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Interdisciplinary Dimensions of Communication Science

Human Being and the Philosophical Discourse

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Abstract: The hypothesis from which we start our approach is the one according to which the philosophical discourse is a specific way of communicating the reality. The base of the philosophical communication is surprise, doubt, uncertainty, anxiety, all generated by the fundamental interrogations of Kantian origin: How much am I able to know? What do I have to do? What am I allowed to hope? The answers to all these questions were set up in philosophical concepts and visions, all of them leading to communication, trying to express themselves and make themselves understood. Communicability is the very essence of the philosophical approach. Actually, communication is a fundamental philosophical attitude as I, in my capacity of human being, live only with the other, in full interaction. On my own I am nothing. Throughout this paper we find arguments for the idea according to which the philosophical discourse subordinates an art of genuinely living and communicating about balance and avoidance of excess, about the ability to assume and overcome, about lucidity and wisdom, about credibility, certainty and truth, about freedom and limitation, about the meaning and value of the human condition.

Keywords: genuine communication; philosophical discourse; the I; the Other; interrogation

1. Introduction

Co-substantiality is a significant characteristic of philosophy and communication. In philosophy, dialogue accompanied every aspect of philosophy as a representation of the world, as a set of structures of existence and modes of knowledge catalyst, followed by communication and action. Albert Camus persisted in believing “*that this world has no higher meaning. But I know something about it makes sense and that is the man, because the man is the only creature who wants a sense.*” (Camus, 1976, p. 34) Understanding the human specifics in the world determines the man to gain self-awareness, and also awareness of the existence of the *other*. In a word, the union is achieved through discourse.

2. Faces of Philosophical Communication

2.1. Philosophical Meta-discourse

Philosophy is a way of “handling” reality, to value it, being determined by the characteristics of the age and civilization in which it was developed. A scientific truth is accepted in all fields of civilization. In philosophy, it may be admitted in a field and rejected in another; it can be promoted at a time and considered invalid in another. The wonderment was what led Plato and Aristotle to seek the essence of being, René Descartes, through the methodical doubt, sought to identify the unquestionable certainty; the stoics wanted to find peace of mind in taking the suffering of life, “each of these searches has its truth, in historical clothes, each time differently, of certain representations and particular language” (Jaspers, 1988, p 11). Any philosophical concept tends towards communication,

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having as purpose to speak and to be understood, because its essence is communicability, relational, definite, with its truth.

Philosophy is an *attitude*, and a *method* for both knowledge and action. As an intellectual attitude, philosophy is a perpetual questioning about the meaning and value of the human condition, to which no particular science can provide any complete information. Philosophy has, undoubtedly, a function of spiritual training. For Plato, the exercise of thought, especially that of philosophical thinking, is a spiritual exercise of self-training. Philosophy is “*an ascension of the soul towards the intelligible.*” (Plato, 1995, p. 58) The true training includes and transforms the soul itself, in its whole and its basis. Albert Camus argued that “*to decide whether life is worth living means to answer the fundamental question of philosophy. The rest, if the world has three dimensions, if the spirit has nine or twelve categories, it will come after.*” (Camus, 1995, p. 105) Therefore, a big philosophy is, with “*the intellectual icon of the world, a way to respond to existence, regarded as a whole, a particular way to feel, a full expression of a spiritual personality.*” (Rosca, 1967, p. 7) So, in any philosophical approach, the important things are both the integrated knowledge and the subjective addition; the implicit or explicit finality is that to propose a valuing hierarchy.

But what qualities, what truths must meet the philosopher, the person who “builds” the philosophical approach, valuing hierarchizing the forms of existence, striving to find answers to the queries on human being? Aristotle reveals the following features, which need to be specific to the philosopher:

- the man needs to be of great culture, who possesses information from various areas without having, however, a specialization in a particular science;
- is one who can understand the most difficult, abstract issues that ordinary people do not have access to;
- is also an educator, a person able to explain to others the philosophical themes and to be understood, the wise man finds the meaning of his existence in the ability to formulate his thoughts as accurate as possible and teach them in the most appropriate way;
- “the philosopher should order, not to be ordered by another, and it is not allowed to be given him directives, but for him to give to those who are less erudite.” (Aristotle, 1996, p. 17); therefore the philosopher must have a spiritual leader role, because he owns a science that has been cultivated for itself, for the sake of knowledge.

In particular, “*the philosophy deserves to be studied [...] rather for the sake of the questions themselves.*” (Russell, 1995, p 105) The interrogations broaden our conception of what is possible, it reduces dogmatism and enriches our intellectual imagination. Constantin Noica states that “*whenever there was the problem of self-correction, philosophy raised to three types of certainty which are all taken up by*” *self-awareness.*” Philosophy’s certainties can be grouped, after the Romanian thinker, around three types of approaches. (Noica, 1984, pp. 11-12):

- (a) awareness of self-existence as human;
- (b) awareness of restricted existence of human;
- (c) awareness of possibility of getting out of the human limitation situation.

Human beings refuse to accept that life is ignored by the rest of the universe. By philosophy, man is aware and takes its own status of being conscious, free and precarious, subjective and practical, rational and valuing. The philosophical discourse projects on to the world the wants and desires of human beings, its need to internal security and fulfillment. Thus, the boundaries of humanity become bearable. The work in philosophy is the actual work on their own beings, on their own conceptions, on how we see things and on what we ask of them. (Wittgenstein, 1995, p. 42)

2.2. Identity and Philosophy

Communication takes a certain identity. The general aim of the fact of communicating is expressing that identity. Communicating, I affirm my being and I position myself in relation to the other. In any communication situation, the individual plays a role aimed at ensuring, ultimately, the control of the

situation, the ability to make him aware in his role. This method of communicative intervention is dependent on the social existence. "Identity is a condition of communicative acts given that any statement is issued in a particular "place" (about the status, roles, membership), that define the "situational" identity of the speaker, that he will make actual in the relation". (Marc, 2010, p. 44) During communication, we seek a position and try to make ourselves recognized in that position. There is a way of communicative intervention related to social existence.

A fundamental motivation for the identity search is linked to maintaining a sense of integration and unity of self and its continuity over time. "*If the identity acts as a communication goal, it is at the same time its resultant. The image of ourselves is built through daily interactions and the images that they produce.*" (Marc, 2010, p. 46) The representation and self-esteem arise for a great part of us from the "mirror" of the other, from the feedback for the messages that we send. "*There is no painting more difficult than the painting which man makes of him or more useful,*" says Montaigne. (apud Todorov, 2002, p. 184) Self-knowledge serves in the communication between people, and the other way around, the best friendship and the best dialogue between the two people are stimulated by the impulse of knowledge.

Take one by one, people alike, look in their interaction, in their friendships, in their loves, they are irreducible to each other. "*Contrary to what all future narcissists will think, not I, with my own identity, am absolutely different from all other people [...]; but the other, i.e. I in relation to another. Different, of course, not its substance [...], but by its position in relation to me: he, and no one else, was my friend.*" (Todorov, 2002, p. 184)

Each "you" assumes an "I", and the individual exists only in relationship. Each *you* is unique, each *I* is common to all. "*As long as they are taken one by one, people are alike, but when seen in the constellation of relationships that they have, we have to admit that they are different and irreplaceable: this woman is my mother, my son, this child, I love this individual, not another.*" (Todorov, 2002, p. 184) Positional individuality is irreducible: for that it is him (for me), because it is me (for him). The individual is not really different from other individuals, but by the relation that it establishes with them.

2.3. Kierkegaard's Philosophical Dialogue of Despair

In relation to human values and desires, the world is reasonable and absurd, meaningful and meaningless, familiar, but also indifferent and irresponsible. Living in the sphere of humanity is to interpret and give meaning to life and reality in relation to us and for ourselves.

For philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, the man is a synthesis between infinity and finiteness, between temporal and eternal, freedom and necessity. (Kierkegaard, 1999, p. 53) Among these categorical couples there are manifested permanent tensions and opposition, because the human spirit cannot harmonize them. The awareness of this helplessness leads to despair. "*The possibility of this disease grants to human superiority over animals, and this quality distinguishes him in a different way than walk on two legs, or vertical, as it proves the vertical orientation or infinite greatness which lies in the fact of being a spirit.*" (Kierkegaard, 1999, p. 56) Desperation impose human other stakes than vegetative life and spiritual comfort. Not being desperate it causes damage to the ability of exiting. For the self to become, there are essential the possibility and necessity. "A self who does not have the possibility of being desperate, is as a self without necessity." (Kierkegaard, 1999, p. 56) Thus, an intense desperation lives the one that does not accept as he is, but wanting to become as he could be. As desperate is the one who, overwhelmed by necessity, assumes the impossibility of becoming, by a mute submission.

Self-consciousness is the decisive factor about the self. The more awareness, the more for himself. The more developed the consciousness becomes, the more intense is the despair. Without eternity in ourselves, we cannot despair. We identify at Søren Kierkegaard the anthropological dimension of

despair, a “deadly disease”. The desperate despairs for *something*, but after “a long moment”, he understands that, in fact, he despairs for himself.

The most spread is the despair that ignores the self. People do not have, often enough, an idea what it means to be spirit, “*that is the absolute that can be human.*” (Kierkegaard, 1999, p. 97) Søren Kierkegaard says that it is the despair of the lack of spirituality: “and if the spell ceases once with the illusion of the senses, it points out, however, also that despair was always present in the background.” (Kierkegaard, 1999, p. 99) In ignoring his desperation, the man can at least be aware that it is spirit. Søren Kierkegaard’s conception, the human fulfillment of each individual is a matter of reporting to the human into their own person, but, unfortunately, there are few people whose inner conscience keeps continuity.

2.4. A Philosophical Discourse on Happiness

Each person, depending on its skills and expectations, its level of aspiration, is bound, in order to grow in humanity, to seek happiness, just as a duty to seek truth, justice, beauty, ignoring obstacles, both those objectives, and subjective ones. For Plato and Aristotle, happiness can be gained by what we achieve in our lives and especially through the activity of knowledge specific to the rational part of the soul. For Aristotle, each person must meet its purpose for which it was created: “*it is obvious that happiness must be placed among the worthy activities desirable in themselves and not among those chosen for other things, for happiness does not need anything, it reaches itself.*” (Aristotle, 1988, p. 17) Human purpose in this world is to be an active being, which always tends to fair measure of any thing or event, extremes, even the most uplifting, must be avoided. Therefore, the aim of human life is to live according to reason. Any action of the soul, as directed, is a virtue, and the action is the happiness itself.

Immanuel Kant also appreciated happiness also as an ideal, but achievable, if we can identify the correct path to reach it. “*Being happy is out of necessity the desire of any rational being, but finite, and it is therefore an inevitable determinant principle of its capacity to covet.*” (Kant, 1999, p. 55) Sometimes, happiness is considered a mood of joy, peace, quiet, excitement or bliss, provided by knowledge, love or faith.

Pragmatist, John Stuart Mill, believes that the foundation of morality is *usefulness*. The greatest happiness principle sustains that “the actions are good as far as they bring happiness and bad if they have as result the opposite of happiness. Through the word “happiness” it is understood the pleasure or the absence of suffering; by the word “unhappiness” we understand pain or lack of pleasure”. (Mill, 1995, p. 515) There are some kinds of pleasure more desirable than others. If from the two pleasures, all or almost all, who have tried both, grant preference to one, independent of any sense of moral obligation to do so, then that is the most desirable pleasure. If one of the two pleasures is preferred to the other, even if obtained by sacrifice and suffering and it does not renounce at it for any other pleasure, it means that the preferred pleasure is of a higher quality.

The English philosopher refers to thinkers who rejected strongly, the hedonistic beliefs, according to which the noblest purpose of life would be pleasure. For them, “*to suppose that life has no higher purpose, better and nobler objective to follow than pleasure means, according to these spirits, a doctrine rather good for pigs.*” (Mill, 1995, p. 515) John Stuart Mill did not deny, totally the hedonistic conceptions, distinguishing between pleasures of the flesh and spiritual pleasures. Spiritual pleasures are superior; this superiority is given by the “greater duration, certainty and intensity.” Spiritual pleasures are not preferred for themselves, but for the advantages that they bring. Being happy means you get to live pleasure that we consider to be the maximum. “No intelligent man would consent to be a fool, no instructed person would want to be an ignorant, and no person with heart and conscience would want to be despicable and selfish, even if they would be convinced that crazy, ignorant, wicked are more satisfied with their fate than they are of theirs.” (Mill, 1995, p. 514) This attitude can be explained by the existence of a feeling of dignity that all human beings possess, to some extent. Inferior spirits with low level of aspirations reach happiness more quickly.

A higher spirit, however, “will always have the feeling that the world is so made so that its pleasures and desires are imperfect.” However, it is preferable to have the consciousness of its own misery, but to get to happiness by the satisfaction of inferior desires. “It is better to be a dissatisfied human than a satisfied pig, to be an unhappy Socrates rather than a satisfied fool.” (Mill, 1995, p. 514) The utilitarianism can achieve the aim by general developing of character nobility, even if each individual would take advantage of other nobility, and “his would be, as far as happiness goes, a simple result of this profit.” (Mill, 1995, p. 515) The ultimate goal for which it is worth desire all these things is an existence without, as far as possible, pain, and rich as much as possible, with joy, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The English philosopher, maintaining the option, for individualism says that every man may act alone, in which its own way to get happy is having the possibility of establishing for him the greatest pleasure. An accomplished man is only the one who assumes the successes and failures, sufferings and joys, good and evil, to the extent that it engages him as unique human. Every human being develops its way of life and its expectations and aspirations on what makes him happy. Therefore, happiness cannot be defined, but approximately characterized. The happiness ability can be combined with a sense of inner incompleteness, without which evolution and creation are not possible.

3. Conclusions

The philosophy means to put knowledge into question, reflect on it and give answers. In addition to its cognitive role, philosophy fulfills also an axiological role, because in the center of its focus is always the man with his whole existential problem. Philosophical thinking involves eigenvalues, horizons that are his and his alone, means that exclusively belong to him and the procedures that set it apart. Karl Jaspers says that the essence of philosophy is the search for truth and not its possession. As a reflection, philosophy is, in fact, *a knowledge of knowledge*. Valuing philosophy is given by the spiritual perspective which it opens, the depth of the level of consciousness which it undertakes.

4. Bibliography

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