Communication au colloque de Philosophie comparative, organisé par l'Université d'Occhanomizu, Tokyo, 8/12/2006

A Short Insight on Cultural History of the Concept of Activity [1]

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I will give four reasons to present here this paper, in a symposium dedicated to "Thought and Language". By this way, I apologize to you if my communication seems to take some distance by comparison with others.

- The relation between language and concept is a true philosophical question: to what extent is there thought and what thought under the current use of a peculiar word?
- Question which seems to me crucial for such a word like "Activity", omnipresent in the French ordinary language, but whose "thought content" is quite problematic. "Activity", no "Action".
- Question for a comparative symposium: what about a problematic counterpart of that word "activity" throughout language, culture, Japanese philosophy? If we speak of technical, "industrious" activity, as I did in the precedent symposium in Clermont-Ferrand (April 2006), the question is to me a crucial one, due to the enigmatic and rich history of that form of activity (industrious) in the history of Japan.
- That survey on the term "activity" is for me of a prominent importance insofar it supports an intellectual approach named "ergological" (studies about human activity), with the establishment of a Department of "Ergologie" in my University, a degree course ("Master d'Ergologie"), and a national and international net of people sharing this approach and producing inside it.

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I- How does this concept circulate to day?

To day, "activity" is :

-*either* a word without precise conceptual content, rather blindly circulating through everyday language or in various scientific areas. What is the lowest common denominator which could explain that fluidity of the term "activity"? It could be consumption or use of energy. But that meaning is quite extensive and does not give us some strong constraints to fill it with a precise content. The clearest approach of it would be through its opposite: "inertia" would then *well define* the contrary of activity. It could be satisfactory because it covers all the uses of the word, as much in the physical area (an inertial movement does not waste any energy, it is strictly equivalent to the rest), as in the living and even human reign, where that definition by opposition remains pertinent even it may become far more complicated. You may speak of an "active volcano", a computer in activity, the neuronal activity, and of the activity of anybody at work. But from this large extension, which can explain the ability for anybody to understand the word, whatever should be the context, we do not grasp anything telling to build a real concept. It is why I spoke of a "blind usage".

According to the intellectual context, the situation may differ. For example, in a famous sentence, the French philosopher G.Canguilhem uses the term "activity" to identify specifically what is Life; from that use results a *gap* between the use of the term in mechanics and in the living reign: for him, Life can be defined through "activity", a form of activity which is a constant struggle against "inertia and indifference"[2]. Here we have a break of the lowest common denominator (from inorganic to human field), but in the same time, a better constraint for the thought in its attempt to build a real concept of "activity".

-*either it* is a basic concept explicitly required

- By some trends or some movements, through ergonomists since the last seventies[3]
- or by effervescent movements more or less linked with the precedent, aiming at building "systems" or "theories" of activity.

II- What would be the interests of such an insight ?

Why propose an insight on the cultural history of that concept?

a- The situation has not been always that situation we know to day, with these both options: generally speaking, a "blind usage", and locally speaking, an explicit use of the word

"activity". To my opinion, we can identify two sources, leading, through philosophical and cultural history, to the present situation. It could be schematized as a stairs, flowing down from a common origin, by two flights, the right and the left, up to us. These both paths are not independent from each other, but, to make matters simpler, we can first describe them separately.

b- Each concept or set of concepts always retains elements of its heritage. We may assume that this phenomenon occurs also in that case, with that double trajectory of the term activity. It is the first reason why it is necessary and may be, fruitful, not to be unaware, to day, of such history.

c- The second reason is more idiosyncratic: a view upon these both paths or both historical trajectories of the notion may powerfully help to identify what we call today an ergological approach and its specific use of the concept of Activity.
The ergological concept of Activity could be thought as an articulation or a combination of the two branches of these paths.

III- The word, notion, idea of "Activity" always occurs when there is a problem for saving the unity of human being

To my opinion, whenever something like "activity" occurs, whatever be the word or way to call it in various languages, it is always an attempt to solve a problem connected *with the unity of human being* : "activity" has the *function or the signification or the aim of sewing on again (re-sewing, linking again)* pieces of humankind previously separated, dislocated roughly, for the sake of what we could nevertheless appreciate as "good philosophical reasons".

IV- The first branch of the process of dislocation and "re-sewing" the unity thanks to the notion of "activity"

What are the two branches or two flights of these processes of dislocation and re-sewing, sewing on again?

+ One is originated in the heroic attempt to take into account the possibility, for humankind, to access the *universal*, The Truth, the Good, through Understanding, the building of scientific knowledge being the model and the right track to be followed for the achievement of this access.

How mathematical truth is possible, available? From the beginning of philosophy, to answer this crucial question, Plato would separate, isolate the "faculties", the parts of human spirit, capable to reach the world of Ideas, escaping the fascinations of the changing world, of the passions, of all which split, separate men between them; to escape all which fix or drown them in the deceiving appearances of the present. One of the most significant item of this idea could be found in the beginning of the PHEDON when death appears as a liberation of soul, then released of the body conceived as an obstacle to reach the essential truths: the "right track" says Plato, is that idea: as long as we shall have our body and as long our soul will be mixed with that bad thing, never we shall own the object of our desire, that is to say, the truth. For the exercise of our intelligence, body hinders the search for it (see 65a and 66b). Therefore, in THE REPUBLIC, the hierarchy of the social functions in the City has to reproduce the hierarchy of our faculties, with the intellectual ones at the top, controlling over the others, insofar we want justice governs inside her as inside us.

After Plato, this endeavor will carry on through the most famous philosophers, each with his own conceptual strategy, but always including a special form of division, inside human being, between "faculties", between "seats": on one side the spirit, mind, soul and on the "other side", the side of sensibility, body, passions and feelings, which always could be an obstacle for the noble work of the first one.
Thus, in The Rules for the Direction of Mind (1628), Descartes explains that as far as knowledge is concerned, we have four 'faculties" to be used: understanding, imagination, sense and memory. "It is obvious that only understanding is able to perceive truth ; but it may be helped by imagination, senses and memory, so that none of our faculties is relegated" (Regula XII).

But, as we see in this sentence, none of these philosophers was unaware of the necessity to speak a little about the obscure dynamics linking these previously separated faculties. Without evoking here the definition of the soul by Aristotle, Descartes, after pointing out the necessity in The Regulae to restraint but not to ignore others faculties, have to face this problem after having set the "third substance", the "union of the soul and the body" in the Sixth Meditation (1641).
Here comes a true difficulty: the question is a question still immanent to the ambition of knowledge, different in that way from the second flight (which is a problem of unity through the "industrious making"): how to conceptually penetrate the making of the combination of heterogeneous faculties? Making that will be necessarily a dynamical process since it must go between these heterogeneous

powers, once these powers are identified and separated. But a process that could be probably inscrutable since the challenge is trying to make intelligible an articulation of powers, one of them being beyond any knowledge function, and, even, possibly obstacle to any rational thinking.

There begins almost in "underground" the discrete building of something like "activity", whose part to play is to suggest this strange and always obscure dynamics of "go between", in the very field of the epistemic ambition.

For example, let us read the Letters from Descartes to the Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, who is very anxious to understand the relations between the human soul, without extension, and human body, piece of physical extent: if you want to prove the distinction between soul and body, Descartes says, only the powers of soul are requested, the body would have been noxious. But how will you understand the way soul moves the body (21/05/1643)? Knowledge, conceptual, problem, but which has to mix our knowing power with what has nothing to do with it. Do not try to think this union, in the same manner the philosopher proved the distinction. The less you are philosopher, the better you are confident about the union. That is not exactly a provocation said Descartes to the Princess (28/06/1643): things which are related with the union of the soul and body can be only "obscurely" conceived by the understanding by himself, but are very clearly conceived by the sense. Once the metaphysical principles are well understood, you had better to dedicate the time remaining for studies to the thoughts where the understanding acts with the imagination and the senses (28/06/1643, AT, t3, pp690-695).

Even if nothing like "activity" is mentioned in that Letters, the idea of "*acting with*" (that is to say, common contribution or construction of understanding, imagination and senses), points out the necessity to more or less sew again the parts previously dislocated of the human powers, in the very interests of metaphysical knowledge. But it is so opposite to the ascetic and heroic attempt of this previous separation, so difficult to set in rational and conceptual form, that this acknowledgment stays extremely discreet.

In the aftermath of Cartesian philosophy, we can follow the snaking and few visible path of the building of "activity" conceived as what designs the cooperation of heterogeneous powers in the process of knowledge[4].

Whatever should be the contribution of Leibniz, to my opinion, Emmanuel KANT is the first to give a real status, in this sense, to the idea of activity. The German term, "tätigkeit", will be used exactly for this highly enigmatical re-sewing of some of the human faculties previously dislocated (in that case, Sensibility and Understanding), in order to conceive, for him, how knowledge is possible in the world of what he calls "*phenomenons*".

I tried to study a little more precisely, for a conference at the French Society of Philosophy[5], this word of Tätigkeit in the kantian language. This word is not, it seems to me for the same reasons above mentioned, very clearly defined. But in the Critique of Pure Reason (or first Critique), it is always associated with a dynamical process, going between two faculties absolutely heterogeneous, whose cooperation is nevertheless absolutely necessary to produce any knowledge in the world of phenomenon. And in the chapter of this First Critique dedicated to the Schematismus of the Pure Reason, this "work", that Tätigkeit is named "an art hidden in the depths of human mind": *we cannot use our knowledge powers to* clearly *describe what make them possible, we are there beyond them*. Activity appears to be –and this will of a prominent instruction for our ergological problems to day- an art of the transgression of our faculties.

After this First Critique, I think that the term "Tätigkeit", beyond the only problem of legitimacy of knowledge, will carry on covering *the obscure comings and goings between heterogeneous fields* : thus, in the practical philosophy, when our will is to arbitrate between our empirical motives and our participation to the "supra sensible world" through the commitment of our reason, "Tätigkeit" is anew the word which comes to name that go between into two fields radically different, and impossible to be conceptually described. And as in the precedent case, this "activity (Tätigkeit") of the Practical Reason according to objectives principles" is normally "impenetrable" ("unergründlich zu finden")[6] .In the Third Critic, with the notion of "free game of the faculties"[7], with the theory of the genius, is extended the dynamical process of tätigkeit, as the unity in movement of the powers of mind.[8]

After Kant, this "intellectual" form of activity, this concept hardly clarified of Tätigkeit will have a short but intense development and beyond that "golden age" of the philosophical concept of activity and its decline, will nevertheless produce a surprising posterity leading to some of to day's uses.

To sum up quickly[9]:

Through Fichte, Hegel, Marx[10], the concept of Tätigkeit, inherited from Kant, will have explicit and much wider development, especially for the intelligibility of the dialectic process of history. After 1845, this concept seems to be in decline, too loose and too full to be useful in the philosophies of history, especially in the Marxian mature conceptualization. Nevertheless, with the soviet psychology who had maintained Marx's reading, (Vygotski and yet more, Léontiev[11]), that term of "Tätigkeit" will be

appropriated from its low key use in The Capital and re-elaborated around the seventies by both schools I mentioned above, ergonomy "of activity"[12] and theories or systems of activity.

V- The second branch : the industrious making

+ The other branch is less visible but as much important for us : it is the problem that I would call "the industrious making", or, the technical doing. There, it is non longer question of an intellectual activity, mind activity, inside the field of a knowledge philosophy in its attempt to clarify its implicits. This second flight, the right one, concerns the "industrious making", where the dialog of the human conscience, of the conceptual knowledge, with the body, with the diversity, the changing, the hic et nunc of circumstances (whose singular aspects can never be really anticipated by concepts) set at another level the crucial problem of dynamical unity of human being.

How can we admit that Man, through its technical ability, links mysteriously such dimensions so different as: incorporated and methodological knowledge, body and spirit, nature and culture, Life's and Mind's patrimonies inside us? How philosophy could admit such an outrageous scandal, without destroying its heroic and ascetic attempt on the other side, the left flight?

The right flight of my schema briefly indicates how this second paths, despite this possible scandal, moves on throughout philosophical works.

It moves on because great philosophers cannot help thinking how technical doing is humanly possible, even this interrogation leads them far from the specific and noble mark of humankind. Therefore they take it into account more or less soundless, low key.

Something like "activity" also makes its way on that side, through the obscure lucidity of the grand philosophers, facing this question: How is possible that fecund cooperation of the heterogeneous parts in us, when body is, obviously, an essential partner (and not a suspicious one, as in the left side)?

This "industrious making", without in any sense throwing away the resources of intellectual powers, is nevertheless antecedent to them, an anticipation of these powers and cannot be submitted to any predominant part of ourselves. To illustrate this, we could mention here what G.Canguilhem said in his "Descartes et la Technique"[13], speaking of the artisans : "…from the impossibility of a continuous and total transformation from science to action results the originality of a power -liberty and will- no limited by intelligence". This "original power" is a power able to dynamically and enigmatically unify all our "faculties": too obscure to deserve a name, but it is a part of what we call "industrious activity".

We could follow the history of this strange "power", saving discreetly the synergy of a composite being, through various grand philosophers. From Plato, we could retain the so complex concept of "Technè", that, when applied to the Athenian artisans, appears to be a sort of art of "kairos"[14] : obscure knowledge, but knowledge all the same. If the Aristotelian distinction between "Praxis" and "Poiésis" is running the risk of disconnecting relation between the field of values and that of technical activity, -big reduction of the synthetic dimension of activity - , on that right flight, we find, like with Plato, a sophisticated relation between Descartes (as the below quotation suggests), Leibniz and the craftsmanship power: how these artisans are able to master such amount of variabilities and local difficulties life and technical "encounters" are full of[15]?

This interrogation coming from this escaping ability yet bringing a prominent social contribution to the "wealth of the Nations" carries on with Diderot and The Encyclopédie; when, for example, Diderot speaks, in the Article "Art" of the Encyclopédie, of the ontological and chronological precedence of the "pratique" of the Arts upon their "inoperative knowledge" (that is to say a conceptual knowledge, which does not by itself operates).

And we could here find again, at the same period (end of century XVIII), Kant and the Third Critique: in fact, the question of the taste judgment is not directly that of the "industrious" making. And in the § 43, Kant does not give value to any form of paid work, as far as Art is concerned. But with the notion of "talent" and the reflection about artistic making (the genius), we find again this "free game of faculties" already encountered: nowhere before, this transgressive notion of Tätigkeit, as a dynamical and synergical link between heterogeneous had been led so far. We find in the Third Critique the idea of a sort of perfect agreement between "activities", each of them coming from a special faculty: "It is which happens (…) every time an object given through the sense provokes the activity of the imagination, which, from it, aggregates its diversity, and the imagination, on its turn, provokes the activity of the understanding in order that it unifies it in its concepts" (§ 21).

Free game of faculties: Activity as synthesis or synergy of activities.

Over the decades to come, I think that it is through a philosophy of the relations between Life and technical activity we can follow the right flight of the history of our concept. Philosophies which nearly always imply a conception of the relations between Life, technical doing and conceptual activity : how this conceptual activity which is historically second with regards to technical making, can be generated inside this proper human movement and takes after its distances from this first one, from where it comes (left flight) ?

We can follow this movement[16] with, for example, the bergsonian philosophy[17], the german physician K Goldstein (1878-1965), the anthropologist A.Leroi-Gourhan : "In a viewpoint closer to the movement which moves all the beings throughout time, technicity, thought, locomotion and the human hand appear to be linked in only one phenomenon, to which Man gives its signification, but to which no being from the animal reign is unfamiliar[18]".

And to the end of this right flight, we find again G.Canguilhem, reader of Bergson, Goldstein, Leroi-Gourhan, asking himself throughout all over his work what is Life, thinking of health as a debate always renewed between anonymous norms coming from the environment and norms that each living being produces and tries to promote, and so conceiving technical doing as the prolongation of that immemorial debate. As he says speaking of Descartes faced to the artisans, " to see in the technique an action always to some degree synthetic, and for this reason no likely to be clearly conceived , that is not, according cartesian point of view set it out any value(…), it is not a lower way of creation" (1937, see note 13).

Through this technical activity, seen as the search or pursuit of health by extending powers upon extern environment, "activity" as this norms productive disposition confronted with the natural and social environment can be looked on as an expression of human live itself, of its global, "synthetic" and unified manifestation : " It is for medicine as for every other technique : it is an activity which is rooted inside the spontaneous attempt of each living being to master its environment and organize itself according to its proper values of living being" (1966, p.156).

VI- What happens between the two branches (would it be possible to join these two branches by proposing a scientific government of human industrious activity)?

From the XVII th century, according to the "heroic attempt" yet mentioned *on the left side*, natural sciences begin to develop, and with them, the conquest of natural forces. Starting from the first "manufactures" [1](England, end of the XVIII th century), where a deep use of "the technical doing" mentioned in the right side is still exploited, to the "fabriques" (as described Marx in the IV section of the First Book of the Capital), the new powers of sciences are introduced into the field of industrial manufacturing (the "Industrial Revolution"). A new concept of "work", supposed to be relevant as much as in the physical area as in human field begins to appear[19]. Then this introduction will be soon conceived not only as a tool for mechanical manufacturing, mechanical rationalization, but, with the Scientific Labour Organization (F.W Taylor, beginning of the XX th century) as a way to entirely control the right side of our schema*:* that is to say to remove the lasting presence of that enigmatic technical activity, that enigmatic industrious making, that legacy of craftsmanship, still remaining, still used and required in this mechanical environment… We may notice that if the various philosophies of life allow bridges between both flights of our stairs, there is a permanent temptation on the left one to remove the "go between", to come back to the hierarchy of human powers and to reduce the question of the unity of human being.

The ergonomists, so called of "activity", when thinking closely and critically during these seventees over the gap between the assumed principles of taylorism and the reality *in situ* of industrial work, produced the distinction between "prescribed" and "real" or "actual" work. And then they appropriated the concept of activity ("tätigkeit") , heir of that long history, then spread over in France from URSS and Leontiev works, to point out what happened (but what ?) in that gap between "prescribed" and "real" work.[20]

I should sum up this long history, telling that, on the end of the left side of the trajectory of the concept, these ergonomists demonstrated that the entire anticipation or standardization of work processes was ***impossible***: human *activity*, as an obscure process developing between what is anticipated, foreseen and what is actually done, is an unavoidable, inescapable guest of our lives.

On the other side (the right one), some years before, the French philosopher G.Canguilhem, reading and making a review of G.Friedmann's studies on factories governed by taylorism all over the world, was led to the conclusion, for philosophical reasons linked with his conception of what is Live, that this ambition of total control of the industrious making (*right side*) was, strictly speaking, "***invivable***" "***unbearable***", impossible to be lived by anybody[21].

VII- The ergological approach : three instructions resulting of this history

The ergological approach joins the major instructions of the two branches of the history: human activity is the dynamical and tense process joining the treatment of the limitations of any form of standardization and the captures of various opportunities to live, despite any form of rigid hétérodetermination.

Then three characteristics, *I think*, could define human activity, involving methodological and operational consequences:

- as suggests the concept of "tätigkeit" on the left hand, and the enigma of the technical doing on the right one (from both parts an obscure synergy), *"activity"* is a *"transgressive*, synthetic, no localizable concept". If it is the idea which occurs to mind when you try to sew on again, to re-sew, to re-aggregate the unity of human being, it penetrates every dimensions of it. Therefore, as it cannot be conceived only by our conceptual powers, it cannot be the property of only one scientific discipline. In fact, it makes an appeal to every one but is owned by no one in particular.

- To avoid the "invivable", the "unbearable", which means an attempt to pursue days after days how to ensure one's health, Live inside us (and work, even in its more tiny dimensions, is an essential part of it) is always more or less fighting to foster, to promote, to get forward one's values in the social and historical world.
Throughout this permanent quest, this prominent weight of values in it, "activity", and especially work activity is a moment of *mediation* between individual and collective, singular and universal, between microscopic and macroscopic levels of social life: human and social values, actually, do not stay, cannot be confined in the only workstation, or in working area. A value is always a mediating operator.

- As suggests, as emphasizes on the microscopic level, the distinction between "prescribed" and "real" work, debates of norms never stop to occupy, to catch human activity : debates between "antecedents norms", the "prescribed work" of the ergonomists being possibly one of them, and attempts to *renormalization* whose existence is attested in the microscopic level by the "real" or "actual" work . And wider values concerning social life, as mentioned just above, interfere in these debates.

For that reasons, every human activity is crossed by potential contradictions and is a proper matrix of human history. As a conclusion, we could perceive that the challenge to define a concept of activity brings with it considerable philosophic questions from the epistemology to practical, historical and ethical fields.

Notes:

1 This document is a compact presentation of a text now in preparation, being itself a consequence of a series of conferences and lessons since 2004.
For further insights on the Part IV of this text, see my intervention in the Société Française de Philosophie, 22/01/2000, "Philosophie et Ergologie", Bulletin de la Société, Editions VRIN, Paris 2001.
More generally, a more pedagogical view of basic ideas of the ergological approach can be found in Y.Schwartz et L. Durrive, Travail et Ergologie, Entretiens sur l'activité humaine, Octarès Editions, Toulouse, 2003, and on the site of the Département of Ergology (Université de Provence), http : //www.ergologie.com
Further developments may be found on my book Le paradigme ergologique ou un métier de philosophe, Octarès Editions, Toulouse, 2000.

2 See Le normal et le pathologique, P.U.F, 1966, p.173 "…a philosophical analysis of Life, conceived as a struggle against inertia and indifference".

3 See for exemple Comprendre le travail pour le transformer, la pratique de l'ergonomie, F.Guérin et alii, Editions de l'ANACT, 1991.

4 See for example Franck Fischbach, L'être et l'acte, enquête sur les fondements de l'ontologie moderne de l'agir, Vrin 2002, especially speaking of Leibniz, p.11 and following.

5 See Schwartz 2001, note 1

6 See Critique of Practical Reason, French translation, P.U.F 1960, pp.83-84 and my paper "Raison Pratique et débats de normes" , in La Raison pratique au XXè siècle", sous direction M.Bienenstock et A.Tosel, L'Harmattan, 2004, pp 261-295.

7 We cannot help mention here The Letter from Descartes to Princess Elisabeth (6/10/1645), when he explains why our soul can feel satisfaction after physical efforts: these exercises prove strength or either virtuosity of the body to which it is joined.

8 See the definition of the "Pragmatic knowledge" of man as a being of "free activity", in Anthropologie du point de vue pragmatique, French translation, Vrin, p.11

9 See Schwartz 2001

10 Marx, though criticizing Hegel for reducing Tätigkeit to only intellectual dimensions, "this abstract work of spirit", the only one he can recognize (Manuscript of 1844, n° XXIII), will fully uses this concept until The Theses on Feuerbach (1845).

11 See Activity, Conscience, Personality, (1975), Moscow, French translation, 1984.

12 Whose main figure is Alain Wisner (dead in 2003), Professor in the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, in Paris.

13 Travaux du IX ème Congrès International de Philosophie, Congrès Descartes, Herman, 1937, Etudes Cartésiennes, 2è Partie, XII, republié dans Cahiers Philosophiques, n° 69, 12/1996.

14 See Y.Schwartz, 2000, pp457 sq.

15 See Y.Schwartz, Travail et Philosophie, Convocations mutuelles, Octarès Editions, 1992, pp 182-192

16 A special development would be necessary to locate Nietzsche, and the relations between his affirmative power of life and the ascetic movement of philosophy and conceptualization.

17 See Bergson, La Pensée et le Mouvant, P.U.F, 1962 (1934), and L'Evolution Créatrice P.U.F, 1966 (1907).

18 André Leroi-Gourhan, "Libération de la main", Annexe of Mécanique vivante, Fayard 1983

19 See F.Vatin, Le travail, Economie et Physique, 1780-1830, P.U.F, 1993.

20 As proves a recent letter-writing (October 2001) between professors J.Leplat, from Work Psychology (CNAM, Paris), and younger professor F.Daniellou, ergonomist from University of Bordeaux II. Both were scientifically living around the CNAM Ergonomics laboratories when this appropriation occurred.

21 See from G.Canguilhem "Milieux et normes de l'homme au travail", Cahiers internationaux de sociologie, Volume III 1947, pp. 120-136.

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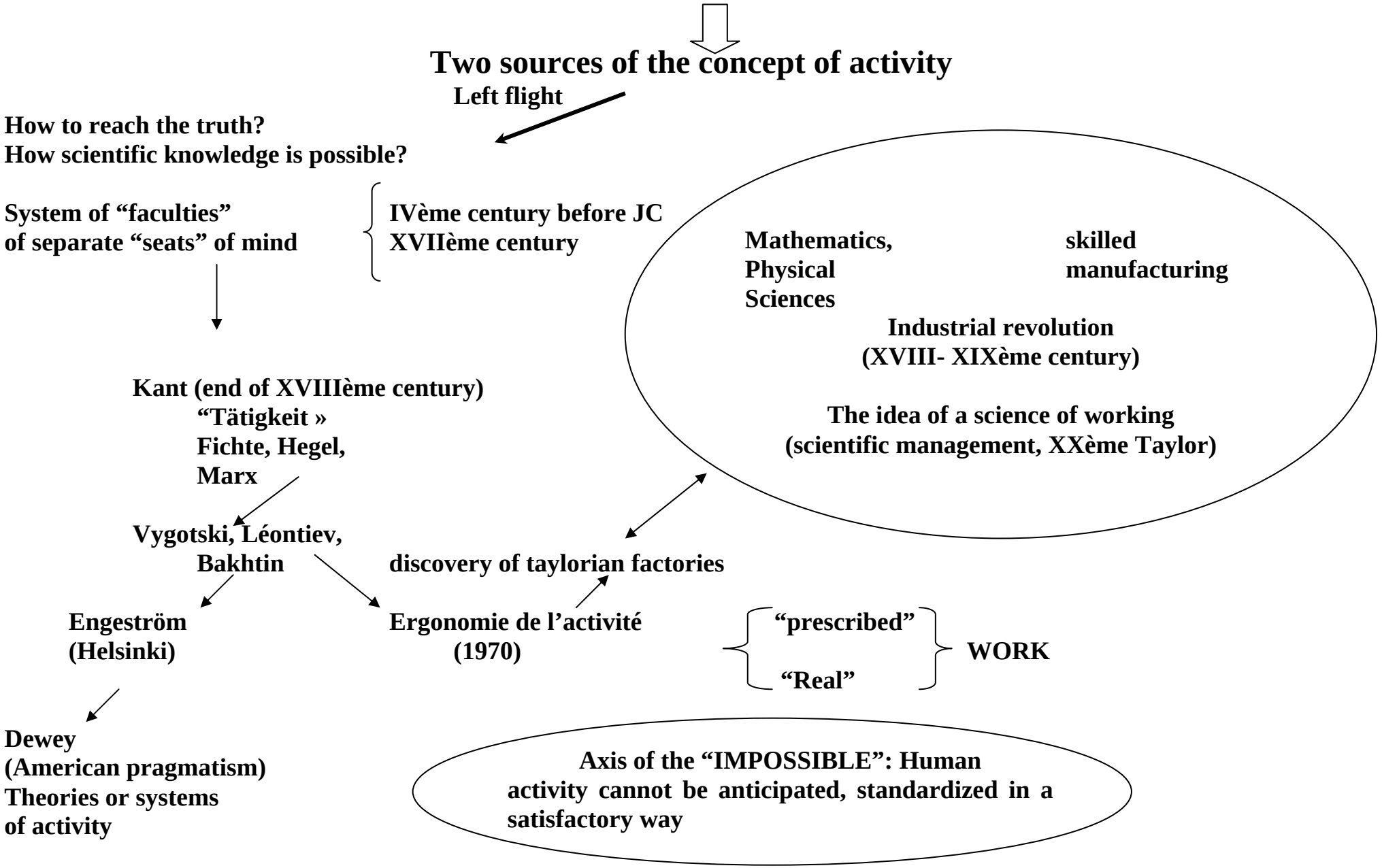
The problematic unity of Human Being



The problematic unity of Human Being

Two sources of the concept of activity

Right flight

How the "industrious making"
How the technical human doing } **are possible?**

Plato

Descartes, Leibniz,
Diderot : philosophy and the artisans
Kant (Third Critique)
(Nietzsche)

Bergson

Goldstein
A. Leroi-Gourhan
(Anthropologist XX ème)

Canguilhem (dead 1995)
Philosophy of life, of health
of the norms (Text from 1947)

Mathematics , Physical Sciences

skilled manufacturing

Industrial revolution
(XVIII- XIXème century)

The idea of a science of working
(scientific management, XXème Taylor)

Axis of the « INVIVABLE »: a healthy live cannot agree with the complete predetermination of norms of its activity

The problematic unity of Human Being

Two sources of the concept of activity

Axis of the « IMPOSSIBLE » : Human activity cannot be anticipated, standardized in a satisfactory way

Axis of the "INVIVABLE": a healthy live cannot agree with the complete predetermination of norms of its activity

THE ERGOLOGICAL APPROACH:

What is "impossible" should also be "unbearable", "invivable"

HUMAN ACTIVITY IS

- **A notion which crosses, transgresses, links all the frontiers inside human being**
- **A mediating power between each level of human experience**
- **A dynamics of potential contradictions, basis of human historicity**