

# PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES

## A MOMENT OF TRUTH ON THE EDGE OF A PRECIPICE

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### Abstract

The crisis encompasses the entire cumulative creation of the human mind. And it is impossible to cope with environmental pollution, social tensions, failures in monetary processes and other crisis manifestations in isolation. The threat to the existence of humanity must be sought among the deepest internal causes. Disturbances of a sense perception gave rise to World Wars I and II, many small wars, bloodiest revolutions, riots, crime, and violence in their worst forms. How is it possible to establish the truth or falsity of judgments in the supersensitive world?

**Keywords:** category of truth, truth, supersensitive world, Plato

Pundits at the Laboratory of Technogenic Tectonics of the Institute of Tectonics and Geophysics of the USSR Academy of Sciences had to admit "Our planet is too fragile and tiny to remain intact after the explosion of all accumulated atomic weapons. In 1964, an American bomber with four nuclear bombs on board, each of a threefold magnitude of the Hiroshima bomb, crashed onto the Spanish soil. The world only survived by good luck.

P. Sorokin: "When human beings cease to be controlled by deeply interiorized religious, ethical, aesthetic, and other values, individuals and groups become the victims of crude power and fraud as the supreme controlling forces of their behavior, relationship, and destiny" (Sorokin, 1964. p. 24). Disturbances of a sense perception gave rise to World Wars I and II, many small wars, bloodiest revolutions, riots, crime, and violence in their worst forms. These events made our century the bloodiest of all the preceding twenty-five centuries of Greco-Roman and Western history... Many more human beings have been killed and wounded in the two world wars and smaller wars of our century than in all previous wars in the last ten centuries. "Far more" not only in absolute numerical terms, but also in the relative sense of the number of the wounded and killed in wars per one million of population [Sorokin, 1964].

The Death of the West, P.J. Buchanan, one of the highest ranking members of the American establishment, reads: "Homo occidentalis seems to have made self-destruction their primary goal. In so doing, the collapse of the European world is not a prediction of future events, but a statement of the present state of affairs... Europeans do not plan to continue as a great vital race" [Buchanan, p. 110].

Erich Fromm, Academician V. Koptuyug, a member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Sustainable Development, and S. Kurdyumov, a corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, who summarized the results of Russian research on interdisciplinary synthesis, all consider the expression "end of the world" a common scientific term.

The crisis encompasses the entire cumulative creation of the human mind. And it is impossible to cope with environmental pollution, social tensions, failures in monetary processes and other crisis manifestations in isolation. The threat to the existence of humanity must be sought among the deepest internal causes.

The atomic bomb exploded already in Parmenides' poem [Heidegger M. Interview]. The acme of Parmenides, the founder of European rationalism (be only common sense the judge of disputable words), occurred at the end of the VI-th century B.C.

The category of truth emerged in order to rule out in advance, at the stage of deliberation, the possibility of error in action, "For true and false are attributes of speech, not of things. And where speech is not, there is neither truth nor falsehood. Error there may be, as when we expect that which shall not be, or suspect that which has not been; but it neither case can a man be charged with untruth" [Hobbes, p.22].

In the beginning there was the Cause (im Anfang war die That), - rejecting Word and Thought, Faust translates the Gospel of John.

In the beginning there was the Sechenov reflex, the reaction of a living being to the effects of the external world: the excitation of the feeling nerve is reflected on the moving one [Sechenov]. The reflex can be divided into three components: signal - decision-making - reaction. The middle link, the project of an upcoming action, is a thought. This has been accepted at least since the epoch of T. Hobbes (voluntary motion... is first fancied in our minds), P. Janet (thinking is a substitute for real action) and L. Vygotsky (thinking takes over the function of planning, of solving a new task arising in behavior).

If an impulse from one feeling nerve can be transmitted to several moving nerves, the problem of choice arises. We will choose in thinking only what we think is right and genuine.

**The thing and the idea of it.** "...that he who thinks the separated to be separated and the combined to be combined has the truth, while he whose thought is in a

state contrary to that of the objects is in error" (Metaphysics by Aristotle IX 10, 1051b 5). "...Aristotle, the father of logic, not only has assigned truth to the judgment as its primordial locus but has set going the definition of "truth" as "agreement" ... Aristotle says that the παθήματα τῆς Ψυχῆς are τῶν πραγμάτων ὁμοιωματα - that the soul's "Experiences," its νοήματα ("representations"), are likenings of Things" [Heidegger Being and Time, p. 257]. The most frequent definition of truth that has come down to us from Aristotle was *veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus* - truth is the adequacy of a thing [Heidegger. On the Essence].

Truth is real when confirmed by observation. You have calculated on geological models the location of the deposit, set a point for drilling, the well at a given depth entered the ore - your inference is true. The general theory of relativity got a confirmation, independent of the initial data - a beam of light must be curved by gravity and its real displacement was caught during the eclipse. The criterion for the scientificity of a theoretical construct is the possibility of confirming its conclusions with objective data, verification. A theory cannot be considered scientific if it cannot be refuted by facts.

**Stamps and imprints.** There is no contradiction as long as we equate mental representations of the world with sensual ones. The world is the original, perceptions are copies. Plato's term *aletheia* (ἀλήθεια), which he borrowed from Protagoras, introduced contradictions into the definition of truth. The word ἀλήθεια combines the negative prefix ἀ- with the root -λήθ- (hiding, concealing), and ἀλήθεια is thus understood as not hidden, not concealed.

Of Plato: "Before he met Socrates (in very early youth, therefore) he had been a pupil of the Heraclitean philosopher Cratylus; and, according to Aristotle's not improbable account, by moving away from Cratylus: theories of eternal flux to Socrates search for an eternal moral truth, he had been thrown upon a dilemma which he could not escape until he had made his fundamental distinction between the sensible and intelligible world - namely, the theory of Ideas" [Jaeger, p. 89].

"Socrates did not make the universals or the definitions exist apart: they, however, gave them separate existence, and this was the kind of thing they called Ideas" (Metaphysics by Aristotle XIII 4, 1078b 30). This is how both Platonic ideas and medieval universals came about. Only for the real, sensual *vera veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*. Yet the supersensitive world is not a tangible world! "It is we alone who have devised cause, sequence, reciprocity, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive, and purpose; and when we interpret and intermix this symbol-world, as 'being-in-itself,' with things, we act once more as we have always acted - mythologically" [Nietzsche, p. 36].

How is it possible to establish the truth or falsity of judgments in the supersensitive world?

Let's recall the famous chapter about the cave in Plato's *The State*. The senses allow us, the prisoners of the cave (the only world available to us), to see only shadows of real things. Only if we get out of the cave can we see real (idea) things, already unhidden from us (*aletheia*).

If such an unhidden truth cannot be generally meaningful it could serve as a valid tool. It is not meant for the prisoners of the cave. But another thing is more important. The attitude that the world in which we live is only a copy of the real world is unacceptable. No living being could survive a single day if his or her psyche did not adequately reflect the reality of the world around them [Vygotsky, p. 643].

The primary source of divergence must be sought in the category of multitude. It is the multitude about which we think as of oneness (Georg Kantor). We turn the multitude into an object, which we further treat as if it were indeed one, a thing, *рез, πράγμα*.

So there is a cave, on the walls of which we see the shadows of real things. But isn't this how we perceive things in ordinary life? When it's completely dark, we can't see them, but then the sun comes up, and the rays reflecting off the object reach our eye. And what changes if we use the image of Plato's cave? There are real things, and there are rays projecting their image onto the wall of the cave. This is also how a movie projector works. A frame of film is displayed on the screen. A ray of light passes through the dark cinema hall and tobacco smoke floats on the white canvas, a tall woman's hairdo, a cowboy hat, a wave of someone's hand...

The viewer sees the same thing as the inhabitant of Plato's cave. Is it possible to filter out the real image of an object from extraneous interference? Not such a difficult problem. The smoke from the projector, the hat and hairstyle of the cinema audience reflecting on the screen are extraneous things, irrelevant to the intention of the demiurge (*οἰκουμενικός*, maker for the people), the filmmaker. They are not preserved by revisiting the same shot in front of a different audience, at a different time. These interferences will not be there. There will be others, but the idea of the frame will remain. The kiss of the hero and heroine will be perceived as real action, and the smoke and the hat as interference, as noise in space.

Thus the discrepancy between the intention of the creator (for the Greeks the demiurge was both a craftsman and a god) and the result obtained is a very common thing. The ideal is a perfect creation, and its real and inimitable copies are constantly encountered in life. And the higher powers have nothing to do with it. The demiurge is any natural process in its purest form, always going by itself, but never protected from extraneous distorting interference.

But how, in this case, is the verification of the truth of a judgment to be carried out? As the academic physicist L. Mandelstam posed the question: "What do we measure when we speak of the simultaneity of disparate events? Here we have to compare with the prototype not a representation of a thing, but an idea".

In 1878 F. Galton published an article on composite portraits [Galton]. At the dawn of photography the shutter speed was 80 seconds, one plate could take several people in turn. And when printed, you could get an image of a typical family member, a typical Italian or a typical Swede... The resulting image was more perfect than the portraits of specific people. Individual flaws of individuals were mutually compensated, blurred in the

final picture. But typical features were superimposed and emphasized more and more distinctly.

Crystals in nature can't be without distortions, scratches, cracks, dirt, fractures. But try to make a composite portrait of them, real ones, and you get an image of an ideal crystal, as theoretical crystallography suggests it to be.

In science, when testing a theory, the objects of study are taken as representations not of real things, but of ideal things. Reality, as it is, is usually so complex, chaotic and not regular that it has to be deformed in order to build a theory. This process is called idealization, in which objects that do not exist in the world of real things are created. The most famous example is the bodies that appear in celestial mechanics. Depending on specific conditions, different physical models are used to describe the motions of celestial bodies - idealized space objects that have mass but are devoid of volume. Clearly, this is not the case in reality; mass must be concentrated in a certain volume, and it can be anything but zero. Just as there can be no absolutely solid body or absolutely black one...

F. Galton makes it possible to observe real objects behind the shadows.

A. Losev considered ideas not from the point of view of how they arise, but for what they were created: "Plato's idea is not a mere generalization of things and objects, but the ultimate generalization... Plato's idea is the meaning, the semantic essence and definition of this or that thing, the very principle of its comprehension, its generating model" [Losev, p. 184]. For this generating model it is possible to draw an analogy with a printing matrix. Let us imagine that the matrix is ideal, but, even in this case, each image created by it will be unique in its own way due to the influence of external conditions.

In all these cases we are talking about an invariant - stable, constant characteristics that do not change in the process of transformations.

If we take a closer look at the supposed simplicity of truth as a correspondence between a thing and a representation of it, the same ambiguities will emerge as in truth-unconcealment. The sensually perceived thing itself can in no way serve as a reliable yardstick, because everyone's sensory perceptions are different. Some people will insist that ripe and unripe berries look the same, while others will say that ripe berries are red and unripe are green. This is the usual color-blindness effect. Since the time of Sextus Empiricus it has been known that we, because of the different constitution of perception, receive unequal impressions, and this is quite clear both in the case of those suffering from jaundice and eye disease, and in the case of those in good health: how from the same thing some receive the impression of yellow, others of purple, and still others of white. According to Euripides the madman sees the double Thebes and the double Sun; to the typhoid patient honey is bitter, but to the healthy man it is sweet [Sextus Empiricus]. And here we will not do without grouping and identifying the most stable characteristics of the resulting image.

Without generalization there is no communication. In order to interact with each other, we must look

for, and find, commonalities in numerous individual perceptions. In the perception of the world of things, everything also begins with an invariant.

The normality and realism of a thing is established by multiple repetitions of the same characteristic. Stable from object to object.

**Truth not drowning in the river of oblivion.** Using the criterion of truth-conformity and truth-unconformity, we have put the order we want in the world around us. But how stable will it be in further development?

Chaos can be organized - a system can be built from a multitude of elements. But these systems can be many in each case. Which one to choose? It seems preferable in its actual usefulness, the one that is most effective. And how can we predict how useful it will remain in the very distant future?

And once again we are looking for the ideal, but no longer on the plane of the present, but on the plane of a multimillion-dollar timeline. Here the factors that are ideal for relevance, but transient for eternity, can also be impermanent and changeable. Positivism has no place here. The ruthless flow of time can discard the momentary truth without hesitation as it dispels the tobacco smoke and the cowboy's hat on a movie screen.

Repeated redundancy serves as the basis for choosing eternal truth as well as actual truth, but here repetition is already in time - regularity, following some laws.

The temporal invariant is not the same as the spatial invariant. There, we discarded the order that does not meet our interests, while here, history and evolution ruthlessly discard everything that does not correspond to the essence of nature. "History teaches us nothing; it only punishes us for unlearned lessons," - V. Kluchevsky. And evolution discards along with the wrong tests their authors too. As well as the whole communities, tribes and states, as well as populations, species and genera of living beings that failed the exam.

The term sustainable development is used to describe the sustainable development of civilization. The dictionary meaning of the word here is dominated by the meanings "to sustain, not to let it fade away, not to let it cease".

At the same time, we need the sustainability of life: sustainable development, improvement, increasing the complexity and harmonious living community. Not a selected population, but the entire biosphere, the universe.

The fate of truth-assertion was predetermined by its very essence: "The intellect's judgment and assertion is now the place of truth and falsehood and of the difference between them. The assertion is called true insofar as it conforms to the state of affairs and thus is *ópo-íwoig*. This determination of the essence of truth no longer contains an appeal to *άλήθεια* in the sense of unhiddenness; on the contrary *άλήθεια*, now taken as the opposite of *weúooog* (i.e., of the false in the sense of the incorrect), is thought of as correctness. From now on this characterization of the essence of truth as the correctness of both representation and assertion becomes normative for the whole of Western thinking" [Heidegger M. Plato's Doctrine].

But the criterion of truth-rightness cannot serve as an argument for assessing the stability-instability of the development of civilization. It takes into account only the present. And - no memory of the past, no anticipation of the future!

In our crisis era, it is about the preservation of life on Earth. This problem is the most deeply elaborated by both biological evolution and human history. This is how it is in such an area as the physiology of movement. A successful technique in our actions is remembered, forming a skill - automatism, while an unsuccessful one is excluded from use. Stable automatisms are formed in behavior [Bernstein]. If the choice of the currently correct solution does not meet the requirements of sustainable development, then external, on the part of nature, selection corrects this error in a long series of transmission of knowledge and life.

An example from biology. Sea stars and ophiurs feed on bivalves whose embryos are so small and defenseless that, during the clams' breeding season, predatory invertebrates could wipe out the entire population. To protect their future food from destruction, the starfish and ophiurus go into a two-month starvation - until the clams reach full weight and reach normal numbers.

In order to prevent development from going haywire, living creatures must turn on their homeostasis mechanisms at the right time. And those species that were able to build certain stoppers into their behavior did not die out, nor did human cultures that were able to achieve harmony with nature.

"Raise the mind to instinct," Prince V. Odoevsky urged. Moral instinct. The instinct of self-preservation [Odoevsky, p. 284]. In any living being all the components of behavior - emotions, expressions, feelings, desires, criteria of choice, affects, stereotypes of actions - are determined by the instinct of self-preservation. At the same time, the instinct of individual self-preservation is subordinated to the species instinct and even more general ones. The main stimulus of evolutionary development, according to P. Kropotkin, is the desire to survive together, and not to save oneself alone: "The very concepts of good and evil and our conclusions about the 'Higher Good' are borrowed from the life of nature" [Kropotkin, p. 34].

The ancient Hellenes emphasize a very different side of the concept of truth. P. Florensky: "Truth is ἀλήθεια". But what is this ἀλήθεια? - The word ἀλήθε(σ)ία, or, in Ionic form, ἀληθη ... is formed from the negative particle ἀ (ἀ privativum) and λήθος, Doric λάθος.

In connection with the latter meaning of the root λήθ are λήθη, Doric λάθα, λαθοσύνα, λησουσύνα, λήτις, oblivion and forgetfulness; ληθεδανός, causing to forget; λήθαδγος, forgetting. This representation is symbolically captured in the image of shadows drinking water from the underground river of Oblivion, "Peta." ... We have an unmuffled demand for that which is unforgotten, that which is not in oblivion, that "abides, μένει in the present time.

This unforgettable is ἀλήθεια Truth as understood by the Hellenist... Truth is the eternal memory of some Consciousness; truth is a value worthy of and capable

of eternal remembrance. If the notion of memory, in its essence, goes beyond the limits of reason, then the Memory in its highest degree, the Truth, is all the more higher than reason" [Florensky, p. 17-18].

Gone into oblivion is that which did not meet the requirements of the sustainable development. Those deeply interiorized religious, ethical, and aesthetic values, which, according to P. Sorokin, have left modern civilization out of control, have remained unforgotten. They became unclaimed, due to the rejection of Truth-Eternity in favor of Truth-Pragmatics.

Until special cultural institutions emerged, interiorization was the only means of preserving the way of life, the only way of passing on the baton of life. All knowledge, ensuring the existence and development of people, was built in, implanted in each individual soul.

The Indian formula "Atman is Brahman, Brahman is Atman" seems not too clear, strange for the European perception. But Brahman, the universal spirit, is placed in the individual Atman, for the reason that there is simply no other place for it.

How this happens is explained to Europeans by Goethe: "What am then...? Everything that have seen, heard, and observed have collected and exploited. My works have been nourished by countless different individuals, by innocent and wise ones, people of intelligence and dunces. Childhood, maturity and old age have all brought me their thoughts...their perspectives on life have often reaped what others have sowed. My work is the work of a collective being that bears the name Goethe" [Goethe, p. 409].

Memory, in its highest measure, is Truth. Brahman was once interiorized in your Atman, and there it is still stored, but in such depths as to be very difficult to reach. It is packed very tightly, and it is not easy to unpack it, even with full and sincere desire. And if there is no such desire...

Quite adequate to Indian wisdom is the evangelical commandment "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21) and "All in me, and I in all" by F. Tyutchev.

Built-in warning systems of danger are stored in the psyche of every living creature. In animals they operate inevitably. These are instincts, unconscious urges. But in humans, conscience becomes the determining imperative. And although it is subject to the arbitrariness of human decisions, it still bears the imprint of inevitability. You can ignore it, but you can't dismiss it. Alexander Pushkin: And glad to run, but nowhere ... so awful! Yes, the person whose conscience is unclean, is pitiful indeed.

Buddhism recognizes conscience as the highest Knowledge [Anagarika Govinda, p. 230]. Both in Russian and in German (Gewissen) conscience is almost equal to consciousness [Freud]. For man Truth-unconscience is a red traffic light. Don't cross the line. Slow down, stop, back up!

Whether a thought passes the control of the heart is the main criterion for the sustainable development of mankind. The heart is understood here not in the anatomical sense, but as the core of the integrity that is stored in human memory [Florensky].

Truth is preserved by memory, automatism, skills, norms of popular culture, ethics - generally accepted notions of what is good and bad, not for an individual, but for all people, species, all life on earth.

"In the East for centuries the problem has been how to get beyond the mind - the only problem, the single problem" [Osho]. S. Radhakrishnan's clarification brings clarity: the Upanisads do not maintain that intellect is a useless guide. The account of reality given by it is not false. It only fails when it attempts to grasp the reality in its fullness" [Radhakrishnan, p. 179].

A living individual reacts to signals from the outer world with the entirety of his soul, but only the minimum of necessary and sufficient impulses controlling external motor musculature is transmitted as a command to the executing organs (this is what a thought is).

The unused remainder goes to the depot. It is this reality that makes up the depths of the soul, it feeds emotions, perceptions, forms images, is responsible for the formation of words and their compositions. The category of thought does not include reactions of heart, breathing, tension of all, not only external-motor, musculature. It does not include cares, expectations, love, hate, envy... The projects of action do not contain the excitement of the soul.

With the Taoists, the basis of philosophy is the category of wuwei - non-action. Don't force nature, don't interfere in its processes, because it is so beautiful, while a man has not yet remade it to his own taste, leave it alone, moderate your appetites!

And so as not to be tempted to reshape everything, do not make projects of your influence on the outer world, suppress the itch to reshape reality at a distant stage, at the stage of planning and thinking. And this already gives rise to the strengthening, i.e. non-intellectual, anti-intellectual vector of spiritual development: "Isn't the mind mistaken in the benefits?", worried F. Dostoevsky [Dostoevsky, p. 426].

In Buddhism the role of wuwei is played by ahimsa.

Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us!

Let us live happily then, free from ailments among the ailing!

Let us live happily then, free from greed among the greedy!

Let us live happily then, though we call nothing our own! We shall be

like the bright gods, feeding on happiness!  
(Dhammapada, 197-200).

Europeans do not have the practice of turning to the Truth-eternity to verify the correctness of their decisions. The East, on the other hand, has thousands of years of meditation. Meditation is de-automation [Osho]. Awareness of actions performed automatically, at a glance, not controlled by higher values of activities.

The criterion of Truth-eternity is stored in the living human memory. In the soul. In the heart.

Be only conscience the judge of the much disputed word!

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