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My education was essentially in philosophy and for this reason, perhaps, I am not worthy of belonging to this famous Academy, which is mainly composed of renowned scientists. I studied philosophy at the University of Padua, which was a famous centre for the diffusion of Aristotelianism during the Renaissance, but which has conserved some traces of this tradition also in our time. I have been professor of philosophy at the Universities of Perugia, Geneva and Brussels, and I am now professor of philosophy in Padua, where I am leading a Centre for the history of the Aristotelian tradition. As a philosopher I have been elected member of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (Rome), which contends with this Pontifical Academy of Sciences the heritage of the ancient Accademia dei Lincei, to which Galileo Galilei belonged, and as a philosopher I have been elected member of the Institut International de Philosophie (Paris). I am now organizing, as the chairman of the International Programme Committee, the XXI World Congress of Philosophy on behalf of the FISP (Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie).

However, if someone generously proposed my name for this Academy, there must be a reason and I suppose that it concerns the main field of my philosophical interests, and this is the philosophy of Aristotle. I have dedicated to this philosopher and to the history of his influence on European culture more than 40 years of my life, with the result of being known essentially as an Aristotelian scholar. The study of Aristotelian philosophy, obviously, gave me the basis for developing some philosophical reflections in most of the fields of philosophical thought: logic, philosophy of language, philosophy of nature, metaphysics, ethics, politics, etc. Moreover, since Aristotle was not only a great philosopher, but also a great scientist, especially in the field of biology, psychology, anthropology and human sciences, the study of his works has necessarily implied for me an interest ancient science as a whole. And because the thought of Aristotle influenced the history of science during the whole of antiquity and the Middle Ages, not only in Christian but also in Muslim Countries, the reconstruction of the Aristotelian tradition obliged me to study the sciences of late antiquity and the Middle Ages in their whole extension.

In modern times, as it is well known, the thought of Aristotle was abandoned and refused by the development of some sciences such as astronomy, mechanics and chemistry, and this refusal gave rise to the birth of modern science. But his teaching has maintained a fundamental role in the

development of other sciences, such as biology, medicine and human sciences (psychology, linguistics, rhetoric). In the next few weeks my university will commemorate the fourth centenary of the degree in medicine obtained in Padua by William Harvey, the discoverer of the blood circulation, who was essentially an Aristotelian. And even where Aristotle's influence was refused and fought, as in the case of Galilei, his logic and his method remained as a model for the modern sciences.

In my studies on the presence of Aristotelian philosophy in the 19th and 20th centuries I discovered that it had been striking not only in philosophers such as Hegel, Trendelenburg, Brentano, Moore, Heidegger, Gadamer, Austin, Ryle and others, but also in scientists such as Darwin, Jacob, Delbrück, Mayr, Prigogine, Thom and others. The French mathematician René Thom, who died recently, during the last years of his work experienced a true conversion to Aristotelian physics. For these reasons I have realized that it is impossible to study adequately the philosophy of Aristotle and its connections to the contemporary philosophical debate without knowing the status of the discussion in the main fields of contemporary science, and this has forced me to engage myself in some of them. I am not a philosopher of science, nor a logician who analyses the methods of science, but a philosopher deeply interested in the contents of contemporary sciences, and for this I hope to be not completely unworthy of belonging to this Academy and to be able to contribute in some measure to its proceedings.