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**ФИЛОСОФИЯ КАК ЗНАНИЕ ИЛИ КАК ЕГО УСЛОВИЕ?
АКАДЕМИЯ ПЛАТОНА И ВОЗМОЖНАЯ СОВРЕМЕННОСТЬ****IS PHILOSOPHY A KNOWLEDGE OR ITS CONDITION?
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Аннотация

В статье происходит обращение к тому, как Платон понимал природу философского знания, как он представлял себе развитие и существование философии. Задача исследования состоит в том, чтобы зафиксировать определенные сценарии реализации философского знания, проводимые Платоном и попробовать сопоставить эти сценарии с тем, каким образом развивается современная практика преподавания философии. Отвечая на вопрос «что значит, по Платону, быть философом и пользоваться философией» позволяет также уловить существенные черты его учения в целом, которые можно назвать «платонизмом».

Abstract

In order to understand how and in what direction, generally speaking, philosophical knowledge, to say – usual knowledge for every teacher of philosophy, is developing, I propose to refer to Plato's view on the development and life of the philosophical knowledge which is can be taught. Can we fix certain scenarios of implementation of philosophy by Plato and his Academy, and see, if we succeed, of course, in what way modern practice of teaching philosophy, that has a direct relationship to the majority of teachers of philosophy, is developing? So, I may formulate the main aim of this article as follows: this article can be considered as an attempt to appeal to the understanding of Plato about the nature of philosophical knowledge. Plato's view on the nature of philosophy teaching allows to capture the essential features of his teaching in general, which are might be called «platonism».

Ключевые слова: Платон, природа философии, самость, Академия, идея.**Keywords:** Plato, nature of philosophy, selfness, Academy, idea.**The first feature of the philosophical knowledge¹ according to Plato is universal empiricism**

To clarify the phrase «universal empiricism», referring to the Platonic philosophy, I suggest recollecting here the words used by A. Trendelenburg in the introduction to his «Logical Investigations». A. Trendelenburg is a philosopher, who is more often associated with the revival of the Ar-

¹ There is a plenty amount of works, devoted to the Plato's view on the nature of philosophical knowledge. Here, I will point out two works, from which we learn about the nature of philosophy. On the philosophical knowledge, which is opposed to mathematical, rational and discursive knowledge see: Messiat S.V. Plato's Concept of Discursive Knowledge [Messiat, 2011]; on the philosophical knowledge (philosophical truth) in its opposition to the non-philosophical truth see: Woolf R. Truth as a Value in Plato's *Republic* [Woolf, 2009].



istotle philosophy rather than with the Platonism². He believes that a philosopher should act as a scholar, who studies particular things in detail, than to be involved in the pursuit of some general concept, which has been already studied by his predecessors and was given a description. A study of particular things suits the Platonic attitude towards the philosophy; it corresponds to the first, basic and obligatory condition of philosophical comprehension, when we talk about Plato.

Attentive reading of the dialogue «Ion» can make us reconsider the personality of Plato: this new philosopher will speak not as a dreamer of things of general property, who is far from empiricism and common people activities, but will acquire a new image. The question of the dialogue «Ion» is as following: which kind of poetry (it means, a kind of speech) is the best? Who is the person who defines the criteria for «best» and who can judge it? Undoubtedly, this person is that who is more well-grounded in poetry. Generally speaking, the specialist in a particular sphere is one who is the most knowledgeable in this subject. However, there are some people, who consider themselves to be experts, in case of poetry – rhapsodies. They draw attention to one particular poet, whom they think to be the best one. Then in case of philosophy, if we continue the logic of Plato, such people can choose their favorite philosophical doctrine, focusing their attention at one particular philosophical view. Plato explains it with the help of «divine» connection, «obsession». It means a rhapsody (or any person who announces himself to be a specialist in a sphere) is obsessed, he judges the poetry considering his own connection with a poet, which is gifted by Gods. But what is exactly valuable about these words generated by the divine bonds? According to Plato, these words are of no value³. The obsessed will estimate these words worse than that person who is aware of the empirical properties and its details constituting a speech (or estimate the poetry of Homer as in the «Ion» worse). A coachman, a doctor, a fisherman are the exact judges of the quality of speech, the speech which is connected to carriages, health, fishing.

It happens in different spheres, not only in case of Homer and poetry. Two different kinds of «art» exist: to be obsessed (or to rely on the generalized, emotional and mystical knowledge) and have concrete knowledge. And Plato criticizes any attempt of the person having general (in fact – trivial) knowledge to prove his significance and persuade everybody that he is good at every particular subject. Hence, the rhapsody in the «Ion», despite the high self – esteem of his art (and any other person who will, like a rhapsody, estimate the interlocutor's speech), won't be of any value, he will be not a mouthpiece of the truth, but the obsessed, and thus he is not allowed to proclaim himself an expert.

Plato teaches that one can get this or that knowledge only from those teachers who are tempted by it. Essentially, Plato declares the value of the narrow professional education passing from a teacher to a student. Getting knowledge about music, for instance, will be the most useful if this knowledge is acquired from the best musician who doesn't spare his/her moral forces on some other kinds of knowledge. However, in many modern educational humanitarian programs and classes such Plato covenant is not executed. Interdisciplinary classes established in accordance with the general background of humanitarian knowledge are characterized by the vagueness of its content, in such classes we can talk about completely different things.

That means that the necessary condition of teaching philosophy is a synthesis of «clarity with both depth and appropriate elaboration», as Hegel wrote in his letter in 1816. It turn, the thought of the Plato's specifics is presented in various Plato's dialogues. Here is one of the definitions of philosopher in the dialogue «The Republic»: philosopher is the one «who can view things in their connection» (VII, 537c), that is, the one who is able to study all the things existent. The philosopher of «The Republic» is not the one focused on the comprehension of «light» (that is, it is not the person of humanitarian turn of mind and who was bad in mathematics), the

² A detailed study of the relationship between the teaching of Trendelenburg and the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, and the ancient philosophy in general, is presented in R.A. Gromov's article [Gromov, 2012].

³ Hegel tells us, as it were in his reflections on the teaching of philosophy at universities, that «the whole can truly be grasped only when one works through the parts», and this thought shows us the platonic character of his philosophy [Hegel, 1984].



philosopher is the one who being focused on «the light» has an opportunity to see it in everything, and every thing in this light. That is, in fact, it is the one who studies everything and the one who is gradually coming to the essence of light.

Does it always happen so, that a cognitive attention to the details of the essence is a characteristic feature of the philosophy teaching practice (or the movement process of free philosophical thought)? «Although the time of categorical systems of creativeness is obviously over», – it is written in one of the textbooks, and after such an announcement we expect the further development of research focus on the attention to the particulars, still, however, in a few paragraphs of this textbook one can learn and study the general theory of existence and other «basics of general philosophy», that is, all those which imply laws, universalization and generalization.

The second feature of the philosophical knowledge according to Plato is the theoretical rejection from unprepared, monosyllabic formulation objects of ideal order

The next stage of the movement in a philosophical way, proposed by Plato, is the awareness of the criteria of revision of statements and conclusions according to their property. We will not find in Plato clear instructions for the differentiation of the genuine philosophical statements and speeches from just seem to be so, however, in the whole corpus of his works it is easy to see the difference. A philosophical statement, in contrast to the attempts of interlocutors of Socrates (and in some cases – and personally Platonic Socrates) to identify the phenomena of perfect order, will possess a willingness to refuse the up-to-the-minute denotation of the true state of affairs, will contain semantic duality, to encompass the contradictions that have been smoothed or unnoticed previously.

The most demonstrative this circumstance is expressed in the early dialogues of Plato, which have a certain specificity. Sharing the known point of view on the nature of the early dialogues, according to which previously in them there is the framing of the teaching about the ideas up, I think that the main goal of the early dialogues of Plato is the foundation that the idea prevails over the fact, and it is conveyed by the fact that you cannot cognize one or another phenomenon outside of the ideal world. In the early dialogues «is searched something common, that in all this “self-identical”» [Losev, 1993, p.141].

The early dialogues have metaphysical themes according to the character, have questions of the «ideal» order. Of course, you must reckon in that this topic is expressed in the early dialogues more like a worldviewing directive, than a specifically posed theoretical problem. Generally speaking, the researchers of Plato do not link the topic of the early dialogues with the search of a certain phenomenon or a private thing. There is also a view that the result of the early dialogues of Plato is not the definition of any occurrence, phenomenon, but vice versa, identifying what this phenomenon cannot be [Greek Thought: A Guide to Classical Knowledge, 2000]. I believe that the early dialogues of Plato encompass the demonstration of the fact that the phenomena, which are defined in the dialogues, are of such nature that it is possible to understand them only by using a special method of examination, – that is, due to philosophy.

In the later dialogue «Symposium» none of the interlocutors of Socrates is not wrong in the literal sense of the words, just speeches of Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Aristophanes and Agathon about love are not complete, are not meaningful, because these people are not philosophers. The interlocutors of Socrates tried to present Eros as a certain phenomenon with its own characteristics, approximating to such its descriptions as: the highest good for the human life; sincere and intelligent love; such phenomenon which contains the things of the physical universe in order. But all these speeches have been attempts to define the phenomenon of ideal property without philosophy. The difference of the inferences of these people is intended, I think, to emphasize the fact that Love is such a beginning, which is made of «transcendent» things, and therefore cannot be expressed in one point of view. Only the speech of Socrates really expressed



the idea of «Eros» presenting it as an intermediary between immortals and mortals, reflecting the middle, the intermediate nature of the ideas.

Plato's comprehension of ideas does not imply their fast and direct cognition, and their full detection for the participants of the dialogue. The primary value of the study of philosophy is to create a proper cognitive guideline, which, immediately raises the question of the protection of the guideline from sophistry and meaningless oratory; and then later study of philosophy becomes the value that is achieved through philosophizing some specific knowledge about the ideas. Ideas should be to comprehend, but it is necessary to understand that the reality of ideas cannot be quickly analyzed, there is a lot of evidence in Plato's texts approving this fact. Starting directly from the «Apology of Socrates», Plato's Socrates confirms that there is no ready-made knowledge; he could not promise any of his students because knowledge itself cannot be given. And in the «Second letter» (314a-b), although not all researchers considered it genuine, Plato wrote of many years of «prolonged labour» anticipate getting of philosophical knowledge.

Still in literature can be found some reasoning, explaining Plato's refusal to issue finished formulations of ontological positions «dualistic ontology»⁴, wrong view of the matter, the irrationality and even fancy of his teachings [Racionalism i Irracionalism v Antichnoj Filosofii, 2010] rather than Socratic manner to engage in dialogue and features of academic teaching practice. In this case Plato's dialogues are convenient material for interpretation, can be easy included in the perspective of interest of the author. Reflections on the problem of the struggle between idealism and materialism, any other metaphilosophical problem – will set a certain course of interpretation of Plato's dialogues. Indeed, in the capable hands any text can work on defending its own philosophical concepts.

For a large number of modern domestic philosophers-experts question of what is knowledge and what we know, it is also extremely important. Some of the researchers, in response to this question, remain in the framework of the work on the problems associated with the «fundamental question of philosophy», which, although has changed its formulation, but remained a universal and «basic». And if you take the side of the Platonic vision of being of philosophical approach to knowledge, leaving aside in formulated by someone before matrix of all possible (and therefore – it is easy to foresee) philosophical problems, it becomes clear that the real philosophical problems arise from the analysis of different possible interpretations of the philosophical text. They exist at the junction of different types of descriptions of speculative universe, these problems are not immediately ready to use. To understand the specificity of philosophical knowledge should be a clear understanding of what was originally a philosopher implicitly renounces claims to describe the world of the object as it really is; philosopher engaged in understanding a world that does not tolerate the wording and definitions «major issues».

The third feature of philosophical knowledge according to Plato is cognition of the selfness

There is a big question for the researchers: what exactly did Plato teach his students at the Academy? A widespread notion about Plato academic activities is the idea that Plato taught both philosophy, and mathematics⁵. The idea of academic symbiosis of mathematics and philosophy, put forward and realized by Plato, has a long history and it keeps quite stable even in the twentieth century: «Two of the three schools of ancient Greek philosophy, Ionian and Pythagorean, consisted exclusively of geometers - and references to Eleatic's interest in geometry can also be found quite often. Plato was a great figure in the history of both subjects» [Peirce, 2001, p.102].

⁴ Here, the «dualism» of the philosophy of Plato is not connected with the dispute about the first principles of his philosophy, which is constituting the sufficient point of the Academy's activities after his death, and occupying a central place in neo-Platonic discussions on the Oneness and the first principles. We see here a simple opposition between the world of Ideas and the material world of objects.

⁵ Here, the «mathematics» means all mathematical disciplines taken in one coherent whole, which includes the «calculation» and the «geometry», like Plato describes in «The Republic».



One can hold the opinion, represented in the well-known work by L. Y. Zhmud [Zhmud', 1996] and according to which Plato, at best, taught dialectics at the Academy, while exact sciences and mathematics were taught by other people, and the role of Plato in teaching mathematics is greatly exaggerated; because nobody knows for sure what was happening behind the «walls» of the Academy. The only thing we know is that Plato taught something. If he taught dialectics, it is necessary to note that it was a certain method, a special art of understanding «the essence of any subject», as stated in «The Republic» (VII, 532a).

As a recommendation for teaching philosophy and for philosophical treatment of things in general, Plato, if we follow his conception of dialectics, put forwards the following idea: not to put any question concerning the studied subject, until the utmost clarity of what this studied subject is (whatever it may be) is achieved. In «Phaedrus» Plato insists that if the interlocutor wants understanding of any object to be successful, he «must first make a methodical division and acquire a clear impression of each class» (Phaedrus 263b), in «Sophist» it is claimed that a philosopher - is the one who can make «the division of things by classes» (Soph. 253d). In «Philebus» Plato says that the ready-made answers to the questions concerning the truth do not allow revealing the nature of reality. Plato asserts that before for no particular reasons one ascribes the good to «wisdom» (φρόνησις), «knowledge» (ἐπιστήμη) and «intellect» (νοῦς), one must figure out first: in what correlation are the types of knowledge with each other, are they similar or not? Only due to the answering these questions one may understand whether everything that was mentioned deals with the good or not.

However, what do philosophy learners perceive as a result of long preparation, which was at the Academy? As an answer I quote Plato's statement from the dialogue «The Republic», where he declares: «philosophers are those who are capable of apprehending that which is eternal and unchanging, while those who are incapable of this» (VI, 484b). The cognition of «that which is eternal and unchanging» is the cognition of the ideal being.

Claiming the existence of a body without a soul, Plato asks: «Do we think there is such a thing as absolute justice, or not?» (Phaedo 65d). Of course, we do. We also acknowledge the existence of absolute «beauty» and «goodness» but the essence of Plato's question is not to make certain of whether there is the presence of knowledge. The essence of the issue lies in the affirmation of «self» as the semantic definition of the phenomena of beauty, goodness, justice, and so on. The word αὐτὸ («self») in Plato's texts, if does not have a technical meaning, refers to the description of a reality that cannot be understood by perception and which gives these phenomena the perfect look. We see this in «Symposium»: reference to the end of Diotima's speech about the most beautiful gives an idea of what is this very ideal area. Diotima, speaking about «beauty», attaches to this word the word αὐτὸς, emphasizing the «self» of the beautiful, uniqueness of its own nature: «ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλὸν δύναιτο μονοειδέξ κατιδεῖν» («What if he could behold the divine beauty itself, in its unique form?»), (Sym. 211e-212a).

What does Plato teach?

What is «good», «selfness», «one» and what should one do with this knowledge? One can just take these entities as something given, and experiencing the tremulous feelings, akin to the mystical ones, confirm that these entities are real, and this reality itself would explain their ontological significance. Moreover, mythological scenes, which express the content of his philosophy in a positive light, dominate Plato's dialogues and these scenes often express the most attractive part of Plato's philosophy – stories about the underworld.

One can try to follow Plato substantively, and try to understand what kind of content is hidden behind the term that will be called later in the academic tradition «the ontology of Plato». The one, as we understand it from the dialogue «Parmenides», is ineffable, but the possession of this ineffability, the closeness of it, has much to offer. Studies of the development of Neoplatonism, taking into account the importance of the moment of interpretation of «the first hypothe-



sis» of the «Parmenides»⁶ by Platonists, underline the role of «one» as the organizer of the world of visible things⁷. The one organizes all kinds of secondary existence, and this is combined with the characteristics of «pure» transcendental, hidden and unspeakable.

In this way, we may need to refer to a respected Plato's student. Proclus wrote many comments on Plato's work; we can trust his understanding of the teachings of Plato. Proclus imagined pretty well the ineffability of «one». There is an important Plato's «ontological» statement, a very well-known passage: «all the things, which are ever said to exist are sprung from one and many and have inherent in them the finite and the infinite» (Phil. 16c). Proclus commented on this fragment⁸: Plato teaches «the intelligible triads». The first member of the triad is «limit», that is «god», but it appeared «owing to the indifferent and the very first god». «Limit» «measures» and «determines» everything and «hypostatizes» next following gods. «The unlimited is a persistent power of the god, which leads to appearance of all the originative structures and of the whole unlimitedness». But «the mixed» presents the very nature of the gods and contains both «the appeared» and «the cause», and in «the mixed» «isolation» of the first god is justified.

Further, according to Proclus, Plato describes degradation of the triads: similar to the first triad the second triad will be intelligible too, but it descends from the second member of the first triad, and so on. But the first triad is the first one among the earliest, however, we should not forget about «the very first god», after who it comes.

How should a teacher of philosophy act: should he believe in this to the letter? The knowledge of «the One», of Plato's «selfness» is the knowledge of the one, that «determines everything and is deprived of all the determinations, i.e. it is those, that is the very itself of every thing and the very itself of all the existed, at the same time, cultural-typologically it has an absolutely specific face, and in it without surprise we recognize the generally-known traits of the antique genius on the whole» [Losev, 1994, p. 363]. And in this case such knowledge can be transmitted to the following generations.

Or everything, Plato speaks about, should one consider as the material for historico-philosophical reflection, or as statements given for analytical insight or as something else? On the one hand, the practice of academic collaboration and communication, which takes place in the philosophical environment, evokes sensation of the necessity of negotiations of theoretical generalizations and of way out of «the circle», specified by the classical philosophy. But on the other hand, the idea, that probably we really have a chance to cognize and transmit «wisdom» as «art of life» (P. Hadot), cannot be rejected completely.

A view of the problem of the Platonic approach to the reality presented in the book of J. Moravcsik [Moravcsik, 2000], analyzing the content of the categories «appearance» and «reality» through the philosophy of Plato, is interesting in that the author draws attention to the specifics of the cognitive element in Plato's relation to reality. From this book we learn that according to Plato, understanding of the essence of things does not mean accumulating an information, or to be armed with lots of knowledge about different things. Knowing something, according to Plato, does not mean cognize an object in a varying degree. The most important in the cognitive process is a contribution to the perception of the conditions under which understanding of the truth is possible. This study of the conditions of receiving cognition makes Plato's doctrine of knowledge «realistic»; only on the basis of these conditions, one can count on the full and final understanding of the reality. Plato's theory of ideas is not intended to justify the reality, but to be

⁶ Conclusions from this «hypothesis»: Parm. 141e-142c.

⁷ A number of Losev's works is devoted to the rationale of this state. Repeating the logic of philosophers and the Neoplatonists, Losev sees in the «dialectic» in the «Parmenides» real and meaningful disclosure of the answer to the question of why the visible universe has exactly that appearance what it has. The logical-dialectical scheme of «Parmenides» contains, in his opinion, descriptions of the relations between the ideal, forming being and the «empirical being», which are can be described as relations between organizing principle and the whole reality, that is subordinated to this principle.

⁸ Plat. Teol. III, 45.



a condition, the thinking field, through which an explanation of reality and access to the real objects come.

G. Deleuze in his «Logic of Sense» does not assume Plato's ideas for philosophical analysis directly. There is no such problem: to give some positive knowledge about the ideas themselves, to talk about what they represent. Deleuze uses the ideas of Plato to denote the «pure formation», which captures the duality of things, and which is related to the self-identity and other conditions, which were interesting for Deleuze. This is the another example of how the Plato's dialogues act as a mental background, experimental fields, where completely different text will be built on the second floor.

Anyway, the position of Plato, concluded that the research object is the object which is gradually discovered in the process of philosophizing, should aim a modern philosopher on step-by-step research description of the movement to conceptual conclusion, to identify the conditions of getting knowledge, on the details and particular, containing an invaluable amount of new knowledge. This position also opposes the attempts of reducing all the text volume to the presentation of general ideas, theoretical schemes, universal judgments, rude generalizations, ready knowledge. According to Plato, the answers to the questions about the truth do not allow to reveal the nature of reality. In addition, generalizations can lead to superficial, meaningless, «disputatious» reasoning, from the appearance of which he warned everyone who wants to do philosophy.

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