

Review of: "The Synthetic Concept of Truth and Its Descendants"

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The Synthetic Concept of Truth and Its Descendants by Boris Culina is an interesting discussion regarding the concept of truth and its relation to language.

The concept of truth advanced, and named “synthetic,” can be recognized as the same concept which Göethe tried to explain when he asserted:

Experience is only half of experience

or

You don't have to have seen or experienced everything for yourself; but if you want to trust another person and his descriptions, remember that you are now dealing with three factors: with the matter itself and two subjects. [4, #570]

or when Kant writes

Understanding cannot intuit, and the sensuous faculty cannot think. In no other way than from the united operation of both, can knowledge arise.[1, p. 75]

Whewell devotes a chapter to this matter and he names it “The fundamental antithesis of philosophy” [5]

Thus, Culina's view point is part the long tradition of rational humanism. The dialectical character of knowledge is there for any one that wants to recognize his unavoidable participation in the act of knowing.

The work by Culina next calls for a different tradition, the one that connects thinking with language, and in particular with words. This popular thesis is rather questionable and appears to be characteristic of neurotypical brains, molded for social life. Language is, strictly speaking, a means of communication. In the early times of a child, when he constructs reality, as Piaget taught us [3], language is absent or very precarious, but despite its absence, the child produces the most striking construction of a human life: reality. He invents

himself as a distinct person and reality as his place. Out of a sensory chaos he constructs an organisation in ideas, not words since he lacks them, just ideas associated to the sensory input. To produce language, of any kind, it is strictly necessary to conceive “the other” to communicate with, and “the other” can only be conceived as the negation of self, other is what is not self. There is no possibility of language until we conceive reality.

The neurotypical mind will learn by incorporating other people's ideas, it is then likely to associate words with ideas, the

neurodivergent may go straight direct to the source and learn by observing Nature. Nature simple is, it does not tell us a story, it does not have a language. The thoughts produced in this form are unlikely to be bound to language. We can then turn the work under scrutiny towards itself and understand that it is not possible to produce any work of thought without inscribing ourselves in it. There is no thought that is not contaminated by ego. Not realising this, and putting into practice some form of “ego control” (self-criticism) is a common

problem that prevents us reaching any believe stable enough to consider it True. 1 Truth as an stable believe is the position of C Peirce [2] built upon ideas in Kant and Hegel, and to a lesser extent in Whewell.

In summary, this is a nice work that provides an opinion on what the author sees as descendants of the ancient dialectical approach to knowledge (not recognized as such in this work). The descendants are the result of mating the old conception with some other ideas that would benefit for a critical examination.

References

- [1] Immanuel Kant. The Critique of Pure Reason. An Electronic Classics Series Publication, 1787. translated by J. M. D. Meiklejohn.
- [2] Charles Peirce. Collected papers of charles sanders peirce. Charlottesville, Va. : IntelLex Corporation,, electronic edition edition, 1994.
- [3] Jean Piaget. The Construction Of Reality In The Child. International Library of Psychology. Routledge, 1999.
- [4] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Maxims and Reflections. 1832. Digitized by The internet Archive after a 1998 Penguin Books edition.
- [5] William Whewell. The history of scientific ideas, volume 1. JW Parker, 1858. Third Edition.