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Spirit and Language in Hegel's Philosophy of Absolute Spirit

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Abstract

The article examines Hegel's philosophy of language whose linguo-philosophical views were being formed in a general context of becoming of his philosophy of absolute spirit. The specificity of Hegel's understanding of a deeply spiritual language nature, at the root of which lies the key issues of the philosopher about the consubstantiality of Language and Spirit, is revealed. Particular attention is paid to the explanation of the significance of Hegel's "lessons" in current philosophical discourse and the need of their adoption for the development of human sciences in general.

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1. Introduction

Currently, philosophy, to a large extent, is developing under the influence of Language, and predominantly, bringing up to date and reflexing upon those problems, that were raised and intellectually scrutinized by the linguo-philosophical movement in the 20th Century that has recently passed (a "linguistic turnaround" in philosophy and humanitarian cognition in general). On the other hand, taking into account the enlargement of a problem field of linguistics and an openness of boundaries of linguistic cognition/knowledge, nowadays linguistic disciplines need the philosophical approach to Language and eliciting its fundamental basics, as happens with any other science in principle. Moreover, in the current era of communicative mobility of scientific space in general and intensive dynamics of cognitive processes and "energetic" nature of Language as it is demands a thorough crossdisciplinary investigation together with access to transdisciplinary projects. A successful accomplishment of these projects is

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deemed possible only with the assumption of philosophical inquiry of this very nature: “*What is Language?*”, “*Due to what is its deep spiritual essence determined?*”, “*What is its creative potential and what are its creative abilities?*”.

H. G. Gadamer, whose life covers the whole century (1900-2002) at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries, was able to cover with his thought this problem in all of its global-historical scale. It is the problem that directly touched the moral basics of a human objective reality in the world. Moreover, he was able to designate a perspective of a philosophical view on Language for the next generations of scholars: “There is an actual correspondence to the notion of Spirit that goes beyond the subjectiveness of Ego. This is the notion of *Language*, which shifts more and more to the center of a modern philosophy for this very reason that a *Language phenomenon* compared with a Christian notion of Spirit derived by Hegel, gives its due to our completeness being eternal like Spirit and finite like any other event. To think that there is nothing to be learned from Hegel in our century of scientism, is a mistake. An end that Hegel puts to the global teaching of the world was not just our presumption: he is always something that science finds having in stock. And exactly, in not accepting any dogmatism including dogmatism of science me “*seems to me to be the most hidden and yet the most powerful foundation of our century*” (Gadamer, 1991: 26). Emphasizing the topicality of the idea of classical philosophy and mainly, *Hegel’s philosophy of absolute spirit*, that seriously influenced the formation of “sciences of language” in due time, and “sciences of culture and spirit” in general, Gadamer pointed out the future prospects of modern human sciences that had to develop in this exact way of universal spirituality that was emphasized by classicists. And nowadays the need to consider Language in these spiritual traditions set by philosophical thought and its emphasized global prospects that “lead us to the problem of Language in general, its apriority and transcendence” (Mikeshina, 2007: 326-327) is becoming apparent. Such a tendency to the reconstruction of understanding of the integral spiritual nature of Language has obviously teethered. Attention to the cultural-historical and mythopoetic memory of Language and its axiological dimension is being reinforced. The key problem of an interrelation of Language and Consciousness is considered differently, and more on the global-level. Attempts are undertaken to solve it, taking into account modern achievements of neoclassical epistemology and the emerging of new variants of an interpretation of Consciousness nature. Researchers of different academic fields talk about an interrelation of Language and other complex self-developing systems – Society, Culture, Science, Education. However, the primary focus is still predominantly on two functions of Language: cognitive and communicative. And the philosophical discourse unfolds around the consideration (and often this consideration is superficial) of several themes that are recognized today as prioritized, such as “Language and Consciousness”, “Language and Cognition” and “Language and Society”. But it leaves undeservedly aside *spiritual* origins of an interrelation of Language and Culture.

In the arisen situation, the demand to come back again to the legacy of classical philosophy, that fundamentally always remains invaluable, is felt more and more. In that context, it is worth referring exactly to the philosophical writings of H.W.F. Hegel who concentrated in himself all of the general achievements and ideas of the classical era and determined the future prospects of a formation of philosophical and linguo-philosophical thought. It is significant that a permanent reference to the linguo-philosophical views of Hegel is observed in global Hegel science, particularly at the current stage of its development (Vernon, 2007; Pinkard, 2012, 2009, 2002). Nowadays, it is also important for us to “read” with the most careful attention those pages of his writings which are devoted to his reflections on Language and show the specificity of Hegel’s philosophical reflection on Language *in the aspect of his “spirituality” exactly*, and in the context of “sciences of culture and spirit”.

2. The spiritual nature and spiritual origins of Language in the framework of G.W.F. Hegel philosophy

Hegel has not left any works dedicated specifically to comprehensive conceptual judgement of the nature of Language (although his separate reflections on Language are scattered in his major works based on lectures he gave throughout his life), but his presence in the course of linguo-philosophical thought of his era is beyond any doubt. His reflection on Language develops in accordance with “*classical*” modern European philosophy. At the same time *Hegel’s own* understanding of Language is subject to his very own philosophical concept of *Absolute Spirit*, which is deservedly considered the crowning achievement of the pursuits of philosophy and the culmination of the philosophical thought of Modern history. Thus, belonging to the common philosophical discourse of the era, Hegel chases the *idea* of Language, trying to perceive it in its essence and, most importantly, in its metahistorical sense,

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