosophy does, that we can give conclusive solutions to philosophical problems by means of grammatical analysis. Dealing with philosophical problems by such a poor means is like going at them bald-headed.

### 13. *Philosophy and Professionalism*

Philosophy is not a professional activity for it has no specific field to investigate nor specific techniques of its own to use.

This view is opposed to that of analytic philosophy, according to which philosophy is a professional activity.

<sup>52</sup> Wittgenstein 2005, p. 310.

<sup>53</sup> Wittgenstein 1958, I, § 118.

<sup>54</sup> Wittgenstein 2005, p. 312.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Diels 1934, 22 B 6 (Eraclitus).

For example, Rescher states that contemporary analytic philosophy is characterized by “a growing professionalism based on a more rigorous formal training and a ‘publish or perish’ ethic.”<sup>57</sup> Throughout, “a high degree of scholarly competency and professionalism pervades the enterprise.”<sup>58</sup> Analytic philosophy “has become increasingly technical in character,” its “investigations make increasingly extensive use of the formal machinery of semantics, modal logic, compilation theory, learning theory, and so forth. Ever heavier theoretical armaments are brought to bear on ever smaller problem-targets.”<sup>59</sup>

The growing professionalism of analytic philosophy derives from its assumption that philosophy must be confined to sectorial questions. This has brought analytic philosophers to believe that in philosophy a Taylorian division of work is possible, which has led to its increasing technicalization.

However, as Rescher acknowledges, “the increasing technicalization of philosophy has been achieved at the expense of philosophy’s wider accessibility – and indeed even its accessibility to members of the profession.”<sup>60</sup> It has produced a new type of scholasticism, characterized by a pedantic argumentative style, made of dreary distinctions on insignificant minute questions, and incapable of giving any contribution to an inquiry into the world. And it has led to identify the initiation to philosophical work with the indoctrination in such argumentative style.

As Feyerabend points out, according to analytic philosophy, those who want to become philosophers “must be trained to repeat the tricks” after their instructors, “so that sometimes in the future they may perhaps be able to become trainers themselves, modifying the tricks a little here and there (this is called ‘original research’), and being equally stern in the propagation of their knowledge (this is called ‘professional conscience’).”<sup>61</sup>

But thus one does not become a philosopher, rather a sterile pedant. Taking refuge in professionalism is only a way of deluding oneself that one can make philosophy without the need to have original ideas.

Actually, a professional philosophy is impossible. A philosopher is not a professional in the same sense as a mathematician, or a physicist, or a biologist, for philosophy has no specific field of its own. Nor a philosopher is a professional in the same sense as a doctor, or a lawyer, or an engineer, for philosophy has no specific techniques of its own. A philosopher moves on an unexplored ground on which there is still no consolidated knowledge. In doing so, a philosopher has no inherited professionalism on which to rely on. Therefore a philosopher is, and always will be, a great amateur.

But precisely because a philosopher moves on an unexplored ground on which there is still no consolidated knowledge, philosophy is at the same time always exposed to the risk of failure but also capable of surprising developments. Just like those thanks to which, trying unexplored routes, through hazardous though sometimes fortunate moves, philosophy has originated new sciences.

#### 14. *The Heuristic View*

<sup>57</sup> Rescher 1993, pp. 721–722.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 723.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 731.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Feyerabend 1999, p. 386.

The characters listed above show on what view of philosophy this book is based. It may be called the ‘heuristic view’ for according to it the aim of philosophy is to search for new knowledge and new procedures of discovery.

A philosophy complying with such characters would permit to give an affirmative answer to the question raised in the Introduction – whether philosophy has dissolved itself into the sciences and is now a purely ornamental discipline, or can still be fruitful and what kind of philosophy can be such. A philosophy of this kind could be fruitful because it seeks new knowledge, it seeks it trying unexplored routes, and thus may even originate new sciences.

In the course of its history, philosophy has done so repeatedly, and to a philosophy capable to do so it would difficult to deny the attribute of being fruitful.

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