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Converted Forms. On the Need for Irrational Expressions

Merab Mamardashvili

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Bibliographical note

The article “Converted Forms” by Merab Mamardashvili (1930–90) was first published in Polish in 1972 in a journal called *Studia filozoficzne* [Philosophical studies]. It only appeared in Russian in 1990 in the final book Mamardashvili published while living, a collection of articles under the title *Kak ia ponimaiu filosofiu* [How I understand philosophy]. During the Soviet era, Mamardashvili’s theory of converted forms was mostly known from his book *Klassicheskie i neklassicheskie idealy ratsional’nosti* [Classical and non-classical ideals of rationality] (1984), and prior to that from his articles “Analysis of Consciousness in Marx” (1968) and “Forma Prevrashchennaia” [Converted form], an article in the fifth volume of the Soviet *Filosofskaiia Entsiklopediia* [Philosophical Encyclopedia] (1971). Some similar issues are present in the extended summary of Mamardashvili’s talk “Prevrashchenye formy i pragmemy” [Converted forms and pragmemes], given at a 1970 Summer school in Tartu on secondary modeling systems. In 1984, Mamardashvili gave a talk entitled “Converted Forms” at the Moscow Institute of Philosophy. In the institute’s archive, there remained several drafts with the title “Converted Forms,” the earliest of which dates from 1966, and the latest, from 1971–72. It was this latter draft that was finally published in 1990. (by Andrei Paramonov)

Keywords

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The experience of dealing with such theoretical constructions in the history of science as Marx's analysis of the phenomena of economic fetishism and ideology, Freud's psychoanalysis, Jung's concept of archetypes, contemporary studies of mythology and symbolism, and so on, shows that for a number of such manifestations of fairly complex empirical systems, a premise of generalized causality based on a particular kind of determinism, namely conversion of action (or converted form—*verwandelte Form*), is necessary. It would make sense to elucidate converted form in a generalized way not only in order to treat it independently of the empirical source of abstraction and expand it to include any phenomena of this type, but also to generalize its foundations and the sphere of application of this causal description compared to the classical one. In fact, we are talking about constructing a special operator, differentiated from all others, in the conceptual apparatus of the humanities, signifying a special ontological reality—that of converted objects, or converted forms, and numbering these objects among the objects addressed by every theory dealing with human reality (historical, social, psychological). These areas of theory possess fundamentally non-classical properties.

What is Converted Form?

The term “converted form” (*verwandelte Form*) was first introduced into philosophical and scholarly use by Karl Marx. He applied it to certain characteristics of the construction and mode of functioning of complex systems of connections (or what Marx called “organic” or “dialectically divided wholes”), and made possible the study of apparent dependencies and paradoxical effects that appear at the surface of the whole in the form of what is nonetheless “the form of its reality, or rather its real form of existence” (Marx 1972: 483).

A similar form of existence is produced from the conversion of internal relations of a complex system, taking place at a certain level of that system and concealing the actual character of those relations and their direct mutual relationship by means of indirect expressions. At the same time as being the product and sedimentation of the conversion of action of system’s connections, these exist independently within it as a separate, qualitatively whole entity, an “object” like any other. Precisely this seemingly independent “existence” [‘byti’istvennost’] contains the problem of converted form, which in an apparent (and practically certain) form presents the final point of reckoning in an analysis of the functional properties of the system as a whole, presenting a particular, irreducible entity, the “substance” of the properties observed. Capitalized value in the system of the bourgeois economy, for example, as it displays a “capacity” for self-expansion, is such a form. That is a typical case of an irrational converted form, when a thing takes on the properties of social relations and these properties appear as being apart from any connection with human activity, that is, as completely natural. If such objective appearance is permitted in a system of connections elucidated and followed by a method of ascending from the abstract to the concrete, we are dealing with a meaningful study of converted form, tracing those connections as the necessary “phenomenal forms of essential relations” (Marx 2012: 588) in conditions wherein those are superimposed on each other and distorted. But the self-sufficient, self-exhaustive character of such “phenomenal forms” must be preserved by analysis (with all the paradoxicality of its existential effects), which presupposes the expansion of the objective description of essential relations through reckoning with the area in them where the action of observation and the action of the observed content are commensurable (commensurable as parts of the one action of a system which contains the observing subject). Then the converted products of the action can be inherently understood, and the action itself fully described. The particularity of converted form, distinguishing it from the classical relationship between form and content, inheres in the objective elimination here of determinations of content: the form of manifestation takes on a free-standing “essential” meaning, is isolated, and content is re-

placed in the phenomenon by a different relationship, which merges with the properties of the material medium (the substratum) of the form itself (for example, in the case of symbolism) and moves to the place of the actual relationship. This apparent form of actual relations, separate from their inner connection, also plays—precisely through its isolation and its seemingly independent existence—the role of a self-standing mechanism in directing actual processes at the surface of the system. At the same time, connections whose origin is real are seen to be “sublated” in that form (as dynamic regularities in statistical regularities, as connections in the formation of images of consciousness in regularities of object recognition, grasping meaning, etc.). A direct reflection of content in form is here ruled out.

The Necessity of Irrational Expressions of Action in a System

The distortion, existing in actuality (not merely in the consciousness of the observer), of content, or such a reworking of content as to transform it beyond all recognition is specific to converted form. But this indirect figuration that itself is not simply a part of the subjective world from which an objective analysis could detach itself and that it could disdain in its depiction of the “the existing state of affairs,” acts, on the contrary, as a fully independent object, existing separately in time and space, whose objective role and essence is based on this very transfiguration and distortion of the actual, making that transfiguration itself an indivisible, self-contained element of the system itself. The subject sees it as an external given of being. And the observer’s duty is to use as facts as givenness (*evidences*), as “the existing state of affairs”: what this subject sees or is in principle capable of seeing. Arguments about what stands behind this evidence are of no importance to the observer here, inasmuch as they are not descriptions of facts. In this sense a converted form of seeing how the system acts from the inside of that system is an *objectivized* orientation of the concatenation of atomic conscious acts in it, it is the object posited as real outside of the subjects, defined by the relations of the system as a whole and drawing its life from them rather than from the act of the understanding individual. On the contrary, for that individual it is by means of this object itself (which appears to be superstructured over the system) that a field of understanding and possible movement of thought is induced; a space with a closed horizon is created, which in principle the subject’s gaze can oversee, but on the other hand, this same object throws off a kind of “shadow” on various parts of the system—a zone of essential incomprehension is induced, a “dead space,” impenetrable to the rays of consciousness. Converted objects have a particular kind of existence, irreducible to the subjective fictions and illusions of consciousness. But

they exist not in the same sense in which the so-called “true” objects of science exist; what we are talking about is rather an existence comparable to that of conditional and necessary fictions and symbols such as $\sqrt{-1}$, imaginary and irrational numbers in mathematics, and so on. But, unlike the constructive and conditionally conscious path of emergence of those figures in science, converted forms of existence arise independently of the conscious intentions and ideal motives of the acting subject; they are objectively (and necessarily) induced by means of the interweaving and perturbing superimposition upon each other of the system’s various connections in those areas within it in which operations that determine the subject of observation are commensurable with the activity of the object under observation. At the level of converted form, new relations spring up, their final point of reference is the converted form itself and its indivisibly-whole phenomenal manifestations.

It is those new relations that give birth to paradoxes in the interpretation of what is observed, the incompatibility between seeing the system “from the inside” and seeing it “from the outside,” the system’s visible effects and apparent dependencies. Resolving the problem of the latter in the system does not mean that the point of view of the subject can simply be rejected as false. Aside from the meanings of truth or falsehood, the meaning of “conversion” is also introduced (the indirect expressions mentioned above are not simply false, though they may be absurd, as a “fried logarithm” is absurd). The term “conversion” is a term of scholarly language, not the language of objects belonging to a system that includes the observer in itself, but it allows us to accept the formations of that language into the theory, completing their phenomenality with substantive discourse comprising a single, full, and non-contradictory description. Taking into account that double connection and allowing for the irreducibility of the meaning of “conversion” to the alternative meanings of truth or falsehood, we can construct a way of reducing the content of converted formations from reconstructed true states and events of the system, a way that allows us to establish the natural life of converted objects or, what amounts to the same, restore the objectivity of the system’s description (overcoming not only what has been called the phenomenological obstacle, obliging us to reckon with the inner lived experiences of the system, but also the formalism of the structuralist approach).

The Phenomenological Indivisibility and “Natural” Quality of Imaginary Expressions

Reciprocity in complex systems thus creates qualitatively new phenomenal forms, the supplementary “life forms” of the object. Though the actual life of such forms is defined by this reciprocity, in becoming

one of the system's particular elements they present themselves as readymade premises, initial reasons for the entire movement of the whole. For example, in an economic system the money form is a converted form of the commodity form: in its converted aspect the self-expansion of money is revealed to be the internally ideal form and driving motive of all movement. But a converted form does not necessarily have to be an irrational one: in such an objective appearance (semblance) as the movement of the Sun and planets around the Earth there is no irrationality, as there is none in the functioning of semiotic systems in culture, a converted form of the substantive work of consciousness. Irrationality only creeps into converted expression under certain conditions (e.g., in man's alienation from the self in activity, the disengagement of its social wealth and forms from the individual content of labor). The example of the visible movement of the Sun provides a good illustration of the distinction between the classical category of "appearance," and an "appearance" in the sense of a converted form. For astronomical science, this movement is an appearance in an epistemological sense: it is taken merely as observed material, from which conclusions are drawn about the laws of actual motion, and then the visible effect itself explained. This movement is a converted form only in the system of social and practical life that turns the sky into its own "organ" (practical measurement, spatial and temporal orientation, etc.). The form of the manifestation of visible movement—as a "humanized element" of nature, a reified representation that becomes a sign bearing social and existential meanings—functions here undividedly and independently from the juxtaposition of connections leading to that form. It serves as a starting, regulating, "programming" moment in the whole complex of human reactions that come into action regardless of any knowledge of the fact that the Earth moves around the Sun, not vice versa.

In their isolation and independence, these forms are utterly impossible things, absurdities, fried logarithms, but they are part of reality. And they are accepted as real—regardless of their absurdity taken as final and indivisible premises. Amidst them, people are like fish in water, they are the habitual, self-explanatory (and invisible—as people cannot see the air or feel its pressure) ether of life, imbued with completely rational constructions, revisions and connecting threads; nobody takes any interest in the mediating role of these initial forms and premises, nobody needs to restore them as those (i.e., as forms that bear witness to something *else* and mediate and signify that something). On the contrary, starting with an irrational expression as a point beyond which the expression's rational referent is completely repressed or "submerged," a perfectly clear tendency toward "system building" (*Systemenbildung*, in Freud's sense) exists and manifests itself—systems that are entirely cohesive, consistent, and logical. One example of such a derivative rational system would be the functioning of commodity production, although it contains deeply fetish-

istic premises as well. Another example would be psychoneurosis, as an internally cohesive and meaningful form of behavior—it is completely logical and consistent, if its ontological premises are accepted. A world unfolds and develops in a systematic set of relationships: it is an enchanted, bewitched, topsy-turvy world, densely populated with wonders and phantoms, which are tightly and logically interconnected; all one has to do is accept the starting point of this world as a given. Everything in it takes on a fantastical form, distinct from real being, but the form is separate, with its own independent life and engaging in independent relationships, which in themselves are in no way lacking in logic. Thus the tendency toward system-making weaves the mystical veil of the entire societal process of life. But let us repeat that “mysticism” is a term in metalanguage, not in language as object.

In such cases, converted form should be understood not to merely denote appearance, even the most objective, which would appear to be accessible even to the immediate, naïve gaze, but an inner form of appearance, its firm and reproducing core whose depiction at the phenomenological level may in itself be the result of a very complex analysis. For example, fixing the market price of a commodity may lead to the construction of an optimal mathematical model of that regulator of elemental economic processes, a model unattainable by purely empirical description and at the same time not revealing the converted character of the price-form, not deconstructing its “normalcy,” its “naturalness,” and not breaking it down from the perspective of internal relations among its contents, that is, not moving beyond the limits of apparent relationships in any way. This particularity of converted form allows knowledge with useful practical applications to be received and many aspects of an object to be effectively modelled before creating a unified substantive theory of that object.

General Structure of Converted Form as a Function of Replenishment and Substitution of Objects in a System

Thus, of vital importance in a converted form are first the conversion within it of some other relationships, and second that the form is itself a qualitatively new, entirely discrete phenomenon, in which the mediating intermediate links have “condensed” into a distinctive functional organ, possessing its own quasi-substantiality (and correspondingly, its own sequence of accidents, often the reverse of the true one). Converted forms replenish and substitute for initial forms, and in this sense the system of connections can be presented as a system of levels of transformation and substitution. The structure of conversions, and thus the structure of the quasi-object that is converted form, can be present-

ed in the following sequence: disconnection of the relations from connections, their replenishment with a different kind of objectivity and properties, and syncretic substitution for the previous level of the system with this formation. In other words, converted forms regulate the system by replenishing the cut-off links and mediations, substituting for them a new relation that ensures the “life” of the system. The initial (real) relation here cannot be brought into being in its actual mode due to having been extracted from the given system of relationships or their blurring (as a result, for example, of what Freud called “overdetermination” of the object, located at the nexus of too many relationships, and because of this manifestation, perturbing each of those relationships in the object). Its mediating links and dependencies are effaced by the action of other relationships, which push it out as something exposed (until its replenishment), self-contained, as a phantom object. This rests on a real moment: certain characteristics of the object, born of its origin and mediations, may have no importance for certain aspects of its functioning. So, for example, the action of capitalized value occurs outside of the relationship to labor because of the temporality of capital circulation and its mutual interrelations that erase the organic composition of capital, that is, internally diverse relationships of its parts toward labor as a social relation. This is an example of the real existence of an object outside its initial relationship.

In making a concrete interpretation of the abstract structure of a converted form, a comparable suppression of connections may take place as, for example, the absence of such connections and their corresponding mechanisms in consciousness, through which they pass and in which they work, but without becoming apparent. Hence the applicability of the converted form concept to the phenomena of the unconscious—for example, in the psyche, to what is known as repression, to unconscious linguistic phenomena, to structures of personality, and so on. It is possible to interpret this exclusion as representing an underdevelopment of connections and the anatomy of some organ in the biological system which must nonetheless fulfill the same function in the system as would a fully developed one.

At points of suppression of actual connections the object begins to go through an independent cycle of movement, replenished in a certain way by quasi-substantive definitions. The latter “act as representatives” in the system in place of the dropped links, but in a converted, apparent way. The studies of Sigmund Freud, for example, clearly showed the significant degree to which the omitted connections turn out to be capable of symbolic reworking (very similar, in terms of the use of concrete material, to Levi-Strauss’s “bricolage,” the logic of which he uses to describe the work of myth). In place of the object as a system of relationships stands the quasi-object, in which the manifestation of the workings of those relationships is tied to some kind of substance, definitive and indi-

visible; the quasi-object consequently replenishes them in the system, depending on the “properties” of that substance. Or, to put it differently, it completes the absent, lost (and unobserved) connections in the system’s material (see the problem of phenomenological “fulfilment” in Husserl) and thereby fills up the “holes” in the whole, replenishing it to systemic fullness and coherence. These are imaginary or quasi-objects, existing completely objectively, discretely and independently. Imaginary objects include, for example, labor and capital as having a price; material signs in various kinds of languages that bear immediate meaning of objects; images of dreams and hallucinations, objectified neurotic ideas, etc. In these objects there is not, and there cannot be in actuality, an immediate relationship between value and labor, between sign and object, and so on. But precisely from this direct interlocking of the relationship with a certain “carrier” there develops the new, replenished (or replenishing) relation, which endows the objective appearance with structure and consistency and which signifies or indirectly realizes the process that is not directly evident in that phenomenon (see the above reference to symbolism). The order and sequence of the elements in the replenished relation differ from the existing one or can be the reverse of it, as, for example, the order and sequence of material elements from any kind of code are not a direct expression of the order and sequence of the real relations that it sets in action. That order is rather filled up using the active properties of the quasi-object that has come into being. Here the specific structure of expressive connections develops, of a different type than connections of content. Thus we have the expression, studied by Marx, of the process of revenue production in such forms as “percentage,” “entrepreneurial income,” “costs of production,” and so on. In the structure of expressive connections, causality is defined entirely in terms of the properties of the quasi-object (in this case as “the price of capital’s”), from which material the “voids” of the system observed from within (and expressed) are filled: the process appears in such a way as though the new form—the “percentage” (the interest)—preceded the industrial profit actually produced; that the industrial capitalist earned an “entrepreneurial wage” from a certain self-expanding value, as though the value produced did not subsequently divide into various parts but those parts, conversely, constituted that value, etc. Likewise the phenomenon of the replenished (and thereby reworked, “re-distributed”) whole takes place both during the ritual completion of substantive actions among preliterate peoples, and in phenomena of social symbolism and the symbolism of the unconscious in the psyche (dreams, psycho-neuroses, etc.).

The question of imaginary formations in converted form is broader than the problem of possible mystification (that is just a particular instance, important in, for example, analyzing the social role of religion). In artificial technical systems, things proceed without the emergence of any

kind of mysticism. The particular structure and sequence of pseudo-substantial elements by means of which other relations are in fact realized may in fact be really embodied, spatially removed from those elements, in technical devices, producing, for example, what may be called the pseudo-thought of cybernetic and electronic computational machines (in which, despite the absence of human consciousness, the results of the functioning of that consciousness are achieved).

The operation of replenishment effectuated in the system by the quasi-object may be the material action of a natural system, and the artificial constructive element in a technical system, and an act of consciousness as the immediate language of real life, and an ideological act. For example, in using some linguistic form or other, people do not think about the form's structure and laws, but think about the content of the utterance, about its objects. The sublation of these laws in consciousness is compensated by a special kind of "insertion," an involuntary construction—the identification of the sign and its referent, which allows whole layers of language activity to be transferred into the area of linguistic automatism.

The converted, replenished external face of relations not only breaks away from the actual movement its form belongs to, but becomes its readymade basic premise, its independent condition. That is a phenomenological substitution accomplished by converted form. The syncretism of converted form allows the system to act without accounting for or actual manifestation of all its relationships, summarily. At this level, the entire process takes place as the realization of the properties of converted form, replacing other levels of the system with their activity. When, for example, a cultural system of signs replaces given parts of the substantive work of consciousness, the system in its converted form acts as the final cause for all of the movement of consciousness, manifesting itself in that movement. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity, for example, with its supposition that the structure of a given language defines the direction in which our thought orders and divides reality, was based on observation of this circumstance. In relation to thought and ideological phenomena, the concept of substitution, effectuated by converted form, defines those formations that do not require for its action a theoretical recognition and differentiation of all their component parts at the level of concept, or even rule out such recognition. More specifically, in order to follow the inner economic laws of those modes of production in which human beings live and act, they do not need to know this inner, hidden part—it is enough for there to be a converted form supplied in consciousness, which plays a regulatory role, indirectly supporting and fulfilling the actual laws of a system. As Marx showed, people "are placed in relationships which determine their thinking but they may not know it," that is, in the case at hand, without knowing what really defines the value of the goods they produce (Marx 1969: 163).

This very particularity of converted form is also observed within the scientific-theoretical assimilation of reality, when the functioning of a readymade ideational content presupposes the identification of an unconscious abstraction with an object—that is to say, the non-differentiation of the object and its mode of action, of object and knowledge. Here, that identification is revealed to be the source of antinomies in theoretical thought. In that sense, the activity of theoretical consciousness where it reckons with the meaning and origin of its abstractions and concepts, in the boundaries and spheres of their use, is a continually renewed “de-objectivization” of converted forms, sublation of the identification between object and knowledge, and so on.

The syncretic mechanism of converted form works based on the fact that the relations between the system’s levels are inverted: the products of the process act as its conditions, and become embedded in its beginning in the form of preliminary “models” and “programs.” To the extent that no reproduction of the relations of a complex and repeatedly divided system of relationships is conscious, and it never contains the “image” of all its relationships in every point of itself, the system must reckon its products and results as preliminary “models” and “programs” of the production activity that renders those products. These models act as representatives on behalf of many points, condensing them in themselves, in their own syncretism. Isomorphism acquires the character of a cyclical relationship, a circular movement: at the level of converted form the products of the system are defined, for all intents and purposes, by themselves, tautologically. Converted forms ensure the system’s stability and counteract changes to it. The internal relationships make themselves known only by force (for example, in economic crises, in mental illness, and generally in conditions where any of the genetically heterogeneous but closely layered, co-existing functional structures malfunction or are destroyed), as well as in processes of development, which are the primary reason why converted forms are destroyed.

Applications of the Concept of Converted Form

The concept of “converted form” provides a key to analyzing consciousness at its various levels. In using this concept, Marx managed to place phenomena of social (and individual) consciousness in a system of social activity. This concept allows mental, ideological formations to be traced from their material and social foundation (rather than reducing them to it, falsely postulating that social structures are mirrored in ideological and cultural ones, etc.), and enables elucidation of the constantly changing relationship between the automatic and the conscious in social behavior and action, and analysis of the particular features of the functioning of personality structures, composed through the individual’s as-

simulation of sociocultural systems, etc. The concept of converted form is a fruitful one for use in studying the phenomena of social fetishism, primeval anthromorphism, in the analysis of semiotic systems of culture, including uncovering the conditions of alienation in culture, and so on. In applying it to ideological relations, Marx interpreted converted form as false consciousness; that is, not a subjective individual error, but rather the socially necessary appearance of relations, reproduced in the perception of their agents. Converted forms of actual relations represent the content of the motives and motivations toward action of the immediate agents of social relations.

Marx also used the concept of converted form to describe scientific knowledge. According to Marx, the task of science is to uncover internal interconnections; he treated research that limits itself to naturalistic reproduction of converted forms of appearance as a vulgar type of science. But this, on the other hand, presents the task of joining together substantial and phenomenological studies, a task which is made more pressing by the fact that in contemporary bourgeois philosophy (in phenomenology, in existentialism, etc.) various kinds of “theories of the phenomenon” are being developed, which have “replaced the reality of the thing by the objectivity of appearances” (Sartre) and thus place an epistemological and ontological basis under the procedures of the vulgar science. Without the concept of converted form, the transition from substantiality to phenomenality (and vice versa) and their combination in a certain unity of science are impossible. In a scientific system consisting, in principle, of varied methods and various types of theoretical constructions, a qualitative theory of Marx’s type (with its corresponding substantive-objective method of analysis) must also exist and materialize. Such a theory constitutes a mediatory link common to both formal mathematical theories and phenomenalist ones (for example, to theories that accept the product of phenomenological substitution as a final reality, as an elementary and final fact, and accordingly, do not use the concepts of “conversion,” “substitution,” “replenishment,” etc. in their constructions and descriptions, by which alone certain important tasks are nonetheless carried out).

In sociohistorical studies, the concept of converted form allows sociohistorical regularities to be revealed with maximal faithfulness to reality. If, from the point of view of scientific knowledge, converted form is a reproduction of the object in representational form, then in historical reality such a “representation” is a real force, part of ahistorical movement. The focus and real driving force of history, that is, an “objective event,” a “fact” (and not a representation, distinct from fact) of history is interpreted being; “interpretation” of being by its subjects (false or more or less approximating reality) and “true being,” which would form and be active independent of its being interpreted, cannot be separately distinguished in their analysis.

The “Being-Consciousness” Continuum and its Non-Classical Consequences¹

All in all, like many others in the humanities, this case shows the need to work with the concept of a single continuum of being and consciousness and examine “being” and “consciousness” only as distinct moments of that continuum, bearing in mind the areas where classical distinctions between object and subject, reality and representation, real and imaginary, etc., lose their meaning. But here once again we find the presence (and persistence in a theory claiming to objectivity in its descriptive method) of converted objects (irrational expressions, “yellow logarithms”) as signs, “testimony” to the unavoidable difference between being and consciousness, as symbols of the fact that for all their being joined in a certain shared continuum being and consciousness cannot be made identical. The persistence of the operator of “conversion” in the theory’s conceptual apparatus indicates precisely that.

The concept and the problem of converted form constitute a fundamental element in the development of the contemporary logic and methodology of the humanities, which presents in its most radical possible form the task of re-examining and limiting the entire classical philosophical field of mental operations and identifications (what has been called the Cartesian-Kantian space of thought), usually applied by science to objects of human reality. If we think through and unfold the philosophical consequences of the problem of converted form more profoundly and to their conclusion, it turns out that an approach that takes it into account together with its mode of relation to the facts of that reality implies different metaphysical hypotheses and postulates than those admitted by the classical approach and presumed by it to be common and universal. On the contrary, those may represent a particular, special case. This pertains above all to the re-examination of the formulation of such abstractions as the abstraction of the order or chaos, continuity and discontinuity, homogeneity and heterogeneity, the concepts of truth and error, the relation of “description from the outside” of objects of human reality to their “description from the inside,” and so on. The discussion should in principle deal with the construction of an ontological space of thought, distinct from the so-called Cartesian space and able at the same time to serve as the locus for working out or, if you prefer, inventing expanded forms of rational thought and objective knowledge and description.

¹ “Non-classical” in the sense used in modern physics when speaking of the difference between classical and non-classical objects. Analogously to the currently established position in physics, likewise in philosophy (above all in ontology), two strands can be distinguished, one classical, the other modern and non-classical.

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