

SZABÓ LAJOS

On Philosophy

Philosophy is the unity of the whole wealth of existence and consciousness. It strives for this unity. This unity is its goal, and however paradoxical this may sound, not only its goal, but this ultimate One is also the cause and starting point of philosophy. Paraphrasing the old theological theorem, we may also say that if we do not proceed from this ultimate unity, we can never achieve it. As an illustrative reminder let us just mention that none of the thinkers who proceeded not from this point with intuitive certainty ever reached these problems.

Our attention needs to be directed at this point from the beginning, because that is the only way the particular problems will be endowed with their natural, perspectivistic proportions, which are in turn the prerequisite for the continuity of spiritual work between generations.

In light of these simple and basic tautologies, that is, self-evident truths, we can establish that many things bear the name philosophy – *that are not philosophy!* Contrariwise! There are only but a few classical thinkers whose concepts are duly called philosophy – and they are not studied! So apart from these few important exceptions, our statement could even be reversed: *nothing is called philosophy that actually is philosophy!*

That clears up a lot of things. For within every mistake there is a truth hidden. The value judgment of our era and of eras familiarly related to ours by their ignorance of philosophy is one of these truth containing mistakes. The thing these eras know and refer to as philosophy is truly worthy of being treated as a negligible quantity. The necessary error lies in what they know and *what they call philosophy.*

The necessary and age-fitting mistake today is calling something philosophy that isn't, and not calling a reality philosophy which by all existence and value is deserving of the name. Our time cannot grant philosophy the name philosophy because it does not know it, *it does not wish to know it. Everything hangs on this reluctance*

and on this *issue of naming*. Everything hangs on it and it is the source of all confusion of feelings. Not only the Bible but Confucius too and all other true thinkers inform us on how much depends on a *name*.

We spoke of the ignorance and reluctance towards philosophy and the inability to call it by name as a necessary mistake fitting of the age. Under such circumstances what sense does it make for us to wish to call it by name and present it as something worthy of knowing? To acknowledge that a mistake is right for the age and at the same time necessary and yet to try and fight it?

Well, the ultimate meaning of an introduction to philosophy may lie exactly in these contradictions.

We would be justly countered with the claim that with such an approach our attempt suffers from at least two intrinsic contradictions. One that we are fighting a mistake in the public approach already recognized as necessary; and two, that in our fight we forget that the mistake of the age is the mistake also of the *one who fights it*, and thus in place of the mistake in the public approach, we could only fit our own error.

All that would be true if the individual were unable to stand up against his age. But man is both a historical and a superhistorical being at the same time. The very essence of history in fact is just this complex alloy of historicity and superhistoricity.

The researcher *can* therefore learn to know philosophy and call it by name (cognize and recognize?) in spite of and in opposition to the inertia of the age, and it *is* possible to assume the existence of certain individuals from the new generation whom he may warn of their own strength to stand up against the inertia of the age, warn them that they need not fear this act as one of hubris, he may inform them at their first steps, and thus we will have helped the new researchers of the ever renewing basic strife of philosophy in their fulfilment against the age, and gained new allies in our most profound aspirations.

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The methodology of the historically given empirical research that we are criticizing is the application – with the unconscious swing of a reflex – of faith, trust (fearlessness), world concept and the complex multifaceted communal facts which all became self-evident through the work of generations and were achieved by universal ways of life. These methods will necessarily fall into crisis with the change of the faith, the way of life, and the world concept that constituted their basis. This change is partially brought on by the empirical research itself. For an analogy: the ethics aged and matured by the historical dogma comes to contradict the dogma that aged and produced it: it can no longer be reconciled with its intellectual conscience (Nietzsche). Or: productive forces and relations of production (Marx). Or: the consequences of Newtonian physics break down the world view of Newtonian physics.

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Always, we live and struggle between two harmonies. One already provides but a poor, reflex-like, dead self-evidence. The other one is still rich, mysterious, whirling and menacing.

Translated by István Czigler