

TRUTH AND OBJECTIVITY
IN (ROMANIAN) PHILOSOPHY

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Resumé. La philosophie roumaine est proposé comme pretexte pour décrire le fonctionnement des relations qui existent entre la vérité et l'objectivité.

Les topiques discutés sont focalisés sur les réflexions philosophiques du Constantin Noica, philosophe roumain qui a contribué essentiellement à l'ouverture de la philosophie roumaine vers la philosophie occidentale de nos jours.

For the question “What is a fact concerning the thinking?” one can count several alternatives.

The first assumption begins with the idea of existence of things outside the spirit and before it. If they exist like this, the pieces of knowledge learnt by the spirit are taken from things which are already or almost done. In the measure in which the spirit customizes with the way of truly being of things, from themselves, the acquired knowledge should be unique. But, the fact is that we meet a wide range of pieces of knowledge about the same thing; this contradicts the hypothesis.

This is how we reach the second assumption, according to which the things to be known are as we make them to be, not as they really are. The activity of the spirit is now more elaborated. It doesn't stop with just recording the already done knowledge, but prepares the material of

knowledge, measures it, compares it, preparing it to appear as fact, upon which knowledge will act.

The quality of being a fact is not held by everything that turns up in the horizon of knowledge, but things acquire it through spirit. Until fronting it, the fact meant nothing for thinking.

If things gain the quality of fact through spirit, how does one establish their degree of objectivity and value of truth of our assertion about them? This is a question which offered the occasion of many disputes. How is it possible for the spirit to interfere in the world of things, when it wants to meet them? If we admit that the spirit can intervene among things, its action will change them, will alter them. What will the spirit know about the object if it alters it, if things are not the way they are any longer, but how we make them to be? Where is the truth?

Thus, we reached the idea of truth, long-debated idea by the philosophical thinking.

Kant, in *The Critique of Pure Reason* asserted that if the truth stays in matching the knowledge to its object, this must be different from another one, because a good knowledge consists only in the report of knowledge with the right object. A universal criterion of truth would be that which can be applied to all knowledge, indiscriminating the objects which correspond to them, or how this thing represents a contradiction in itself. Thus it results that we needn't look for a universal criterion for the truth of knowledge.

If truth is a correspondence report between knowledge and fact, where from do I know when I have this cover? The answers we try to find for such a question deepen

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the dilemma even more: either I previously know that I have this correspondence, by virtue of the fact that I am endowed with the possibility of owing information regarding the intimate being of the thing taken into consideration and or I don't know anything and thus I can't estimate whether the cover is good or not. In both cases the effort is useless.

The wantonness is given in the first case by the fact that, by virtue of my previous knowledge, it is senseless to make the effort of knowing what I already know in fact, and in the second case, the idea that, no matter what I might do, I still won't reach the knowledge.

The conclusion that can be formulated and which, within the area of Romanian philosophy has been advanced by C. Noica, is that truth seems as a wrongly raised problem, although its pursuit continues to be useful. There is, in compensation, a deeper plan than that of truth, the plan of objectivity. It is of no interest if the knowledge is true or not, but if it is objective, if it imposes itself to any human knowledge.

Those who believe in the possibility of finding out the truth can be named realists and those who don't share the same opinion idealists. The realists will say that objectivity represents only one of the truth's features, because a real knowledge is also objective, therefore the objectivation doesn't have to be the opposite of the truth. Objectivity doesn't represent a problem for them because, as far as you possess the object, you are also in possession of objectivity.

The idealism tries to show how the certain knowledge can be possible. The price of such an approach is the overtaking of the idea of truth and its replacement with

another one, with that of cognition objectivity and with the steadfastness of the knowledge.

“It is usually said – Noica wrote – that the idealism is the philosophy of the lazy people since it doesn’t strive to find out what the things foreign to the conscience are, but it invents them all by itself, according to the laws of the conscience. But after all these presented, the realism is the one that proves laziness, because as soon as it imagines it possesses some real, adequate knowledge it also considers it objective, without trying at least to entirely identify it. For the realism, objectivity is obtained through the simple reference to the object, while the idealism only here begins, from the duty that it feels to have of making clear the way in which it becomes possible that what has been imposed as certainty of a knowledge to be shared as such to anyone else.”ⁱ

To the realism, which keeps on sustaining that the world and the things, because they exist, must be discovered in themselves and not to be created by the conscience, could be opposed one question: What does “world” mean? “What else could be the answer, but the mind in its own movement?” Obviously, here we are talking about the world of knowledge. The consequence of such a perspective is the fact that the subject must be more efficient in it’s composition, just to make it more objective. The world of knowledge is just how the spirit determines it to be, and, in its background the acts reflect rather the power and the measure of the spirit than the virtues of the outer world.

The dispute between the realists and the so-called idealists is, in fact, the controversy between the science man

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and the philosopher. If the researcher wants to discover the truth for founding the particular disciplines where he works, he is free to believe in it, even to idolize it, but he doesn't have to teach the philosopher, who knows that the truth is a problem wrongly raised, as there are so many, taken from fields that have to do with partial analysis .

From the sciences of man "philosophy takes evidence, not lessons; and it tries to give in exchange justifications, not lessons. Each learns what he has to learn from his own domain, and if the occupation of one is to think over the other one's occupations, it doesn't mean that the first, the philosopher is unnecessary or that the others, the science men, are worthless"ⁱⁱ – wrote the Romanian philosopher Constantin Noica.

The preference of the philosopher for objectivity reported to the truth represents on the one hand an attempt to demonstrate the power of the human spirit, his creativity, and in this way, the principle supremacy of philosophy reported to the other cultural fields that aim at emphasizing as absolute the truth.

When he wants to overtake knowledge, passing towards a living conscience, "the modern man cannot feel for the sciences of the time nothing more but hostility"ⁱⁱⁱ, feeling generated by the fact that the truth in which the scientist are in pursue, is prior to their existence, which separates the sciences from the human being. Everything becomes unknown to the conscience, everything seems intimidating and full of worries to the human being, because the world around him became organized and gained meanings that seem to be imposed to him. It is a sort of a conspiracy of things against him.

What enables this kind of situation is that question, which represents the foundation stone of knowledge: “if to understand means to find or to set meanings?”

The majority answer to find, some, to set, others to choose (although these could be easily assimilated to the first group) and those from the forth group who combine the first two answers. The last faction encourages the search of new meanings from the heart of reality, but also, in a small part, from inside the human’s mind. If the act of knowledge is one of the human’s most noble attributes, then, that means it participates above the simple operation of recording facts intangible to it.

In the Romanian philosopher’s opinion the comparison between the truth doctrine and the objectivity one has at least three marks of superiority:

1. it doesn’t believe in things already made (neither laws nor knowledge), which is why human’s perception enlightens a new level of understanding.

2. the objectivity surpasses the truth trough the fact that it creates its own object based on mathematical rigor, while the truth doctrine only models the basis of things.

3. if we consider an objectivity criterion, it will overtake the truth one because it has the human print.

Of course it is not a hard thing to anticipate the objection that could rise against such vision, which will imply that once with the replacement of the truth with the

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objectivity, the human being will be in darkness, in a world of arbitrary values, because no one will guide him through the possible knowledge, throughout meanings. That is why it is mentioned that not our particular meanings are used for the general act of setting meanings. Not at all, the ones suited for this are those who can be applied to any thinking conscience.

The critic series are not over with this note. A new question rises: what council could decide what are the valid answers to any conscience? In phrasing an answer to such question, we should have in mind that in fact no culture section could aspire to having such a council, except for philosophy, which has been specialized to a general purpose. We have to find one of the sources of the philosophic imperialism from all times.

The objectivity in many thinkers' opinion is more appropriate than the truth. The science tries to search the truth, while the philosophy has in view the objectivity. The modern wave's common sin is not that we listen too much to our philosophers but that we don't listen enough, and we should because "no one serves better the generality ideal than the one who struggles to apply meanings, not to find them". He has as basis the objectivity and through it can avoid better anarchy than anyone else.

The objectivity is gained only through the restriction of subjectivity. A child, who calculates correctly a sum, knows all that is into it in a human's perception, said Descartes. But God sent us to replace Him, to shape meanings, to create and not to be satisfied with a merely act of accounting.

Although philosophy can account better for knowledge, not any type of philosophy is fit for the

exploration of knowledge. As much as some would try to present philosophy as a field lacking any internal struggles, rivalries and as a unitary whole, the situation is far from being so.

For instance the existentialist philosophy, in fashion for a long time, is justified when considering itself just another philosophy among so many others but not anymore when trying to eclipse all the others in comparison to which it can only be complementary. It authorizes in a direct or indirect manner the stronger feeling of belonging to nature, to a pre-existing order, of being “made” and “manoeuvred”, that he can no longer be held responsible for his actions.

As against the existentialism, the philosophy of the soul offers the benefit of not dealing with the analysis of the anonymous powers that smother men, but instead with the spirit in practice on the one hand, and on the other hand, even supposing the existence of such powers, they are not considered tyrannical at all, as long as we do not show them more interest than they really deserve and we do not submit to them.

One could blame existentialism for estranging man from spirit, often giving rise to false problems. Choosing existence as part of the disjunction either essence or existence, the existentialist philosophy denies all that is fundamental to spirit (the Romanian philosopher Constantin Noica teaches us to avoid binary logic, here from his disbelief not only towards existentialism but also towards analytic philosophy.)

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In opposition with all these, the philosophy of the soul has a completely different perspective. This philosophy possesses two essential qualities: unity and reflexivity which come from the spirit itself.

To explain the unity of the spirit we make use of the concept of “reason” which we must clearly delimit from that of “intellect”. For the intellect things are separated since it is the one that operates the distinctions which must be made, otherwise the world would enter a complete chaos. The intellect is not able to surpass this separation, reason being designated with this task. It must prove that what the intellect keeps under strict separation is, in fact, an inner unity.

Separation is something caused artificially, a moment in our knowledge, but not its end. He who perceives reality only through the angle of the intellect estranges himself from it because reality is, essentially, unity. Reason, by surpassing plurality towards unity, leads back to reality.

This is the ability of bringing harmony to light, if it lies in the object itself. Reason brings forward the superior unity of the intellect’s notions, which, in fact, the intellect has in its structure, but is unable to see.

What are the categories from the perspective of the philosophy of the soul?

They are the reflection of reflection of the reason in the intellect. Reflected, in the intellect, reason, as the omniscience of the becoming into being (formulated by Noica) gets divided in the beginning into three concepts: becoming, becoming into being, and being, which, seen from

the four perspectives of the intellect (quantity, quality, relation, modality) would result into categories.

The Judgments appear in a similar manner.

The philosophy of the spirit begins from where most end. It suggests another revaluation of categories, a dialectical one, one that no longer brings under discussion their origin. The faculties of spirit as Kant sees them: intellect, judgement, argument, are formed on the hierarchical system in such a way that reason envelops all the others. Argument is becoming into being in the conscious of becoming, and the judgement is the beginning of remaking the rational unity, with the three types of synthesis (being is becoming, becoming is being, being is being). Reason is the nucleus of the problems and it must be reconceived in order to eliminate neutrality from its environment.

After we have tried to analyze in which the spirit's unity can be established, we shall now refer to the method of arguing of its second feature: reflexivity.

People have thoughts, maybe even some animals have, but ideas have only those who turn their thinking on the thought. After the same pattern, one has philosophic conscience only if he turns his soul on the spirit. The defining feature of the soul and of its science, the philosophy, is thus reflexivity, a feature that cannot be encountered in any other fields.

Through philosophy reflexivity makes its way in the world of culture. This supposes the circular unveiling of its dimensions. We can thus refer to a logical circle (defined by syllogism, with the crossing from particular to general and

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back again), a circle of knowledge (defined by the shifting from the actual knowledge and contemplation), an ethical circle (concluded by the oscillation between freedom and obedience) and an aesthetic one (in which the idea and the sensitive cross-over). The forming of all the philosophical disciplines could only have been done after they became aware of the circle they belong to, obviously, each with its own features.

The circle can be looked at as an original category of the soul, which forms the base for all its other categories. If the table of categories might have been viewed as an argument for supporting of the soul's unity, although the categories themselves are the intellect's own creations that emphasize the world's diversity over its unity, the circle which lies within the spirit is a condition for its own existents. The soul's philosophy starts from the categories but ends up as dialectics. But it is not the usual linear dialectics, in the modern sense of the word, which impartially confronts opposite terms. The true dialectic starts when neutrality is left behind only to enter in a state of orientation.

Linear dialectics, or regular, can grasp two forms: a mono-linear one, which has its origin in a thesis following but one line, and a ramified one which consists of a greater number of plans, more specific series. How can thought avoid this vicious circle, a movement that theoretically cannot be stopped? The answer comes from the idea that the mechanical movement is carried out in two ways: on the circle's line but also on the diameter's line, "thus from the starting point of the two movements will this time be a full stop and not an infinite circular movement" iv., wrote the above mentioned Romanian philosopher.

On the other hand the state of orientation directs the circular movement so that it won't repeat itself. The mission of philosophy is not just to show that reason (spirit) is oriented, this fact being already too obvious to necessitate any demonstration, but to show what is it oriented towards. Philosophy returns to the ontological problem, the weaving of the problem of reason with that of existents are the markers towards which philosophy should direct its attention. Yet another great risk of loss emerges as the commentators say: the supremacy of reason undoes everything that isn't a part of it.

It has been believed, and it is still, that defining the human as a being merely rational is insufficient and that human particularity should be enlarged far beyond reason. Existentialism came up with additional statements: the-fact-of-being-in-the-world, freedom, temporality, presence in affective circumstances are human characteristics which can establish, along with rationality, the human essence. Romanian philosopher Constantin Noica disagrees seeing along with these attachments a sign of deficiency for the concept of reason.

Anxiety, as the fear of not following his path toward existents, falling into indifference, as a loss of the aspirations headed for existents, freedom, as a choice possibility oriented at reason, temporality, all of these are part of reason, they mustn't be added to it. "It is therefore absurd to say: man is something more than a rational being. Man is rational all the way to absurdity, in excess even", he wrote. Along with reason comes another necessity and only the spirit's philosophy, which studies it, can decide on the objectivity of knowledge.

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We thus reach another impediment: if philosophy can analyze the value of universality of meanings, not any such science is able to do it. Philosophy goes through what science, art and civilization had to face: converting to plural. The reason is although a problem of philosophy, because, ultimately, philosophy, just like the world, is spreading without separating.

NOTES

ⁱ Constantin Noica, *De Caelo*, Humanitas, București, 1993, p. 36-37

ⁱⁱ *Idem*, p.41

ⁱⁱⁱ *Idem*, p.42

^{iv} Constantin Noica, *Devenirea întru ființă*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1987, p.102