CHAPTER 5

Developing the Styles Project: Towards a 'Theory of Styles of Reasoning'

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I shall be engaged in turning the styles project into a more comprehensive analysis of scientific thinking so as to be able to assess Hacking's notion. One of the points implied by his claims is that ways of thinking, the statistical and the laboratory style, share a set of features ('the characterizing properties of styles') presented in Sect. 3.4: 1) being ways of thinking and *doing*; 2) relying on a new kind of evidence; 3) introducing new candidates for truth-or-falsehood 4) being self-authenticating; 5) representing a sharp break in the history of Western thought.

The label 'style of reasoning' wants to suggest that, despite their differences, these ways of thinking belong to the same species. Still at issue is how we can further characterize scientific thinking: can we identify other styles of reasoning so as to provide a more accurate description of it? It is a safe guess to say that the spectrum of our ways of finding out about the world is quite broad: there might be other ways of finding out that possess most of the characterizing properties of styles of reasoning in addition to ways of thinking that do not satisfy them. Actually, I shall put forward two related theses.

My first thesis is that, besides the statistical and the laboratory style of reasoning, there are at least four other styles of reasoning, of which some are very important because they are based on the most fundamental forms of reasoning: deduction, induction and abduction. My second thesis,

L. Sciortino, *History of Rationalities*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-24004-1_5