

WHAT ARE WE SEEKING IN COGNITION?

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Humans are both seekers and creators. Human creation is primarily based on human cognition. It is in cognition where we look for reality as it is in itself. However, this task has not been fulfilled so far, and despite it has not been given up, it may be seen as problematic. This does not mean that our knowledge is futile and has no meaning and purpose at all. Even our errors have a meaning. Taking into account the crucial role of experience, the author goes on in his search for the meaning of knowledge pointing out that epistemological reality is not sharply divided from ethical and aesthetical realities.

In the history of philosophy, humans have been characterized in different ways. As a creature who produces, who is rational, who laughs, plays, acts politically, and as a pilgrim, as a religious, metaphysically oriented, symbol-creating being—there are many possibilities. Humans of today differ from other animals so much that each of the human qualities is specific and characteristic just for them. I would like to draw attention to one of these attributes: Human as a being looking for reality, *homo scrutator*, *homo scrutans*.

It is also characteristic of humans that they are beings that ask questions. They ask about everything around, inside of the self, about the self and reply according to the given possibilities. There is probably nothing they could not ask about, everything evident, a matter of course can become a problem for them; and even if they answer their question, sooner or later doubt will be cast on the answer and they will look for a new one adequate to the changed circumstances. Although humans think, which is one of their privileges and their pride, it is characteristic that they do not know and have to try hard to know. These qualities condition one another, and only he can think that does not know because to think means to solve problems. An omniscient being, not solving any problems, a sort of absolute reason, is *contradictio in adiecto*.

What is it that humans search for, what are they permanently asking about, what is it that can satisfy their curiosity and again arouse it? It is reality, the chief support of their thought and activities, without which they are nothing. The chief aim of knowing is to find reality, all the other aims being probably derived from this one.

However, humans are not only seekers, they are also creators—the greatest living creators of reality, namely material and spiritual, cultural, which would not exist

without them, continuing on the material-spiritual level creating and re-creating initiated by material nature. They re-create what already is into what is not yet, but should be according to their ideas. They re-create it on the basis of the known. Because knowing is not purely academic, it is for creation. But what is created by humans, is re-created after some time, according to the development of knowledge or according to the deficiencies of the created. They try to re-create, re-realize all possibilities because sooner or later they are not satisfied with something. It seems today that as for the original, mainly natural reality, they will leave no stone unturned. Whether to their benefit or detriment, it is a different question. Desire to know and create is primary. Naturally, they are always looking for benefit, but, because they are not-knowing, benefit may turn into harm.

Human being is a homo creator.

A search for and creation of reality are not a one-off; but the historical tasks of humans are their destiny, the meaning of their history. A human being belongs to reality like all the rest, is part of reality that realizes, acquires knowledge of and re-creates itself relatively, according to the historical level of its development. Their object is the whole reality as far as they see it and they themselves within its framework.

Why do humans look for reality, why is it their fate, why does the search create the contents of their history, why do they have history at all, why is the search so painful even destructive, why, although not useless, is it relative, why is there no hope for its definite end?

Domiciliary reality is not enough

In their animal state, humans followed instincts. Instinct is one-way, relatively reliable and unchangeable. This is why an animal has no history, at least in the human sense of the term. An instinct knows its reality—animal reality, self-sufficient reality, it can orient itself in it, it does not keep reality at a distance, it does not realize it and fits in with it automatically. Naturally, it also fails, it does not protect animals against every destruction, because they also are an experimental vehicle of nature. Animals also look for reality, sometimes in the wrong way. When a human being is born, an instinct begins to wobble changing into multilane, losing strength and convincingness, losing certainty, turning into reason. Reason has changed into multilane, weakened, distant from reality, although not cut off, thinking, and thus also nomadic instinct. Its view of reality is a bird's eye view not a frog's eye view and it sees in reality a possibility of several, though not uncertain, ways, leading to the aim, that means it suddenly sees problems in it. Which way is the right one? Its freedom of choice is redeemed by the loss of certainty, it is freedom from knowing, freedom of not-knowing, of seeking. The consciousness is a gap between the instinctive immediacy and reasonable wobbliness. The loss of instinct's reality was human's prime and fundamental alienation, which is today reiterated in numerous variations on a small scale.

Reason is thus both loss and profit. It offers humans a variety of life opportunities, which animals do not have, but at the expense of the loss of certainty about their successful solution, even at the cost of their failure. A hummingbird has built a perfect and unchangeable nest from time immemorial. Since leaving the cave, humans built hundreds of different dwelling places, because they have never been satisfied with any of them forever, they listened to their imagination and reason, which designed new and new variations according to their historical knowledge and technological possibilities. It still is not at the end and it hardly ever will be; but it is not uncommon that human construction often falls on their heads, destroys and kills them.

Neither animals nor humans know external reality as such. Although humans are instinctively convinced of their own existence, they work it out on a species by species basis because they are also media, which change information passing through, imprinting a stamp of their species, gender and individuality on it. This is how their everyday world is created, their fundamental, domestic, natural reality, the only place to live forever, although they go on expeditions to other realities. They do not go there voluntarily, reason drives them, and also in this sense, they are at least relatively homeless. Even the domestic reality as such is not unchangeable, humans re-shape it through history, under the influence of knowing these realities.

We are tuned in to our fate

In contrast to other animals, humans know also other realities, saved “under” or “behind”, “before” or “above” their domestic reality. These are different layers of the same reality, in which humans live, but there can be another, more important, purely spiritual reality and humans often believe that it is where at least their soul and spirit come from. What is important now, however, is that they all escape from them, and they have to work hard to penetrate into them, through religion, science, philosophy, etc. Their cultural disciplines are forms of knowing—but also of creating—reality. They keep all at a distance, human individual knows they are ‘there’ and s/he is ‘here’, although s/he her/himself is a knowing everything reality. But as soon as humans direct their attention also at reality, it immediately splits into two and one part escapes them. Thus, they are always as if beyond reality, above it. And therefore they think that they fly above everything, even above nature.

Humans let slip even their everyday reality. It is not only this reality where a number of questions emerge, they also found that it is only a surface layer from among deeper and very different layers, being only as if the crust of the earth with movable, liquid, and boiling layers underneath, which are only recognizable in a special way. Is not this layer only an illusion, delusion, dream explained by the lower layers? Are not these layers, or only one of them—the basic one—the actual reality, carrying all the others on its shoulders? Humans abandon domestic reality and push their way through the others because they want to know just the primary one from which the others are derived. They get there through their epistemological probes, hunting for it throughout history and through all cultural disciplines. It lures them as

a singing Siren, when the marshy place is sinking deeper and deeper under them. Will there be Orpheus who will not be destroyed by the singing, who will defeat it and will find the primary reality—Siren and disarm her? To find it, to find the Absolute, Truth, Good, Beauty is human's ultimate goal, salvation, redemption, longed-for cessation of strenuous and painful history. Because humans not only want or long for, but also have to know, being forced into it by their inner discomposure growing with every new question, the unknown. The unknown is disquieting, terrifying and must be changed into the known. But humans also long for definite peace and quiet. By finding the last reality the intrusive questions would finally become quiet, fatal problems would end, an old ideal would be achieved: divine omniscience, omnipotence, the old demand—know thyself—would be satisfied, and basic questions of human life and being would be answered: Who am I, what am I, where do I come from, where do I go, what is the meaning of my life, how should I behave to reach my goal safely, where will I find reliable guidelines how to be myself and not somebody else, when I am really free, and many others.

Such are human ideals, dreams, having been expressed in all cultural disciplines in history in different ways, particularly in religion, philosophy but also in art, in social utopia, etc. Humans search, find, create, destroy and recreate and, although, as the results show, these efforts are probably not useless, they cannot speak about the last found reality in any area. Their findings sink again and again into an abyss of non-knowing and the Sisyphean labour returns. The obstinate search thus continues. Humans love their search, efforts, pains, tears, falling down, getting up, and redeemed victories, they are tuned in to them, and continuous inactivity or activity without problems would destroy them. Humans are beings for both comforts and discomfort, they are beings of sharpened contradictions.

Praise of error

Let us take a more concrete look at the process of searching reality. Human knowledge is a vehicle for seeking reality, not to mention now the fact that knowledge also belongs to it. All its methods, instinctively used in everyday cognition, like observation, experiment, even modelling, abstraction and concretization, synthesis and analysis, induction and deduction, analogy, etc., not yet found, which were born with reason and discovered in history, are auxiliary tools of this search (being themselves historically problematized reality). The highest goal of acquiring knowledge is truth and in theory, we cannot go beyond it. However, truth is not purely academic, its aim is reality. The difficult process of acquiring knowledge ends after reality has been found.

According to the currently most common view formulated by Aristotle long ago, truth is a concordance between thought and reality. Looking out of the window and stating that it's raining, I am right. I have it verified, I see that everything is wet, but, looking closer, I state that it is not raining, it is drizzling. I was wrong and corrected myself. Truth has its contrast in error and we are grateful to it for knowing about truth, as we are grateful to the night that we know about the day. Error is usually

characterized as untrue, incorrect knowledge, taken for truth. The causes are allegedly usually psychological, like inattention, precipitance, etc. I know it, but I was inattentive somehow and I made a mistake. A more critical view on the matter allegedly removes error and truth will blaze as sun, when the cloud floats away.

I do not think it is so easy and that importance assigned to error is not appropriate. Error is eternal, unavoidable and not only the momentary and accidental companion of truth (hypotheses, theories), truth would not be historical and developing a category without it. Not-knowing and perfect knowing do not need truth. Moreover, error is born from truth, truth itself becomes an error and has to be replaced by a new, more adequate truth. Thus knowing gains its historical dynamics. Its history is often a series of truths about the same thing, as a rule, increasingly adequate as we believe, but never being in accord with the subject itself, with the reality as such, which is instinctively supposed to be the only one. What do they agree then with? With experience. Experience is subjective, the subject being known is naturally also involved in it; it is mediated by a psychophysical condition of humans acquiring knowledge, their psychological, moral, and other equipment and their outer spatiotemporally conditioned cognitive possibilities.

Experience is as dynamic as the truth itself. It is assessed by reason, which is not a blank slate but is influenced by period and personal, mostly unconscious attitudes of humans acquiring knowledge, their will, character, temperament, interests, education, value orientation, prejudices and other factors. In the quest for truth, the author removes some of them, because s/he knows about them, some however, are not removed, they condition his/her truth, creep into it, and shape his or her seeing of reality. They highlight something, eliminate something, amend something, create an uncontroversial aspect and agreement is achieved. Since the author does not know about them s/he thinks that s/he knows reality itself, and accords with it. When reality changes with the development of cognition, truth will change into error, its conditioning will be revealed, its concord with only a particular experience will be found out and new truth will be sought after. Estrangement of reality removed by truth will be renewed and a human individual, Ahasuerus is again sent forth from Eden to work in the sweat of his face.

Truth is not a concord of thought with reality, only with experience, regarded, however, as reality. Truth cannot be found as a mushroom in woods, although the term of a quest for truth is characteristic because it is assumed that truth is ready somewhere as reality, which is expressed by it. Truth is *de facto* being created, it is not desubjectivized, but is always both historically and personally conditioned, bearing an imprint of its creator and era, place and time, being joined together with them. Truth is not absolute, only relative, and if it is group, its objectivity is only intersubjective, it is the truth of subjects, which are "in tune" one way or another. The so-called absolute truth, whether partial or total, is only an ultimate ideal of knowing. We cannot say about any truth, even about the truth not changing in history, that it is absolute because it can change in the future, develop into error. We cannot say that it is in concord with the reality sought. The antiquity of truth is not a criterion of its accord with reality. History showed that the most antique and the most general truths (*geocentrism*, *generatio aequivoca*) have converted into the most general errors with time. By contrast, inborn, eternal, crucial truths can be part of the

subjective human equipment; humans look through them at the external reality and they protect them from an undistorted view of it, and they get to know it only through them. This is the case of Kantian apriorism.

Error is at the side of truth not as if its sporadic and ailing shadow, as inattention, it does not stand against it as an enemy on the battlefield coming from the opposite side. It gets into it organically as subjectiveness, which could not have been done away with in the particular conditions, it has been truth itself for long, and reveals itself only later. Truth becomes then partially or completely an error. We must not think that the past only drowned in errors as the enlightenment and each era argued dogmatically, the only connoisseur of truth; but we have to admit that each has its truths in which it lives and for which it fights and dies for. Current truth, error of tomorrow, myth of the day after tomorrow. Even the greatest nonsense of the past about which we speak today smiling, were or might have been truths once. Do humans accept anything at all? Do they live in something and for something that they regard as error, untruth, illusion? Even neopositivists, who had placed truth on a list of prohibited words and accepted declaratively only hypotheses, did not do it. The so-called Socrates' and Descartes' methodological skepticism was merely methodological, theoretical. Descartes did not keep to it even in theory. Although humans also live in speculations, assumptions, beliefs, illusions and they know about them as such, there is nothing from their perspectives to contradict it and therefore, there is a hope that they are true and that they correspond or will correspond to reality. They behave in accordance with it. Explicit nonsense is repudiated.

Truth and reality are identical in a sense

Truth is a judgement formulated by reason, which is the only one to bear responsibility for subjectiveness, which creeps into the truth. Senses are "innocent", reason should be critical. However, it is not and cannot be. It is the youngest human cognitive vehicle that succumbs to all its irrational influences, it is often merely their speaker and illusions of its purity, criticality and impartiality are a prejudice resulting from the human pride contained within it. In fact, it is the most venal human element working to order and often trying to satisfy it. It is manifested in all its contemplations and thus also in truth. If reason is merely a thinking instinct and if instinct is working in the interest of animals, reason also defends the interest of humans—particular humans. Open and hidden. There is no thought without interest, humans think because they have certain interests. We can often say that like interest like truth and reality. A pure, entirely unbiased and general Kantian reason opposed to all interests is difficult to think about. The acquired knowledge of reality does not always suit humans and it often wants to obscure it. How could they do it without knowing it, however? A liar knows the truth.

In my opinion, this view on truth is valid about every rational cognition. That means also daily, primary cognition, about seeking knowledge of the natural world, from which also science and philosophy stem. It also has its truths, everybody has truths, even uneducated, ignorant people. Science and philosophy usually look at

them from above, they allegedly drown in errors, they do not tell truths, only opinions and they should not be taken into consideration. They often yield to superstitions, various unconscious social myths and various ideologies are full of them! Rationalist philosophy used to look from above even on science, which, according to its Nestor Plato expresses—except for mathematics—merely opinions, in the best case “true opinions”. It is mainly philosophers that look at truth—reality, transcendental ideas through rational intuition. It is, however, an aristocratic and dogmatic approach that belongs to the past. Every human being has his or her truth. It is naturally their own personal, but also group, intersubjective truth, which is usually less critical, less desubjectivized than the truth of a scientist. It is often justified in a very bizarre fashion, only wanted, often merging with certainty; chiefly philosophy fights against it vehemently, it is often enough when nothing opposes a particular opinion, when it is shared by others, when “people say it so”, etc. Importantly, there is nothing evident to deny the opinion, that it is an uncontroversial accord with experience that is with the supposed reality. This accord is sometimes very fragile. Particular people are convinced of it, it carries them through life, and brings them, success which is not necessarily smaller than those of a scientist. They can also discuss it, persuade others, because truth is only one and when he or she is the one who has the truth, they cannot have it, they can literally fight for it, as we often see in religious, political and other quarrels. Withholding truth from these people would imply withholding air and water from them. Truth drags from bottom to top throughout cognition, going up as smoke from the ground to heaven—smoke which is getting thin because it is refined with air, the more critical thinking. This is a whole, only quantitative difference between plebeian and aristocratic truths. We struggle for all, sometimes using fist, using arguments and courtesy diplomatic dodges at higher level, both hurting, however; it is strenuous and it is a specific human form of natural selection. Religious faith wants to be truthful in a sense too, although it sets much store by the fact that it is faith. It also discusses, argues, denies errors and knows why it believes.

Truth is as mineral water, springing at a particular place, containing dissolved substances from the layers it has flown through.

Haven't we deviated from the quest for reality? No, because, as I have already said, who has truth he also has reality: reality as human being can have. Because truth and reality are identical in a sense. In what sense?

When I say that stars seen with the naked eye are flashes of light in the heaven, I am right and, at the same time, I express reality. Truth is inside me and reality as if outside me and this is why they cannot be identical. It is clear, however, that I created this reality under particular conditions and reality is my truth itself. A different look at stars will not confirm my reality. Reality is judgement about reality and not reality itself. Although in the history of knowledge experience also changes, it is, however, neutral and only reason is active and judging. The same reality can be judged in a different way and different reality can be seen in it, according to an aspect, a choice of facts. How different was the judgement of the shining stars by ancient authors!

One can object to the truth that lightning kills, but has not killed anybody yet, whereas the lightning did. Is then truth identical with reality? I think so, I repeat, however, that with the acquired knowledge of reality. Somewhere behind it there is

fundamental reality, lightning as such that kills. Reason has only access to reality as knowledge, which does not kill, as the knowledge about a virus does not cause disease. This knowledge can cause that we kill through viruses. It is, however, the fundamental reality that kills and we can use it for manipulating without knowing it exhaustively. We will be possibly able to use this virus for treatment. Let us go back, however.

Only courts of justice fight for reality although on the basis of experience. Reality is subjectively conditioned, it is also a historical category converted into unreality during its development as truth is converted into error, it is relative, all humans have their reality and the absolute reality is an ideal as the absolute truth is an ideal. We only have relative reality, everybody having his or her own reality, we discriminate it from unreality, everybody knows that “in reality it is so and so”; we elucidate, reveal reality to someone, we take his/her “blinkers” off, we lead him/her out of illusions into “harsh reality”, in which s/he does not live but we do. We have our arguments, we discuss, convince, because reality is only one as truth is only one, usually our truth. The wish is father not only to truth but also to reality.

At a particular moment when we know what is reality like, it is only this particular aspect or aspects that is reality. The rest is unreality, untruth, error, hypothesis, theory, likelihood. This aspect is valid only till reality is waved and its matter of course is lost. Then we shift it to another place and everything will change adequately. Everything in acquiring knowledge can thus become both reality and unreality. Reality is the torchlight, jumping in the dark from object to object. We do not live only in truths and realities, but in the hierarchy of steps leading to them.

Jaspers says that being is actually only interpreted and that such interpretations are “ways of reality”. Reality is thus not being—reality per se, but only our view of it. “If the content of an interpretation is regarded as reality itself, it is a fundamental lack of understanding of our knowledge”, Jaspers says. I think, however, that this interpretation is justifiably regarded as reality and it also is reality—but it is reality created by us, it is Jaspers’ reality. Philosophy has discriminated between being, reality and existence since long ago; complete disunity is governing here, however. To simplify matters, I speak here only about reality because the terms only express different types of understanding. Everything in our knowing has to appear in the court of criticism. Is it real and in what sense?

Historically, we live both horizontally and vertically in an infinite number of realities (having recognized them as such), personal and interpersonal worlds, we are monads but not without windows, because we communicate and try to harmonize our worlds to live in one, common world, hopefully in the right world. Without instinctive belief in one, the genuine reality, we would not discuss, assert, we would be without history, and get drowned in our insurmountable solipsisms. The authors, who had once developed extensive philosophical systems, tried to clarify various areas of reality from a uniform aspect because they took it for granted that reality is only one. We want to get out of our subjectiveness, revealing itself more and more in history, to get rid of it completely. Although we love our subjectivity and individuality, our uniqueness and matchlessness for example in art, we hate it instinctively in epistemology and we try to get rid of it as much as possible, because it is a work of reason, our vague thinking and divergence. Democracy and tolerance

mean in this connection resignation of *one* truth and reality. But how difficult and unnatural it is! How much blood religious and nationality freedom cost us! And have dangers already been averted? Wrestling for one truth and reality goes on, however, and an ideal goal is the unification of all people in one truth and reality. Tolerance is a historically conditioned virtue of necessity.

The empress who would not retreat an inch

Reality is thus also created by us in the same way as truth with bloodstains of humanness and individuality—the only reality we are able to achieve. It is not even thinkable that humans, such creative creatures, for the most part self-creations, would remain noncreative, passive as a finely-cut plane mirror just in acquiring knowledge. Tell me what is your truth and reality and I will tell you who you are.

By and large, I don't argue, however, that truth and reality are our arbitrary creation. Each, even the most personal truth contains an element of reality sought after. Nobody can proclaim long only as they please and if they do it, inexorable judgement, being, reality, necessity, truth which will not allow to be manipulated, will, sooner or later, directly or through others, chase it away, mock and move it to the side. (Truth will always be victorious also in this sense.) Its tolerance is great but not endless. From this perspective, attention should be again drawn to Bacon's words that we can triumph over nature only by obedience. Not only over nature, but over reality as a whole. It is just in the need of obedience that reality emerges as our empress, who finally does not retreat an inch. Even if it is engaged in doing us a service, as I showed using an example of viruses: we have to respect its order. According to it, it will do something by our command that it would not do by itself. And, like the command and the level of knowledge, like performance. There is a difference between treating virus infection with herbs and with antibiotics. This is the basis of our growing rule over it.

Reality is as if encompassed in our cognition, it does not leave us, showing its presence in various ways, its face being covered with Maya's veil, however. And whether the philosopher is a naïve realist or solipsist, they will never dispose of it, it will always emerge in their systems and its demands will always be the same and will not change. Truth is power—the power of reality it expresses.

We do not have, however, a criterion for determining the share of fundamental reality in our truths and this is the main cause of groping around, our fumbling cognition, which creates its problem as a whole, because we cannot compare a copy with an original. If I can compare a photo of my friend with himself, it is easy to recognize its imperfections. And if I only have a copy and the original is not available? I cannot even speak about a copy and I think up tens of hypotheses to explain why a photograph is such and such, and the truest copy—as we believe—truth is only subjective, created from inside, modelled according to the momentarily emerging, but in its self-sufficiency unknown original. It is not surprising that philosophers have tried to cancel this self-sufficiency many times and transfer it to the subject. It did not help, however. They threw it out the door and it came back

through the window. All methods of seeking are thus mere crutches that have been verified in history as the most successful, but not guaranteed aids because they also are conditioned by our subjectivity. What is not suitable is thrown away and replaced by something better. Success, from the coarse material up to the fine spiritual, satisfaction of the thought, satisfaction from the discovered solution, is the only criterion about which we believe that reality itself, independent of us nods approval. We believe it on the basis of the growing practical achievements of our truths, chiefly truths of exact natural sciences. But this is also only an analogy, borrowed from the subjectively conditioned life experience. Because, when we kept to such and such rules in practice, we were successful. When we are successful, our rules are correct.

We have to obey ethical reality

We are looking not only for epistemological but also for ethical and aesthetic reality. I shall not speak about aesthetic reality, but I shall say several words about ethical reality. Ethical reality exists in the form of moral commandments, norms, rules, its goal being good, chiefly social, which, whether coming from God or from humans, emerge in our mind as something we should be at one with. Although they are inside us, they are as if external, imperative, standing above us.

In contrast to epistemological reality, we are not looking for ethical reality, it is given and has to be obeyed. There is no truth and error here, but it is obedience and disobedience, dissension, treason, sin. The indicator of both is conscience, inner stability or instability even incongruity which can have bad mental consequences and vanishes only when agreement between the norm, commandment is renewed. We are in a similar situation as with error. Error does not upset us so much as a bad conscience, we are more involved personally in moral action, it concerns our personal integrity, it is an issue of our virtue.

This is naturally valid only in an ideal case. Epistemology, truth and error have enough to say about ethics, it actually has the leading word in ethics as in philosophical contemplations on morals. They are torn away from their own morals so much that moralist need not be a moral person. It has to be, however, in harmony with reality, which emerges in his or her contemplations about morality, s/he has to tell the truth, or at least to seek it. Where do moral standards come from? What is the quintessence and goal of moral behaviour? What is conscience? Is altruism really only a sublime form of egoism?, Is the directive not to resist evil correct?, etc. etc. Morality often depends directly on contemplations about it, particularly when it has already cut loose from obeying the moral authority and wants to stand on its own feet. Good is allegedly conditioned by truth, we have heard in the history of philosophy from Socrates' times. We can speculate incessantly, or to let the moral standard analyzed, create a new one, more suitable for me, not to create any, conscience, another venal element in addition to reason, can be redirected or completely silenced, etc.

There are a number of varieties, I cannot believe that there is a stable, absolute point as there is not one in epistemology. Despite that, it is undeniable that we have

moral standards we should obey, that they are our moral reality and, although they also are historically relative, group or personal, and that although we often argue very vehemently about what is good and the like—despite all this, we search in history for the final, fundamental moral reality, the highest good, believing that we shall achieve it. Indisputably, we are being humanized, although evil, sometimes even “bestial”, does not desert us at all; it even appears that knowledge, science and technology, that is truth, even multiply it. Truth also serves evil, not only good, it is morally indifferent. Is evil proportional to the share of error in our current truths? We can think about it. The fact is, however, that in the case of both truth and good, our irrational, our emotions, passions, interests and the rest enter the game but they are more difficult to do away with in the case of good than in the case of truth. Good grows directly from some of them, suppresses some, whereas truth wants to suppress them all. Good does not ask for complete desubjectivization. But when, for example passion is still good and when it becomes evil, should we reckon with it at all? Good is sometimes converted into evil, as truth is converted into error. Life economy could not have created either pure error or pure evil.

But let us go back to epistemological reality.

Fight for acquiring knowledge of reality has only been fully waged recently

We have always lived in certain reality. The problem begins, as I have already said, in everyday life, when we are surrounded by it without realizing and verifying it. Everything around me that I perceive is as if real, usually intuitive. It emerges evidently and as a problem when it is doubted. Reality is not only beyond me, I am reality myself and it is also inside me. My visions, dreams, fantasy are also reality. I think about not only philosophically but also scientifically, psychologically, psychoanalytically, sociologically, etc. I develop a hypothesis, theory, truth about my vision of a friend, I try to find to what extent it agrees with my external reality about him or her, I create reality about it, stating that I am mistaken and correcting my error. Various forms of psychoanalysis seek to find the reality of our non-consciousness.

I often move external reality to the inner reality, reducing it, but also “saving” it, or I move it back to its original place. Humans who do not believe in God any more, shift their external reality to the inner one, among their visions, where vision remains reality or explore them further. They find out that the subject is its birthplace and that they shifted it back to where it belonged. The history of knowledge is mostly the shifting of reality in their hierarchy, probably never their complete nihilizing. The objective usually becomes subjective, where it can live very long. We do not forget the bygone objective reality of emptiness, ether, flogistone, but also various ghosts, obsession, etc. If substance was once an outer, ontological reality, Kant shifted it to the subject, where it changed into an a priori category of reason, whereas logical empiricism completely denied its reality—we encounter it nowhere in reality (Berkeley). It still does not have its permanent place in subject either and is either shifted or “nihilized”. Anyway, it remains a givenness—reality in our mind, at least

as a vision, prejudice, biological aid, and we can still think about it: now, however, from another angle. It is still an important external reality for several philosophical and other attitudes.

We can speak here about the historical uncovering of anthropomorphization of reality and about drawing inferences. Humans have necessarily anthropomorphized — biologically, epistemologically—reality always without knowing it. As time went by, humans realized it and shifted their anthropomorphisms back, into the subject, as long as it was possible. Microphysics, chemistry, microbiology point out more and more to the fact that material natural reality is entirely different from that we meet in the natural world, in everyday reality; its anthropomorphization, however, cannot be removed, only alerted to. On the other hand, philosophy can move the anthropomorphism of thought to some extent. It concerns secondary anthropomorphism, for example religion: it was attacked, although inconsistently, by the emerging Greek philosophy and it can be removed. Later, it also discovered the inconspicuous, yet natural and indispensable one, criticized by modern, chiefly Kant's, philosophy. Modern philosophy—Descartes—allegedly discovered human universal subjectivity and, through its eyes, reality is brought to the present. In my opinion, it means an omnipresent subjective anthropomorphization, subject as a factor, necessarily reproducing fundamental reality in a specific way. Many a ground-breaking modern philosophy has then become noticeable for discovering another, unknown or not much observed layer of specificity. Marx's, Jaspers's and mainly Heidegger's existentialism, hermeneutics, chiefly Gadamer's, and other currents. Heidegger's innovation consisted in the fact that he discovered a new, natural, lived, and unconscious human outlook on everyday world, on objects with which humans coexist, a view which has almost nothing to do with the scientific outlook, although it is building on it scientifically, growing out of it and standing above it but destroying its quality by its quantifying: the world full of meanings, senses, hints, signs, codes that can only be understood by philosophy not influenced by science; the world whose existentials, substantially different from Kantian categories, differ so much from the classical philosophical outlook on being that they conceal it in a different way than the categories—as a result, philosophy has not comprehended human beings, intimately interlinked with this elemental quality, so far; this is how Heidegger puts it. In other words, Heidegger uncovered a new type of anthropomorphization of fundamental reality. He did not doubt its existence and drew far-reaching inferences for cognition. He did not want and could not cancel this anthropomorphization, but he pointed out to the new human reality and threw new light on the cognition of fundamental reality, which goes on accordingly.

Modern philosophy, better to say its scientific part, expects from this disanthropomorphization easier separating “the wheat from the chaff”, subjective from objective, and thus easier acquisition of knowledge of the reality itself. The fight for knowing the reality has been fully waged only recently.

Reality hides itself from us

The shifting to various layers of reality proceeds also in a different way. Acquisition of knowledge on a daily basis is full of empirical propositions and often also of empirical laws, truths and realities. It rains only when the sky is cloudy, as we know from our daily experience. But why does it rain then? I am looking for the cause and thus I enter reality, inaccessible in everyday life, subsurface, scientific reality, clarifying the surface reality. The daily acquisition of knowledge also seeks and finds causes, but it is usually not able to explain natural phenomena and the unanswered questions pull reason to the depths. Thus it reaches the “bottom”, philosophy, which does not ask what is the cause of rain as a layer of reality, the cause of life as another layer, but what is the cause as such, its reality, reality as such as a whole, its structure, or its origin, goal, the existential structure of human life, its meaning, goals, the meaning of suffering, death and many others. What is a norm as such? What is meaning, spirit, mass, essence and law? How many primary substances are there? In other words, what reality is expressed by these concepts, which themselves are a particular reality?

We do not speak much about reality as such, although we are seeking it exclusively, with the help of one reality already recognized, we are looking for another one; from this point of view, all our methods, starting concepts, can be transferred to the hierarchy of various realities with different functions. The essence is thus reality (mass, spirit), all the other realities or at least a set of particular realities being its manifestations; cause is reality, its activity, giving rise to another reality. If we are only looking for the cause, we do it for example by means of induction, the method as recognized reality, through which we search another reality. Law is reality, amending the order of a large set of realities; reality is a criterion for measuring the reality value of givennesses, claiming truth-reality in a particular set of accepted realities. The aim of human life is reality, which is ready or should only be created and which directs human life so as to identify itself with it. We could go on with these characteristics (not definitions).

We thus establish a network and hierarchy of aids—realities trying to capture the reality sought after as adequately as possible. This hierarchy is historically conditioned, human, group, individual, there are a great number of them according to various perspectives. If it changes, the sought-after and the found reality will also change. Reality also has thousands of “hidden” names. Also in this view we can say that reality is hiding from us. It is Proteus in thousand appearance simultaneously.

Ambiguous forefather Kant

It follows from what we have said that it is the natural, material reality that is easiest to look for. It is an offer, tempting, seducing us. Natural sciences use, so to speak, meter, kilogram and number to acquire knowledge of it. Their exactness but also “unimaginativeness” is thus well understandable. If they are even the driving force of our modern culture, if they pull it behind them and sound the tone, it is

evidence of our genuinely natural, even today prevailing “materialistic” background. The humanities are worse off, because their reality, humans as social beings, is more difficult to access, much more complicated, more abstract, sometimes it is only being created and often “hanging in the air”. Finally, philosophical reality is as if arbitrary, multifarious, often individual, always problematic, indubitable for one author, worthless, bubble-like for another one. It is much more personal and existentially more important than the natural scientific, as heavy quarrels in philosophy show. Prejudices, disdain, mockery even hatred have their place here, a teacher treats his pupil with disdain, because he has outstripped him. From time to time it seems as if ideology and not deliberate philosophy were at issue, philosophy often claiming scientism. And yet here it is argued empirically and logically, truth is being achieved, unity with reality, and also much tighter than in science, for example by intuition (reasonable, sensory, emotional, mystic), ecstasy, contemplation, etc. Philosophy developed such methods for immediate penetration into its reality as science, natural science in particular, do not have. Let us mention Losski’s intuitive realism or Anglo-American neorealism! It is in a way a return to naïve realism of everyday life, convinced of the fact that it acquires knowledge of external reality straight away. Philosophy not only explores its reality formally but it also creates its contents. Every philosopher speaks about what reality is like, what is it and what is not, what is its extent and contents, how can we penetrate into it, etc. But instead of an agreement between their views on this reality, they mostly differ diametrically. Even in those who look upon through intuition even by mystic ecstasy, in which the onlooker completely merges with the looked on, it turns into nihilism.

How do humans achieve their historical aim to find, adequately grasp the fundamental, material or spiritual reality sought after, but also reality, the outer support of which they do not find because it is somewhere inside them, or do they create it themselves? The answer partly follows from what has already been said. Natural sciences, physical sciences in particular, advance successfully, physics seeks to work out “the theory of everything” and it was getting ready to knock on God’s door several times. It always sinks deeper into unknown layers, but huge achievements of natural sciences, turning our lives upside down almost overnight, show, however, that they cope with their reality and approach it asymptotically.

In part of modern philosophy, reality itself was shifted to the subject in Hume and Kant, who made of it one of the twelve a priori rational categories between possibility and necessity. In scientific philosophy, in positivism, and particularly in neopositivism, reality was not set free from the subject and was reduced in it more and more, shrinking finally to the possible subject of utterances scientifically admissible, verifiable, but not yet verified. Philosophy itself was there reduced to a logical language analysis, to searching whether a particular proposition is or is not verifiable, able to express reality. Neo-positivism expelled not only metaphysics but also noesis, normative ethics, aesthetics from philosophy and included propositions about empirically inaccessible essence, cause into metaphysics, denied the possibility to know events in a subject other than one’s own, etc.

By their entering into modern philosophy, natural scientists, who reduced its issue and reality to an empirically accessible minimum, initiated reaction of philosophy which did not want to give up old issues, particularly contemplations about humans

and their existential problems that completely disappeared from scientific philosophy. This reaction was also initiated by Kant, joined his opinion on the metaphysical need of humans, was launched by the philosophy of life and ended preliminarily with existentialism. Reality was understood as being much wider here, it moved again into the object, nature or also God as world essences met here again with response as well as ethics; the position of humans in nature and being as a whole was considered, their specifics, their freedom, creation and self-creation, responsibility, the meaning of their life, history were highlighted, not taking sciences into account at all (Kierkegaard, Sartre) or to some extent (Jaspers). The aim of this anthropological philosophy was to compensate by its qualitativism humans for what was taken from them by quantifying scientism. Reality offered by scientism to humans was out of question there, tradition played an important role. Scientism as if wanted a centipede to use two legs for walking!

The last, fundamental reality found in existentialism was even less than in scientism. It belongs almost to the tragedy of human fate that humans have not found any reply to their existential questions and such a reply is probably hardly to be found. How should we live? How to make our life meaningful? When are our actions correct? Where do we actually go in history? Where is reality and is there any reality to show us the way, with which we should accord? Is it somewhere in the transcendental or deep inside of us, in the very foundations of our biology? We feel that it is too abstract, incomprehensible, diffuse. Throughout the long-lasting millennia, we have probably not moved further than the first man who posed these questions although natural sciences are well ahead. What it does say about our being in this world? Do not we belong here, are we intruders and is there no place here for us? Or should we live as we like and obey empirical principles of as large joint usefulness as possible, by the law of the stronger, a principle to survive at all costs, a principle of compassion for and considerateness towards the weaker or in some other way? No reply arrives, we feel lonely, our attitudes are different, and we also pay for it with our blood. We know much more about the function of the atom in the universe than about ourselves. And it concerns primarily us and not natural reality. If we do not learn an inch more about it in the future, nothing will happen, because we can survive on what we know today also in the future. We have always been able to survive, in caves or in palaces. Prehistoric people had everything they needed in order to survive in their caves, they could not have survived hundreds of thousand years there otherwise, and it was the feeling of uneasiness in themselves that chased them out. What we need urgently today, however, is the knowledge of reality of ourselves; what is it like and what should it be like to be able to interfere in it effectively? Nature is not such an enemy of us today as we are enemies of one another and if it is a threat to us anyway, it is only because we destroyed it, again because we did not know what we were allowed to do. This disproportion can have tragic consequences.

The search for reality goes on. By and large, we can state that we broke up with many truths of the past, which emerged as illusions, we are more realistic, more secular, we turn from the transcendental to the immanent, we rely more and more on ourselves. If we construed being somewhere from above, from the absolute to the relative, it is the other way round now, we start from the very elementary nature and

we ascend, to ourselves, or up to God. But the classical God cultivated for thousands years, who was criticized by the Enlightenment, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, is in fact dead even for theology; modern gods—each theologian worth mentioning has his own—are unclear, vague, hidden, as if they felt ashamed for humans, for the twentieth century in particular. In everyday life, reality has also shrunk with respect to the past and with respect to the future as well. We cast doubt on and we disanthropomorphized the concepts like sense, meaning, purpose, the goal of life, development towards better, etc. We lost many illusions about ourselves, slowly, in disgust but necessarily we integrate ourselves into nature as part of the life chain, significantly specific, but questionable, with dubious advantages, risky and risk-taking.

We go on in search of reality as does the search in philosophy. Current postmodernism is not waiting for problematizing certainties, still preserved by the modern, ground-breaking era, but is problematizing them itself and is solving problems. Nothing should be certain, traditional in particular. As Lyotard puts it, “everything borrowed, even from yesterday... must be under suspicion”. Except for one, I would add, the search for reality. This is where postmodernism also conforms to tradition.

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