

Philosophy

The Question of Truth in Sciences of Spirit (*Geisteswissenschaften*)

Natalia Berdzenishvili

Faculty of Humanities, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

(Presented by Academy Member Roin Metreveli)

ABSTRACT. The aim of the article is to demonstrate how reasonable it is to use the concept of truth in human sciences, the so-called *Geisteswissenschaften*, and emphasize the distinction of humanitarian knowledge in comparison with natural sciences. The paper does not claim on providing all the analysis of all the major philosophical concepts concerning the problem of truth as well as considering all possible aspects of the problem of truth. We divert our attention towards the analysis of the problem through philosophical hermeneutics as we think hermeneutical aspect can better highlight the actuality of the issue. While focusing on the given topic, we will mainly refer to the ideas and concepts of Vilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. According to Dilthey, important is not only the object but also the manner of approach to it. The manners of approach to the object are different with natural scientists and Scientists of Spirit. With efforts of Humanitarian sciences understanding in the terms of Hermeneutics, Despite language distinctiveness, inter-comprehension is stipulated by the fact that what we want to understand (“implied truth”) is presented during a dialogue as something universal. The value of such dialogue is that neither of the speakers insists on telling the truth, with such kind of position they move to “open – closeness”. The process is implemented (“played”) within the borders of Hermeneutics in relevance to our historical existence. Hermeneutical aspect reveals what is meant. “Meant” is indirect relevance to the truth which is covered (in the text), acts everywhere where there is an attempt of comprehension and requires disclosing. Besides the final instance is never found. ©2016 *Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.*

Key words: hermeneutics, truth, art, historicity, comprehension

In philosophical theories the question of truth is considered in relevance with the problem of the interaction of the human and a universal total. Naturally, the paper does not claim on providing all the analysis of all the major philosophical concepts concerning the problem of truth as well as considering all possible aspects of the problem of truth. The aim

of the article is to demonstrate how reasonable it is to use the concept of truth in human sciences, so called *Geisteswissenschaften*, and emphasize the distinction of humanitarian knowledge in comparison with natural sciences. We divert our attention towards the analysis of the problem through philosophical hermeneutics as we think hermeneutical aspect can

better highlight the actuality of the issue.

While focusing on the given topic, we will mainly refer to the ideas and concepts of Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer.

For Heidegger “hermeneutic” generally means the expression of human, of primary nature. The function performed by Hermes in mythology is the one performed by language for Heidegger. According to his opinion, this is language that is hermeneutic, being silent in everyday human existence and it is almost impossible to identify it.

When there is a discussion who pioneered philosophical hermeneutics – Schleiermacher, who made the conceptualization of hermeneutics as a universal theory of comprehension; Dilthey, who worked up hermeneutics as the methodological basis of *Geisteswissenschaften* (Science of Spirit); or Gadamer, who combined Heidegger’s “Existential Hermeneutics” and hermeneutical tradition – one thing is clear: whereas the attention was drawn to the philosophical aspect of hermeneutics, Gadamer diverted his attention towards the hermeneutical aspect of philosophy as he believed each philosophical thinking was the result of “comprehensive” effort. [1]. He tries to answer the question “How it is possible to comprehend surrounding world and how the problem of the truth of existence is incorporated in this comprehension”. According to Gadamer’s philosophy, there is a possibility to enter the reality farther that would enable us to widen our scope and come closer to “open-coverness”, allowing us to “decipher the codes” of the creature bearing inside it interesting information for us. Hence, the human necessarily searches for existence, its sense, but at the same time its look is confined by the life situations leading to the unclear sense of fear.

It can be said that hermeneutical method with its completeness is accumulated in Gadamer’s philosophy. He is trying to separate himself from the subjectivity of his precursors emphasizing the circumstance that modern philosophical hermeneutics is principally different from the traditional understanding of

hermeneutics. Whereas traditional hermeneutics insisted on being the method of *Geisteswissenschaften*, Gadamer recognizes hermeneutics as a universal philosophy of the new time.

Such kind of trepidation with Heidegger is considered to be one of the major metaphysical moods in which the truth is revealed. This is the realm where all preserves and loses itself at the same time. Such kind of disappointment is stipulated by the fact that while orienting in the universe, a human is given only a specific universe’s subject-matter or phenomenon of the existence rather than the existence itself.

According to “Philosophy of Communication” by Jasperse, there where the question of true existence of a human (so called “Frontier Situation”) gains significance despite disappointment, the role of science is considered insufficient. [2:18]. According to Jasperse, communication means not transferring knowledge by the help of some proofs but this is a kind of possibility (means) of existence to inter-relate with existence, where the speaker himself represents the subject-matter of reference.

Dilthey admits that in this case the significance is given not only to the subject-matter but also to the method of referring to this subject-matter. The method of the reference of *Naturwissenschaften* (The Science of Nature) to the subject-matter is essentially different from the method of the reference of *Geisteswissenschaften* (Sciences of Spirit) to the subject-matter.

The Peculiarity of the Reference of *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften* to the Subject-Matter.

In general, the physical aspect of the human is considered by *Naturwissenschaften* – physiology is the very example of such examination. Although physiology studies a human, it has such relation to this subject-matter that is diametrically different from relation of *Geisteswissenschaften* towards this object. Namely, a person expresses goals, values, ideas, feel-

ings. These forms of life, sense is revealed in A image as objects of comprehension.

Science belongs to *Geisteswissenschaften* only if its subject-matter is presented to us in the very form that is based on the interrelation of life, image and comprehension. Comprehension can exist only there where the image is presented. In other words, such sensual material is given in the “depth”, “behind” of which “is hidden” opinion. “Comprehension” means identifying “covered” “non-sensual”. Comprehension (not Explanation) here is considered as the aspect of spiritual development. Such sensual material, physical phenomenon in which there is “put” nothing and it does not have “inner” side or something to depict, such kind of object according to Dilthey should be explained. Therefore, it belongs to the sphere of *Naturwissenschaften* rather than *Geisteswissenschaften*. For instance, the “text” of philosophical hermeneutics is understood as life in its wholeness. It should give us an interpretation of life. Thus, philosophy is self-penetration by life enabling to be comprehensible for cognition. In this case we are dealing with so called the philosophy of philosophy that means to ground the philosophical fact that philosophy exists next science. For Dilthey the philosophy of philosophy is the same as essay, where philosophy talks about itself through ideological types on the basis of the life diversity. From this point of view philosophy and art represent the organ of the life cognition rather than truth as “the gap between knowledge and creation” with its life-experience is quite elusive for observation, reflection and theory. This does not deny the fact that in every representation of life knowledge serves as an opportunity of cognizing truth. For Dilthey hermeneutics is a universal method of historical consciousness, for which cognizing of truth means comprehending of something already revealed and living in it. [3:292]. Life is determined through the fact that alive creature differs itself from the world which it lives in and at the same time keeps in touch with it. In other words, this is life in self-difference. Hermeneutics should reveal what is meant. “Meant” is indirect compliance with truth that is covered (in a text), acts everywhere

where there is an attempt of comprehension and requires revelation. [4:279]. Beside this, something tracked down is never the last instance. Dilthey believes the interpretation of such detections is the most complicated task as they reveal a human nature in a most profound manner. In this case the criteria of evaluation is authenticity (distinctiveness) rather than truth or false.

Hermeneutical aspect reveals what is meant. “Meant” is indirect relevance to the truth which is covered (in the text), acts everywhere where there is an attempt of comprehension and requires disclosing. Besides this, the final instance is never found.

For Dilthey “naturalness” is based on the fact that achievable is understood as rational, unachievable – “historical”. The final result of “historicity” is sympathy – the sense of the universe. A human as a historical creature goes through self-cognition only in history rather than through introspection. The necessity of rewriting and re-evaluating of history or historical reconstruction is stipulated by our determinacy by present, “contemporaneity”. The problem of comprehending is that this “contemporaneity” claims for truth. As for the reconstruction of the past, it combines with what directly refers to us as truth. Accordingly, the comprehension of past means cognizing what the past in fact wants to say. (“In fact” here means something that is impossible to comprehend through axioms, theoretical postulates). Combining of the horizons of modernity and past is performed through the efforts of humanitarian sciences in the frames of hermeneutics. Despite language distinctiveness, inter-comprehension is stipulated by the fact that what we want to understand (“implied truth”) is presented during a dialogue as something universal. The value of such dialogue is that neither sides of a dialogue claim for the truth of their opinions. This way they head for “open-coveredness”. This process is performed (“acted”) in the frames of hermeneutics according to our historical existence.

The process of historical research does not mean to broaden the study in every direction. Historical study is high quality of reflexing towards the ques-

tion where hermeneutical consciousness studies the route. When a historian studies past, he relies on certain sensual material – historical documents. Accordingly, when a human, as a historical creature, studies the past, he relies on experience. “Your” experience reveals the paradox that something contradicting me (requires understanding), proves its own right causing compulsion of unconstrained recognition through which it is comprehended.

The Peculiarity of the Question of Truth in Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics

What significance does historical experience gain according to Gadamer and how he refers to the problem of truth? Creating with his own philosophical hermeneutics the philosophy of comprehension, Gadamer emphasizes principal distinction between modern and traditional philosophical hermeneutics and neglects psychological approach (Dilthey, Schleiermacher). [5:177]. Gadamer does not consider the text as the product of the subjectivity of somebody else neither does it aim to empathically comprehend subjectivity covering the secret of individuality inside itself. He claims that objective truth is achieved only under the condition of the existence of a certain distance. Such distant time gradually carries out the process of infinite and permanent filtration encouraging revealing some true notion. This distance of time can provide differentiation of truth and superstition. This possibility is a precondition of comprehension and inside the borders of these possibilities self-being is understood as being both in the universe and co-being with others. [5:201].

Gadamer goes back to the far past and states that Pilate’s question “What is truth?” is still determinant for our consciousness nowadays too. Gadamer remembers Nietzsche’s expression stating that we got used to hear Pilate’s phrase in a different mode. Nietzsche spread the scepticism expressed in Pilate’s words towards science: science constantly claims on truth - whether it is or not the final instance owning truth.

In order to present the question in a clearer manner, Gadamer goes back to the Greek origins of western European sciences stating that striving for knowledge, perception, something unknown became the basis of creating Greek science as well as scepticism towards everything that is considered truth. With such scepticism they would try to reacquire truth. Heidegger goes the same path and while talking about truth he goes back to the meaning of Greek equivalent of this word. The Latin word ‘veritas’ and its derivation ‘wahrheit’ can be normally translated as “Truth”. However, in the practice of translation their possible relevance is admitted. Normally, determining of the meaning of a word is stipulated by cultural-historical context. Nevertheless, etymology of a word (of representation, conception) as an opportunity to penetrate into the “true nature of a word” is diverse. “Wahrheit” something “uncovered”, “open”, “existing”. At first, the Greeks used to understand the concept of truth as direct distinctness, uncoverness of existence, which a person can achieve through brain operations, which is covered for everyday experience and which can only be understood through philosophical reflexion. The complication of the contents of the term “wahrheit” and its usage is mostly stipulated by permanent interest in “who, what from who, for who, for what and how” gains from “open-coveredness”.

In Alethology they distinguish three kinds of truth: “truth itself”, “truth for us”, and “our truth”, which can be determined the following way: “our truth” – this is creatable truth, “truth for us” – created truth and “truth itself” – existing truth. “Our truth” meeting original, “truth itself” leads to “truth for us”. “Triple” truth acquires more lucidity in relation with the notion of “hermeneutical experience”. In other words, truth is derived not from common expressions and conclusions but with the directness of our own existence and originality. Briefly, this is some kind of distrust towards what people consider knowledge that was believed to be truth before and was scientifically proved.

When Gadamer approached philosophical hermeneutics with that point of view, art became the keystone. Philosophy and Art represent the organ of cognizing life rather than directly truth. According to him, when science goes from science to truth, it is already philosophy. What is more, Gadamer considers art – as the possibility of reaching experience – to be the center and important interlocutor of philosophy. He thinks art is also of a philosophical nature when it is interested in both common and general. For him it is of a central importance to segregate the experience of art rather than cognizing art itself.

Art work is a created thing. However, it shows more than the thing itself. This is that “more” inside it that creates art [6:70]. “The process of Artistic creating” means dealing with revealing truth of existence. According to Heidegger, “creating” as telling about existence being unhidden is a kind of message or a language. This moment a language says what is possible to say and at the same time indicates what is impossible to say. Thus, Heideggerian openness is delivered to us through a language what he calls poetry.

What connection is there between truth and artwork? How is truth fulfilled through artwork? What is truth in terms of uncoverness of the existing? What does uncoverness mean?

Truth as uncoverness of existence in an artwork.

According to Heidegger uncoverness of the existing is an event. An event means some kind of process when the existing constantly opens and covers. Truth is uncoverness and refusing uncoverness at the same time – double coverness. The playful nature of “open-coverness” is the major determinant of the human-being. We should not understand “covered” as an edge of a human cognition as it is in the essence of truth as some secret. In order to depict truth, it is necessary to show this secret rather than be forgotten.

Heidegger claims that his self-hiding existence is illuminated and enclosed in the creature. This illumination is the same as beauty. Beauty is one of the

kinds of the truth being. [7: 57]. “Beauty (poetry) is a method how truth as a covered thing is depicted”. Beauty is given as a form as it illuminates itself just through a concrete form – it exists as just an energy accumulated in this form. Beauty is something general and only after fusing with it does the concrete object become a beautiful object. [8:101]. Activity of beauty through such way turns reality into subject-matter, and subject-matter will be transformed into feeling. Hence, Heideggerian truth is cognizing the indivisibility of a human and the universe in the momentary-existence. The method of existence of beauty is based on the aspiration to attract the spirituality of a human since it radiates the light of assuring and unquestionable truth. Metaphysics of light, its reflexive nature means that through it it is illuminated not only through the thing it illuminates but it can also gain visibility through this process. Thus, beauty is such experience as some adventure that entirely separates from the frames of our experience and puts us in front of the task of the hermeneutic integration.

According to Gadamer the essence of beauty does not exist opposite reality or apart from reality. However unexpectedly beauty arises, it is already some pre-requisite that truth exists somewhere in unreachable far distance. And yet, it is always ready to meet us in that very reality where we live despite the chaos and imperfection of this reality. This is the very thing that comprises the ontological function of beauty: there should be put a bridge at the crossway of real and ideal.

Gadamer tried to deepen the ontological meaning of the notion of beauty through orienting towards Platonic thinking – kindness, truth, beauty. Following Plato, Gadamer claims that beauty is that very thing because of which we love kindness. In other words, beauty is the same as kindness but being transformed into the object of love. Kindness overflows into beauty the way it wants to be represented. Such turn-into of kindness into beauty in order to be “represented” is the most supreme speech. For hermeneutical experience such “selfrepresentation” is es-

sential as the multiplicity of meeting with beauty helps us perceive the meaning of experience.

Gadamer does not claim on novelty but he is interested in the consideration of the word said. For his philosophical thinking it is characteristic not to try to derive his own logical theorization out of the joint ones. His position is covered outwardly a simple and plain number of questions. "Truth and method" is dedicated to the fact that there is not and cannot be a method ruling truth: "In philosophy, there are no criteria of authenticity that is achieved in science through step-up movement and is based on utilizing and checking methods. Nevertheless, there is scale in philosophy, which is not easy to clarify. Of course, such a scale is not a selection of laws that we can control. It is more a skill that has to prove itself. There where no methods are accepted, where modern science cannot penetrate (with the sense of moderation that is characteristic of it), there is only one scale for that sphere: The accuracy of appropriation, using own experience in correspondence with the standards of epoch". – Gadamer states there is a key to the hermeneutical basis of his philosophy. With this approach he moves the question of philosophical hermeneutics from methodological aspect to ontology. For him hermeneutics is ontology – the understandings of being that "is created" through the possibility of a dialogue addressed towards the depths of centuries. Truth opened in dialogue is valuable because a person becomes experienced rather than acquiring some new knowledge. As for experience, it belongs to the one who is aware of "the inner historicity of experience" rather than the one who thinks he owns some objective and fixed knowledge.

In Gadamer's philosophy of hermeneutical awareness is always ready and waiting for gaining experience rather than ending in methodological self-confidence. The dialectics of Gadamer's experience does not either go to an end or move to a higher, perfect form of knowledge. He considers recognizing such truth "that cannot be the subject of abolition" [8: 46].

Humanitarian sciences consider that when the im-

pression concerning something existing is true, verified, depicting it as it is in reality, however, at the same time, pointing what kind of question should be asked later as well as what should be clarified on the next level of cognition – it is impossible for cognition to advance all the time and gain the final volume of knowledge as it is likely that possible truth becomes elusive.

Science frees consciousness from superstitions, many unproved illusions in order to cognize the existing in a better way (was ist) [8]. Besides this, the longer this scientific method effects the existing, the more doubts and questions arise concerning the conception of truth. And yet, due to the fact that for science only matters what matches to its own method of ascertaining and checking the truth, it considers those doubts and questions inappropriate. Dissatisfaction towards the pretensions of science is mostly revealed through the forms of outlook (mythology, art, philosophy), or in the instances that show the limitations of methodological studies on the basis of the skepticism towards a science.

Unlike traditional hermeneutics, where comprehension serves as a method of hermeneutical cognition, contemporary philosophical hermeneutics considers comprehension in existential-ontological terms. Contemporary hermeneutics contradicts philosophical tradition that turned a human into a subject of pure cognitive reference towards the universe. The universe is both the object of theoretical cognition and practical, of life, which means it is "sensed" by a human. Gadamer does not talk about cognition but "testing the universe", which includes a direct sense, "testing life", and the diverse and aesthetic forms of assimilation of the reality: "testing history", "testing art", and "testing language". Such kind of testing with its nature is a typical phenomenon – understanding that means "meeting to oneself" – self-comprehension that is given in historical nature of a human. The human has the basic, central self-comprehension not because his glance is directed to himself but because he acts practically. In other words, he is open to the universe.

ფილოსოფია

ჭეშმარიტების საკითხი გონის მეცნიერებებში

ნ. ბერძენიშვილი

ივანე ჯავახიშვილის სახ. თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, ჰუმანიტარული ფაკულტეტი, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის რ. მეტრეველის მიერ)

ნაშრომში საუბარია იმის შესახებ, თუ რამდენად მიზანშეწონილია ჭეშმარიტების ცნების გამოყენება ჰუმანიტარულ, ე.წ. გონის მეცნიერებათა სფეროში, და გამოკვეთილია ჰუმანიტარული ცოდნის თავისებურება საბუნებისმეტყველოსთან შედარებით. ყურადღება მიმართულია იმ კუთხით, თუ როგორ განიხილავს აღნიშნულ პრობლემას ფილოსოფიური პერმენენტულია. ვფიქრობთ, პერმენენტული ასპექტი უკეთ წარმოაჩენს საკითხის აქტუალობას.

მოცემულ საკითხზე მსჯელობისას ძირითადად ვეყრდნობით ვილჰელმ დილთაის, მარტინ ჰაიდეგერისა და ჰანს გეორგ გადამერის ნააზრევს.

დილთაის მიხედვით მნიშვნელობა ენიჭება არა მხოლოდ საგანს, არამედ ამ საგანთან მიმართების წესსაც. საგანთან ბუნებისმეცნიერებათა მიმართების წესი არსებითად განსხვავდება საგანთან გონის მეცნიერებათა მიმართების წესისაგან.

ჰუმანიტარულ მეცნიერებათა ძალისხმევით ურთიერთგაგებინება პერმენენტუალის ფარგლებში განპირობებულია იმით, რომ ის, რისი გაგებაც გვინდა (“ნაგულისხმევი ჭეშმარიტება”) დიალოგისას წარმოგვიდგება როგორც რაღაც საყოველთაო. ამგვარი დიალოგის ღირებულება მდგომარეობს იმაში, რომ დიალოგის მხარეები არ აცხადებენ საკუთარი აზრის ჭეშმარიტებაზე პრეტენზიას, რისი საშუალებითაც ისინი მიემართებიან “ღია-დაფარულობისკენ”. ეს პროცესი ხორციელდება (“თამაშდება”) პერმენენტუალის საზღვრებში ჩვენი ისტორიული ეგზისტენციის შესაბამისად. პერმენენტულია ცხადყოფს იმას, რაც ნაგულისხმევია. “ნაგულისხმევი” - ეს არის ირიბი შესაბამისობა ჭეშმარიტებასთან, რომელიც დაფარულია (ტექსტში), მოქმედებს ყველგან, სადაც გაგების მცდელობაა და მოითხოვს გამოვლენას. ამასთანავე, მიგნებული არასდროს არის საბოლოო ინსტანცია.

REFERENCES:

1. Kavtaradze T. (2001) Philosophical Hermeneutics of H.G. Gadamer. University. Tbilisi (in Georgian).
2. Gordeziani R. (2008) Matsne-Philosophy #1 (in Georgian).
3. Buachidze T. (2003) Philosophical Essays. 2 Tbilisi (in Georgian).
4. Gadamer H.G. (1988) Istina i Metod. M. (in Russian).
5. Gadamer G.G. (1993) Wahrheit und Medhode. 2. (In German).
6. Heidegger M. (1992) The Origin of the Work of Art. Tbilisi (in Georgian).
7. Heidegger M. (1989) Being and Existence. Tbilisi (in Georgian).
8. Kulinjashvili A. (2006) Aesthetics. Tbilisi (in Georgian).

Received April, 2016