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CONCEPTUALISM AND DEFLATION OF TRUTH

In the article the topics of truth, relativism and conceptualism are discussed. The discussion involves an application of these subject-matters to the views of I. Kant, D. Davidson, P. Horwich and other authors. Conceptualism about truth is consistent with deflation of truth; but neither conceptualizing nor deflating constitutes a real worry of "loosing" the importance of truth, as its use which is commonly widespread, is saved. We continue to use the term "truth", but its function appears to be less and less reach than before.

Key words: truth, deflation of truth, slingshot argument, fact, correspondence.

In different approaches of various fields in the philosophy of 20th century (as well as of the 21st century) relativism has been appearing in diverse forms. Relativity mostly accompanies values, verdicts of estimations. Relativism in global sense usually is the subject of avoidance, but how to distinguish global from local application? Concerning values and estimations, among others, it is truth that is faced with relativism; mostly – moral truth, rather than truth in general.

Relativity generally could be understood in terms of relation to human thinkers, thus relativity of the world to human thought. This corresponds to the fact that the bearer of truth (in the most general sense) is taken to be a proposition (the content of thought); nevertheless that there are special cases when it is rather sentences or statements. In the latter cases there appear questions about relation between truth and assertion, reference, meaning, information etc. There are attempts to interpret truth via logical relations exploring quantification and indexicals; to prescribe degrees to truth and view it in terms of quantity of information. This list itself serves as an illustration of expansion of relativism, nevertheless that each approach strives to underpin the truth in absolute sense, and to provide a way of safe and valid estimation and prescribing of truth.

Truth can also be interpreted from the standpoint of conceptualism. According to the common view which emphasizes concepts when analyzing something, such concepts have no connection with external things because they are exclusively produced by our a priori mental structures and functions, so they exist only within the mind and have no external or substantial reality, we do not know whether they have a real value; we do not know whether or not our concepts as the mental objects have any foundation outside our minds or whether in nature the individual objects possess distributively and each by itself the realities which we conceive as realized in each of them. But concepts are not just titles; they are significant in every usage of them. The usage of them is appropriate in every particular example of the utterance, in which they play a constitutive and regulative role of *implicit norm* for it. We can produce the utterance in a given context because of this special role of the concepts as norms which appear in it.

The problems of normative regulation of practical usage of linguistic units involve *ontological* and *epistemological* aspects of *realization* of linguistic entities in the form of *linguistic units as the facts of speech*, where a special subject of interest is the *epistemological status* and the *normativity* (implicit norms) inherent in speech acts, which provides for their *constituting*. A 'norm' is understood as a *fundamental hypothesis about the possibility of a linguistic unit*, which *makes possible* a linguistic unit together with the other background norms of it and *is realized* in a definite pragmatic context, which regulates its appropriateness and, in its turn, provides for its interpretation (the formal

definition of the norm of linguistic unit can be given in the form of the rule of 'evidence' (which can be not-empirical): the content of a linguistic entity must be evident). So the question about the epistemological status of linguistic units is related to the implicit epistemic normativity of the use of it. Thus the concept can function in a role of implicit norm for an utterance. Apart from the situation where they are used they have no such a status of significance. They are relevant only in the process of the accomplishingness of their constitutive and regulative role every time in producing and using every utterance. So their value consists in *particular realization* of our ability of utter something. And this value is the only instance of their significance.

Truth can be considered as such a concept, when we attempt to produce the token utterance of some type (for example statement or conviction), in which we want to stress the efficacy of what we express by it. Truth as a property of the token utterance characterizes its belonging to such a type. So, the more acceptable account of truth have to take into consideration that truth is relevant only in the realization of its bearer, when it plays the role of implicit norm in its constitutive and regulative functions of the token of type utterance or linguistic entity. It coincides with the basic ideas of minimalist approach, which roots could be tracked back to Kant philosophy.

Philosophy of language in general, as is shown, for example by Josef Simo [Симон, 2008], is not considered to be a proper topic for Kant. But we can gain the general idea of Kant concerning the language: language witnesses our cognitive activity.

Kant rendered intelligible the objective validity of *a priori* concepts [Kant, 1999]. If it is possible to understand *the objective validity as significance* in a mentioned sense, it opens a way to try to interpret Kant's *truth* as a *concept* in a mentioned above sense. So, it is possible to proceed by considering *objective validity* and the *aprioriness* of those items to which it can be applied to show that these last are "*normative concepts*" in a mentioned in the previous passages sense, and particularly truth is such a concept.

For Kant the understanding of the species of knowledge, which constitute experience has rules which one must presuppose as being in oneself prior to objects being given to oneself, and therefore as being *a priori*. These species of knowledge find expression in *a priori* concepts to which all objects of experience necessarily confirm, and with which they must agree. We can know *a priori* of things only what we ourselves put into them. So, some a priori rules make the experience possible.

The question "What is truth?" and the nominal definition of truth, that it is the agreement of knowledge with its object, is postulated as a question about the general criterion of the truth of any and every knowledge. The object could be taken as a content which gets the value true. So, the

object is a bearer of truth. The object must be distinguished from other objects to become a true content of knowledge. Knowledge cannot be false. Content is false if it does not agree with the object to which it is related, even although it contains something which may be valid of other objects in different contexts. A truth as a general criterion of knowledge must be such as would be valid in each and every instance of application of this knowledge; however the objects and contexts may vary. It is obvious, that to satisfy such a general normative criterion is very problematic: the content of knowledge (understood as a relation to its special contextual object). But it cannot be taken and accepted as varying from one account to another. The value of truth is just prescribed to every content contextually actual, which is why a general prescription and test of the truth of such content is dubious. A sufficient and at the same time general criterion of truth cannot possibly be given and is inappropriate to be demanded. Still it is important to underline that although general criterion of truth cannot possibly be established, it does not deny that truth is objective validity. General criterion could be just a relation, it could not be an individual property or characteristic of a token usage of the type; and it could consist in relation with the type. So, objective validity is not a relation, but a property of some token usages of appropriate type.

For the construction of a concept Kant indicates a need of a *non-empirical* intuition. A concept is a universal representation. An intuition is a single object, but it must in its representation express universal validity for all possible intuitions which fall under the same concept. Let's view *single* as *token*, and *non-empirical* intuition as the implicit cognitive norm as a rule of a non-empirical "evidence"; then universal validity as a truth plays the role of normative type which accomplishes as a producing and using the tokens of it (utterance). So the purpose of truth as a witness of objective validity arises (in some token instances of the type utterances which involve truth) always as a normative concept, in a process of constitution and regulation of the production and usage of an utterance.

Among contemporary deflationary theories of truth the minimalist approach of P. Horwich [Horwich, 1998] can be traced through the pointing some grounds of these theories in competition with the others. Truth as the aim of inquiry can be considered as a truth-predicate. The extension of the predicate "is true" is the set of propositions that say of what is that it is; or say of what is not that it is not. Thus, a bearer of truth remains to be a proposition, but its estimation is possible only via analyzing its expressive representation.

M. Dummett indicates that this is not enough to save correspondence with reality as essential content of truth, conceptualizing truth does not capture the point of the concept of truth itself: "Unless we tacitly appeal to the usual meanings of the words 'win', 'lose' and 'draw', this description leaves out one vital point – that it is the object of a player to win. It is part of the concept of winning a game that a player plays to win, and this part of the concept is not conveyed by a classification of the end positions into winning ones and losing ones. We can imagine a variant of chess in which it is the object of each player to be checkmated, and this would be an entirely different game; but the formal description we imagined would coincide with the description of chess... Likewise it is part of the concept of truth that we aim at marking true statements" [Dummett, 1978, p. 3].

The correspondence theory of truth, in most general terms, says that truth is correspondence with reality. A more specific version says that for every truth (true proposition, statement) there is a fact to which it corresponds.

This does not imply that there is a one-one mapping between each true proposition and each fact. It allows that distinct truths can be made true by the same fact. Facts, on this conception, are "truth-makers" (this contradicts with G. Frege's understanding of fact as a thought which is true [Frege, 1956]). Falsity is then explained as the failure of a proposition to correspond to a fact. It is not that true propositions correspond to true facts, and false propositions to false ones (there is no false or mistaken facts). False propositions lack correspondence.

P. Horwich [Horwich, 1998] views the problem in such a way that we can start with facts and say (following Wittgenstein [Wittgenstein, 1922]) that a statement depicts a possible fact, and is true if (if and only if) such a fact exists. This is comparable also with the idea that a proposition is a set of possible worlds, and it is true if the actual world is a member of the set. From the other side we can start with the idea of the semantic properties of the parts of a sentence – reference of names and satisfaction of predicates – and then explain truth in these terms, without appealing explicitly to the notion of a fact. This corresponds to D. Davidson's approach in [Davidson, 1969] and to J. L. Austin's views [Austin, 1970].

Nevertheless, "fact", "correspondence" and "truth" could be independently understood, such interpretation could avoid substantive correspondence theory. This line goes contrary to B. Russell's understanding of a fact as meaning the kind of thing that makes a proposition true [Russell, 1971], and against S. Blackburn's account [Blackburn, 1984] that "correspondence" and "fact" go together and are essentially important for other touchstone topics of philosophy. Although "P corresponds to the fact" is another way of saying "P is true", for not to be just a variant of Aristotle's truism ("To say of what is ...") it needs further elaboration. Not to confuse the epistemology and the metaphysics of truth by saying that correspondence can never explain truth because we can never "get behind" our beliefs or statements and "compare them" with the fact itself (since all we would ever get is another belief), we can bound ourselves with the idea of the semantic properties of sentences. The last is the root idea of minimalism about truth, developed by P. Horwich.

Well-known 'slingshot' argument of D. Davidson [Davidson, 1969] concerns the question "Do all truths correspond to the same fact?" and its result is that if a statement corresponds to one fact, it corresponds to all, which by itself is reformulation as initial question. So descriptions of the form 'the fact that p' where p is any true sentence, refer to the same thing (and if p is a false sentence, then all false sentences refer to the same thing.). Obviously, if Davidson is right, then the correspondence theory is undermined: there is no way of distinguishing one fact from another, and there is no way of telling the predicate 'corresponds to the fact that...' apart from the predicate 'is true'.

Davidson's argument for this is sometimes called the 'Frege argument' because of its conclusion's similarity to Frege's claim that all true sentences have the same reference. The slingshot argument says [Davidson, 1969, p.42]: 'we begin to suspect that if a statement corresponds to one fact, it corresponds to all... employing [plausible] principles, it is easy to confirm the suspicion. The principles are these: if a statement corresponds to the fact described by an expression of the form 'the fact that it corresponds to the fact described by 'the fact that q' provided either (1) the terms that replace 'p' and 'q' are logically equivalent or (2) 'p' differs from 'q' only if a singular term has been replaced by a coextensive singular term.'"

The argument has the following general form. First, assume two plausible principles about the sentential context "s corresponds to the fact that p". Principle 1: Sentences may be substituted for one another in this context when they are logically equivalent. Principle 2: Sentences may be substituted for one another in this context when they differ only in containing co-extensive singular terms. Second, argue that given these principles, if a true sentence corresponds to anything, it corresponds to the same thing as any other true sentence. Then taking S and T to be any truths, the correspondence theory of truth says: S corresponds to the fact that S (ii). But the argument above allows us to infer: S corresponds to the fact that T (iii). This move is justified by Principle (1): since whether (ii) is true depends solely on whether S is true. The move from (ii) to (iii) is also justified by Principle (2): the singular terms on each side of the second identity sign in (ii) and (iii) are co-extensive (co-referring). The basic idea of this argument can be presented as well in many ways.

There are different challenges and responses to the slingshot argument. Can truth be defined at all? Is the argument valid? What happens if we understand singular terms in Russell's way? In any case, should someone who 'believes' in facts accept Principles 1 and 2? What understanding of what facts are does it involve?

The slingshot argument aimed to show that under two reasonable assumptions, if a true sentence corresponds to one fact, it corresponds to them all. One way of responding to this is to say that the expressions assumed to be singular terms in the argument are not genuine singular terms. Another way of responding is to reject the assumption that logically equivalent sentences correspond to the same facts. If facts are identified by their constituents, then the sentences we are substituting may well refer to different facts, since they have different constituents.

Suppose there were an analysis of truth: the concept 0 analyses truth. Then 'p is true' would say something more than 'p', since it says that p has the property 0. But then the proposition that '(p is true) is true' would say more than 'p is true', since it says that (p is true) has the property 0 – and so on. But as G. Frege insisted these propositions are surely not distinct: surely they do not say different things. But what is more important – if 0 here is an arbitrary concept, than we could substitute any concept we like for it: 'corresponds with the facts', 'belongs to the coherent set of beliefs', 'written in bold' and so on. If this is right, then there can be no substantial analysis of truth. Should it be a worry?

According to F. Schmitt (and we maintain it) it is a worry simply: "in light of a full and accurate picture of the

function that the notion performs in human life" [Schmitt, 1995, p. 232]. So, the importance of "truth" can be preserved, but its functioning – deflated.

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Лактіонова А.

КОНЦЕПТУАЛІЗМ І ДЕФЛЯЦІЯ ІСТИНИ

У статті обговорюються теми істини, релятивізму, концептуалізму. В обговорення залучається застосування даних настанов до поглядів І. Канта, Д. Девідсона, П. Хорвіча та ін. Концептуалізм про істину є сумісним із дефляцією істини, однак ані концептуалізація, ані дефляція істини не є приводами для дійсного занепокоєння щодо "втрати" важливості істини, адже загально розповсюджене застосування зберігається. Ми продовжуємо застосовувати термін "істина", проте його функціонування виявляється все менш і менш багатим.

Ключові слова: істина, дефляція істини, аргумент рогатки, факт, відповідність.

Лактіонова А.

КОНЦЕПТУАЛІЗМ И ДЕФЛЯЦИЯ ИСТИНЫ

В статье обсуждаются темы истины, релятивизма, концептуализма. В обсуждении затрагивается применение данных установок к взглядам Ию Канта, Д. Девидсона, П. Хорвича и др. Концептуализм про истину совмещается с дефляцией истины, но ни концептуализация, ни дефляция истины не являются поводами для действительного беспокойства о "потере" важности истины, ведь общераспространенное употребление сохраняется. Мы продолжаем использовать термин "истина", но его функционирование предстает все менее и менее богатой.

Ключевые слова: истина, дефляция истины, аргумент рогатки, факт, соответствие.