

REVIEW

of Prof. Alexander Gungov's dissertation on "Circularity in the Philosophical Logic of the Continental Tradition" for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophical Sciences"

The dissertation has a total volume of 414 pages, divided into four chapters with 25 paragraphs, an introduction, a conclusion and a bibliography of 111 titles, of which 53 are in Cyrillic and the rest are in Latin.

"The essential thing about the science of logic is not so much that the beginning should be pure immediacy, but rather that the whole science is a circle in which the first becomes last and the last also first." (p. 71)

This quote from Hegel's "The Science of Logic" could easily become the motto of the dissertation under consideration. In it, the author tries to show us what role circularity plays in the process of substantiating statements and in the process of reaching the truth. The teleologism that accompanies this circularity shows the direction of development of the processes in the world and in knowledge and thus guarantees the positive results. In other words, "The main purpose of the dissertation is to approach philosophical logic in the continental tradition through the prism of circular reasoning, which we see as unfolding on two levels: at the level of being—this is an ontological circle—and at the level of the logical—logical a circle which is by no means the censured vicious circle in proof. Tracing this circularity, we constantly relate it to its intrinsic teleologicality." (p. 9 of the dissertation).

The tradition under study includes the greatest names of continental philosophy in its German-speaking version: Hegel, Marx, Gadamer, Husserl and Heidegger. At the same time, the author tries to defend the thesis that continental philosophy is not only not at odds with logic, but also tries to substantiate it ontologically in

opposition to the analytical tradition, where the logical - at least according to the intuitions of the early Wittgenstein - is rooted in the grammar of the language. According to continental philosophers, however, language is ontologically marked and at the same time derives its content from thought. Therefore, reference plays no or almost no role in the constitution of meaning, because ultimately the world is created by the thinking that is responsible for that meaning. The author traces these main threads of thought in the works of the mentioned authors, showing an enviable knowledge of the texts. As he himself notes in the introduction to the dissertation, these works include "the two variants of Hegel's 'Science of Logic' and 'Phenomenology of Spirit', representing his speculative approach, as well as the application of these logical propositions in the 'Philosophy of Religion'." With Gadamer, we limit ourselves to his seminal work, Truth and Method, but still include his ideas from studies devoted to Hegel and Heidegger. Marx is presented mainly with the first volume of Capital, while variants of Husserl's phenomenological logic are traced following Logical Investigations, Formal and Transcendental Logic, Experience and Judgment, and also Ideas I and Cartesian Reflections ". In discussing Heidegger, we cannot help but pay attention to Being and Time, as well as the late Time and Being, but focus mainly on Metaphysical Foundations of Logic, Plato's Doctrine of Truth, and Sameness and Difference ". We also consider his "Logic as the question concerning the nature of language", "Logic. The question of truth' and 'What is called truth'. Based on commentary sources, we also pay attention to his early works on logic from the time of the doctoral studies, the defense of the dissertation and the subsequent habilitation." (pp. 9-10 of the dissertation)

Also in the introduction it is explained why the role of the circle and circles in thinking is so important that it could become the subject of an entire dissertation. Generally speaking, Hegelian thinking is very often associated with the circular form and opposed to linear or one-dimensional thinking. The drawing of the circle

can be found as far back as ancient Greek philosophy. Because this form has no beginning or end. The circle of the absolute is divided into smaller circles. Speaking of totalities leaves us in the circular form. As Hegel himself says, the whole presents itself as a circle of circles, of which each is a moment." ("Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences", item 1, §15). Circles must be thought of together. Some commentators speak of a spiral, but the text convincingly shows that the thought-form traced is precisely a circle. Again, the introduction very briefly traces some historical predecessors of the circular form of thinking, rejecting or confirming its definitions as such (with Descartes, Vico, Spinoza and Kant).

The discussion proceeds chronologically, with the exception of the analysis of Gadamer's hermeneutic logic, which, for reasons of content, comes immediately after Hegel. The center of the exhibition is Hegel's speculative logic, which, according to the dissertation, to a certain extent predetermines the development of the idea of circularity in the subsequent philosophical reflections of Marx, Husserl and Heidegger. The first chapter is devoted to the becoming and structure of Hegel's speculative logic. It begins with the structure of speculative logic and its main manifestations. The operating categories here are concrete and abstract identity, becoming, *Aufhebung*, and synthesis. The teleological essence of the circular inference is clarified and the changes in reasoning thinking, negative dialectical thinking and positive rational (speculative) thinking are traced. The reinterpretation of the categories of speculative logic through the prism of teleology and circular reasoning can be singled out as a significant contribution. A separate paragraph is devoted to truth in speculative logic, which can be described as subordinate to the motto "Truth is the whole" (p. 60 of the dissertation). Manifestations of speculative thinking are examined, tracing the dialectic of categories through becoming, the role of reflection, and concluding on the teleological nature of these manifestations. The principles of speculative

logic are then applied to the philosophy of religion to draw parallels with the current state of this cultural form.

This completes the content of the first chapter, to which must be added, however, the Gadamerian version that is used in such an update to show the variants of manipulative speculation that we are constantly exposed to today. This part outlines the most important elements of the hermeneutic way of working: departure from the familiar in a form of life, which prepares the corresponding pre-understanding for certain formulations of the problem; acceptance of a spiritual principle as the source of meaning – it may be personality, transcendental subjectivity, intentionality or life principle; extracting a circular fusion of horizons that serves object knowledge and self-knowledge. Someone else's meaning is always brought into relation with one's own attainment of reality and only thus receives its philosophical relevance.

The reader can draw the following conclusions based on the dissertation's analysis. Hegelian dialectic (or logic) is not a general philosophical method that can be applied by any philosopher. For Hegel, it is a specific kind of idealism. It characterizes the form of a certain mental construct, of the absolute spirit. This is the notion that everything that happens can be seen as a moment of a whole developed through the power of contradiction. This whole is the self-becoming of the absolute. Although contradictions (motion, change, finitude) can indeed be ascribed to everything, this reality is generally determined and guided by absolute rationality. Hegel's argumentation is extremely strongly influenced by theological impulses. Here are its general features: In the beginning is logic or ontology, in which the absolute or divine being is considered before the creation of the world, i.e. regardless of our surrounding nature. Natural philosophy, as the second part of the system, deals with the externalization of God in the world, which is a philosophical form of the incarnation; the high point presents the philosophy of spirit as the return of the god from creation to himself.

Marx's dialectical logic is re-examined through the lens of circularity and teleologism in its concrete manifestation in the economic theory of 'Capital'. The interplay of the abstract and the concrete universal becomes the key to uncovering the ideal dimensions of money. This in turn allows the disclosure of the nature of cryptocurrencies. As is proper for all logic, the problem of truth is again considered, this time against the background of transformed forms. The analysis of the logical and practical consequences of the application of this concept in real life deserves high praise. An attempt has been made to clarify the idea laid down by Hegel about the positive role of contradiction, which is one of the points of conflict in relations with formal logic. References are also made in this section to the Peircean understanding of abduction, which I would be happy to see juxtaposed with the transcendental approach to the argument. The inclusion of Bulgarian authors in the text is commendable, as well as the demonstration of the importance of dialectics in, for example, clinical diagnostics or in clarifying the nature and functions of cryptocurrencies, through which a connection is made with other works of the author and again showing how the type of logical reflections proclaimed by continental philosophy work, in the territory of today's current problems.

Husserl's phenomenological logic is presented both through internal interpretations of the functions of its basic concepts in texts such as *Logical Investigations*, and as a path to justifying logic as a constituent of experience in the spirit of Kant. Through this, according to the dissertation, the philosophical character of logic is guaranteed. I know of no more detailed analysis of phenomenological logic in our philosophical literature than that proposed in the dissertation. Husserl's intentions and the extent of their implementation for overcoming psychologism and naturalism in logic are shown. The main themes in the six logical investigations are also touched upon. Emphasis is placed on the methodological significance of intentionality, intuition, reflection, and

ascertaining the obvious. They justify the transition to the so-called transcendental logic and its functions. Finally, the role of circularity is shown again. Comparisons with formal logic are made, which are very valuable in substantiating the independent existence of transcendental logic. It becomes clear why Husserl's teacher Franz Brentano's evidentialist theory of truth was adopted by Husserl himself. According to him, complete truth is not absolute, but neither is it relativistic.

The final chapter analyzes Heidegger's critique of traditional logic and the alternative he proposes: overcoming the subject-object dichotomy to account for the grounding character of being, so that logic becomes an inquiry into the conditions of possibility for the meaning and logos of being (p. 391 of the dissertation). Here the circular structure of logic is brought out as the result of existence. The reasons for the rejection of formal logic, which transforms metaphysical truth into judgmental truth and thus loses its content, are analyzed. On the contrary, there is empirical evidence from modern cognitive science that logic is nonetheless sensitive to content, even when presented as purely formal (e.g., Peter Wason's experiments). As for the circularity in Heidegger's version of continental logic, it results from the articulation of the historicity and temporality of human being—characteristics that, according to Heidegger, are neglected by most of the philosophy that precedes his texts. Generally speaking (in the words of Prof. Gungov), "The logical structure and normativity are not self-sufficient, but are derivatives of the pre-reflective and pre-predicate normative structure of the disclosure of being as worldliness and consistency." (p. 392 of the dissertation)

The structure of the text is precise and well suited to the objectives of the exposition. The language is clear, although it deals with the authentic concepts of philosophers who worked a hundred years ago or more. Precisely clarifying these concepts from a modern point of view is an important contribution of the work. My main question is: how does the author stand in the debate about circularity

and teleologism in continental logic? If the place of the present work in this debate is explicitly stated, a plus for the text will be determined.

The abstract correctly reflects the content of the dissertation. The bibliography is substantial in volume and contains only academically respectable titles. I agree with the contributions indicated by the dissertation. Dissertation publications are more than sufficient and significant in quality.

In view of all that has been said, I will vote with conviction "yes" for the awarding of the scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophical Sciences" to Prof. Alexander Gungov.

10.01.2023

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