THE DICTATORSHIP OF VALUE[1] (TEACHING IN THE PLANETARY UNIVERSITY)[2]

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Santa Claus. *May I ask you a question?*
Death. *Go right ahead.*
SC. *What's the easiest thing to sell?*
D. *Knowledge.*
SC. *Knowledge – without understanding?*
D. *Correct.*
SC. *No.*
D. *Absolutely.*
SC. *But that's absurd!*
D. *Absurd – and also tragic; yet a fact.*
In this empty un-understanding world
anyone can sell knowledge; everybody wants knowledge,
and there's no price people won't pay to get it.
– Become a Scientist and your fortune's made.
SC. *Scientist?*
D. *Or, in plain English, a knowledge-salesman.*

(E.E. Cummings: *Santa Claus*)

A. Introduction

In every academic community on the planet, which is deemed worthy of its name and which merits its title, procedures for measuring both teaching and scientific research have been applied for many years. These pro-

[1] Translated from Italian by Holly Nathan in collaboration with the authors, who are responsible for the final version of the text. Notes marked with "*idg*" are by Ivo De Gennaro.

[2] In what sense do we speak, here, of the *planetary* university? This essay belongs to a more comprehensive reflection that has been developed in the context of teaching at Bocconi University, Milan. However, it delineates neither the situation of a single institution, nor a general picture obtained by induction starting from a variety of analogous observations. Rather, it attempts to seize, in the specific situation in which the authors have been operating, the traits that act upon university teaching once it lets itself actively be informed by the earth turned into a *planet*, i.e., in the words of common language, by the "globalized" earth.

cedures are based on the *format* of *evaluation.* Evaluation sustains and guides all institutional action, in every direction and in every respect, thus ensuring the very universality of the modern university.

It is, however, not difficult to see that the fundamental nature of evaluation consists not, as common sense is inclined to believe, in the capacity for *founding* the genuine becoming of university existence as a whole, but rather in the decided refusal of any questioning of *sense*.

By virtue of this refusal, the *format* allows for the smooth and unhindered operation of "quality control" processes of "scientific-educational products". These processes, in turn, answer the intimate *diktat* of our time: *the imposition, on human thinking, building and dwelling, of the exclusive character of operativity, i.e. a form of acting characterised by continuous increase in power* – a trait we indicate with the word outpowering.[3] We are speaking, not by chance, of «format». In this way, we intend to retain the essential in thought – namely, the fact that measuring through values remains solely pre-ordained to and informed by the calculation of performance, without any regard for the truth and the essence of what falls in its cone of light and under its command.

The *format* speaks in a final and unambiguous way: if, for example, we want to know (and here we mean inspect, monitor and test) the "qualitative trend of teaching", what is more logical and more natural than trusting first of all in the evaluation feedback of precisely those who were provided with the "didactic service", namely the students? Isn't evaluating the most clear – the most essential, most concrete, most objective – form of judging the effectiveness of a certain performance?

The idea that evaluating is the most concrete essence of judging seems obvious – so obvious that anybody who opposes, in general, any evaluation of their own work, would appear instantly as somebody who cannot

[3] For clarification of this concept, see Martin Heidegger: *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: Neske 1961), vol. II, p. 263 et seq.; Gino Zaccaria: *Lingua pensiero canto* (Pavia: Ibis 2010), p. 77 et seqq. On the relation between thinking through values and the will to power, see in this volume Ivo De Gennaro: «Nietzsche: Value and the Economy of the Will to Power». – Outpowering is being itself in as much as it is the fund and reserve, in one word: the stock, for the empowering of any being as such. (Note that here the prefix «out-» speaks as in outperforming, outgrowing, outdoing, etc. Outpowering places the accent on the trait of outdoing, surpassing in power, while overpowering means overcoming and subduing with superior power. Outpowering includes overpowering, where the latter is however only a means for the former and not an end in itself.)

bear judgement. On the other hand, even the mere question of the likelihood[4] of evaluating generates suspicion and even angry bewilderment.

But real judging has nothing to do with evaluating, and there is an abyss between the two. The Italian language teaches this. Tommaseo,[5] indeed, warns:

> *Valutare* (value, evaluate) is not figurative, except in corrupt and barbaric use: in its proper use, it indicates the determination of a value that can or must be paid in money. We evaluate in order to pay, to sell, to calculate, to compare the value of something to a sum of money.

The predominance of evaluating as a sure form of judgement is a fatal consequence (but at the same time a primary need) of the present-day autocracy of thinking through values. This mentality (which, as we will see below in Observation 4,[6] is the indispensable support to thinking through models) slyly imposes itself today as the only guide able to show us ways to know who we are and what we want in our work as teachers and scholars. By now, we know our actions only as a production of effects calculable according to their utility. Thinking through values (as it reduces man to a mere operative-evaluating subject, able to acknowledge something only as the object of his estimating) remains imprisoned in admitting every being only as a resource. So no longer can anything escape the calculating objectification in favour of the most unrestrained subjectifying, or: *nothing has sense and meaning if not recognizable and comprehensible within the subject-object relationship confined in the one*

[4] In this essay, we use the words «likely» and «likelihood» in a meaning that has nothing to do with mere probability, i.e. with the calculable chance of an event occurring. In other words, likely and likelihood do not pertain to the domain of contingency. Likely is the *promise* of something, i.e. its fair, fitting, suitable, seeming and becoming form, and therefore its essential vigour and capacity. What is likely is expected, but not in a contingent sense; rather, this expectation is the light in which something appears for what it is. For instance, when we say: «This athlete is the likely winner of the race», this is not to be understood in the sense that he has the biggest chances of coming in first, but that he shows certain traits of athletism that raise him above his competitors. Thus, the fact that our athlete *possibly* ends up not winning the race for some contingent reason will have no bearing on his being the *likely* winner. The likelihood of university teaching is the biding towardness and vigorous fitness (or conformity) of what this teaching consists in – it is what the mindful have in mind when they expect university teaching to be in a certain manner. The (un)likelihood of evaluating is its (wanting) fairness and essential capacity regarding that which it *pretends* to be, namely a true form of judging. *idg*

[5] The reference is to the famous Italian thesaurus by Niccolò Tommaseo (entry n. 3445).

[6] Cf. the "Additional Observations" at the end of the main text, p. 470 et seqq.

dimension of values – or, with a newly minted word that fits our present purpose: in the one *valorial* dimension.

Because of this, thinking through values remains blind to its own peculiar groundlessness, to the fact that in itself it has no metre for self-evaluation in the sense of principles, and therefore, in its mechanicalness, no self-awareness. Not having, by its very constitution, the likelihood of exhibiting *by itself* an origin or a principle upon which to draw,[7] thinking through values will entrench itself in this indigence up to the point that it asserts and enforces it as a universal measure and general paradigm, or, to stick to its code, as the value of every value.

Indigence is the undisputed prevalence of an essential lack: *the failing of the capacity for founding through an onset*. In a single motto: *indigence is insufficiency erected as universal law* – that insufficiency, in short, which usurps sufficiency itself, i.e. the order of free groundings and constitutive stresses of which it, as *in*sufficiency, constitutes the destitution. («Sufficiency», indeed, literally means: the capacity for determining and providing a grounding and necessary support in view of an accomplished end; sufficient is that which can withdraw in conceding; the word *sufficienza*, in old Italian, designated excellence in action as well as mindfulness and quick-wittedness.)

Under the one rule or norm of insufficiency, i.e. in its normality, nothing "is", nothing can make sense or exist, if it does not respond to the command of outpowering. Insufficiency indeed here means: increasing urgency of power. (With a "physical" image: insufficiency = system of forces in recurring deficit of power.) Now, this rule attributes value and validity only to process and effect, to the mere bringing about without beginning and end, origin and completeness, to mere results and products, in the oblivion of origins and provenances, of causes and principles. In this way, in the place where the simple and the original should reign, by virtue of the rule of insufficiency, the circuit of derivatives passed off as genuine, of counterfeits, of reproductions and of repetitions, of replicas and of re-workings can take over – in a word: *the circuit of multiform appearance turned everywhere into truth, and of truth reduced everywhere to mere semblance, or rather "devalued", according to a motto of Nietzsche, as «the last breath of a vaporising reality»*.

This is why – thus attaining finally the sense of the abyss, that is of the unlikely reciprocal translation, between judging and evaluating – we can

[7] In other words, thinking through values must inevitably presuppose the absoluteness of the unevaluable validity of evaluating.

say that thinking through values, with its typical calculating apparatus, constitutes the most violent renunciation of the faculty of judgement, that is of the discernment of what is true. So, while authentic judging consists in undertaking to *say* the sufficiency of what is right (i.e. distinguishing the truth from its distortion), judging reduced to evaluating is always resolved literally in ceding the word to the insufficiency of the valorial algorithm, hence: in denying the word as such, or rather the very speaking of language in what is most genuinely its own.

The above observations, given that they hit the mark, allow us to speak of current university teaching as a practice which is now forced to exist and to unfold within a real absolute regime: *the dictatorship of evaluation.* In what follows, we will limit ourselves to providing a hint of analysis of the *primary condition* of this constraint: the institutional adopting and implementing, in what has become a planetary university, of a *general pattern of teaching,* which, in the language of outpowering, is called the didactic model, and which pivots on the so-called "evaluation of teaching" on the part of the students, taken as undisputed opining subjects.

B. The Frame of the Didactic Model

What does it mean, for a scientific-educational institution, to regulate its own multi-disciplinary pedagogical practice in the light of a "didactic model"?

The model responds to the need to provide education with order and certainty. It is feared that disciplines, in the moment that they become taught subjects, lose the sense of belonging to a single educational goal; uniformity of intents appears as the best guarantee of pedagogical effectiveness. The model plays the part of balancing principle; model here means: organic framework. All scientific knowledge, free and autonomous in research, is willing to fit into a common didactic *format* in its own teaching. Now the single form of knowledge finds a new sense of being a discipline: it becomes a member of a structure, which requires coordination and direction. The model needs designers to plan its processes and supervisors delegated to monitoring correct implementation. It has the force of law.[8] In this way it helps the institution to reach its optimum performance.

[8] In the regime of insufficiency, organisation *as such* constitutes the only source of law.

But then, if everything is so clear and natural, why question the sense of adopting the didactic model?

Just the fact that this "clarity" does not require any reflection should make us suspect it. For something can be clear and seem natural, and at the same time be entirely false and misleading. Looking closely, indeed, here lies a fundamental question – a question that is inherent in the very nature of our scientific knowledge.

In order to envisage this question, let us start by noting the following: every scientific discipline is precluded the capacity for knowing, starting from itself and its procedures, its own *form of knowing*. For example, sociology cannot know its own essence, i.e. the constitutive character of its manner of knowing, by following its methodology of investigation; the same is true, naturally, for physics or mathematics: one cannot know itself physically, the other cannot know itself mathematically – and so on for each particular science.[9] If things are so, it necessarily follows that no scientific knowledge, using its *cognitive methodologies*, can access the nature of its own *teaching methodologies*. Thus two accesses are denied to each discipline *within itself*: *it cannot access its own essence of research, it cannot access its own essence of teaching*.

But – and here is the point – if these accesses remain *de jure* denied to single scientific knowledge, which knowledge can find them? Initially, we do not know how to answer. Thus there is the tendency to dismiss previous comments, noting that the "essences" are to be found only in the systems of philosophers, or to rely on some quick "epistemological reflection".[10] In any case, the confusion does not last long. In actual fact,

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[9] With reference to the internal limit of single science [see: Martin Heidegger: *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske ^{6}1990), pp. 60-63, and Martin Heidegger: *Scritti politici* (edited by Fançois Fédier; Italian edition by Gino Zaccaria) (Casale Monferrato: Piemme 1998), pp. 200-201] it could be objected that every science is always able to construct its own meta-language and use it to know itself (meta-sociology, meta-physics, meta-mathematics, etc.). Apart from the question of the origin of the particular meta-language, the fact remains that, once built, this meta-language will be able to know and clarify the argumentative modalities and perhaps the logical-formal principles of the science in question, but never its essence. We note, however, how philosophy, to be known in its *essential* sense, requires exclusively a *philosophical* clarification of its nature. Art also, if it is to be known for what it is, namely as a way of the institution of truth, requires, in relation to its essence, *artistic* knowledge. There is a singular relationship between art and philosophy, which the great thinkers have never ceased to investigate.

[10] A note is in order concerning the use of the word «essence» in this essay. In using this word, we are not taking a so-called "essentialist" position, nor, for that purpose, a position opposed to essentialism. What is indicated as essence belongs to an entirely different sphere than that of the metaphysical concept of essence. This different sphere,

we are already out of the difficulty: whether or not there is such essential knowledge has no importance on the operative-technical level. The proof is that we are always able to design a didactic model which is in itself coherent, and which, *de facto*, is entrusted with the task of directing and orienting (i.e. regulating) the pedagogical practice of *any* discipline relating to a scientific-educational institution. Even if this argument on the lack of essential or original knowledge were true, the mere feasibility of a didactic model – *as a general scheme of rules and criteria within which to activate multi-disciplinary training* – has by now filled any gap, real or presumed.

In fact, when the model starts to function, or rather, as is said, "reaches a steady state of working (at full performance)", and thus becomes "efficient", "well-oiled", any question related to the nature of that gap (starting with the preliminary question regarding its reality or presumption) is in turn devoid of meaning, because deemed unnecessary. On the other hand, if we question the model in relation to the groundedness (i.e. truth) of its assumptions, it answers now with deaf blows of effective achievements and decisive definitions, based on "it's all working now! everything is running!". *The model – by virtue of its tight closure – exempts all knowledge from the intimate drive to self-awareness*, thus relegating it to a sort of technical autism and insipid-performing idiotism. In this way, it reinforces the impression that the time for thinking has expired; all that is left is "action" – that continuous action, which will, however, be forever deprived of a space of true (i.e. free) decisions.

In relation to the quest to educate human beings to knowledge, and thus to professions, this game of filling in or ignoring the gaps in awareness through formal schemes (which are by their own nature without self-awareness) has disturbing, if not serious, consequences. Yet, as long

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which is much simpler and at the same time more concrete and more original, is the constitutive character of being (Latin *esse* = being). Let us call it *the native instress and temper* of being itself. This temper is in its turn spatial-temporal, where space and time are intended as original dimensions of sense. An English word that indicates fairly well the original spatial-temporal sense of being is the verb «to bide», which means both «to persist in time, to suffer time» and «to insist in space, to bear space». Thus, the "essence of scientific research" is not some general definition of it, but its simple biding, i.e. *the each time unique endurance of space-and-time in which scientific research consists*. – This said, for an appropriate understanding of what in this essay is referred to as essence, a sufficient insight into the above references is perhaps less important than the fact of paying attention to the unfolding of the path of thinking that the essay itself attempts to trace. *idg*

as *being* a man continues to glimmer in *functionary*-man, perhaps the call of sense and truth does not lose its likelihood.

Let us look again at the single scientific discipline. We have already said that it is constitutively denied independent access to its two essences of research and teaching. This double impediment is its internal *limit* – a limit which, however, is never a defect or a negative trait. It is, indeed, the exact opposite: it is in this very limit that lies the hidden source of the scientific vitality of a knowledge, in other words its passion for truth. *Only if left free to play in this dual limitation does a discipline remain problematic knowledge, and therefore a knowledge willing to let itself be based on its own scientific essence.* The fact that scientists and scholars do not speak of this constitutive nature of research proves nothing; the essential is almost always unspoken or not recognised. But the single scientist knows this well. What, for example, he "knows" about *his* teaching is basically simple: he, "by instinct" (therefore drawing on a sense that lies outside the objectivity of his investigations, but is equally rigorous) knows that his own pedagogical attempt will be richer, and so much more able to educate, the more it is involved in showing the pupil firstly the *problematic nature* of the thematic field and its objects, and then the ways to stand firm *in* the problem, especially after having found answers and solutions. A surprising trait is shown then: precisely *during* teaching, during educational engagement, the scholar gets close, in a unique way, to the essence of his science; therefore having every time the chance to become aware of the need to clarify this essence and therefore of the fact that its (scil. his science's) "language" and own methodologies are, by nature, never able to do so. In other words: *free didactic work is one of the constitutive ways in which the limit of his own discipline is shown to the scholar* (*to the scientist, to the expert*), *i.e. the hidden source of its scientific nature.* Because of this, every true scholar considers a lecture or a seminar, or a simple question by a beginner, to be fertile moments, or indeed festive occasions in his existence as researcher[11] – so much so that he finds the bureaucratic habit of distinguishing between scientific activity and didactic activity to be complete nonsense, although then he makes sense of it, interpreting it as an inevitable consequence of the so-called "massification of higher education".

Scientific research and teaching are like the hand and the index finger. What is an index finger that does not recognise its hand? And what is a

[11] Researcher here means: a man whose existence consists, in the first place, in researching, independently from any concrete result he may or may not achieve.

hand that is not understood in its capacity for indicating? Hand and index – research and teaching. The parallel is to be taken literally: neither of the two can *be* without the other, but both together, perfectly united, rest in their internal limit. Thus research and teaching will be much more themselves, each in its own environment, the more they want and are able to *remain exposed* to that limit. Only the sense of the limit keeps awake, in them, the passion for the truth. So let us call the original dimension of this remaining exposed – as such exposedness implies being alert in and watchful of the problematic nature of knowledge and teaching – «ward of truth».[12] *The safeguard and care of the ward of truth – i.e. guaranteeing it common respect and leaving it free reign – are the first concern, actually the first torment, of a genuine educational-scientific institution.* If instituting means something, here, perhaps, a clue to its original sense can be found.

From the above, it follows that *the adoption of a didactic model undermines the ward of truth.* However, if this ward generates the alertness from which, in every scientific discipline, research and teaching originate and to which they return, then an institution that entrusts its multi-disciplinary education to the procedures of a model is faced with the *threat of progressive ethical impoverishment.*

Let us try to understand what this is about.

We noted earlier that the *very fact* that a didactic model works – regardless, therefore, of its "quality", "flexibility", "foresight", etc. – exonerates single scientific knowledge from the task of self-awareness. But it is like being "liberated" from one's own essence and likelihood (*indole*). A strange liberation, therefore, since it is exactly this way that, for every subject taught, an insidious subjection begins. Now teaching is induced to no longer be led by the problematic nature of what is in question in the science from which it comes (namely truth), but to serve, as a "didactic resource", *firstly* the operation of the model.[13] Its truth will be calculated in terms of profit produced in modular procedures. «*True* teaching» now

[12] The ward (cf. the expression «watch and ward») is (i) that which originally "awakens" and attunes the truth and watches and keeps it in its wakeful regard, and *at the same time* (ii) that which, in this very watching wakefulness, awakens and claims man for the guardianship, i.e. for being in his turn the warden of the thus awakened truth. As the truth-awakening awakening of man *to* the truth, the ward is «the original dimension» of the scientist's being exposed to the internal limit of knowledge. Ward here translates *scorta* (escort), whose etymological root is also that of «alert». *idg*

[13] The model acknowledges a certain practice in so far as it can use it as its own function (thus as a variable asset that is always reforma(ta)ble and substitutable).

means: *effective* teaching in the sense of the model. *And so the didactic model assumes the supremacy over every disciplinary pedagogical practice.*[14]

This supremacy ultimately determines three *basic deformations* in the common work of teachers and students:

1. Every scientific discipline – which, in accordance with its own essence, forms *scientifically* to the extent in which it remains *itself* – must mutate into modular subject, into "module", which trains *for the purposes of the model*, i.e. in a modular way.

2. Teachers who aim at the problem, the educators, must become "performing teachers", i.e. modular trainers;

3. Students who aspire to become pupils, learners – i.e. young people who already have a scientific stance – must, in turn, become users of modular training, thus being forced to see themselves as "consumers of a service". [See below, Observation 1.]

Now, because of the primacy of the didactic model over against scientific teaching, a hidden lacerating clash is established in the existence of the institution and its communities and conjunctions: *the clash between the drive towards truth and the tendency towards modular performativity*. It is in this clash – which we will call «performing impact» (scil. impact that per-forms) – that the threat indicated earlier takes root. The more the performing impact stabilizes, up to the point of becoming endemic (therefore, increasingly less perceived and noticed), the more the threat is consolidated and spreads, until it permeates every activity of the institution.[15]

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[14] The model is a *means* only in appearance; in actual fact it imposes itself as a tacit coercive framework. If we expressed ourselves in terms of will (and there would be more than one reason to go in this direction), we would have to say: the model always and only "wills" itself ; model = *continuous modulation* of a single (ungrounded) will.

[15] Here per-forming means: capable of imposing the pre-established format of modular efficiency on every thing and on every sense. Another word to indicate the phenomenon might, for example, be «formating», whose scope is wider and deeper than the one indicated by the technical term «formatting»: the performing impact tends to structure teaching in a way that makes it readable to evaluation and control apparatus of the didactic model functioning as an operative system; formated teaching means: teaching finally compatible with the modular format. (An Italian saying states that you can tell a good day from the morning: the first hour of formated teaching is not the beginning – i.e. clues to the path – of clarification of the thematic field in view of future learning, but the modular "initialisation" of training, namely the activation process of "classroom work" with the signing of the "contract" and the distribution of the "syllabus" of "frontal-instruction lessons". We still speak of lecture rooms; in actual fact they are now logistical stations for the activation of the only device.)

To focus on the constitutive character of the performing impact, and hence the grave threat it poses for the very existence of the institution, a further look at the essence of our scientific knowledge is necessary.

Modern science, unlike Greek *episteme* and medieval *doctrina*, is a system of knowledge that is led entirely by the progressivity of its theoretical results. This progressivity – based on experimental knowledge – is a sign that theoretical research is already always oriented to utility, or rather to the contingent effectiveness of its truths and discoveries.[16] Modern science affects reality – indeed, in some of its practices, it is now capable of designing and producing, therefore planning, new realities of nature. It is, therefore, a system of knowledge whose principle of cohesion no longer comes directly from philosophical knowledge, but from a modern consequence of this latter, namely the capacity for computing and controlling, which finds the logical organ par excellence in modern mathematics (cf. Descartes and Leibniz). The sciences tend now to unite as a single technical department structured in specialised systems (i.e. disciplines), which are increasingly sectorial.[17] This is due to the fact that, in modern science, *the supremacy of method and procedure* is affirmed (i.e. the cogency, that is the constraining power and coercive force, of methodologies with respect to scientific knowledge). In other words: the power of method is the origin of the process of technicalisation and specialisation of sciences. Now, these characters show themselves as undeniably positive. However, precisely in their undeniable positivity, an essential temptation and insidious danger are hidden. [See below Observation 2 on science, method and the cybernetic nature of modern sciences.]

For proof of the increasingly cybernetic-technical nature of modern sciences, consider the way in which they see the categories that define and articulate each time their fields: these are seen as operational concepts that have the value of *models.* This means that they are taken in

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[16] «Considering the expansion process of modern physics, writes Werner Heisenberg (one of the founders of quantum physics), one certainly cannot separate it from the worldwide expansion of natural science, technology, medicine, etc., that is, in general, of modern civilization [...] The connection between natural science and technology has been that of mutual assistance from the very beginning. The progress of technology, the perfectioning of tools, the invention of new measurement and observation apparatus have provided the basis for a wider and more accurate empirical knowledge of nature. The progress in nature's intelligence, and finally the mathematical formulation of natural laws, have opened the way to new applications of this knowledge in technology» (Werner Heisenberg, *Physik und Philosophie* (Stuttgart: Hirzel 1959), p. 182).

[17] It is a planetary department, which has the entire universe as its laboratory. Here lies the origin of that which common opinion also sees, and which it calls "globalisation".

purely instrumental form, losing all ontological consistency. So we come to the point: the operation of the theoretical model is that driving character of sciences for which the truth, the being true, is measured only through advantage (i.e. profit) produced by use of the model in view of the progress of the research programme. The aim is to "progress": a model will be "productive" when it allows real progress. Only then will there be the problem of verification, which is a form of measurement of the progress itself. *Scientific truth is therefore increasingly seen as identical with the effectiveness of its effects. Thus it becomes, increasingly so, a performative truth.* But such a becoming, such a transmutation, can never be founded on original knowledge.[18] That performativity should be the guiding trait of truth, that effectiveness should give shape to truth – well, *this* necessity can never be, in itself, the object of some verification, experimental or just argumentative. Put another way, performativity is not capable of proving *itself* as scientific truth. In fact, performativity itself emerges only in thinking through models, which (as shown below in Observation 4) is the cybernetic implementation of the supremacy or cogency of method. But all this means: performative truth is *only a way* of traditional scientific truth, which, in turn, is *only a way* of the original ward of truth.[19] So we realise the insidious and dangerous temptation mentioned earlier: *the uncontrolled tendency towards performativity, inherent in modern scientific practice, threatens being alert in and watchful of truth* – which, as we know, is the genuine source of knowledge.[20] We therefore call this insidiousness «the temptation of truth».

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[18] Phenomenological clarification of this unlikelihood lies outside the limits of this essay.

[19] By traditional scientific truth we mean truth seen as *correspondence* (i.e. homology) between the proposition and the thing (i.e. the object, the event, the fact).

[20] «Technicalisation, Heidegger writes, not only concerns the mathematical sciences of nature, but also, in the same way, the humanities (organisation of libraries, archives, research conducted with the methodology of time series, exhaustive recognition of single areas, etc.) / Through the supremacy of method and its consolidation as a mere technique a growing detachment occurs from the thematic field as such [...] Speaking generally, there are biologists who no longer have any relationship with living nature (in an *essential* and not sentimental sense); such a relationship is no longer necessary to obtain scientific results and so satisfy the demands of their field of research and its progress. There are art historians who, in being historians, have no true, experienced and agonized relationship either with geniture (on this word see below, footnote 34) nor even, in particular as *art* historians, with the work of *art.* So, precisely through science, the genuine relation between pure knowledge and being is destroyed, whereas, to the extent that genuine and essential knowledge remains the ground of every science, modern science itself, due to a lack of foundations and ground, builds the real threat for

The characterisation of this temptation would, however, not be completely delineated, if we did not take note of another of its traits, which is actually the most important: the temptation of truth is normally not observed, not seen – it is *neglected* (disregarded, left in heedlessness). So, in the temptation of truth – which is intrinsic to the technicalisation of scientific knowledge – *it is truth itself that falls into temptation, insidiously endangers itself, so attempting upon its own constitutive temper.* [See below Observation 3.]

But if it is true that, paraphrasing the words of Friedrich Hölderlin, *where temptation is minded as such, the likelihood of a way of rescue grows*, we must suppose that precisely *in* the sciences (i.e. in their methodologies of computation) lives the seed of a reawakening of respect for the truth as a problem. The mentioned neglect can always turn into care and regard. Indeed, if the temptation of the truth *is flagrant*, if it flashes from out of its latency, until it attracts the attention of knowledge, therefore: if the threat that hangs over truth comes to light, then truth is already saved. But when truth is saved, both being alert in truth and the ward of truth can find their ways of rescue. Any true scientist, as a thinking being, cannot fail to know of the blunders, the misunderstandings and the aberrations that can be generated – in science itself and therefore in every field of human action today – precisely because of the *good functioning* of scientific procedures (theory – model – experiment – technique), which, on the other hand, are encouraged in every way by public recognition and appreciation of their utility. He knows, in short, that precisely where "everything is in order" (accuracy, confirmation, practical validity, functionality) the most treacherous counter-truth can hide: the devastation of sense under the guise of progress of freedom and of human knowledge. The ways of rescue for truth, therefore, are crossings *inside* scientific knowledge – crossings guided by that interrogating thought that any true researcher recognises and that, in his own way, he can even contribute to keep awake. As long as there is science, truth plays its game.

We are now able to clarify what we were aiming at, namely the constitutive character, or essence, of the performing impact, which, through the supremacy of the didactic model, establishes itself in the educational-scientific institution. The analysis carried out up to this point allows us to discern the innermost constitution of the *primacy* of the didactic model in a more rigorous and fitting way: *this primacy is a reflection* (*in itself*

itself». [Martin Heidegger: *Leitgedanken zur Entstehung der Metaphysik, der neuzeitlichen Wissenschaft und der modernen Technik* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann 2009), pp. 160-161.]

unaware) *of the supremacy and cogency of method, and therefore of "thinking through models" in the sense of sciences.*

This, however, implies the following: modular performativity is *a degenerate imitation* of scientific performativity. Modular performativity, indeed, ignores the very grounding trait of its original, namely the problematic reference to truth. By virtue of this, and the consequent lack of self-awareness, it can regain some aspects of the original in the form of hollow shapes (e.g. the working definition of the object under investigation, the inspection procedures and the associated checks, the accuracy of tests and measures, protocols for objective evaluation, planned controls, tabular filing, "synthesis data", etc.), in order to ensure a stable appearance of guidance and government of the educational activity "as a whole". More explicitly: modular performativity, posing as an advanced congener of scientific performativity, gives the impression of being the only sure unit of measurement of the state of health, i.e. *of the truth*, of teaching and learning, while (because of this tacit usurpation) it spreads and consolidates a *forma mentis* on the basis of which the future of scientific and professional education now seems to depend entirely on its ability to transform itself into a multi-functional device of computable and therefore controllable courses of action.[21] In reality, something entirely different takes place: modular performativity, conforming with its character of *apparent* performativity, plays in the field of truth in such a way as to leave truth each time out of the game. So the temptation of truth, which, as we have seen, insidiously endangers every science (as research *and* as teaching), is covered as an essential threat. Now such temptation – as its sense and its vigour are in any case irremovable – is visible (i.e. readable) only under the guise of "risk of production" of the "educational business", or else under the guise of "disturbance factor" in the processes of modular training. A unique frame is secretly imposed on all didactic styles and models, namely the orderly and compact neglect of the temptation of truth – *in* knowing, *in* teaching, *in* learning. The essence of the performing impact is then shown. It is, so to say, a one-way clash: *from* modular performativity, *against* the ward of truth, *until* the suppression of every problematic nature, *by* removing every trace of interrogating

[21] With the expression «degenerate imitation» we should think a mimesis in which the original is used as an instrument for purposes that are essentially opposite or foreign; in this way we can say that a degenerate (or perverted) imitation usurps its own original. Modular performativity is a usurpation, i.e. a hidden perversion, of scientific performativity.

thought, *in such a way that* the total absence of that lost feeling generated by truth in temptation is ensured everywhere.[22]

The performing impact takes on many disguises in the concrete existence of the institution. The strongest and most stable is the *format* of the "debate on the future of the institution", a sort of strategic environment in which periodic outbursts of hostility between "systems of values" are generated, each of which is based on a certain "general vision" ("horizon of action") and on a given "mission" ("strategy and tactics").[23] That the impact firmly dissimulates itself in this form depends on the fact that thinking through models, in which it is rooted (albeit in a degenerate way), *is* nothing else than thinking through values. [See below, Observation 4]. We can therefore call the field of these hostilities «valorial conflict».

In this conflict, the "value" of scientific research, which accompanies the "vision" of "excellence", and the "value" of modular didactics, which stands on the "mission" of "professional training", are variously placed in contrast. In fact, the valorial conflict is held up by the principle of logistical role exchangeability between values: a value can be (and must be capable of being) played as an end but then also as a means, just as a value-means can (and must be able to) assume, at a certain stage, and in certain respects, the guise of a value-end. The trade system that is produced in this way is necessarily informed by unstoppability. The unstoppable exchange makes the indication of what needs to be understood, even only temporarily, as an end or aim unlikely. The consequence is that every articulation of the institution – every practice, every project, every conjunction – is induced to become a value-means for other value-means, which are increasingly without aims. The valorial conflict then unfolds as *dominion of unceasing mediation,* i.e. as privation *of every true purpose and therefore of every genuine decision.* [See below, Observation 5.] Truth

[22] 1. The lost feeling for truth (in temptation) is not a mere emotive state, but the most intimately human tone of man's being. What ever will be knowledge and teaching based on the systematic annihilation of that tone? 2. In the determination of the performing impact as a clash between the *intimate drive* towards the ward of truth and the *tendency* towards modular performativity, «drive» means firmness, resistance and composure, whereas «tendency» means inclination, in the sense of slope and fall, until the point of collapse. Modular performativity continually causes the collapse of the state of alert in truth. Naturally the collapse is all the more destructive the more it remains invisible.

[23] We do not have the space to show from where comes the coercion, for a given system of values, to relate itself to the so-called "future" always and only in terms of "new challenges", "new frontiers", "scenarios", "roles", "vanguards", and so on.

itself, now entirely fixed in its performative sense, is represented as the mere valency or the validity of this or that value, and thus is used as an instrument of the unconditional dominion of mediation. (Here holds the principle: «If there is no value then there is no truth»; or: «No truth can exist where there are no values»). All motions of contrast, within this dominion, are, indeed, gathered in one common scope and stake, which we have clarified as the essence of the performing impact: *the systematic neglect of the ward of truth, of being alert in truth*. Where this ward is only cited or hinted at, it soon assumes the appearance of a non-value, perhaps even a disvalue – a vague and allusive "metaphysical" attitude to dismiss as something ridiculous or "weak", or as a disrespectful conduct towards those who are "on the other hand" absorbed and engaged in mediation. Being alert or watchful in the ward, basically, is seen as an undignified and guilty "luxury". [See below, Observation 6.] So, as long as we remain on the level of valorial conflict, the performing impact runs increasingly at "top speed" (i.e. it advances towards working at full performance), allowing the neglect of truth to consolidate itself more and more until it disappears into oblivion. The forgotten neglect of truth, while as systemic negligence it gives itself precisely an air of "optimism" and "positivity", leaves signs of indigence everywhere, i.e. its hidden characteristic dystonias: carelessness, distraction, doubt, perplexity, consternation, disbelief, suspicion, mistrust. The threatening character of the performing impact takes shape in this way. *Everywhere dominates the growing lack of confidence in truth as truth at work,* i.e. as freedom in favour of the indispensable contrast between true and false.[24]

But when in an institution of high culture we lose confidence in the free operating of truth, then – *and here lies the sense of ethical impoverishment* – the institution itself begins to collapse as community of knowledge, teaching and learning, i.e. as *university*, that is as an *educational-scientific world to which we can entrust ourselves in order to be able to reciprocally trust each other – among teachers, among teachers and pupils, among students.*

Our original question («What does it mean, for an educational-scientific institution, to regulate its own multi-disciplinary pedagogical practice on the basis of a "didactic model"?») has found an answer, which however should not be seen as settling the problem, but rather as a reference to a broader and deeper questioning. We now know that the design and

[24] This lack of confidence can also be indicated as the achieved incapacity to realise the circumstance that no value, or values system, can ever guide the game of truth.

implementation of a model for the governance of didactics is the symptom of the fact that the educational-scientific institution has resolved to expel from its very existence the playing-field of truth and, with it, the truth of teaching. The institution loses it original economy,[25] the idea of its own destiny disappears precisely because confidence in the truth – as a dimension in which to stay alert in order to ward and keep it – is now undermined. In this way, *all knowledge* (*theoretical or technical, linked to the useful or free from utility*) *is uprooted from its philosophical temper*. Due to the violence of the performing impact, in its various dissimulations, no single scientific discipline is by itself capable of putting into focus the void created by the expulsion of truth. The void remains invisible. Its complete invisibility is ensured thanks to that powerful coverage generated by the appearance of the functionality of modular procedures.[26] Therefore, ultimately, the performing impact of the model invalidates the very truth of the institution. [See below, Observation 7.]

C. Conclusions

The suggested analyses point to a single essential fact: evaluation and the consequent modular shaping of education now dictate the "times" of teaching, disrupting their proper pace and therefore weakening their capacity for generating scientific learning and genuine knowledge. They determine the general climate of the university community.

In every university on the planet, which may have given up – consciously or not – the original dignity of its name, evaluation lays down the law and imposes its power.

Measuring through evaluation, following its inclination, tends to saturate the original space-time of teaching. The will to saturation – which gradually takes on varied and unpredictable forms (examples and analysis of which we will omit here) – knows, as its pivotal and foundational points, the following moments:

1. Activation – with its machinal noise hidden in a tone of cooperation – of evaluation apparatus through the taking of students' opinions.[27]

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[25] The word here has the essential sense of frugality, parsimony, sparingness, thrift.

[26] This appearance is, literally, a *total* "insurance coverage".

[27] It can be shown how the lesson devoted to this taking of opinions is a real pedagogical break or caesura – something like an "educational and formative death".

2. Communication of analytical results from the evaluation, possibly along with an invitation to improve performance or else to discuss the "key criticalities" with the modular supervisor.

3. Relative discussions and decisions in superintendent academic assemblies.

4. Regular publication of "process summary data" on the university website (together with its interpretation, which will highlight "progress" made towards an "increasingly better" overall didactic performance).[28]

While publication of the above-mentioned summary data is the seal of complete saturation, locally manifestations of real "evaluative voracity" can occur. The following procedures belong to the latter, for example:

1. The institutional obligation, at the start of a course, to indicate "student representatives for evaluation" for each class.

2. The invitation to discuss the results of teaching evaluation carried out the previous year with the students of the new class.

3. The proposal, directed at each teacher, to draw up self-assessment, which they can then "usefully" compare with the opinions expressed by students, in order to draw appropriate conclusions regarding their own "self-perception" as teachers.

4. The invitation, directed at students, to complete an evaluation questionnaire on how exams were carried out in the previous year. (Note that communication to the teacher of the results of this evaluation will serve to remind him definitively that his work is, *in every moment and therefore entirely*, translated into value, and as such scrutinised, and that precisely because of this he never has to do with students and pupils, but rather with opposite evaluating poles.)

In this way, evaluation is the *constant* reference upon which – literally – the entire pedagogical practice *is based*. It is, indeed, the only safe basis and the ultimate criteria for all questions that concern teaching: in this environment, each time that it is necessary to plan, decide, establish, contemplate, solve a doubt, etc., thoughts turn – specifically or implicitly – to that form of truth which practice of evaluation and valorial communication continue to remind of and to impose: *ultimately, evaluation will decide everything*. (A claim that escapes the sphere of values, even if it

[28] These data act furthermore as employable, spendable information in the circuit of the media and in relationships with the stakeholders, just as with respect to national and international bodies of university politics and evaluation agencies that implement their directives. In this manner these data support the legitimisation and the existence of the institution itself.

appears reasonable, immediately shows not to have hold on effectivity, and therefore, for a mute condemnation, falls in the void.)

The constant element that forms the basis of and the decisive reference for the truth or the sense of something we call its substance. *Evaluation, now, is the substance of university teaching*. The sense remains obscure, without references to anything other than itself, and yet, or precisely because of this, it offers a reliable indicator of how things should work so that everything goes in its direction. Even in complete blindness as to *where* it is going (a blindness that is fixed in a fierce code of silence coated with modular rhetoric), there is no doubt *that* one must proceed "in that direction"; it remains only to decide what the best procedures are to implement the route.

Thus is established, with saturating systematicity, the predominance of an *inclination*, which constitutively affects every educational effort: the inclination to delegate *human* decision on the sense of teaching to the *lack* of decision, or rather to a performative automatism that releases from the stress of the ward of truth. In actual fact it is a strange automatism since, far from "working by itself", it requires and absorbs, on the contrary, all material and human energies and resources, while summoning to answer non-stop the *diktat* of its coactive progress.

The dictatorship of evaluation exonerates from the *gravity of responsibility*, but instead it imposes the *heaviness of answer*. The evaluative climate is *heavy*, since in it the only alleviating factor, namely truth, is not recognised.

The step that leads from the heaviness of answer to the gravity of responsibility is the simplest step that a man can take. Not for this is it easy, nor can it be the result of a mere act of will.

Keeping alive the *likelihood* of this alleviating step is the task that has always been assigned to the educational-scientific institution that we call «university».

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Addendum on Uselessness

If our profession of scholars and educators were once again based on passion for the truth; if it ceased to demean itself with the frenzy of values, we could finally admit, without scandal, that scientific teaching is useless and is worth nothing, i.e. it costs nothing, because it is not for sale and has no price.

We could also realise that, if it does not "cost any price", it does however cost in terms of care, dedication and maybe pain, and healthy bewilderment – which no "evaluation" will ever be able to measure. We would finally be free to understand that philosophy and science, just like art and every technique, do not, by nature, need to be "evaluated"; and we would be able to see that they only need to be cultivated, exercised and taught, each on the basis of its own essence, by men who, besides possessing the necessary genius and tools, cherish the truth above all else.

But the real world – people will say – is not made of ifs, nor is it meant to satisfy naïve yearnings for authenticity. Today – one will add – everything goes in a completely different direction to that just envisaged. Of course. Who could deny that? But confining ourselves to this observation would be irresponsible.

As long as we are men, that is free beings – and free in *the university – , nothing can bar us from thinking, in other words, now: from slowing down in our rush in order to critically linger over our practices.*

That a practice "works" and "goes ahead", and is appreciated and validated by prevalent opinion, can never be proof of its groundedness.[29]

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Additional Observations

Observation 1. Scientific stance.

Naturally, by scientific stance we do not mean the scientist or researcher's already formed character, but his willingness to learn in terms of the problematic nature of knowledge. Is it necessary to recall that the authentically scientific stance remains the foundation of every profession practised responsibly?

We speak of *fundamental* deformations because these, as pivots upon which the model "turns", generate various consequences, which are able to distort the true sense of things every time. A hint at *three* such consequences.

1. The model tends to produce rankings (which are themselves meaningless) among teachers, based upon their comparative evaluation in

[29] A pseudo-truth remains such even when it guides a so-called "accredited" habit. Indeed: not only does it remain such (i.e. a *pseudo*-truth), but it also tends to become deeper in its misdirecting strength.

terms of modular performance. In this way, the "most-performing" module-discipline will certainly be adopted as a "model of teaching". Teaching that is *non* performing in modular terms, because it is still led by problematic nature (and so by the ward of truth), teaching that is, therefore, *counter*-performing and *counter*-modular, seems outdated, inadequate, etc. The controlling bodies in charge will then rush to order it to "change route". In this way a deformed sense of exemplariness is attested. *Curvo dinoscere rectum!*

2. The model imposes a subjugation that we have described as insidious; this trait, for instance, can be seen in what happens to a teacher who is passionately immersed in his scientific work. In adhering to modular teaching, he will not realise *with sufficient clarity* the metamorphoses that his teaching is subjected to. It will be like he is distracted by his own specialist knowledge. He will notice only some generic "troubles": he will grumble about the "increasing weight of teaching", and how he must devote "too much energy" to it; he will complain about the "boredom of exams", the "fall of scientific standards", and so on. But then – unless he decides (as in some cases it happens) to take a stance of "passive resistance" – he will resign himself to the fact that "that's how things are nowadays", reminding himself that "you have to stop grumbling and complaining" in order to "devote yourself to the new challenge" instead. Adjustment to the "new" will seem to him to be "the price to pay" if he wants to save his academic role as a teacher as well as the discipline. The necessary immersion in his own research will not allow him to focus on how the discomfort does not come from a "structural slowness" in adapting to new situations, but from the implementation of the model and from its primacy. It is an ailment, a disorder, of the truth. In actual fact, the price demanded by the model is *all* of teaching!

3. The model must ensure that students are recruited as anonymous monitoring poles, whose feedback is taken as an indisputable fact to put (i.e. feed) into piloting procedures. Their voice – often carried by so-called "student representatives" – assumes the tone of univocal modular data, thus becoming a "factor" of operative decisions and a "player" of valorial conflicts.

Observation 2. Science and method.
It is often said that scientific knowledge differs from every other form of knowledge as it provides man with a well-grounded relationship with a certain field (nature, life, history, language, law, economy, society, technology). But, contrary to common opinion, this expected grounding is

never an end in itself or an abstract logical value; rather, it meets an essential stress of every human community: reaching a dimension of building and dwelling (a dimension the Greeks called *techne* and *politeia*) in which we are able to trust one another in order to be able to trust in our own world, and so have the space-time of a future. The groundedness of knowledge seems therefore to be the first guarantee of that trustiness which is always needed in an authentic political community. Well-grounded knowledge can generate a trusty technique. *Techne* in its entirety (meaning: cultivation of the land; making utensils and tools, houses, roads and so on; clarifying the source of law and writing laws; building defences and protecting health and nature; architecture and the creation of works of art) is still seen here as a service for dwelling (*polis*). *However, the pre-eminence of method – which, in a metaphysical sense, corresponds to reality appearing in the new form of effective objectivity, i.e. of what is real insofar as it is verifiable in terms of causes and effects – changes the nature of scientific knowledge.* Here lies the true origin of that which Heisenberg notes as «mutual assistance» between «natural science and technology» (see above note 16). Thanks to the methodical procedures of research, every science starts to have an extraordinary capacity for thematising its own field, and thus for penetrating the very effectivity of its objects. Methodical knowledge means: empowering knowledge in the modality of penetrating thematisation. Here, thematise and penetrate do not only mean making human intelligence of phenomena more acute, but rather this: thematise what is real affirming it as factual concreteness and, upon this basis, each time specifically called for, penetrate (so to speak "physically") the object itself in order to take possession of its (supposed) internal borders through their efficient coding. [NB That what is real is affirmed as factual concreteness means: seeing anything that is real as "concreted" and "made" (*factum est*), in other words as the result of production, therefore as a "product", a contingent effect of the passage from not being to being through a certain cause, in its turn also contingent.] The thing investigated, the object of penetrating thematisation, is adopted *a priori* as a mechanism (i.e. a device) gradually translatable and recordable in a code that will allow operational control, which, in turn, is always divided into three moments: circumstantial observation (the trait of informative checking), objective history (the trait of feedback) and prediction (the trait of insurance and pilot planning). In these moments we recognise the guiding concepts of cybernetics. Current scientific practice no longer seeks only "the key to a being" in order to reveal its hidden laws and store them in knowledge in the service of the *polis* (i.e. in an

ethical knowledge); instead it forces a being to "speak" within a code (always external to it and therefore apparently neutral), which, while it captures and stabilises it through an appropriate parameterisation, builds the one following perspective: showing the being, the object or the field of objects as entirely directable processes in order to guarantee them in the form of available stocks, and thus of resources for production and consumption. In modern-day science, theory means first of all: *operational* treatment of what is real in its objective effectivity; so it is precisely technical efficiency (as insurance, control and planning of every being, i.e. as *cybernetics*) that sets the tone for theory – also, and perhaps especially, for that building of theories which is seen as pure. Herein lies the reason why today's theoretical research is a thinking through models: every theory *is* necessarily a model, in other words a hypothetical framework awaiting experimental confirmation (i.e. validation), where however the experiment and its results can never go *beyond* the framework of the model itself. In a model of physics, for example, the fact that *through it* we are investigating exactly nature (i.e. the only one, the already given one) is taken as obvious: this fact is *never* proven, it shows itself as valid *ab origine*. Thus we find again the already mentioned internal limit: no specific science can know by itself its own form of knowing. The temptation indicated can be understood then: in thinking through values, and its tendency to become absolute, science is tempted to neglect that limit up until the point that it sees nothing but models (only "hypothesis" and "effects"): their use will no longer be interpreted as a representation of a being, but as this being itself, indeed – and here is the enigmatic aspect – as its essential trait. *The model imposes itself as the only access to the being of beings, only to finally end up* itself *as the being* (*or truth*) *of beings, and indeed as the only likely being.* Now beings are no longer the good to serve having assumed (i.e. invested oneself of) its measure, but the object of which to make use, through evaluations (estimates, surveys), for the "good" of the model. But all this means: modern-day methodical science, i.e. technical science, in treating its objects in an operative manner, no longer knows anything about its original service for human dwelling. As long as it continues not to know, the dwelling itself is neglected in what is essential to it, *up to a point* in which it is forced to become the (necessary) support, as well as one of the inputs, to thinking through models. This is indeed an obscure point of the truth: the element to be served is ordered to turn itself into an enslaved servant, thus being deprived of its constitutive temper. Thinking through models, supported by the "successes" of modern-day building and dwelling (i.e. the technological world), certifies

itself as the highest form of scientific thought, and therefore of thought in general.

Observation 3. The temptation of truth.
The fact that truth may be in (or fall into) temptation, actually does not seem very factual: the temptation of truth does not seem to possess the characteristics of real danger and attempt![30] The word truth and all discussions about it seem remote questions of a vaguely "metaphysical" meaning ("first" truth? "ultimate" truth? what truth?): in our world, it is completely natural to entrust truth to scientific research (truth that is prudently considered relative). This conditioned reflex before the word truth is precisely the clearest symptom of the state of neglect that truth itself is in. In the present context, we are not referring to Truth in general, nor even less so to truth in the relative sense (in fact, every relativity feeds and lives off that absolute that it denies), but we are referring to truth as a *problem*, as an *original human stress,* as *struggle* of *sense*, in other words, as that element which we notice only when it is about to disappear or has disappeared and is lost. We think of, and appeal to, this precise *understanding* of the truth when we are invaded by falsity and by appearance, by empty accuracy of endless calculations and by systematic distortion, by absurdity and by deception put up to guide and measure things; it is the sense *of truth* that we invoke when, in places destined for free thought, any fair criticism becomes unhearable and any essential and thinking question seems scandalous – or even a subversive attempt. Truth is not a universal content hidden in some celestial place, and neither is it the "secret of the world" or the "mystery of life", but that which is always involved when it is *ineludible* that man determines the sense of things and of himself. In our discussion then, the word truth – far from being a property of objects or propositions (ordinary and/or theoretical) – designates, so to say, *a playing field*, which man, the thinking being, must take care of, and in which the stakes and the law are clear: contending with the chaos of the indecidable for that light which, revealing every time the *forces and the powers of appearance,* opens the ways of essential decisions: release the authentic from the jaws of the fictitious and the ostentatious, save what is promising from the unchained violence of the aberrant, set aside what is clear in the oppression of the confused, disentangle the pure from the artifices of the deceptive, elect what is right in

[30] Here attempt has the meaning of assault, attack; we use this word, rather than assault or attack, in order to maintain the constitutive reference to temptation. *idg*

the imbalance of the partial, ransom the rigorous from the volubility of the insecure and from the fixity of the pedantic – in a word: free the true (i.e. the originally logical) from the multiple distortions of the erroneous (i.e. the originally illogical). The playing field of truth (= *free* field for the brightening contrast between the firmness of the simple and the enervating caducity of the contorted) is precisely that which is always supposed (though unconsciously and implicitly) in true scientific research – as can be seen, for example, from this statement by Richard Feynman on the "logic of approximation" in physics: «Each piece, or part, of the whole of nature is always merely an *approximation* to the complete truth, or the complete truth so far as we know it. In fact everything we know is only some kind of approximation, because *we know that we do not know all the laws* as yet. Therefore, *things must be learned only to be unlearned again or, more likely, to be corrected*».[31]

There is an objection opposed to our argument however: performativity has always been *one* of the traits of truth; now, the fact that in our day and age this trait saturates the whole field of truth depends on the new demands of scientific progress, which has definitively shown how truth itself (even if admittedly it cannot be considered, in principle, even as "relative") is an irreparably static concept, a sort of ballast which stops man's natural impetus towards doing. If today we *firstly* consider the useful to be true, why do we not learn to interpret this determination as an enrichment and an evolution of the truth? Of course, everything is possible. However, the question remains: why does performativity, presenting itself as an evolution of the truth as it is traditionally understood, and therefore recognising implicitly that it comes from the truth, tend to obscure or diminish it? Shouldn't a fair contention between the performative, which is current and present-day, and the true, which is traditional and past, exclude precisely this kind of blow? Why does performativity need to get rid of truth, banishing it to dreams of "philosophical utopia" or presenting it as that which would block the way to action? The call to the vivacity of "man's natural impetus" is – *on the level of acting and doing too* – a siren song. To the extent that it is knowing (a *knowing* how to do, a *know*-how), how could an authentic doing/action withdraw from the playing-field of truth?

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[31] Richard Feynman: *La fisica di Feynman* (bilingual edition) (Bologna: Zanichelli 2001), vol. I, p. 3.

Observation 4. Thinking through models and thinking through values. The reciprocal inherency between thinking through models and thinking through values can be demonstrated easily. We can trace two paths: the first from thinking through models, the second from thinking through values. Both indicate how the reciprocal inherency is one of the ways in which truth falls into temptation (and remains there).

Outline of the first path. In thinking through models, «true» is solely what is measurable. But only the effectual is measurable. The effectual is reality assumed under the form of a contingent chain of causes and effects. The effectual is what imposes itself firstly as factuality, i.e. as pure capacity ("energy") for results, realisations, outcomes; factuality consists of *ascertainable effects*. The factual-effectual is the effective then, that which has the strength of positivity, the power and the consistency of actuality, *the contingency*, i.e. that which has full validity. Effective is valid. Valid is what has value and gives value. The effectivity of factuality consists then, each time, in a peculiar state of valence, in a valorial state. The effectivity of contingency (i.e. of a fact, of a series of facts, etc.) shows itself fully when its constitutive value-state is determined, i.e. computed in degrees, i.e. graded in levels (or rates) which are called levels of value, or also values. Computing in values (quoting, rating) is a way of measuring: it is *valuing* measuring (the weighing up which aims at rating). The effectivity of contingency is truly effective-effectual – i.e. it is perfect performativity – if it offers itself to valuing measuring, i.e. to valuation (to the fixing of the quotation or rating). Thinking through models thinks (i.e. considers, weighs up, ponders) values only, and therefore operates only *through* values and *in view* of values. Performative truth (truth by force of performance) consists in valorial or valuative truth (truth by force of valuations and rates), and vice versa – while one *and* the other, to the extent that they neglect the temptation of truth, *are* themselves (the) truth in temptation.

Outline of the second path. In thinking through values, true can claim to be solely of something that is evaluable, i.e. objectifiable in an evaluating that is sure and certain of itself. *True* is just the value (that which has a "rating"). The verifiable will always be only the assurable in the sense of the computable. Thinking through values satisfies the need to assure oneself against the temptation of truth. Control of truth, reduced to the valency of values (i.e. of this or that value), requires appropriate systems of computation, i.e. evaluation apparatus. So demand for the model is born. Thinking through values has the same nature as thinking through

models. One cannot exist without the other. The values themselves are model-concepts, while every model presents itself as a value. Thinking through model-values, thinking through value-models: today's unconditioned dominion of evaluating and modelling (which are reminiscent only on the outside of the traditional "research of fundamental principles and essential forms") bears witness that the truth has been left at the mercy of the imponderable powers of its (very own) fall into temptation.

Observation 5. The dominion of mediation.
The term mediation should not have us think of compromise or reconciliation techniques among the values in conflict, nor, least of all, of a pact aimed at any goal. Mediation here literally means: putting in action under the guise of a "medium", i.e. a means, in other words acting or agitating as a means. Now, given that the means is the medium term (i.e. the support) of transit towards a goal, in the place where every thing *is*, i.e. exists, makes sense, only to the extent in which it "resists" or lasts as a means, temporariness reigns as the one reference of truth. The circuit of temporariness always places any end "at the horizon"; end now means: unreachable final border of the action. In this way, acting no longer has a beginning and an end, but always has something "to do". It is an acting reduced to "having (something) to do", literally to "having ado",[32] an acting that is always busy and bustling, i.e. an action that intermediates nothing else but doing itself. In this constant having (something) to do, there is no longer place for accomplished practices, i.e. for the perfect; every practice must remain an intermediate practice, a medium practice, i.e. a half-way practice and therefore a "half-practice", just as every project must remain a "half-project", every conjunction a "half-conjunction". The dominion of mediation based on the regime of the transitory state of being busy, that is of business, is, basically, the game of "half-decisions" and therefore of "half-truths", i.e. the most tenacious diversion from the ward of truth. In other words: in the dominion of mediation, it no longer happens that the means is justified by the end; rather, it will always be a certain end that will have to immediately "justify" itself: it will be revealed "right" ("just") only if it is adjustable as a means – a means that must allow mediation itself to pass. In this way, while acting guided by the idea that "the end justifies the means" knows the temptation of the truth, acting based on the *diktat* "the end must adjust itself as a means" (i.e. acting as ado, bustle,

[32] Ado (= to do) here not in the sense of commotion, difficulty, trouble, but in that of industrious doing, sustained action, great busy-ness. *idg*

agitation) – let us call it business acting[33] – denies necessarily every temptation of the truth. The mediation of the performing impact, as (so to speak) realm of busy discord between means and ends, makes the "dialogue" between the actors of the valorial conflict closed to reciprocal understandings, while it is instead held up only by mutual (always dissimulated) interferences and intrusions and by reciprocal (always veiled) pressures.

Observation 6. The zetetic stigma.
The counterfeits and perversions, upon which stands the modular forcing of teaching, include (as is typical of dictatorial regimes)

(a) a *misguided apparatus of law*, based upon the identity «just = well-performing» (an apparatus that is characterised, among other things, by an overflowing tendency to develop norms and a craze for regulations, and the corresponding scope for arbitrary actions and abuses),

(b) a *fake ethical code*, based on the identity «good = well-performing» (a code that gives rise to an actual cybernetic "moral" or "label"), as well as

(c) a *deformed aesthetic precept*, based on the identity «beautiful = well-performing» (an aspect we will not examine here).

Both the apparatus of law and the ethical code implicate not only the denial, but the (tacit or explicit) *blaming* of every teaching practice referable to the ward of truth, to the extent that, in general, it involves a loss of power or a jamming in the ordered machinal course of evaluative procedures. The result is an unheard-of catalogue of "crimes of lese-model" or "misconducts causing drop in performance", accompanied by the related sanctions and reproofs. In this atmosphere, a preventive *sense of guilt* is generated in those who, as student or teacher, still insist on the double limit of their own discipline, with the result that the genuine scientific sense, when pressed hard, will seek shelter – within the very institution *nominally* set forth to protect it and foster it – in a sort of clandestinity. If, with Kant, we call «zetetic» the research and attempt (i.e., here, tentative) character of teaching philosophy (and therefore every discipline that keeps its own philosophical roots alive), we can conclude that the establishment of that diverted sense of just and good (with its characteristic sudden and exclusive normality), produces a true *zetetic stigma*, by virtue of which the above-mentioned sense of guilt may well translate

[33] In Italian *agire aziendale* (from *azienda* = «business, company», which, in turn, is derived from Latin *facienda* (*negotia*) = things to do, business to do). *idg*

itself in *woefulness* able to break down even the deepest, most tempered commitment to truth.

Observation 7. Philosophical diagnosis.
The fact that philosophy succeeds in focussing on the "void of truth" – for the diagnosis attempted and outlined in these pages is indeed *philosophical* in an essential sense – does not depend on a particular intelligence it possesses, nor only on its constitutive phenomenological insightfulness. Thinking here simply testifies to an *unlikelihood.* How can we expect philosophy to uproot pedagogical practice from its most genuine dimension? It would be easier to ask it to build a cubic sphere. For philosophy, therefore, the terms are clear: *either* the order, secretly chaotic, of the didactic model – *or* the freedom of truth. The first paragraph of article 33 from the Constitution of the Italian Republic states: «Art and science are free, as free is their teaching». Analogously, article 13 from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states: «The arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected». This freedom finds its ground precisely in the ward of truth. Between freedom and truth there exists an essential relation and bond: understanding its nature is one of the main tasks of philosophy.

Philosophy is irreducible to thinking through values and models. It is the handed down conjunction of interrogating thought. The fact that disposition to interrogating is the first requirement, or the preliminary condition, of the scientific nature of knowledge, shows how every specific science is inevitably *philosophical* – but also how philosophy is not *a* science, less still *the* universal science (the "science of All"), but rather the most original *ontological knowledge* known to our progeny (i.e. the progeny *that we are* insofar as we stem from the Greek onset of thinking).

Ontological knowledge is guarded in the inheritance of metaphysical geniture.[34] The word metaphysical seems to allude to a form of poor

[34] Geniture, which in English means begetting, generation, birth, but also offspring, translates the Italian word *genitura*, which, in turn, echoes the German word *Geschichte* (as different from *Historie*). The geniture of metaphysics is the whole of metaphysics in its generation, i.e. in its generating *itself*, and therefore also the very *element* of this generation, which, in turn, is always originated, borne and kept through the being of man. In fact, man's being is itself native of and belongs to the geniture: we can speak of the «human geniture» in this sense. An old meaning of geniture is that of generative seed, prolific germ. When we speak of the geniture of metaphysics, or of the geniture as the element of art (see above, footnote 20), we must think in the word geniture the simple unity of prolific germ, generative seed, generation and what is generated, and this with respect not to ascertainable things or facts, but to sense. Without geniture, there would

knowledge, or even one without truth or foundations. But if we allow ourselves to be ensnared by that allusion, we distance ourselves irreparably from the essence of metaphysics. Philosophical-metaphysical knowledge is so very rich with truth and foundations that it can even donate one and the other. And since it *can* donate them, it realises that it *must* donate them. So it gathers together the able to-donate *and* the have to-donate in a *unicum*, which is then established as the fundamental capacity of thought. It is in this very capacity for donating that rests the original temper of philosophy. From its very onset, indeed, philosophy means: ward of truth, by way of raising and sustaining the truth in order to give – *through ontological knowledge* – its foundation, fertility and being to those who must try truth in the form of this or that truth (*scientific knowledge*), to those, on the other hand, who must let it shine in the form of work and poetry (*art*), and to those, finally, who must translate it in the form of utensils, instruments and means *for* building and dwelling, i.e. *for* men to be able to trust the world, simultaneously entrusting themselves to the laws of the earth and nature (*technology, law, economy*).

At times we hear that one of the "stakes" or the "challenges" in our modern age is industrialising and making business-like the "sectors" of art and of culture, with the example of science, which has already undergone such a transformation. But maybe the real challenge is in the inverse movement: making industry cultured and civilised, making business scientific once again, making them both artistic and poetic – on the basis of concepts of culture, civility, science, art and poetry which are *free* finally from performative determinations. But all this would mean: bringing the passion for the truth and the temptation of the truth into industry and business. We turn our noses up at such statements, believing that, at best, it is a romantic utopia. We may allow that even. But the game is still to be played. Indeed, our world – the cybernetic world – is without doubt the most powerful counter-utopia that man has ever built on earth. One day we may be *forced* to build differently. But then we would need to *think* differently also. Philosophy, the handed down conjunction of interrogating thought, has the capacity for indicating, in its own way, the sense and paths of such diversity.

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be no observable history of ascertainable things or facts, nor a history of mankind, but (or rather, precisely because of this) we should never reduce geniture to history. *idg*