ALIENATING AND ASSIMILATING KNOWLEDGE: PRAVDA AND TRUTH

[1]Zhukovsky V.I., [2]Pivovarov D.V.

[1]Siberian Federal University, Krasnoyarsk, e-mail: jln@kraslib.ru;
[2]Ural Federal University, Ekaterinburg

The authors aim to determine the differences between the categories of truth and Pravda. It is shown in this article that truth and Pravda are differently bound with each other, and contradictions between them are frequent. It is proposed to apply in gnosiology such new concepts, as "alienating cognition" and "assimilating cognition", "epistemic truth" and "existential truth". Technical and natural-science cognition are examples of knowledge with a dominant of the alienating beginning. On the contrary, religious and philosophical cognition – are mainly "assimilating cognition"; they are interfaced not so much with the search of epistemic truth, but, first and foremost, they try to find the ontological truth of life.

Keywords: truth, Pravda, alienating cognition, assimilating cognition, epistemic truth, existential truth

Hegel has somehow told that "truth" is a great word and a greater subject; if spirit and soul of the person are still healthy, his breast should be raised above at it at sounds of this word. But what is truth? There is no unequivocal answer to this question, and the term "truth" is initially multiple-valued.

Plato speaks in his dialogue "Theaetetus", that it is possible to own some truth, not owning knowledge. Not being cognized, this truth somehow is present at thinking. But knowledge is impossible without Logos, without any reasonable-verbal report. Limited truths should be such truths which are realized and designated by names. According to Plato, the uttered ideas are incomplete and false, and the maximum truths about life are inexpressible. Nevertheless, it is necessary to think about life, even if it is incomprehensible. On Descartes, clear truths – from the God; on Spinoza, the unconditional truth is how the God sees the world; from here, the original truth is an attribute of full and exact knowledge.

Some philosophers-pragmatists approved: "Even if the God actually is not present, but the person requires Him very much and trusts, that He is, then the God by all means will appear as a real force". Utopian function of philosophy justifies itself when force of uniform belief substantiates a Utopia, inhaling a life into it. We shall recollect that in Russia in XX century, in this range of Utopias, the communistic ideal has found the form of the Soviet authority has generated rich culture and has existed more than half of a century. So, concept of utopian illusion is quite compatible to the concept of real practicability.

Not only the epistemic-true knowledge is capable to be materialized, but subjective-illusory knowledge, which maintenance does not possess objectivity and which is not adequate to the external world, can be materialized as well. Atheists-materialists are inclined to consider religion only as one of forms of powerless utopian error. But whether it is fair to recognize as illusions and errors such embodiments of faith in the Absolute, as cultures of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam?! Whether the difference between the substantiated ideas of science and religion is so great?

Generally speaking, it is not too important, whether the initial idea is adequate or inadequate to laws of the protogenic nature (whether such portrait, type of furniture, a facade of this house "is realistic", etc.?). Ability of idea to be materialized, to find separate real existence to satisfy human needs, to develop society is much more important. Philosophers-pragmatists have revealed an enormous role of will and belief in the process of materialization of ideas which are thought up by consciousness: the more the will and belief will be stronger, the sooner and more successfully the imagined world becomes the valid world.

Two types of philosophy always compete among themselves in the West-European philosophy: theoretical and practical. The first is guided by concept of truth, and the world of truths rather reminds the transcendent area of Plato's ideas, opposite to the sphere of the fluid material phenomena. M. Heidegger has named such type of philosophizing "an eidetic discourse". On the contrary, the practical philosophy is aimed at concept of the Good, on human needs and consequently prefers other – an axiological – method of analysis.

In the beginning of XX century theoretical philosophy has rigidly demanded to release the knowledge, which declares itself as truth, from any sort of axiological formulations. In turn, philosophers-axiologists have forbidden building their reasoning as an image and similarity of theoretical scientific knowledge. Unlike theoretical and practical versions of philosophy,

the religious discourse, as a rule, aspires to harmonization of truth and the good – in conformity with the standard of kalokagathia of divine essence.

In eastern doctrines (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism) truth is understood as saving knowledge:

1) as the word of the Teacher specifying the true way to rescue;

2) as overcoming of illusion in favor of an original image of reality;

3) as a way of restoration of world harmony (for example, through reverence of traditions in Confucianism, laws of Empire in Legalism.

In theistic doctrines truth is defined as conformity of some statement to divine revelation. So, in Judaism and Islam truth is a saving Law, fidelity to precepts of the God, transferred to people through Moses or Mohammad. For Christians truth is not a certain universal abstraction, but it is the alive and saving person – Jesus Christ – who has uttered: "I am the way, truth and life" (John. 14, 6).

Lie is an antipode of truth, Pravda and honesty. In formal logic the term "lie" designate "not-true" in the most abstract sense. In philosophical and religious texts a lie and slyness are distinguished from mistakes and errors and are defined as the going distortion of fact of the matter. From the religious point of view, a lie is a sin, a moral harm, a vain attempt to deceive the God. First of all a man who tells a lie harms to himself because he spoils his relations with the God.

A lie can have different scales and degrees of danger, possesses destructive force and causes sharp conflicts between people. Christians consider Devil as "the father of any lie" and as the most unmitigated liar who tempts people and induces to lie those who have weak spirit. Jean Baudrillard has regarded our modern civilization as a product of total simulation (conscious or not realized); our life is filled by simulacrums – by crafty fakes of lie under truth, disgraces under beauty.

As it is known, in classical philosophy there were three different interpretations of truth in which truth was understood as coincidence of knowledge with objective reality (in Latin: veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus):

● theory of correspondence starts with a principle of conformity of knowledge to a piece of material world (Aristotle writes in "Metaphysics": "To speak about real, that it is not present, or about not real, that it is, means to speak false. And to speak, that there is real and not real is not, means to speak true");

● Essentialist doctrine leans on a principle of conformity of things to its non-material originals – to transcendent ideas (Plato, Neo-Platonists, etc.) or immanent essences (Hegel);

● Coherence theory of truth is based on a principle of conformity of knowledge to some form of human consciousness.

Any theory of "conformity" stumbles at a question "conformity to that?". It cannot express exactly in an obvious form that object to which knowledge presumably is put in conformity. For example, to what object the statement "My hand hurts" corresponds? In fact the pain is subjective. It is not registered by devices, and an actor is able to simulate it on a stage quite plausibly.

Irrationalism in understanding of truth amplifies in philosophy since XX century. Nietzsche connects truth with ideas of eternal returning and reassessment of values. Existentialism contrasts the objective truth and representation about personal truth as intuitive appearance of original being to some individual. Sartre sees essence of truth in freedom. J. Maritain and N. Hartmann declare that truth is a special ideal object in structure of transcendental being. Theorists of Postmodernism speak about knowledge as about a process of eternal and unsuccessful "quest" for truth.

Whether truth is objective really? Sometimes this question should be answered with aphorism: "We tolerantly concern to other's opinions, until we have no our own opinion".

According to Heidegger, who continues the ancient tradition, in order to find out truth, it is necessary to use *pro-duc-tivity,* that is to withdraw truth from its hidden place using technology; and technique itself is a kind of truth-making. Attribute of objectivity is no longer ascribed to truth in non-classical philosophy; truth is identified either with specific conditions of soul (Kierkegaard), or with value (Rickert), or with linguistic interpretation (Gadamer).

The truth and value become more and more closely connected. The concept of value began to affirm in gnosiology in the second half of XIX century. Lotze introduced it to philosophy. He believed that value occurs exclusively in situations of its significance to a subject, but it is not the product of personal arbitrariness and freedom of will. Value is objective because it is a mutual intersubjective form of volition and human behavior. In postnonclassical philosophy the problem of truth turns to be one of aspects of a game subordinated to those rules, which are randomly chosen by that or other subject (Foucault).

Russian language marks the ontological moment in the word "truth" – the existing, original, real. Two sorts of truths are distinguished in Russian spiritually-academic philosophy of XIX century: ontological truth (it has objective character and it is stored in the very being) and logical truth (it is subordinated to ontological truth, and it is subjective and expressed in human judgments about being).

In particular, Kudryavtsev-Platonov (1828–1891) proved, that there are two opposite parts in any cognizable thing –

1) ideal, possessing more true life;

2) phenomenal, caused by accidental modifications.

The ideal world is the objective maintenance of truth. Top of hierarchy of ideas – the absolute idea summarizing in all of property of ideal life and possessing absolute truth. This idea is perfect, and the form of its being is individually-concrete. It is inexhaustible. The God possesses it only, it is not allowed to a human being to learn it completely. On Kudryavtsev-Platonov, the establishment of truth of a thing is tied with reference of this thing to values-samples: it is necessary to compare the empirical aspect of a thing with what this thing should be (Kudryavtsev-Platonov, 1892–1894).

It is proved by Kant: in order to learn a thing it is necessary to operate with this thing and our operations change cognizable objects. As a result, a human being learns not that originally exists as primordial nature, but that is recreated by him under schemes of his concepts and creative imagination. On Hegel, there, where there is mutual reflection of the subject and object, measurement of force of creativity needs a special notion of truth as a measure of conformity real with ideal (that is as a degree of coordination emergent (new quality) with the original-essence). Therefore Hegel often defined truth as harmonization (conformity) of a thing with its notion. So, the constructed house is evaluated as "true" when there is adequacy between this house and previously approved architectural project. It is logical to apply non-classical notion of truth of Plato and Hegel to processes of mastering knowledge. We shall name this notion "existential truth" (in Russian – "Pravda").

The existential truth is some correspondence between the human existence and a proper ideal of being. Criterion of justification of ideas and ideals of a person is completeness of assimilation of vital space and a degree of satisfaction with this assimilation. It is not necessary to search, with persistence of a naive realist, only epistemic truth in the knowledge displaying the world together with human relationship to the external world.

Knowledge by all means includes individual understanding. To "understand" means:

1) to express cognizable objects in concepts;

2) to imagine these objects with a help of evident models – in forms of secondary sensuality;

3) to allocate the comprehended object with the sense contained in a personal semantic context of the subject.

Sense-meaning, which an individual attributes to the cognizable object, either is creatively invented, or taken from already old habitual senses. To understand the physical world in religious sense means to imagine this world as:

1) a product of divine creation;

2) object of Providence;

3) the medium among people and the Absolute.

It is necessary to consider virtual division in spiritual processes of two maintenances of an ideal image-emergent: one of them is consciousness, and the second – self-consciousness. Consciousness is not able to distinguish fully, what in emergent was exclusively "mine", and what was put into it from outside, from «alien being». At least, it demands great existential efforts and theoretical reflections.

The classical notion of truth does not measure adequacy of images of consciousness and self-consciousness in their entirety. Is it possible to estimate our subjective experience of assimilation of external world as true or false? Whether the predicate "true" is applied to images of self-consciousness and what are the images of self-consciousness in general – what is a proportion of "picturesqueness" (imitation) and "expressiveness" in such images? I think that there are no unequivocal answers on such questions.

The concept of vital truth (existential truth) is applicable not so much to designation of the objective maintenance of natural, social and mental processes (though it assumes partial reproduction of such maintenance in the removed kind), how many it is interfaced to uniqueness of personal experience of internalization of the world – to harmony of individual relationship to objective world. Generally speaking, how many people there are, so much, there are vital truths. Collision of mutually exclusive vital truths can be fine and ugly, tragic and comical, ennobled or low.

Unsurprisingly, philosophy of pragmatism has identified truth with property of idea to give the constructive character to our activity, to lead to practical successes, to bring vital advantage. Philosophers-pragmatists, debunking

the claims of Marxists in the possession of the absolute epistemic criterion of truth (the criterion of practice), have turned philosophical thinking to a theme of vital truth. The vital truth is a syncretic alloy of the removed objective contents (it makes it related with an objective truth) and of subjective-personal moments in worldview (this distinguishes it from epistemic truth). Often similarity is taken for its criterion: to prove Pravda means to establish subjectively the similarity between discussed situations and previously estimated circumstances.

When the person, painfully solving his conflict with the world, searches new milestones of own sense of life – he searches a new Pravda for himself. Having found this Pravda, he subjectively accepts it for universal epistemic truth, true for all people, and sometimes is indignant, why others do not accept his vital position. The conflict of different vital Pravda's (both inside of a person and between people) is always inevitable. There is a close communication between Pravda and belief (for example, some people say: "To be faithful to his own Pravda"). The typical vital Pravda, the basis for the allocation of which common human moments of outlook serve, is the criterion for comparison and an estimation of diverse vital Pravda's [5].

Classical rationalism started with the firm belief that:

1) the external world is one and continuous;

2) there is only one truth about this world, and all people have the same uniform truth;

3) the scientific truth is universal and general for all of us; it is necessary, uncontradictory, self-evident.

Irrationalism and critical rationalism expose to this opinion its radical doubt. If to believe, that the God is capable to create any possible world, and a human being is similar to the God, then the world surrounding us is not one and uniform at all, and people are able to create any original worlds and images-theories of these worlds.

For example, the sphere of fine arts is made by the sum of alternative art worlds and consists of "strange" art truths competing among themselves. Science and technics have skillfully created set of different new realities which are subordinated to the special independent laws which have been thought up by scientists and engineers. Hence, it is logically true to match against classical principles of uniqueness, universality and uncontradiction of scientific truth the non-classical concept of pluralism of paradoxical scientific truths about the possible worlds.

Considering pluralism of representations about notion of truth, it is expedient to enter two new terms into the general theory of knowledge: "assimilating cognition" and "alienating cognition" [2, p. 30–38].

The term "assimilation" (also "internalization"; in Russian – "освоение", "усвоение", etc.) designates the process of receiving new facts or of responding to new situations in conformity with what is already available to consciousness. Internalization is also often associated with learning ideas or skills and making use of it generally. Internalization is the long-term process of consolidation and embedding one's own beliefs, attitudes, and values, when it comes to moral behavior.

The opposite of "assimilation" is the term "alienation" (in Russian – "отчуждение") translates two distinct German terms: "Entfremdung" ("estrangement") and Entauberung ("externalization"). Both terms originated in Hegel's philosophy, specifically in his Phenomenology of Spirit (1807). "Externalization" (also – embodiment, incarnation, manifestation, materialization, objectification, substantiation, etc.) means to put something outside of its original borders. Alienation is often a harmful separation, disruption or fragmentation which sunders things that properly belong together. To be alienated is to be separated from one's own essence or nature.

Assimilating cognition (gnosis) unites the subject and object so, that cognizable thing becomes subjective and vitally valuable to the learning person. Thus, object can be not only external (even transcendent) in relation to his subject, but also immanent (sometimes transcendental); therefore it is necessary to allocate in assimilating knowledge, in turn, its externally-transcendent and immanently-transcendental versions.

Alienating cognition (επιστεμη, episteme), on the contrary, separates learning and cognizable, transforms the subject into the discharged, passionless and objective observer, and object – into something "absolutely other». Not only external (including transcendent) things but also immanent (sometimes transcendental) things can be objects of such cognition; therefore alienating cognition can be subdivided on exterior and interior alienating cognition.

In Ancient Russia almost all fields of human activity were defined by Pravda and Non-Pravda. "A man could live under "Pravda", because it is the Divine precepts and church rules. Also he can be judged in accordance with it, because "Pravda" is the court, as well as court trials and even the fee for appeal of the witness in the court".

I.S. Peresvetov, the original Russian thinker of XVI century, wrote that Pravda is a set of the God's commandments which have the status of laws both for sovereign, and for its citizens. Being norm of a life, Pravda results from a unique divine source – from Bible. The orthodox belief helps people to execute and understand Pravda, but spiritual persons have the fullest knowledge of divine precepts.

Truth and Pravda are differently weaved with each other, just as interrelations of objective knowledge with subjective belief are various. Contradictions between them (truth and Pravda, belief and knowledge) are frequent. There are: true Pravda and false Pravda; Pravda-lie and Non-Pravda-truth; rescue lie and murderous Pravda. For example, our national fairy tales express the deep truth of life, but contradicts truth of facts (Russian proverb says: "This fairy tale is a lie, but there is a hint in it – it's a lesson for a good guy!).

Certainly, the named kinds of cognition – assimilating and alienating – are abstractions torn off from each other. In objective reality (in everyone separate cognitive action) they are jointed in this or that proportion, and contradictions between them are possible. Finally assimilating and alienating kinds of cognition grow from the same roots, namely from the process of interaction among "mine" and "alien" – from controversial experience of assimilation and alienation.

Examples of cognition with a dominant of the alienating beginning are technical and natural-science cognition. On the contrary, religious and philosophical cognition are examples of assimilating cognition mainly; they are associated not so much with the search for epistemic truth, as with the search for ontological Pravga of life. For this reason religious and philosophical systems continue to render powerful influence on minds of people even then when "rational-scientific criticism» rejects its by means of objective criteria of epistemic truth.

Any of great philosophical doctrines, unlike scientific theories, never becomes outdated, and this fact probably reflects the fundamental difference of wisdom (sapientia) from scientific quality (scientia). "Revelation is a display of the basis of Being in human knowledge" (P. Tillich).

Sometimes researchers (in particular in Christianity) prefer to designate religion using the term "faith", and in other cases religion is defined as a special "saving knowledge". Many atheists, confusing Pravda and truth, estimate religion as the "blind" and empty belief which does not have its objective analogue in reality, and they oppose religion with cold educated reason. Theologians argue amongst themselves trying to describe human cognition of the Absolute through faith. For example, pantheists believe that direct faith is sufficient to know the God. Theists demand to add empirical evidences of the Epiphany and logical proofs of being of the God to religious faith.

It is much told by Apostle Paul, Tertullian, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Karl Barth etc. about an incommensurability of belief and reason. Religious belief is often directed on transcendent, physically impossible, wonderful, therefore its truths seem to our reason paradoxical, senseless and even absurd.

The contradiction between absurdity of belief and logicality of understanding is reflected in Kierkegaard's formula: "to trust, means do not understand". It is impossible to prove belief, but it is possible to clarify it. As a rule, it is impossible to force someone to believe, – faith can be found only through our free choice; "slave is not the one who prays to God". If the truth, via its own light, is not able to attract someone's mind, then external force will not help to do this" (J. Lock). The true belief is spread in heart by the God (R. Niebuhr). At at the dawn of Christianity philosophers-Gnostics have identified the specificity of assimilating cognition with the term "gnosis".

References

1. Berdyaev N.A. The philosophy of freedom; The meaning of creativity. – M.: True, 1989. – 607 p. 2. Pivovarov D.V. Gnosiology of religion, – Ekaterinburg, 2009. – 380 p.

3. Suhotra, Shadow and Reality / Suhotra Swami. – M.: Philos. Book, 1998. – 331p.

4. Frank S.L. God with us three reflections. – Paris: YMSA-press, 1964. – 378 p.

5. Zhukovsky V.I., Pivovarov D.V. Intellectual visualization of essence. – Krasnoyarsk, 1998. 222 p.

6. Zhukovsky V.I., Pivovarov D.V. Visible essence. – Sverdlovsk, 1991. – 284 p.