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An Invitation to Philosophy

Translated from Croatian by Marino Buble

Author's Notes:

1. The chapters which comprise this *Invitation to Philosophy* were written in 1993; thus the traces of the period's state of war present in them. While editing the book today, in 2001, I wondered if I should keep these traces of war in the *Invitation* or remove them from it. In the end prevailed a Heideggerian belief that every individual being, including the "being" of a piece of writing is essentially marked by the **temporal horizon** in which it manifests. Countering Heidegger, this *Invitation to Philosophy* appeals to *values* which, in my opinion, do not depend on any individual or temporal outlook. The metaphysical leap by which some reader might reach the conclusion that the aforementioned values exist in themselves, beyond time and space, the author will nonetheless not allow in this text – that possible leap must be rejected or performed by every reader for himself, at their own risk, so to speak, and with arguments more developed than those touched on by this *Invitation*.
2. Although I have used numerous quotes from many books I nevertheless do not list any references, not even the names of the translators, so as not to unduly burden the essayistic character of this work with an inappropriate critical apparatus.
3. One more, no less important caveat: the reader will rightly ask himself why this book does not rely more strongly on 20th century philosophy. Someone ironic towards the values the *Invitation to Philosophy* stands for, and there is a large number of such people today, not merely among non-philosophers, will note that by the contents it deals with, with some rare exceptions, it could have been written a hundred years ago. Against such an objection I point out only that in a text such as this, which examines the fundamental values of philosophizing, there is no place for those specialist disciplines and theories with which modern philosophy mostly preoccupies itself. Taking into account only those philosophers who've thought about the entirety of man's being, I cannot help mentioning, offhandedly at least, the concluding problem of perhaps the most important philosopher of recent times, Martin **Heidegger** (1889 – 1976), who in his later works often considered the topic of the **death of philosophy**. He thought that in today's era of scientific development, her "technical-practical successes mean that philosophical thought today increasingly appears superfluous." In the discussion **The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thought** he concludes that the **death of philosophy** in the sciences has already occurred and the task of thought today is to completely abandon the way philosophy has been done thus far. It's hard not to agree with Heidegger on this. From a barely visible hiatus of disagreement came this *Invitation*. Its *method* will, in contrast to Heidegger's, be most vividly presented by a small introductory **Parallel with Socrates**:

On a "world night" in the Fall of 1966, in the "cabin of Being" in Todtnauberg, Schwarzwald, Heidegger had, finally, agreed to respond to the accusations about his position during Nazism. "The greatest of

the modern masters of the trade of thought" would often mock the Greek, in fact **Socratic principle**, according to which the *life of the philosopher* was a criterion for the credibility of his philosophy. Still, he eventually tried to justify his life, although under the condition that the *conversation* be published after his death. When the Thirty Tyrants, headed by Critias, a former student of Socrates, began killing many citizens of Athens, Socrates said it seemed odd if someone became a shepherd to a herd of cattle and proceeded to reduce the number of cows and make them grow thinner, and even more odd if someone headed a state, reduced the number of citizens and made them grow worse. When informed of this, Critias summoned Socrates and forbade him further conversations with the citizenry. "I must, then, keep away from what comes after conversation – justice and piety?", Socrates asked. "By Zeus", the tyrant answered, "all that, and the cattle herders; or beware that you too would not reduce the number of cows!" And then he ordered Socrates to go to Salamina and capture Leon of Salamina, and the Thirty Tyrants did so constantly, drawing honest citizens into their crimes and threatening with death if they did not obey. Only after Heidegger's death did the weekly **Der Spiegel** (May 31st 1976) publish that ten year old conversation with him.

Spiegel: In the Fall of 1933 you said: *Principles and ideas are not the rule of our Being. Only the Führer himself is today's and tomorrow's German reality and its only law.*

Heidegger: These sentences are not in the rectorate speech, only in the local Freiburg student newspaper, at the beginning of the winter semester 1933/1934. When I took over the rectorate, I knew I would not pass without compromise. Those sentences I would not write today. I was not even saying such things in 1934.

And although in the **Spiegel** interview, generally considered to be his philosophical **Testament**, he rebutted and refuted many accusations and prejudices about himself and his philosophy, the impression remains that his life cannot fully endure that *ethical principle* of Socrates. In that sense, the malaise with which Heidegger (1966) ends his **Testament** is quite understandable. He says that philosophy's greatest trouble today is the lack of a philosopher great enough to *effectively* lead philosophy to its subject and thus get thought back to the right path. Socrates, on the contrary, in the year 400 BC, refused the order to capture Leon of Salamina and would have probably been executed then if the Athenians hadn't overthrown the Thirty Tyrants and murdered that former student of his, Critias the tyrant.

The theorem that follows from this *parallel* does not, of course, demand that contemporary philosophers should sacrifice their lives for **philosophical truth**, mimicking Socrates; once taught by the example they can always lay low before such a threat or even deny *truth* itself, but one ought to, and philosophically I think *must* demand that they do not sell off her values in the name of authority, power and career.

NON-PHILOSOPHER: Just don't philosophize!

PHILOSOPHER: We must, therefore, do philosophy or bid the world farewell and depart this place, because everything else is gigantic nonsense and claptrap.

I. WHO IS MORE EASILY DECEIVED?

1. *Hegel and his cobbler*

The famous German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich HEGEL (1770 – 1831) often visited his cobbler. Not only because he preferred to do his thinking on foot rather than in a carriage; he walked from his house to the university every day so he wore his shoes a lot, but also because the times then were difficult and "revolutionary", like ours, the air in the cobbler's workshop warm and pleasant, and the cobbler was fond of philosophy. It's known that many of Hegel's famous works like the "Phenomenology of Spirit", the "Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences", "Logic" and "Aesthetics" were created on the basis of lectures the famous and quite frequent patron of the cobbler's workshop held at the university. Traces of these lectures are perceptible and well known, and many anecdotes are still told about them in philosophical circles, such as the one where the student **Schopenhauer** shouted: "But, Professor, your ideas do not agree with reality!", to which the esteemed visitor of the cobbler's workshop replied: "So much the worse for reality!".

Less perceptible in Hegel's works are the "**conversations with the cobbler**", although they are nevertheless present. So at one point the esteemed visitor complains how regarding every art, science and trade the opinion prevails that he who wishes to practice them must gradually learn for a long time, while when it comes to philosophy the dominant prejudice is that anyone can philosophise or rate the value of a philosophy according to the standards they possess in their natural mind! And everyone admits, Hegel complains further, that they are not capable of making shoes although they have eyes and hands and can obtain leather and tools, and they possess the measures for a shoe in their own foot!

The allusion to the philosophical duels in that warm cobbler's workshop halfway between home and university is more than obvious. It's a shame the great Hegel didn't write down these "**Little Conversations with the Cobbler**" - today they would surely be better read than the "Phenomenology". Let us nonetheless try to follow their trail!

2. *The question from the example: philosophy or shoes?*

In the difficult times at hand it may seem to the Non-Philosopher that talking about philosophy is the last thing we need in this world. Why ask yourself and others questions about the distant, tangled and abstract meaning of life when life itself is at stake? Someone's a friend, someone a foe, someone with faith in God and someone in league with the Devil himself, someone's a Croat, someone a Serb, twice two is four! The time is quite clear, answers have been offered, all questions are, largely, unquestionable. Besides, today's philosophy, insufficiently authoritative to be a science (something even Hegel believed!), insufficiently beautiful to be art, has mired itself into ways of discussing its problems so foreign to the common man, the Non-Philosopher, who is today constantly under threat, and it seems there are no horses left to drag her worn-out wagon out of this abstract Hegelian muck. Oh, if we could only hear Hegel's cobbler today!

The esteemed one himself has squeezed into the corner of the workshop listening to a "lecture" on shoemaking, which is a very purposeful and meaningful activity. Hegel listens, keeps quiet, has no objections and dares not have any; this here is a cobbler's workshop, not some university! As soon as the esteemed visitor opens his mouth to say something on philosophy, the master craftsman will immediately interrupt him to put forward his own shoe-making opinion, not doubting a bit that he is as capable of it as the philosopher Hegel!

In times like ours, all philosophies are pushed aside, and who can say the cobbler isn't right? What does the barefoot Non-Philosopher need more today: Hegel's philosophy or the cobbler's shoes?

3. *The Non-Philosopher's reply: shoes!*

The barefoot Non-Philosopher rightly rejects Hegel and chooses shoes. That is perfectly fine. That is, we might say, a superior act of choice which, as such, is not at all bereft of philosophy. When the barefoot Non-Philosopher could refute Hegel and wear shoes as, we assume, the cobbler did every day, one could have no objections to that. Between philosophy and shoes the barefoot Non-Philosopher in necessity chooses shoes and that is the "*sufficient reason*" with which the master tried to back Hegel into a corner in the workshop.

4. *The Non-Philosopher's Error - Time*

What goes on actually with our Non-Philosopher who has pushed Hegel aside in favour of Hegel's cobbler? Will the master give him a pair of shoes because of this?

Let a parable about time assist us here! In Greek mythology the supreme god Chronos (Time) is depicted devouring his own children, time eats its years. Chronos is here and now like a rolling boulder, knocking down all obstacles. Either our Non-Philosopher will chase after the boulder or it will crush him if he stands in its way. To him it seems there is no time to wonder about the meaning and purpose of this rolling while he remains barefoot. And the rolling boulder, by the inertia of its acceleration, hopes to abolish this freedom of wondering; as if it wants to surprise him and jump him so our barefoot Non-Philosopher remains both without questions and without answers, to force him to accept things as they happen to him, without comment! In this mechanic rolling the barefoot Non-Philosopher abandons, of course, philosophy and reaches for the shoes. Very good! Only, no one will give him shoes in exchange for his rejection of philosophy. When the boulder rolls away and this time passes, he will conclude with regret that he has lost his shoes as well. Rejecting Hegel, he didn't put a shoe on his bare foot, he merely replaced Hegel's philosophy with that of the cobbler. And he still remained a barefoot Non-Philosopher. Cheers!

5. *The Cobbler's Theorem*

We can imagine the esteemed professor Hegel and his cobbler didn't just argue, otherwise Herr Professor would not have visited the shop that often. Philosophy is, in this the master craftsman agrees with Hegel, at the very least necessary to keep one from being tricked; if one is a cobbler, that they don't take off with his shoes without paying for them; or if one is a barefoot Non-Philosopher, that they don't sell him a "philosophy" instead of shoes.

If our Non-Philosopher does not understand the purpose of philosophy, he shouldn't rack his brain too much. Let him rather look at his feet!

"Good God, man!", both Hegel and his cobbler exclaim, "You who reject philosophy are still barefoot! Think good and hard about it: who is more easily deceived, the one wearing shoes or the one who doesn't even have them?!"

II. FIGURES OF KNOWLEDGE AND FIGURES OF FALSE ACCUSATIONS

6. *Thales and his old woman*

With **Thales** of Miletus, who was born in Ionian Asia Minor during the Thirty-fifth Olympics (640) and died during the Fifty-eight Olympics (548 BC), begins that, to some superfluous and to others grand *knowledge*, which in European tradition is called *philosophy*. It is that thought which to our everyday Non-Philosopher appears abstract, useless, even ridiculous. Thales was the first to ask questions about the whole of what is and of being (*ontology*), of the Cosmos and the laws which govern it (*cosmology*), and even old Greek doxographers ascribed to him the saying KNOW THYSELF, with which he was the first to turn his questions from nature to the exploration of man and his capacities for knowledge. In brief overviews of philosophical thought it's usually said that, like other Ionian sages, he was fascinated by change so he chose *water*, the most mutable of elements, as the *origin* (Greek: arché) of all things.

It'll be more interesting to inform our Non-Philosopher that Thales was the first astronomer (not counting Egyptian and Chaldean astrologers), who discovered the Sun's journey from tropic to tropic and on the basis of astronomical research was the first to accurately predict an eclipse of the Sun, on May 28th 585 BC, during the battle between Alyattes and Cyaxares, to which a somewhat younger Ionian, the famed Herodotus of Halicarnassus, bears witness.

Thales as such did not, it seems, care much for property and material gain; in daytime he would pensively walk through the olive groves on the hills of Ionia in his ragged chyton, and in nighttime he would go out of his house to observe and explore the stars. His compatriots, seeing him poor and ragged, mocked both him and his philosophy. Of this the late Ancient doxographer (collector of other people's thought), Diogenes Laertius, brings an interesting "figure", which bears quoting:

It is said that Thales, while some old woman was bringing him out of the house so he could gaze at the stars, fell into a pit, and that the old woman, once he had cried out, told him: "Do you, Thales, who are not capable of seeing what is under your feet, mean to know what is in the heavens?"

7. *Question from the example: are philosophers ridiculous?*

Will our Non-Philosopher who is here and now constantly in question choose Thales' path which leads to the stars and back to get distant and abstract knowledge, or will he side with the "figure of the old woman" who mocks such a sage who, gazing at the sky, does not notice the pit he is about to fall into? Is it better to travel in your thoughts to the stars and back to finally "know" that in the beginning of it all "there was water", or is it better, like Thales' old woman, to adapt well to the immediate dark environment? And what, in these times of war, when all abstractions take on the appearance of a "luxury of thought" that's hard to accept, could Thales' cosmological investigations, his determination of being with the element of water, and the pointers from a fragment directing to questions on man's inner essence mean to someone? And in general, if the situation were different; what would Thales' "sum of knowledge" as the sum of answers at which he arrived on his road to philosophy mean to an Englishman, a Frenchman, or more simply, a modern high school student who, it seems, knows more on these questions than the philosopher Thales did? Does not the "figure of knowledge" represented by Thales who falls into the pit from the beginning of the road to philosophy fade away before the

"figure of the old woman" who adapts well and mocks the philosopher? Besides, weren't philosophers always ridiculous?

8. Who can stop a war? The Figure of knowledge or the Figure of adaptation?

While Thales' compatriots mocked their philosopher for always walking around in worn-out clothes and for falling into pits while gazing at the stars, they were struck by a terrible war with the Meropians in which many who were brave and adaptable died. And the war, in truth, began over nothing, we would say today: over a coat of arms, a flag and a star, over a golden tripod which the god Hephaestus allegedly gave to Pelopes when he married Hypodamia. Later the tripod was inherited by Pelopes' grandson Menelaus, and was taken by Paris when, along with Helen, he dragged away to Troy the better part of Menelaus' treasures. Fearing that Hephaestus' tripod would become an object of discord and feuds, Helen threw it into the sea near the island of Cos.

And indeed, after several hundred years, fishermen pulled the golden tripod out along with their catch and took it to the Meropians and Ionians, so it could be ascertained whose it is. A horrible war erupted, which neither the Ionians nor their enemies could stop. After both Miletus and Cos were ravaged several times, along with numerous friendly and hostile cities on the Ionian coast and islands, and after many on both sides fell, and among them that old woman and her children and grandchildren; both sides sent envoys to Delphi asking Apollo for advice on how to end the war with honor.

Pythias, who inspired by god replied in his name, gave both the same prophecy:

The quarrel of the Meropians and Ionians shall not cease
before the golden tripod, which Hephaestus hath thrown to the sea
is sent from the city and arrives in the home of a man
who is learned in what is, what was, what will be.

And the bitter enemies agreed that no man deserves the divine tripod save that ridiculous philosopher of Miletus who, gazing at the stars, keeps stumbling and falling into pits and holes on the way. And they gave the tripod to Thales, and so that terrible war had ended!

9. Thales' "olive-grower's" theorem

Even before he had received the tripod Thales gave the Miletians ample proof of his worth and the worth of his philosophy. Many would, namely, come to him for knowledge when they needed something, and upon receiving it continued to mock him because he did not charge them for the services rendered. When Thales had finally had enough of the Miletians' mockeries, not of him but of Philosophy, he decided to give them such a proof as they were only capable of understanding.

Using his astrological knowledge, he calculated the time when olives would be bountiful. During a barren season he cheaply leased all the mills in Miletus and the surrounding area, and when shortly after the olives had grown bountiful he rented them at great cost and acquired a great fortune. Thus he showed the philosopher could get rich easily, if he wanted to, but it wasn't what he put his efforts towards.

And our brave Non-Philosopher, even if he does not believe the legend of the divine tripod, must understand this "olive-grower's theorem" well. Who will he side with – the old woman who adapts and mocks or Thales who, gazing at the stars, falls into a pit; the figures of knowledge or the figures of mockery, war and false accusations?

III. SWEET VINEGAR

10. Lao Zi and his customs official

Young **Tan Li**, eager to acquire knowledge and wisdom, escaped one night from his native village of Kuh-si Yen (Li province, Ku district) and came to Laobang, the capital of the Chinese Empire, carrying with him only his worn-out sandals. How far can such a refugee who, at least by virtue of not having anything more than his sandals, resembles some of our modern non-philosophers, go?

It happened, as the old chronicles say, somewhere around the beginning of the 6th century BC, perhaps precisely in 571 – the old chronicles disagree on this as they do on everything else – at a time when rulers from the ZHOU dynasty reached their zenith and the great Chinese feudal empire, divided into numerous provinces, began to fall apart from within. The country was ruled by the Son of Heaven (the Emperor), and the provinces by the Sons of the Son of Heaven (the princes); in Laobang there were numerous ministries with an even more numerous bureaucracy, from the highest to the lowest, just like in the provinces. China had an extraordinary bureaucratic organisation. No one could do anything without it being under the jurisdiction of this cumbersome apparatus; but, in return, before even the lowliest freeman a path of progression from the lowest to the highest rungs of authority, power and influence was opened. Non-philosophers practically raced to see who would climb this "staircase" higher and farther. Young Tan Li got a job as cleaner of the imperial privies!

When the Ministry of administration and justice decided to encompass even this lowliest domain with its regulations, it decided to appoint young Tan administrator and imperial clerk. Tan Li politely refused, leaving the spot to his comrade, also a cleaner, Ji, who was very keen on advancing. The other cleaners were puzzled that Tan would reject such a nice income and never ceased to question him on why he did so. Tan Li would always respond the same way: "The DAO turns!" They stopped being puzzled and pestering him only when a high official of the Ministry, dissatisfied with the cleanliness of the privy, had Ji taken out into the yard and beheaded him himself before everyone.

The story that spread about the wise young man then reached a notable at the Ministry of education, one Yin Hsi, who hired Tan Li in the imperial archives. There the young man finally met with what he had earlier come to Laobang for, the deep wisdom of the YI-JING, the Book of Change, which in the confines of the Ministry was studied alongside the SHI-JING and the SHU-JING, the ancient foundations of Chinese wisdom, statecraft and culture.

Tan Li spent some beautiful years in this "empire of wisdom" trying to remain unnoticed and unknown. Yin Hsi would, however, constantly address him asking for wise advice with which he advanced in his service.

When the Son of Heaven announced a contest for the emptied office of the Minister of education, he set before the candidates a pile of expensive objects: jade ornaments, gold necklaces and many works of art which practically blinded the candidates with their skillful craftsmanship and gleaming materials; he demanded they find the most valuable object! It is said that Tan Li was the one who advised Yin Hsi to pick a common clay pot. The Emperor was so thrilled with his choice that he made him Minister!

When a great rebellion erupted in the empire all the ministries agreed and advised the Son of Heaven to gather a mighty host and punish the rebels harshly. However, the Emperor, having heard the ministers, asked Yin Hsi for advice. He, in a dilemma, swiftly turned to Tan Li, who whispered only two words to him: WU WEI! /act without action; in the sense of: do nothing forceful!)

Tan Li nonetheless whispered to Yin Hsi that it would be better for his career to agree with the prevailing opinion. The Minister trusted Tan Li so much he repeated those two words before the Emperor: WU WEI!

Encouraged by his other ministers, the Emperor got so mad that he immediately deposed Yin Hsi and banished him to the most distant province, giving him some meaningless office.

Leaving Laobang, Yin Hsi left the Emperor a letter, asking him to read it when he sees his advice was correct; he was, namely, convinced of the accuracy and wisdom of his protégé to such an extent. And indeed, after a few years, when the imperial army had already been defeated and the imperial court itself surrounded, the Son of Heaven recalled that exile and reached for the letter. And in it, Yin Hsi told his ruler the whole truth: all the advice that helped him advance to the high position of Minister of education, including the WU WEI, "act through inaction!", he received from his wise protégé, Lao Zi, who works as a common archivist in the imperial chancellery, refusing all promotions!

Having read the letter and no longer having anywhere to go – the rebels had already broken into the hall and surrounded him – the Emperor decided to heed that advice. He continued to sit still and think. The rebels, seeing the Son of Heaven so serene, began to shiver, dropped their weapons one by one, fell on their knees and pleaded for forgiveness; so was the rebellion that threatened to destroy the empire quelled.

The Emperor then summoned all the common archivists and announced he would make Lao Zi minister, but since none of those present answered to the name, he ordered the ministry of justice to find him!

That same night Tan Li left Laobang fearing they would discover him at last and make him minister by force. He fled for a long time, hiding, until in winter he reached a tall mountain pass through which one left over the border westwards. There the guards caught him and took him to the customs house, where they gave him over to an old customs official to decide what to do with him.

"So, the Emperor opened the letter!", Yin Hsi exclaimed, for it was him, when he saw Tan Li.

"I will let you cross the border", he said, "only if you write a book in which you will expound your wisdom!"

And so Tan Li wrote the DAO DE JING (*The Book of the Way and the Virtue*) in a little over 5000 words. When spring came, he gave the book to his onetime patron and minister, now a customs official; he put on his sandals and headed west, and no one knows, as the old chronicles note, how far he actually got!

11. Question from the example: which way to go?

It seems that to our Non-Philosopher, who lives in at least somewhat similar circumstances as Tan Li, later called LAO ZI (which means "ancient philosopher" in Chinese), this "story" is more important than the exposition of some possible "sum" of the DAO DE philosophy. Besides, numerous Western overviews dedicate little to no attention to "life examples", stories and legends which in the Chinese philosophical tradition have no less importance than the philosophical arguments themselves. In Chinese, and generally Eastern thought only the life path of every individual sage represents the true measure of the realization of truth. And while the Western philosopher since ancient times has "discovered" the truths of the world, the Eastern sage receives ready-made truths (either from his Master, or from a generally known tradition), discovering through his life the way (DAO) towards the truth inside him.

Should one walk with the Truth to public places and courts in these times, as with a flaming torch, even though one is often aware they cannot be understood or accepted, as another great Chinese thinker, Master KUNG (KUNG-FU TSE, Confucius), or should one, like Lao Zi, carefully hide her glow deep within oneself, away from "unenlightened eyes"?!

12. The vinegar theorem

Regardless of the dualities from the "story" and from the "question" one must say that Lao Zi, with the depth of his thought and particularly the cheerful serenity achieved through an ethic of "acting through inaction" (WU WEI), which should not be understood as dull indolence but as a simple and silent action deprived of all violence; while living in uncertain times, may have marked the "Eastern way of thought" more than anyone else. A Japanese artist portrays his paradoxical cheerfulness on the interesting drawing "The Three Vinegar Tasters".

Three ancient wise men taste vinegar from a barrel. CONFUCIUS tries it first and concludes the facts: the vinegar is *sour*. BUDDHA tastes it second and in accordance with his philosophy finds the vinegar is *bitter*. Finally, LAO ZI tastes it, and, evaluating the dispute "in the light of Heaven", states with a smile on his face that the vinegar in the barrel is actually *sweet*!

IV. THE CHINAMAN OF KÖNIGSBERG

13. Kant and his Hecube

Immanuel **Kant** (1724 - 1804) was born in Königsberg in eastern Prussia and never left his hometown in his life.

Popular portrayals of Kant's life and philosophy usually begin with that sentence but, sadly, they do not draw from it any conclusion worthy of mention. We know he studied in his hometown, that he worked as a private tutor, then as a lecturer at a university, that he applied for professor twice and was rejected on both occasions, only to be appointed professor of logic and metaphysics at the very same University of Königsberg in his later years. More cynical portrayals state this *great man* was barely 5'2" tall, and that twice in his life he made plans

to marry; the first time he spent too long thinking about it so the lady married another man, and the second time the woman of Kant's dreams left Königsberg. Logically, the philosopher didn't chase after her when it is known he never moved away from his hometown! He was modest, diligent and punctual like a Swiss watch; when he left his house beneath the castle at 3:30 PM to walk along Königsberg's "Linden Avenue", later dubbed "philosopher's road" after him, the citizens would, having seen him, adjust their watches. This man who, among his numerous other works, wrote a tract on how despite ill health and frailty one can defeat any illness with the force of willpower, ended his monotonous life of writing thousands and thousands of pages of unreadable, boring tomes by completely "evaporating" from senile dementia.

Why such cynicism and often mockery in writing about Kant and his philosophy? First among his contemporaries, then those who came after him, all the way to today's philosophers, not to mention non-philosophers who take up reading his books! Kant himself gave his "Critique of Pure Reason" (the philosopher's magnum opus, weighing in at almost 800 pages!) to such a person, "well educated" no less, asking for his opinion; the fellow read the book halfway, and then, he said, he had to stop reading to keep his sanity!

Philosopher's didn't have it easy either with Kant or after Kant. He had demolished the building of prior philosophies with his thick "Critiques", to give philosophy a "clear terrain" on which a "new" one would grow, supplied with a "transcendental method" that would help it to finally ascend to such certainties and undeniable facts that, for example, exist in geometry and the mathematical sciences. He explored the "building of the world" to its most obscure nooks and crannies, hoping he had charted the course for its improvement. Kant's followers, particularly Hegel, were quick to demolish this "building" like a house of cards, so that nowadays little remains of its results, but sadly they held on to this dream of philosophy's "scientific" nature for too long!

It's interesting that Kant, a born metaphysician, came to the conclusion that the entirety of Metaphysics until then was unfounded! (For the Non-Philosopher, metaphysics is the discipline that deals in "first causes", "eternal truths", "the existence of God"; in short with knowledge that goes beyond human experience.)

Because we know the world through transcendental categories of reason which precede experience and a priori forms of *space* and *time*, all we ever know is the world of appearances, *phenomena*. The "reality" of things "in themselves" remains inscrutable and unknown. This famous THING IN ITSELF (Ding an Sich), God, being, the first cause, etc. all "objects" of classical metaphysics, are unknowable and of them one can only have opinions or faith; they cannot be rationally proven without the mind stumbling over *antinomies*. This world "in itself" exists beyond our knowledge, but we do not know what it is or how it exists, nor can we even know on the basis of rational thought! The THING IN ITSELF (the area of "*noumenon*" as opposed to "*phainomenon*") remains inaccessible to scientific knowledge.

Hegel will simply dismissively wave his hand and "knock down" all 800 pages of the "Critique of Pure Reason" by exclaiming: "There is nothing more knowable in the world than the Thing In Itself!"

Describing in the foreword of his "Critique" the fate of metaphysics Kant unwittingly describes the fate of all philosophical "systems", including his own: "*There was a time when Metaphysics was called the queen of all sciences, so if intentions are taken for actions, then because of the extraordinary importance of its subject certainly deserves this appellation. The modern age demands we scorn her, so the matron, abandoned and neglected complains like Hecube: - Only recently the mightiest of all rulers with so many children and sons-in-*

law, now I am cast out of my homeland and taken away powerless."

If Kant's philosophy is, like the metaphysics he paints with the figure of Hecube, like philosophy as a whole along with the sum of its "truths", in today's world condemned to the fate of the Trojan queen, why then this conversation about Kant and his philosophy or about philosophy in general? - today's Non-Philosopher rightly asks. If the results of philosophical ponderings are so deniable and perishable as we admit they are, isn't it better or just as valid to consult a *horoscope* for answers?

Carefully avoiding at all times this characteristic simplification we will respond to our Non-Philosopher with a counterquestion: Is, for example, Columbus so significant in the history of humanity because of the opinions and lifestyle of today's Americans (the *results* of philosophy) or because of the fact he discovered America while seeking a naval route to India (the significance of *questions* in philosophy)?!

14. Figures of travel

We did not mention Columbus by accident! If we were to ask our Non-Philosopher who the greatest explorer and world traveler in the history of humanity was, he would readily reply: Christopher Columbus! Not so! The greatest explorer and traveler is called Immanuel Kant, that man who everyone says never left his native Königsberg once in his life.

And while the Genoan sailed on the "Santa Maria", Kant sailed a ship called "Integrity of thought". Once he wrote to his friend Mendelssohn: "There are things of which I haven't the courage to speak, but I will never say what I do not believe!" That is something his fiercest philosophical opponents cannot deny him. And while Columbus' journeys are measured in thousands of miles, Kant traveled across time and space, in trillions and quadrillions.

Travelling to the ancient beginnings of the physical world, he was the first to postulate a scientific theory on the origin of the universe known as the Kant-Laplace theory.

Travelling to ancient times with his questions on the possible development of the human species, almost a whole century before Darwin, he outlined an evolutionary hypothesis on the animal origin of man.

His journey to what he believed were the ultimate boundaries of knowledge is called the "Kantian Copernican revolution". While philosophers before him observed the world, Kant took up observing the power of the Observer himself. On this journey "ad infinitum" (to the infinite) he discovered the Scilla and Charybdis of the Observer's journey; the shores of Metaphysics were "pure reason" trips over contradictions in which with equal unreliability it proves that there is no God and the World is infinite as that there is a God and the World was created and has its beginning (Antinomies of pure reason).

This, for all of classical philosophy the most troublesome aporia (dilemma), he overcame with the, if not the most distant then certainly the deepest, gap between the Scilla of human knowledge and the Charybdis of action in a human world by sailing from the human mind to the human heart, finding there, in the human heart, an autonomous will devoid of all moralising. There autonomous will finds, through the nature of its

freedom, an a priori categorical imperative: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law!" Ideas, rejected in the sphere of human knowledge, Kant postulates into the sphere of human practice; there were the spirit is absolutely free and where it finds the previously rejected *eternal metaphysical truths* inside itself, in its *conscience*. So one must act in science as if God doesn't exist, and in the sphere of human practice, in the area of morals, as if God exists. This "as if" philosophy was and still is an occasion for cynical mockeries of Kant's philosophy, but one will still find supporters of Kant's integrity of thought, unsparing even towards himself.

After all, we did not mention the Americans with regard to Kant's journeys without a final intention. The aging Kant writes the discussion "Eternal Peace", a futuristic philosophy with which he traveled to our time without setting a final destination. Let our Non-Philosopher, especially if he is anxious and exiled from his own home, separated from dear friends, his wife and family, not be crushed by this "close encounter of the philosophical kind"! Kant demands that *ideas*, which are not the *constituent* elements of our knowledge but *regulative* principles of action, be postulated in state and political practice. States "ought to" be republican and democratic and, united in a cosmopolitan "community of states", secure to all nations and every individual the rights of a "citizen of the world".

Between the "ought to" (Sollen) of the philosopher Immanuel Kant and what really *is* (Sein) is still a yawning chasm. The **categorical imperative** which (ought to) govern human practice in the name of duty and honesty is still subordinated to numerous **hypothetical** imperatives, under which the means are chosen to achieve ends. The power of the stronger still prevails over truth and justice, but one cannot say that the world is not at all moving in the direction of this Kantian "ought to". Thence comes hope.

Perhaps our Non-Philosopher would not understand the complicated deductions and symbols while making his way through the "Critique of Practical Reason", but the *figure* that Kant presents at the end of the work is without a doubt both comprehensible and touching:

That which always fills the soul with a new awe and wonder and what supplies the *animal creature* with the life force and value of human existence is: THE STARRY SKY ABOVE US AND THE MORAL LAWS WITHIN US! That image, in which Kant expressed the divine celestial order in man and the conciliatory "Goethean" humanity in the heavens, best describes the circle and purpose of his "travels".

"Sky" in man, and "humanity" in the skies! Affectionately mocking but not without malice, Bertrand Russel called Kant the "Chinaman of Königsberg".

15. Kant's "lunar" theorem

The Americans about whom we speak when Kant is faced with our Non-Philosopher, those who, following the futuristic projections of Kant's "ought to", are today the only ones with the power of "categorical" rather than just "hypothetical" action, often in practice switch these imperatives. From Kant's "cosmopolitan" viewpoint, it would be far more meaningful to right injustices, plug a few of the cracks in the world "between being and ought to" of which there are too many anyway, than to travel to the unknowable far reaches of the "noumenon", i.e. the thing in itself, even if we look for it on the Moon. Who among our Non-Philosophers does not recall the words of the American who not too long ago was the first to land on the Moon: "One small step for man, one giant leap for Mankind." Kant, who otherwise like any reasonable man had nothing against travelling to the Moon, nevertheless directs the primary goals of human action in a completely different

direction, warning us: "And when man some day walks on the Moon he will not be a step closer to the Thing In Itself!"

V. A PHILOSOPHER FROM ABDERA AND TRUTH FROM CRETE

16. Protagoras, the sophists, and the "Liar"

The most famous of the philosopher who reached their *akmé* (apex) in the "golden age" of Greek culture (5th century BC) was neither **Democritus** nor **Socrates**, but a certain **Protagoras** who today's non-philosophers and printers like to confuse with **Pythagoras**! This **Protagoras** (certainly not **Pythagoras**!) was the first *sophist*, famous in his time both for his teachings and for his students – the *sophists*. He was the first who dared to ask a student for fees, which immediately caused outrage among some philosophers, and among still others massive approval. From the moment when Protagoras came to Athens from his native Abdera and swept aside all "rivals" with his incomparable work *ALETHEIA HE KATABALLONTES LOGOI* ("The Truth, or the Refuting Orations), Greek philosophers divided themselves into *sophists* and the "other ones". The sophists won in the eyes of their contemporaries, and the other ones, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, in the long run – in the history of philosophy! It seems that today the time has come for a sort of rehabilitation of the sophists. The appalled Non-Philosopher for whom since school days "sophist" means the same as "liar" should be reminded: does he know anyone today who teaches philosophy or writes philosophical articles in, say, the newspaper, without expecting to be paid for it? And if his paycheck is denied, is he not ready to sue the debtor just like the Greek sophists did when they took their "forgetful" students to court?

Protagoras, it seems, gave his students *sophisms* for practice; forms of false conclusions with a hidden logical error, so they would learn how to tell apart true and false *refutations*. Later sophists began grossly misusing these "exercises", which got them a bad reputation among honest men. If our honest Non-Philosopher looks around himself, he will notice the world is ruled by sophistry; only philosophers preoccupy themselves with forms of valid and true reasoning, and few people listen and understand them anyway.

Here is some practice for our Non-Philosopher, just in case! (it's never too late to arm oneself, even even with knowledge) – a very famous sophism called "The Liar" – which, it seems, came out of Protagoras' thinking shop. (Modern logicians, for example W. Kneale in "The Development of Logic", following D. Laertius, rather ascribe it to the Megaran Eubulides, creator of the famed *logical paradoxes*.)

Creon of Crete says that all Cretans are liars.

Therefore, Creon lies as well, given that he is from Crete.

If he is lying about them being liars, then all Cretans tell the truth!

Therefore, Creon tells the truth because he is a Cretan as well.

If so, then all Cretans do lie after all! Creon, therefore, lies as well, as all Cretans are liars.

If he's lying about them being liars, then they must all be telling the truth, in which case he, being a Cretan, is telling the truth, which again means that all Cretans are liars.

So Creon is a liar who lies when he says that all Cretans are liars, etc.

If our Non-Philosopher gets a headache from all this spinning, let him, instead of painkillers, simply take a "*propositional expansion*"! Although today every non-philosopher thinks (inside) that "all Cretans are liars", let us allow the existence of at least one man, no matter how unnoticeable, even if he is all the way over on Crete, who *tells the truth*!

17. Question from the example: does wisdom frown on the world or smile on it?

Shifting his gaze from the outside world into the internal depths of man (ethos), worried over the *idea of good* like a midwife over a child being born, **Socrates** called the sophists *whores* for selling their wisdom to all comers. **Aristotle** in his "Refutations of the Sophists" deals with these "illusions of wisdom" claiming: "*Sophistry is illusory and not real wisdom, and a sophist is a man who knows how to get money out of this illusory wisdom.*" **Plato** quotes the words of Protagoras directed to a young man who became his student:

"When you've spent your first day with me, you'll leave home better than you were, and tomorrow as well. Every day you will progress further!"

"He who studies from a sophist", Plato remarks, "loses something on the very first day, grows worse day by day, and is finally beyond help!"

Therefore, as far as the "question from the example" is concerned - a warning: let our Non-Philosopher not think that "true wisdom" descending to the depths is always dour and worried, just like humor isn't necessarily shallow and dull.

For example:

THE HORNED MAN

SOPHIST: Do you have that which you haven't lost?

STUDENT: Of course I do!

SOPHIST: You haven't lost your horns, therefore you have them!

When some epic poet insulted Protagoras all around for rejecting his poems, Protagoras replied: "My good man, I would rather hear your curses than your poems!"

18. Helping the Non-Philosopher: Against Protagoras!

On a lovely morning in Abdera a poor fellow, a dockworker, was loading wood from the dock to the ship along with the other dockworkers. The philosopher **Democritus** observed him with fascination! The illiterate dockworker, if nothing else, had to possess an ingenious *logic*, seeing as he invented a mat for the shoulders on which to carry loads of cargo, and the observer had to be Democritus, to spot the dockworker's ingenuity.

Democritus immediately took the poor fellow under his wing, and as he was wealthy he brought him into his house, taught him to read and write and educated him, in essence - he made the dockworker into a

philosopher!

If we believe the continuator of **Eratosthenes'** "Chronology", **Apollodoros** of Athens, who was the first to create a precise "Chronological overview of Greek philosophers"; the meeting in the harbor between the dockworker and Democritus happened at least 20 years before Democritus' birth! But never mind, moving on!

In the middle of the century, Democritus traveled from Abdera to Athens to expound his philosophy there, in what was then the center of the world's wisdom. However, he remained obscure, they didn't even notice him "there" so, disappointed, he returned whence he came. His student, the dockworker which Democritus had taken along with him, remained in Athens. He became famous over night by charging for his lectures and his "Refuting Speeches" of which, sadly, only one sentence remains: MAN IS THE MEASURE OF ALL THINGS; OF THOSE THAT ARE, THAT THEY ARE, AND OF THOSE THAT AREN'T THAT THEY AREN'T. From the "Contrary Speeches" ("Antilogoi") also just one: "One can debate anything equally from two opposing viewpoints, even that statement itself - namely, whether one can debate anything from two opposing viewpoints."

This angered honest old Democritus so much that he sat down and wrote a discussion in reply to his old student, "Against Protagoras":

"If every idea is true", Democritus writes, "so is the opinion that every idea isn't true, because it too is based on an idea. Thus the opinion that every idea is true becomes a lie!"

19. The opposite response: for Protagoras!

There is a characteristic *difference* between Protagoras as the founder of *pragmatism* and the much better known **Aristotle**, creator of the first in a line of great "idealist" systems, and it is on the territory of *logic* which is the "tool" of philosophy ("Organon"). In the text "On the Gods" Protagoras wrote: "I cannot know neither that they are nor that they are not, nor what form they take. Many things, namely, prevent knowledge: their invisibility and the brief life of man." Therefore, man has nothing in his reasoning but *names* (concepts) of which one can always put forward *contradictory* claims ("antologoi"). It is the task of reasoning to supply the position it advocates for with reasons as strong as possible, but one can always and everywhere expect a sufficiently strong counterargument.

Aristotle on the other hand founded his logic on self-evident *categories*, which ultimately boils down to the so-called "theory of correspondence"; that is, the names (concepts) "correspond" to the things. Reasoning is, therefore, valid not only if the form of the argument is *valid* but if the argument itself is *true*!

Protagoras does not claim our arguments are untrue; he considers the category of truthfulness to be *uncertain*, so he does not take it into account. For Aristotle, logic itself as a categorized form of human thought is proof of the existence of a Creator and his general manifestation.

Protagoras, like today's logicians, holds that truth is nothing but an *assumption* valid in one symbolic system, but unusable in another, so it must be replaced by a new, perhaps completely opposite one.

20. The divine theorem

With the death of the most prominent Athenian statesman, Pericles, who had been his great friend and protector, Protagoras lost a good portion of his reputation! And what can we do? The multitude even today doesn't appreciate someone by his work, but far more by the number of TV appearances they've made! So too in "democratic" Athens, during the Peloponnesian War, there was a regular hunt for prominent people. Alcibiades, who a day earlier had been appointed general, was sentenced to death a day later. After many leaders sentenced to death on a common trial (a group process in the State's interest!), it was Protagoras' turn as well. It was, it seems, at the time of the oligarchical rebellion of the Four Hundred, in 411 BC. He was sentenced to death (as, withal, was Socrates some ten years later) for impiety expressed in the text "On the Gods", which was known to all for decades before the trial. They did not allow him to defend himself in court, as was the custom, instead convicting him with a mere vote; a sign that they were truly afraid of his *eristics*, the skill with which one builds up the *weaker* and not the false argument, as often claimed!

Then they gathered all his books and publically burned them in the square. It was the first in a series of great bonfires on which the West eagerly incinerated its own foundations. Cheers!

It is said that on that occasion he managed to avoid the revenge of men, but couldn't avoid the revenge of the gods; his ship sank during his escape, and Protagoras drowned.

21. The down-to-earth theorem

Protagoras made a deal with his student **Euatles** that he would pay him his tuition once he's won his first lawsuit. Having finished his schooling, the young man refused to begin working. As time went by, Protagoras became more and more impatient. Finally he sued for payment of the debt. Before the court he proved that the student must pay him: according to the deal if he wins the case - and according to the verdict if he loses!

The defendant replied even better. Payment was not an option, he stated, according to the verdict if he wins, and according to the deal if he loses!

VI. ON THE FLIGHT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

21. Chuang Tse and his butterfly

The continuator of Lao Zi's **daoism**, the Chinese philosopher **Chuang Chou**, better known under the name **Chuang Tse** (369 – 286 BC), liked to dream. Moreover, using dream imagery he often expressed deep thoughts that Western philosophers, no matter how hard they tried, cannot catch with the nets of their rational concepts. Without a doubt, he was not only a great philosopher, but also a great dreamer.

There is an important common trait between this ancient Chinese wise man and today's Non-Philosopher. Both like to dream! God only knows what the Non-Philosopher dreams about, although one can make some conclusions from what's written in the newspaper. Indeed, these days it is not easy for the Non-Philosopher to dream, because dreams, no matter how pretty and rose-colored they may be, always bring the bitter taste of awakening. When he's a Non-Philosopher and when he's not, he is equally incapable of shaking off reality. And

that may be the uncrossable border that separates the dreams of our non-philosophers from the dreams of the profound Chinese man from the title. Would it be possible for some of Chuang Tse's dreams to inspire a new, happier way of waking up or at least to cause wonderment, because wonderment is the beginning of true philosophy. Or is this silent hope mere mandarinising, considering the time in which we find and entangle ourselves, and that with an old Chinese man who was anything but a mandarin?!

As for the mandarins (high Chinese officials), just this: once, on imperial orders, they found Chuang Tse who was fishing at the river P'u and called him to go with them, seeing as the Son of Heaven (the Emperor) wanted to entrust him with government over the empire. Chuang Tse, with his fishing rod in his hand, replied without averting his eyes from the hook:

"I heard that at the imperial court there is an armor of a sacred turtle that died three thousand years ago. Suppose that this turtle, when it was caught, had the choice of dying and having her bones worshipped for centuries in the future or continuing to live and dragging her tail in the mud – what would it choose?"

"Without a doubt", the mandarins replied, "It would rather keep living and dragging its tail in the mud!"

"Well, then, farewell to you", Chuang Tse said, "and let me keep dragging my tail in the mud!"

Such a man and philosopher, Chuang Tse, left for our Non-Philosopher as well a *philosophical image* to contemplate:

Once I, Chuang Chou, dreamt I was a butterfly and was as happy as a butterfly. I was aware of being completely satisfied with myself, but I did not know I was Chou. Suddenly I woke up, and there I was – obviously Chou. I do not know if it was Chou who dreamed he was a butterfly, or if it is a butterfly who (now) dreams he is Chou.

23. Question from the example: who's dreaming of who?

This double-edger imposes on us a question through the power of a *philosophical image*: *who is Chou?* Is he a man dreaming of being a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming of being a man named *Chou*?

Our Non-Philosopher contemptuously turns his head:

"Man", he says, "can dream of whatever comes to his mind, but how could a butterfly dream he is human?! Nonsense! Man has consciousness, and a butterfly doesn't!"

Oh no you don't! This lepidopterist argument by our Non-Philosopher completely misses the point. It takes the butterfly as a representative of one genus of living beings (lepidoptera) and opposes it to that of another, humans! And so the Non-Philosopher does not notice that the *philosophical image* is not about any of the thousands of species of butterflies studied by lepidopterists. You don't need a stick or a net, you'd be trying in vain; Chuang Chou's butterfly cannot be caught that easily because it does not fly anywhere in so-called "nature". It's the butterfly from Chou's dream that flies over the fields of consciousness.

"Well, now you're caught in the net yourself!" our Non-Philosopher cries victoriously. "If our butterfly doesn't

exist anywhere in nature then it's only a dream; and how could a dream dream that it is Chou?!"

Easy, my friend! If you ride a donkey and some friend of yours, a painter, paints this donkey, will you say this donkey doesn't exist at all? Or will you say it exists only as an image? Or will you reply that the donkey cannot paint on his own? Go on, make up your mind! If you say the donkey cannot paint on his own, the painter will paint another painting, with that very same donkey sitting in front of a canvas and painting! What will you say then? If you say the donkey exists only as an image, the painter will paint you as well, riding that donkey of yours. Will you say then that you exist only as an image? If you, finally, say that this donkey doesn't exist, aren't you a jackass yourself?!

Let us return, then, to that butterfly from Chou's dream and admit it exists; differently than in nature, like on a painting, or moreover, in a human dream, but it exists! Otherwise we'd have to claim that man, who spends over a third of his life sleeping, also doesn't exist, and we wouldn't dream of claiming that, would we!

When Chou wonders about himself, saying he does not know whether he is Chou who dreamed of being a butterfly or a butterfly who now dreams he is Chou, he does not give an answer, he does not claim he is a butterfly dreaming of being Chou, he's merely wondering!

24. *The Non-Philosopher's Reply: why ask such questions at all?*

We could reply to our Non-Philosopher that replying to a question with another question is usually *avoiding the question* or a logical fallacy, if we wouldn't understand that his question is just a form of a reply that goes: "Questions like that serve no purpose! I've got better things to do. I have a wife, kids, house, this or that to take care of... I don't have time for questions like that from idle philosophers, and Chinese ones at that!"

And indeed, everyone, including our Non-Philosopher, has the right to take things as they are served and not wonder about anything. If his "better things to do" reply is valid, then presumably so will our objection be valid as well: why doesn't he get to doing those "better things to do" while, for example, reading the horoscope?!

25. *Chuang Tse's reply*

While we're dreaming we don't know it's a dream, Chuang Tse wrote, using conceptual thinking to clarify an *image* to the "uninitiated"; we only notice we've been dreaming once we wake up! Equally, there is a *great awakening* after which we realize that this *life* of ours was just *one big dream*. The fool, however, considers himself awake, claiming he is actually a prince, not a peasant only dreaming of being a prince, just like the peasant foolishly thinks himself to be a peasant without even wondering who he is, so he will never find out that he is actually a prince only dreaming of being a peasant!

26. *Wonder, dilemma and questioning: the road to philosophy*

The intelligent Non-Philosopher who doesn't use the false argument of "better things to do" when coming upon questions like these; and we should believe that such a person exists, is disturbed and puzzled by Chuang

Tse's image and his question. He understands that the "butterfly from a dream" knows approximately everything man knows about himself, moreover, that - flying like that over the blooming fields of consciousness - it is pleased with itself, which man sometimes isn't! The only thing that dream butterfly *doesn't know* is that it's not a butterfly but a philosopher, Chou, who dreams he is a butterfly. And that his *self-awareness* is false he realizes only upon waking up. The Non-Philosopher also has self-awareness and thanks to it he knows he is a non-philosopher and everything he knows at all, he knows thanks to this consciousness that is self-aware. Still, isn't he in the position of the butterfly who still hasn't woken up and won't he, like that butterfly from the dream, realize who he is only after *waking up*?

This awareness of the trickery of self-awareness or "knowledge of ignorance", was considered by daoists, including our Chuang Tse, to be the highest knowledge man can attain. On the basis of that knowledge of ignorance they assumed a "higher perspective" (the perspective of Heaven) which is above knowledge and ignorance and which leads man towards awakening during his life, even before that *great awakening*. Such a man is *awakened* (enlightened); he sees things "in the light of Heaven"; it is an *exhalted* man who, instead of conceptual thoughts, left us *philosophical images* as signs on the path to awakening. Such was Chuang Tse as well.

What causes wonder and dilemmas in our intelligent Non-Philosopher and what directly leads him to the road to philosophy is not the fact he wouldn't want to agree with Chuang Tse's "knowledge of ignorance", but just the opposite - that he *reliably knows* that he's not a butterfly dreaming of a being a man but is *only* human. Unlike the daoists he has that experience of *awakening before*, not *after*, and it endlessly repeats itself to him, as an individual and as a part of humanity, in all its bitterness and harshness through science and through history.

And as much as Chou from that philosophical image could be a butterfly merely dreaming it is Chou, just like the butterfly who thought it was a butterfly wasn't a butterfly but Chou dreaming of being a butterfly, so our Non-Philosopher *reliably knows* that Chou is nevertheless merely Chou, just like the Non-Philosopher is still merely a Non-philosopher!

The question many philosophers overlooked isn't: can we know, but, how can we and - where do we get our knowledge from?

27. *The frog's theorem*

When we put forward the proposition that we *can* know we say no more and in fact stop at this claim itself. We've only borrowed it from our intelligent Non-Philosopher in order to encourage him along his own road to philosophy. Otherwise he might fall under the magical influence of the daoists before he has "thought things through". He who plays recklessly at the "fields" of consciousness might experience a much harder awakening than Chu's butterfly. And who stubbornly and without a valid explanation takes up some "limited position" opposed to the "position of Heaven" will deserve to have his worldview compared to that of the *frog in a well*, as Chuang Tse and his continuators did in the book of Daoist wisdom, the "Chuangtzu"!

*A frog in a well sees only a glimpse of heaven,
and thinks it is only that big.*