THE 13th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
ISSEI
International Society for the Study of European Ideas
in cooperation with the University of Cyprus

The Challenge of Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Universalism and Plurality of Cultural Worlds

BORIS GUBMAN
Tver State University, Russia

Confronted with the reality of the mosaic contemporary culture, philosophy is no longer able to preserve its classical image and functions. It becomes engaged in a dialogue between science and other forms of culture, between different non-similar cultural worlds present in the communication space of the global community. The critical mission of philosophy emerged as one of its major functions together with the collapse of the classical metaphysics and the rise of postmetaphysical thinking. J. Habermas rightly emphasized that postmetaphysical thinking considerably differs from the classical metaphysics of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, as well as from the Modernity metaphysics of consciousness offering a new perspective of philosophizing on the communicative basis. Given this new status of philosophy, it becomes involved as a mediator in the cultural milieu criticizing its various outcomes and unifying them in common space (Habermas 1994: 50). With this apparently new role, philosophy should also help in the dialogue between non-similar cultural worlds thus making possible constant negotiations between them. However, assuming the importance of its critical role, philosophy is still preserving its function as a universal tribunal of reason inherited from the European Enlightenment. This means that the reality of cultural pluralism revealed by the philosophical reason in its critical faculty should be reconciled with its universalist potential acknowledged even by the radical postmodernist thought. To remain true to its vocation, contemporary philosophy should preserve in a modified fashion both capacities of producing a universalist and critical theoretical worldviews.

Absolute Tribunal of Philosophical Reason and the Plurality of Cultures

The classical metaphysics of the Antiquity and the Middle Ages was based on the assumption that philosophical reason allied with the intellect is able to rise above the empirically given reality and uncover the ontological foundations of the universe. The strong understanding of theoretical thinking able to expose the essential structure of reality led to metaphysical constructions revealing the hierarchy of being and man's place in the universe. Irrespective of the considerable differences between the classical philosophy of the Antiquity and the mediaeval religious metaphysics, they were both not at all sensitive to the reality of culture produced by human beings. In the philosophical thought of this time, human culture was not opposed to the order of nature and was conceived as its continuation.

With the coming of Modernity, philosophical reason aspires to find its own foundations within itself producing the metaphysics of consciousness. The sovereignty of thought becomes the basic assumption of the new constellation of philosophers from R. Descartes to I. Kant and G. W. Fr. Hegel. "Whether reason is now approached in foundationalist terms as a subjectivity that makes possible the world as a whole, or whether it is conceived dialectically as a spirit that recovers itself in the procession through nature and history, in either case reason is active as a simultaneously totalizing and self-referential reflection (Habermas 1994: 32)." In the understanding of the inner machinery of human consciousness, they find the key to the universe. Thus, continuing the line of classical metaphysics, philosophy undergoes a radical change: it comes to the reflexive interpretation of its own mission as a self-justifying thought activity. Any coherent worldview should be worked out since that time as a result of reflexive comprehension of the inner ability of mind. When viewed in this perspective, philosophical understanding of the life of the mind should provide the secure path for working out human theoretical and practical strategies in the world. The belief in the ability of philosophical reason to become the final point of justification of human rational activity was at once universalist and critical in its character. It contains the presupposition that philosophical theory has a strong potential permitting to cope with this tremendously difficult task.

The approach to philosophy as a final tribunal of reason is most clearly formulated in Kant's famous essay *Conflict of the Faculties* where he comes to the conclusion that no other discipline is able to give a justification for all kind of human theoretical and practical activity (Kant 1966a: 331). Philosophy, in his opinion, represents the unique capacity of self-founding thinking giving on the basis of transcendental methodology a key to the universal a priori foundations and limits of the functioning of theoretical and practical reason, as well as the faculty of judgement. Analysing the potential of philosophical reason in its relations with the intellect, Kant comes to the conclusion that reason is able to rise beyond the empirically given and produce ideas representing the human world as a meaningful whole. Thus, he touches upon the problem that should become later the focal point of the reflexive understanding of the hermeneutical dimension of reason. In the self-founding capacity, philosophy unifies both critical and universalist aspirations

opening the horizon of world interpretation in a cosmopolitan sense. Philosophical reason goes beyond the boundaries of any human group or nation and produces a vision of the world that motivates any rational subject to accept a critically grounded universalist worldview.

This interpretation of philosophy as a self-founding theoretical activity was further developed in the Hegelian thought. Philosophy as a reflexive thinking, Hegel believes, is equipped with the absolute power of reason surpassing any limits of the finalized products of the intellect (Hegel 1970: 78). Possessing this capacity, philosophical reason is endowed with the gift to dialectically grasp in its constant reflexive self-development the Absolute that is also given in its immediate presence to faith. On the basis of categorical synthesis, philosophy, in the Hegelian view, should reveal the absolute logical foundations of the universe. If philosophy is a never-ending reflexive activity of reason, it should trace the inner dialectical self-deployment of the Absolute in history (Bubner 2003: 130). This should give a philosophical reason, Hegel believed, a historical dimension. When compared with the Kantian vision of philosophical reason's ability, it is a radically new chance to understand the universalism of philosophy as relevant to a certain cultural situation. However, this potential chance is not realized in Hegel's system due to its monologue character and inability to accept the otherness and multiplicity of logical strategies.

The opposition of culture and nature emerged as a specific fruit of Modernity making the universe of human cultural creativity a specific field of philosophical reflexion. Since the time of its appearance in the 18-th century, philosophy of culture paid tribute to human ability to rise above the limits of nature and to produce a meaningful world that differs from the reproducible cosmic order. At the same time, the classical Modernity looked at cultural reality as crowning the inner rational structure of the universe and leading to its final perfection. It was understood as a continuation of the realm of nature with its universal rational order. Uncovering the world's rational foundations, philosophical reason should find a universal key to the riddle of mankind's cultural development. It should do it relying on its own rational reflexive resources permitting him to grasp the inner logic of cultural reality in its historical transformation. If so, the uniqueness of different cultural worlds may be understood only on the basis of a certain general idea accessible for philosophical reason. Otherwise, philosophy in a cosmopolitan sense would be inconceivable. Philosophy built upon this premise is able to criticize culture only for its inadequateness to the ideal principles revealed by reason whose historical dimension and limits are not examined within its format.

The metaphysics of consciousness offers its vision of cultural progress in the teleological perspective. A true universalist philosophizing, Kant believed, should rest upon the analysis of the main faculties of consciousness autonomous activity providing a key to the understanding of human cultural creativity and progressive self-perfection of mankind within the realm of history. Philosophy in a cosmopolitan sense should rise beyond the limits of any existing human community and culture revealing mankind's common goal of development. In his

work *The Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*, Kant moves to the crucial point of his critical metaphysics claiming that human reason is able to coin the idea casting light on the immanent plan of nature that directs the destiny of mankind. In the light of this idea, the universal history looks like a field of a constant perfection of theoretical and practical reason leading to the final point of a cosmopolitan world order where the triumph of human freedom is achieved. Despite the exiting contradictions and conflicts, the world community governed by the inner teleology of nature gradually progresses to the stage where they should necessarily disappear and the international law should grant any particular human being a status of a world citizen on the basis of a universal civil society (Kant 1966: 28). At this hypothetical point, reaching the understanding of mankind's common destiny, philosophy acquires perfection in its cosmopolitan dimension.

The Hegelian thought also proves its final universal validity through the self-development of the Absolute within the human reality. Hegel spoke of culture as the outcome of "universal labour" of human subjects involved in the teleology of history ordered by the Absolute. In its self-deployment within history, the Absolute reveals its different facets on various stages of human history setting the achievement of freedom as the final goal of mankind. Nourished by the ideas of J. G. Herder and J. W. Goete, the Hegelian thought emphasizes the gradual realization of freedom in the life of different peoples in non-similar cultural milieu, but its final victory is predestined by the universal teleology of the absolute spiritual foundation of the universe. "The fulfilment of Spirit therefore requires the growth of a community which will fully express and embody reason (Taylor 1998: 95)." Philosophical reason penetrates into the self-reflexive dialectical movement of this absolute substance acquiring the universal dimension.

Despite the radical criticism of the Hegelian legacy, Marxism in its classical form inherited the universalist dialectical style of philosophizing. It pretended to find the universal logic of history thus making it a tool of criticism of all forms of cultural alienation and political oppression. At the service of the Marxist political ideal, philosophical reason is a satellite of the revolutionary praxis.

With the coming of crisis of the classical metaphysics of consciousness, philosophical universalism became the target of constant attacks on the part of post-classical thought gradually moving to the stage of postmetaphysical thinking. This turn is inconceivable without the understanding of the overall change in culture of the second part of the 19-th-beginning of the 20-th century. It was marked by the interest to the unique cultural events and the emergence of historicist thought in humanities, the evolution of science from the classical to the post-classical paradigm, and the birth of modernist art. By this shift culture reminded philosophical reason of the gap exiting between its ideal image and reality that constantly demands attentive critical reflection. In order to sustain its image of a self-founding activity of reason, philosophy had to transform itself in the never-ending critical reflexion of cultural worlds.

The uniqueness of cultural worlds comes to the forefront of philosophical discussions in the works of Fr. Schlegel and other theorists of the Romanticism. It

becomes a real challenge for philosophy when expressed in different areas of humanities by Fr. Ast, J. G. Droysen, and L. von Ranke. Following Fr. Schleiermacher, W. Dilthey offered a hermeneutical perspective for the philosophical reason aspiring to penetrate into the reality of non-similar cultural worlds. Understanding them in their individuality as spiritual wholes, he was trying to cope with relativism and save the universal dignity of philosophical reasoning by postulating the permanent element of any psychologically biased interpretation residing in the eternal nature of human beings. On the basis of the transcendental methodology, W. Windelband and H. Rickert were trying to find a point of reconciliation between natural sciences and humanities in a priori structure of consciousness aimed at once at two vectors of the uniquely given and law and based on universal values. This was a way to save philosophical universalism confronted with the challenge of historicism. Fr. Nietzsche was far more radical in his perspectivist views and genealogical methodology symbolizing a decisive split with universalist aspirations of the classical philosophical reason. After the break with the universalism, the critical perspective becomes the most vital alternative for philosophical reason.

In the course of its formation, post-classical philosophy looks for a point of reconciliation between the uniqueness of human condition and universalist aspirations of philosophical reasoning. On this way, philosophical reason was inevitably moving to the understanding of its 'impurity', deep involvement in the inter-subjective relations, historical situation, particular cultural milieu, and, finally, in the human body experience. It had to respond to challenges of the 20-th-21-st century history, to information society innovations, to the new wave in post-classical science and humanities, as well as to the world interpretations offered by modernist and post-modernist art. Given the necessity to critically evaluate this cultural situation, philosophical reason gradually comes to the reflexive understanding of its hermeneutical function. This kind of transformation of philosophical reasoning is evident not only in the anthropological doctrines, but also in the schools of thought traditionally associated with analytical philosophy and philosophy of science.

The transition from the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle to post-positivist doctrines of K. Popper, Th. Kuhn, and P. Feyerabend introduced a new cultural dimension in the analysis of a plurality of non-similar paradigms of scientific ideas. Feyerabend's criticism of the relations between contemporary science and political establishment reveals an affinity of his thought with the ideas of neo-Marxism and post-structuralism. L. Wittgenstein's philosophy of language initiated the 'linguistic turn' within the analytical current of thought. Culture and language games come into the focus of attention of Wittgenstein's followers revealing the priority of semantics and creating a common area of dialogue with anthropological philosophy.

Analysing consciousness in the key of transcendental phenomenology, E. Husserl came to the conclusion that in the final instance it is rooted in the inter-subjectively shared life-world. M. Heidegger's fundamental ontology nourished

by his thought gave birth to different versions of hermeneutics from H.-G. Gadamer to R. Bubner and P. Ricoeur. Thus, transcendental reflexion steadily moves from the analysis of the a priori structure of reason to the uncovering of the being-in-the world producing a variety of conflicting strategies of interpretation of human reality (Ricoeur 1969: 27-28). In a phenomenological perspective, M. Merleau-Ponty also rightly pointed out that philosophy should not ignore the human bodily experiences.

The school of Frankfurt Neo-Marxism made a significant contribution to the understanding of philosophy as a critical theory. Rejecting the dogmatic doctrine of the classical historical materialism, M. Horkheimer, Th. Adorno, H. Marcuse, and E. Fromm developed a version of praxis philosophy that produced a prolific synthesis of the ideas of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Weber. The first left-wing generation of the school of Frankfurt successfully proved that philosophy could be interpreted as a self-founding thinking only in the never-ending genealogical criticism of cultural tradition in the light of the totality of praxis. The philosophical universalism is conceivable only in its concrete historical form as the outcome of praxis conditioned critical activity of reason. This attitude to the problem was inherited by the next generation of the school of Frankfurt after its liberal turn associated with the assumption that "social criticism stands side by side with the demands of a historically evolved reason (Honneh 2004: 338)."

Irrespective of their differences, French post-structuralism was strongly influenced by the neo-Marxist critical theory. Phenomenology and hermeneutics also have a significant role in the formation of J. Derrida, M. Foucault, G. Deleuze and other leading theorists of post-structuralism. They were convinced that philosophy should produce a new kind of iniversalist thought in the critical genealogical deconstruction of existing cultural traditions and negotiations with them.

Contemporary postmetaphysical thinking is the outcome of the development of the post-classical Western philosophy facing the necessity to reconsider the task and limits of philosophising in view of a new cultural reality. H. Arendt rightly remarked in *The Life of the Mind* that our understanding of the priority of reason over the operations of the intellect aimed at the empirically given should be accompanied with the new vision of its hermeneutical involvement in the language milieu. Reconsidering Kant's legacy, she comes to the justified conclusion that "the intellect (*Verstand*) desires to grasp what is given to the senses, but reason (*Vernunft*) wishes to understand its *meaning* (Arendt 1978: 57)." Thus, philosophical reason loosing its 'purity' and evaluating its deep connections with the particular individual and cultural situation unavoidably becomes hermeneutical. In order to produce a universally acceptable view, it should get engaged in the critical negotiations with the existing cultural traditions. The opportunity to get into this dialogue is one of the major issues under the discussion in contemporary postmetaphysical thought.

New Philosophical Critical Universalism

Under the influence of different cultural traditions, contemporary philosophy should inevitably be attentive to their meaningful content and get into critical negotiations with them. At the same time, philosophy of the postmetaphysical age should work out a new formula of universalism. Otherwise, there is a danger that philosophy, betraying its proper mission, will be no longer able to survive after the collapse of classical metaphysics. It may degenerate, as Kant predicted, in a kind of narrative practice describing and interpreting non-similar cultural traditions. In order to remain true to its cosmopolitan vocation, philosophy must be altogether critical and universalist. The hermeneutical reason should critically examine the content of cultural traditions and find the universal philosophical strategies that are adequate to the mosaic panorama of contemporary rapidly shrinking world. However, among the leading theorists of postmetaphysical thought there is a considerable disagreement regarding the opportunity to preserve philosophical universalism in a critical fashion.

Perhaps, the most radical denial of an opportunity of survival of any form of philosophical universalism was expressed by R. Rorty who openly voiced his opposition to the Platonic-Aristotelian ontological constructions of reality, as well as to the Cartesian-Kantian philosophy of consciousness within the format of his neo-pragmatist doctrine. He looks at Nietzsche as a philosopher who helped to ruin the fortress of universalism of the classical metaphysics and paved the way to the post-modern stance of thinking. “Post-Nietzschean philosophers like Wittgenstein and Heidegger write philosophy in order to exhibit the universality and necessity of the individual and the contingent. Both philosophers became caught up in the quarrel between philosophy and poetry which Plato began, and both ended by trying to work out honorable terms on which philosophy might surrender to poetry (Rorty 1989: 26).” Rorty’s own attack on the universalist metaphysics of the past was nourished not only by Wittgenstein and Heidegger, but also by J.-P. Sartre, H.-G. Gadamer, M. Foucault, J. Derrida and other representatives of European thought, as well as by such American thinkers as W. James, J. Dewey, Th. Kuhn, W. Quine, H. Putnam, and D. Davidson.

Looking for honorable terms of philosophy’s surrender to poetry, Rorty’s is convinced that language is the only reality we could know in its uniqueness and contingency. Despite Wittgenstein’s understanding of the rules of language games as methods of translation of experience and reality representation, Rorty believes that this problem is of no philosophical significance after the world was de-divinized and viewed as existing in sign systems. He also disregards the fact that Wittgenstein was quite critical of extreme nominalism mistakenly “interpreting all words as names” and spoke of the rules of language games as preserving certain general aspects and playing important role in the concrete communication space (Wittgenstein 1964: 118).

Rorty’s criticism of philosophical universalism rests on his appeal to radical nominalism and historicism. His liberal ironist strategy of philosophical reflection is rooted in the tradition of the Romanticism and stands in opposition to the Enlightenment rationalism. The uniqueness of language vocabularies specific for

particular cultures makes their boundaries non-transparent. Thus, language contingency and particularity of each historical situation becomes an argument against philosophical universalism. This kind of approach resolutely outlaws creation of meta-language discourses despite the reality of their natural multiplication in the cultural context. Rorty is right claiming that a perfect meta-discourse clarifying scientific or non-scientific problems is a utopia, but a meta-discourse practice is a legitimate and inerasable part of culture.

The liberal ironist rejection of a meta-discourse practice should be regarded as a step forward to the refutation of rationality as belonging to the classical stance of philosophical thought. "The ironist, by contrast, is a nominalist and a historicist. She thinks nothing has an intrinsic nature, a real essence. So she thinks that the occurrence of a term like "just" or "scientific" or "rational" in the final vocabulary of the day is no reason to think that Socratic inquiry into the essence of justice or science or rationality will take one much beyond the language games of one's time (Rorty 1989: 74-75)." In his criticism of rationality, Rorty is trying to justify his approach appealing to Wittgensten's language philosophy whose message sounds differently due to his understanding of language game rules as certain rational patterns. Wittgenstein also believed that primitive language games could facilitate the emergence of their complicated forms thus supporting in fact the idea of the historical development of rationality forms (Wittgenstein 1960: 17). Philosophy, in his opinion, should clarify the rules of language games, revealing concrete life forms existing in human culture. Thus, Wittgenstein interpreted philosophy as a critical thinking uncovering the roots of the rational foundations of linguistic practice constituting culture. D. Davidson's works that equally inspired Rorty are also based on the idea of inner rationality of different forms of human thought and action (Davidson 2005: 319). Rorty's conclusion that rationality is always a fruit of a definite cultural milieu should not be taken for a sound reason to reject its idea as philosophically meaningful. If philosophy is deprived of the right to build a generalized rational interpretation of cultural forms, it should move in the direction similar to literary criticism chosen by Rorty.

Rorty's radical break with philosophical universalism conditions his refusal to coin a definite formula of liberalism. Declaring the primacy of the private over the public, he totally disagrees with J. Habermas and claims the uniqueness of Western liberalism as a fruit of particular cultural conditions. Helpless to offer a radical political strategy of improvement, a Western liberal ironist is only able to feel personal compassion for human beings sufferings in other parts of the world.

Philosophy's right to exit after the demise of the classical metaphysics should be proved on the basis of the need to obtain a new formula of its critical universalism relevant to the contemporary world problems. Dealing with this problem, A. Badiou proposed his version of mathematical ontology that should be translated in the logics of different worlds. J. Habermas and J. Derrida offered the two most popular versions of philosophy's self-defence in a critical dialogue with culture. While Habermas believes that universalist philosophical views are obtainable in a critical communication of rational subjects and then applied to the

non-similar life-worlds, Derrida looks at them as the outcome of negotiations with different cultures. Both scenarios of philosophy's self-defence are applicable in the currently existing situation.

Badiou's project of a radically new philosophical ontology is based on the assumption that it should overcome cultural relativism and find a rationally convincing universal order of being that might be compatible simultaneously with the coming of a radically new and unpredictable event. Therefore, universality and openness for renewal constitute two basic and mutually complementary features of his philosophical thought. Badiou is in agreement with M. Heidegger that "philosophy as such can only be re-assigned on the basis of the ontological question" (Badiou 2010: 2). At the same time, he is persuaded that the analytical tradition rightly emphasized the value of the mathematical-logical G. Frege-G. Cantor revolution opening new horizons for ontology. Finally, this kind of philosophical ontology is inconceivable without the post-Cartesian theory of the Subject understood in the key of philosophical synthesis of the ideas K. Marx, S. Freud, E. Husserl, J.-P. Sartre, and J. Lacan as 'void, cleaved, a-substantial, and ir-reflexive'. Thus, the contemporary conditions for philosophy include for Badiou the history of Western thought, post-Cantorian mathemaics, psychoanalysis, contemporary art and politics.

This kind of approach to philosophy's task in contemporary world should be considered as a response to 'democratic materialism' based on the belief that there are only bodies and languages. Such strategy of philosophizing is synonymous for him with the postmodernist one: "'Postmodern' is one of the possible names for contemporary democratic materialism" (Badiou 2009 : 2). Getting into the open debate with M. Foucault, J. Derrida, G. Deleuze and other representatives of postmodern thought, Badiou names his own philosophical platform 'materialist dialectic'. In his interpretation, it differs greatly from the so called democratic materialism assuming that "there are only bodies and languages, except that there are truths" (Badiou 2009 : 4). Possessing no substantial existence, truths appear in the world and compose an 'atemporal meta-history'. Badiou repeatedly claims that this kind of 'Platonic gesture' is demanded to overcome 'democratic sophistry' putting obstacles on the way of our understanding of a subject's participation in a truth-process. The proclaimed struggle for truth has an evident revolutionary colouring and looks as the only ground for finding the affinity of Badiou's materialist dialectic with the orthodox Marxism (Badiou 2009 : 503). It demands a revival of a considerably remodelled kind of Platonism able to survive in the contemporary mosaic of non-similar cultural worlds.

In *Being and Event*, Badiou worked at the level of pure being determining the ontological types of truths and abstract forms of subjects activating them, while in *Logics of Worlds* he approached this area at the level of being-there, in the perspective of appearing in different worlds. Comparing his own philosophical development to that of Hegel, Badiou believes that *Logics of Worlds* stands to *Being and Event* as *Phenomenology of the Spirit* stands to *Science of Logic* (Badiou 2009 : 8). This means that, unlike Hegel, he had to work out first the

general ontological foundations of his doctrine, and, then, to prove them at the level of a specific version of phenomenology in accord with the prevailing pluralist atmosphere our time. His pluralism appears as the other side of the anti-holist approach to the basic questions of ontology.

The basic assumption of Badiou's ontology is that being should be understood as presentable in a situation where the multiple is given as multiple 'substracted' from the one. "Ontology, insofar as it exists, must necessarily be the science of the multiple qua multiple" (Badiou 2010 : 28). Therefore, ontology is feasible for Badiou only on the basis of mathematical set theory. His mathematical ontology is deeply rooted in the ideas of Plato and Cantor despite the fact that he resolutely rules out the existence of the One, unifying all possible multiplicities. E. Zermelo- A. Fraenkel theoretical views are the immediate source of inspiration of Badiou's approach to the multiplicity problem. The multiple, in his opinion, is composed solely of multiplicities, but the One does not exist. What exists, Badiou argues, is the count-as-one - a system of conditions giving a chance to recognize the multiple as multiple.

Understanding multiplicity as based on the logic of belonging, Badiou emphasizes that nothing is the pure multiple upon which the count operates. Due to the fact that any multiple is composed of multiples one should logically come to the problem of the first count pointing inconceivable without the void which is for Badiou "the proper name of being" (Badiou 2010 : 56). This ontological premise means that the void is presentable as a constitutive element of any structured multiplicity. It signifies the 'unicity of the unpresentable' marked within the presentation and forms an origin of any structure or meta-structure. The void in this perspective paves the way for the methodologically conceivable operation of presentation of an initial finite multiple and the open infinity without the One (Badiou 2010 : 148). The existence of the infinite Other is not identical for Badiou with the One due to his resolute atheism and refutation of God's existence (Badiou 2010 : 277). Giving reasons for the inexistence of the One, he appeals to B. Russell's paradox without any further reference to the solution offered by type theory and its horizons. On the assumed platform of the 'abnormality' of a set of all sets, Badiou declares the inexistence of Nature and History that looks quite problematic in the key of type theory (Badiou 2010 : 140; 176). Within the infinite counting-as-one process, the relations between oneness and infinity also demand further elucidation. The One together with the infinite Other persistently remind of themselves in any thought effort.

The inexistence of History does not mean in Badiou's ontology the denial of historicity whose origin is the local evental site appearing in a situation. The event is characterized as "a one-multiple made up of, on the one hand, all the multiples which belong to its site, and on the other hand, the event itself" (Badiou 2010 : 179). From the ontological point of view, the evental site is thus interpreted as 'an abnormal multiple on the edge of the void' which is retroactively qualified as such by the event's occurrence. Due to the fact that the event belongs to a given structured situation without being included, it is always producing historical

singularity ‘on-the-edge-of-the-void’. The event, in Badiou’s set theory description, does not belong to being qua being, but it intervenes into the situation through nomination generating a structured sequence. Like J. Böhme’s ‘Ungrund’, the void interpreted by Badiou as ‘the name of the Other’ is at the origin of the event’s historicity.

Within the format of Badiou’s philosophy, truth comes together with the event as ‘indiscernible’, revealed by the post-evental fidelity operation under the circumstances of a given situation and contrasts the existing state of knowledge. He proposes a strong demarcation line between veridicity of a statement within a certain ‘encyclopaedia of knowledge’ with its conventional rules and truth which always ‘makes a hole’ in it (Badiou 2009 : 2). Truth is also characterized as the ‘infinite element’ of a situation containing infinity of inquiries. Badiou is a strong opponent of any form of a constructivist approach which “naturally prevails in established situations because it measures being to language such as it is” (Badiou 2010 : 328). However, it is easily noticeable that his criticism of I. Kant and any form of contemporary constructivist epistemology contradicts the basic assumptions of his approach to ontology making on the platform of a mathematical set theory. It is nothing other than a form of mathematical transcendentalism with conventionally established inter-subjectively valid rules. When Badiou discusses the problem of a truth nomination, it becomes apparent that this process is inconceivable without the mixture of already existing and newly introduced language conventions, coexistence of the old and new descriptive vocabularies. The purely mathematical proof of a possibility of a name’s neutrality is not able to refute the semantic practice reality with its circular reference structure which is deeply imbedded in ordinary language.

Breaking with the traditional understanding of the subject, Badiou offers its interpretation as a “local configuration of generic procedure” that supports truth (Badiou 2010 : 391). Subject, he argues, is not substantial in its nature and is represented in individual (the domain of love), mixed (the realm of science and art), and collective (the sphere of politics) forms. Subjectivation process counts what is ‘faithfully connected’ with the event and introduces new nomination in a definite area in order to express truth. “A subject is a local evaluator of self-mentioning statements: he or she knows-with regard to the situation to-come, thus from the standpoint of the indiscernible – that these statements are either certainly wrong, or possibly veridical but suspended from the will-have-taken-place of one positive enquiry” (Badiou 2010 : 404). Creating a discourse in a finite local situation a subject faces the infinity of truth. Here again the author is confronted with the dilemma of expressing the infinity within the newly born discourse system which should be inevitably transformed into the ‘encyclopaedia of knowledge’.

A. Badiou’s book gives a chance to understand the main facets of the problem of the relations of being and event in the light of contemporary scientific and cultural experience. The freshness of its main ideas creates a real intellectual challenge and evidently contributes to the formation of the new reflexive pattern of philosophizing emerging in the 21-st century.

Truths, making human beings immortal, are articulated in Badiou's metaphysics in the spheres of science, art, politics, and love by faithful, obscure, and reactive subjects. Each of these subjects is specifically related to the present and understood as "a register of experience, a schema for the conscious distribution of the reflexive and non-reflexive" (Badiou 2009 : 47). The general theory of appearing or being-there is the area of study of a Greater Logic that differs from the ordinary logic which is a grammar of correct statements accompanied by a theory of deduction and a semantics of interpretations (Badiou 2009 : 93). Badiou believes that the main task of his Greater logic is to think 'worldly' multiple, objects and their relations in appearing or localization.

Badiou's Greater Logic is based on the assumption of the inexistence of the Whole which is the cornerstone of his ontological views. He comes to this conclusion on the basis of the famous B. Russell's paradox ruling out logically the possibility that a set can contain itself or belong to itself. The set of all sets – the Whole or the Universe – becomes for Badiou the inconceivable Chimera (Badiou 2009 : 110). He continues the attack on the Western ontological thought that was launched in the French philosophy by E. Levinas with a different set of arguments. Within the format of Badiou's doctrine based on the mathematical ontology, Infinity non-related to localized sets of multiples becomes unthinkable. He comes to the conclusion that "the identified multiple is a 'being of the world'" (Badiou 2009 : 113). Any singular being is identified in the world through its relations with other beings in a certain situation. In contrast to Hegel's logical universalism, the Greater Logic uncovers within the non-similar worlds their logical order represented each time in its specific form (Badiou 2009 : 143). It is based on the assumption that there is no logic but the logics of different classical and non-classical worlds.

Each individual world is ordered in Badiou's version of 'objective phenomenology' by its own transcendental. It designates that a world, where pure multiplicities appear as objects, possesses a basic order-structure conditioning the network of identities and differences of its constitutive elements. Despite of Badiou's doctrine evident rootedness in the tradition of transcendental philosophy, he expresses disagreement with I. Kant and E. Husserl who, in his opinion, overlook that the transcendental logical order depends on the ontology of the situations of being (Badiou 2009 : 173-174). However, it is hardly deniable that these situations of being are imaginable only within the transcendental operations of consciousness.

Although the French philosopher stands in opposition to postmodernism, he introduces the set of categories portraying the constitution of the worlds and the process of change within them that sound in accord with the post-classical stance of philosophizing. Any world is portrayed in its static form in Badiou's phenomenology as composed of objects – "units of appearing in the world" identified within the framework of transcendental indexing with their phenomenal properties and ultimately atoms – and their relations. "A world is ontologically assignable by that which appears, and logically assignable by the relations between

the apparents" (Badiou 2009 : 305). Identity and difference, existence and non-existence of the objects are defined through their worldliness. At the same time, variable worlds are subjected to change and characterized in Badiou's book by the categories of site, weak and strong singularity, and, finally, event. A site is defined by the author as "a reflexive multiplicity, which belongs to itself and thereby transgresses the laws of being" (Badiou 2009 : 369). Bridging the gap between being and being-there, a site appears to disappear and instantaneously reveals the void out of which the strong singularity of an event comes to the world. Declaring his disagreement with Deleuze, Badiou removes an event from the 'ascendancy of the One' and 'delivers it to the stars' as revealing truth.

The subjective truth-procedure and the objective appearance of the multiplicities in a world are understood as mutually complementing each other in Badiou's theory of points. Any point 'dualizes the infinite' in an instant of decision making a truth appear in a place of a world (Badiou 2009 : 409). It is associated with the production of the subjective formalism through the application of different thought operations to collecting the traces of the vanished events in the light of their possible modes of relations with the present. A multiple-being that bears this subjective formalism and makes it appear in a world is interpreted by the author as a non-organic body representing "the totality of the elements of the site incorporated into the evental present" (Badiou 2009 : 468). Thus, the past should always meet the present signalling 'the true life' which is for Badiou the instant of creation and eternal truth coming. In contrast to Stalinist version of Marxism inherited by L. Althusser, this move should disjoin his version of materialist dialectic, the philosophy 'of emancipation through truths' from historical materialism, to break with the 'cult of genealogies and narratives' (Badiou 2009 : 509). It should also draw a demarcation line between his doctrine and postmodern thought.

Responding to the problems raised in postmodern French thought, Alain Badiou offers an original rational scenario of interpreting them in a new key. It is aimed at developing a universalist strategy of philosophizing adequate to the mosaic multiplicity of non-similar cultural worlds. At the same time, his theoretical thought is unable to completely bridge the gap between mathematical ontology and their variety.

Unlike Rorty, Habermas is a strong opponent of philosophical post-modernism and a theorist who believes in the power of communicative rationality as a basis of a new critical universalist stance of philosophizing. In his version of neo-Marxist philosophy, he gave a profound analysis of the crisis of the classical metaphysics and came to the conclusion that in order to survive, philosophy should learn the lessons of the Enlightenment and reinterpret them coining a new pattern of a critical universalism. It should be able to apply its universal descriptive and normative content to particular cultural milieu. In this respect contemporary critical universalism differs, in his opinion, from the highly valued Kantian and Hegelian heritage subjected to just and severe criticism by the representatives of language

philosophy, structuralism, post-structuralism, neo-Marxism and neo-pragmatism (Habermas 1994: 37-38).

Habermas resolutely disagrees not only with Rorty's refutation of philosophical universalism, but also with Wittgenstein's interpretation of the merely "therapeutic" vocation of philosophy. This therapeutic understanding of philosophy, he argues, means a "farewell to philosophy" non-critically leaving the world as it is. Philosophy in its "therapeutic" function is unable by its very definition to change the world. "Field research in cultural anthropology seems to be the strongest candidate to succeed philosophy after its demise. Surely the history of philosophy will henceforth be interpreted as the unintelligible doings of some outlandish tribe that today is fortunately extinct (Habermas 1995: 11)." In order to avoid this tragic final, Habermas offers his own strategy of philosophical critical universalism needed in a radically changing world.

Philosophy, in Habermas opinion, should respond to the challenges of contemporary culture that since the beginning of the European Modernity suffers a divorce between its main branches – science, morality, and art. "Since the dawn of modernity in the eighteenth century, cultures has generated those structures of rationality that Max Weber and Emil Lask conceptualized as cultural value spheres. Their existence calls for description and analysis, not philosophical justification. Reason has split into three moments – modern science, positive law and post-traditional ethics, and autonomous art and institutionalized art criticism – but philosophy had precious little to do with this disjunction (Habermas 1995: 17)." Habermas argues that philosophy today should play a role of a witness and mediator trying to reconcile various branches of diversified human knowledge and alienated areas of culture. Transforming itself on the communicative basis, it proves that rationality and universality should prevail in the sphere of knowledge, as well as in the coinage of norms governing the relations of society. Kant's categorical imperative should be regarded as a corner stone of normative justification and selection (Habermas 1995: 58).

In response to Rorty's criticism, Habermas argues that universality and rationality as fruits of theoretical and practical reason are born independently of the context of particular lifeworlds. However, only a particular lifeworld should translate, for instance, the universal insights of morality into concrete actions and prove their validity. "Within the horizon of the lifeworld, practical judgements derive both their concreteness and their power to motivate action from their inner connection to unquestionably accepted ideas of the good life, in short, in their connection to ethical life and its institutions (Habermas 1995: 108-109)." Thus, universal rationally grounded morality becomes applicable only in the context of particular lifeworlds with their concrete set of ethical values. Habermas creates a point of reconciliation between opposed Kant's and Hegel's approaches to this problem preparing the ground for his liberal-republicanism unifying public and private spheres. Philosophical universalism, according to this strategy, should find a critical application to a variety of cultural forms, particular lifeworlds thus proving its validity.

Derrida's post-sructuralist defense of philosophical universalism is a direct response to the Kantian approach to this problem under the post-modern condition. Irrespective of evident discord with Kant's version of transcendental idealism, Derrida confessed that his deconstruction doctrine is deeply rooted in the idea of power of critical philosophical reflexion that was born within the European Enlightenment milieu and most clearly articulated by Kant (Derrida 2007: 44-45). New philosophical universalism, according to Derrida, may emerge as a result of critical deconstructive negotiations with historical tradition. In this respect, neither Kantian teleology of history, nor his rigid Eurocentrism is acceptable for Derrida as a foundation for his own critical universalism. Reacting to the often heard accusations that the deconstruction strategy is not sensitive to the pulse of history, Derrida responds that he was always interested in "certain historicity" in its transcendental version offered by E. Husserl or M. Heidegger (Derrida 2002: 157). To stand in opposition to the metaphysical constructions of history does not mean for him to deny its reality. A truly universalist philosophy, in Derrida's opinion, should reject the metaphysical teleology of history and get into the negotiations with different cultural traditions aspiring to learn from them.

If history is not teleologically determined and open to the unpredictable future, deconstruction becomes equal to a permanent negotiation process with tradition unbreakably related to positive affirmation preserving certain effects of the past (Derrida 2002: 16). Negotiation procedure is dependent on a certain context giving its impulse for the deconstruction: "An essential aspect of negotiation is that it is always different, differential, not only from one individual to another, from one situation to another, but even for the same individual, from one moment to the next. There are only contexts, and this is why deconstructive negotiation cannot produce general rules, "methods" (Derrida 2002: 17). Highly evaluating J. Austin's and P. de Man's views, Derrida looks at cultural traditions as discourse producing machines, pattern strategies of coining texts that are strongly motivated by power drives enrooted in the language. He believes that the new cosmopolitan understanding of philosophy's mission should contain a reformulation of the Kantian reading of universalism due to the existence of different cultures and worldviews. Interpreting philosophical universalism as the outcome of the negotiations process with non-similar cultural and thought traditions, he gives a new formula of the basic foundations of the deconstruction platform.

As a permanent deconstructive and affirmative practice, philosophy is understood by Derrida as self-founding activity. Thus, by its very definition philosophy appears as an activity which is universalistic in its aspiration. Derrida looks at philosophy as an endless search for the rational legitimation, its "absolute source": "Philosophy stands under the law that demands that the right to philosophy never end, and that it never suspend questioning, irony, *skepsis*, *epochē*, or doubt when facing any phiosopheme, even the philosopheme that seems to be found in a determinate fashion a given declaration of rights, for example the Declaration of the Rights of Man, including the right to philosophy" (Derrida

2002a: 40). Declaring that philosophy should constantly remodel the forms of its self-representation, Derrida refers to the tradition of Kantian transcendental reflection as a source of his own approach to this problem. He speaks of a duality of the relations between philosophy and culture: any true philosopher raised in a particular cultural milieu should go beyond it surpassing its limits in search of a new horizon of the world understanding (Derrida 2002a: 38).

Summing up his vision of the contemporary cosmopolitan-universalist approach to philosophy, Derrida formulated a set of general conditions of its development. As a first one of them he declares the existence of plurality of philosophical and cultural traditions: "Whoever thinks that the right to philosophy from a cosmopolitan point of view must be respected, granted, extended will have to take into account the competition that exists and has always existed between several models, styles, philosophical traditions, linked to national or linguistic histories, even if they can never be reduced to effects of nationhood of language (Derrida 2002: 337)." In this respect, the confrontation between the continental and analytic or Anglo-Saxon philosophy is for Derrida the most canonical example. He calls for a critical displacement and deconstruction of their 'hegemonies' through the access to places and events that are beyond the limits of their opposition. The expected effect of this move, he believes, should be intra-European and bring fruitful results. Derrida's philosophical heritage may be regarded as an important step in this direction.

The second condition for the expansion of contemporary cosmopolitan approach to philosophizing demands "the appropriation but also the overflowing of what are said to be…the founding or originary languages of philosophy – the Greek, Latin, Germanic, or Arabic languages (Derrida 2002: 338)." Derrida's fidelity to the roots of philosophy, its founding languages goes hand in hand with his persuasion that any language can become a leader in expressing the cosmopolitan voice of philosophy today. The English language playing a very important role in this respect, in his opinion, should become today a vehicle for the universal philosophical reflexion and communication on the condition that its practice is freed of the phenomena of dogmatism and authority it may produce.

Likewise, cosmopolitan-universalist philosophy is unimaginable for Derrida as a servant of a particular form of culture assuming a leading role. Globalization is the outcome of universalizing all kind of human relations within the world community on the basis of expansion of science and technology (Derrida 2002b: 226-227). Derrida is positive in his attitude to the universalizing role of science and technology. However, he is radically opposed to scientism and glorification of technological development (Derrida 2002: 339). Inheriting the Enlightenment outlook on the importance of scientific knowledge, he goes further and argues that critical thought should subject to doubt any particular fruit of reason, any cultural form. He rightly believes that negotiating with different forms of culture, a truly cosmopolitan philosophy should preserve its independent status.

This understanding of philosophical thinking paves the way for Derrida's political ideal of democracy to come which is not an idea in the Kantian sense, but

a universal perspective to be reached in the struggle for authentic human relations. He finds a Kantian idea at once too definite and unable to express the openness of the future. For this reason the democracy to come should be understood as a perspective that is always on the way of its new conceptual expression. His strong belief is that it is impossible to dissociate the right to philosophy "from a cosmopolitan point of view" from this political perspective. The ideal of democracy to come is, of course, deeply rooted in Greek democratic practice, but is irreducible to any historically existing phenomena. Philosophy is able, in Derrida's opinion, to contribute to the coinage of new images of democracy in accord with the changing social, cultural and political circumstances.

The authentic relation to the other is at the root of Derrida's vision of democracy to come. He calls this relation messianic, able to arrive at any moment and having no horizon. Derrida's doctrine of messianic relation as opposed to any kind of messiahnism is a secularized version of its interpretation offered by Levinas. It emphasizes the role of the intellectuals as bearers of the messianic force in the permanent creation of democracy to come.

As the third condition needed for the development and expansion of the contemporary cosmopolitan-universalist stance of philosophizing Derrida declares the necessity of permanent struggle with the governmental attempts to limit its influence in the educational system. Here again he stresses the significance of Kant's approach to the question of autonomy of philosophy in the university system (Derrida 2002: 340). In a number of his works, Derrida claims that today under the totally different conditions philosophy is still endangered in its free existence not only in the totalitarian and authoritarian states, but also in Western democratic countries. Therefore, philosophy in a cosmopolitan sense should be engaged today in the never-ending theoretical and practical struggle for its right to exist as a self-founding thought activity.

In the rapidly globalizing world, cotemporary philosophy should work out a strategy combining universalism and critical approach to a mosaic of its cultural reality. After the demise of classical metaphysics, philosophy is no longer able to address culture with its ideal image portraying the teleological path of its perfection. However, despite its new roles of mediator and witness bridging gaps between different cultural forms, philosophy should not loose its capacity of a self-founding thinking. Otherwise, it may degenerate into a kind criticism aimed at the unique phenomena and producing no general meanings nourishing cultures. The hermeneutical reason is moving to a new kind of critical universalism getting into prolific negotiations with a variety of cultures, learning from them and producing general meaningful interpretations of human world problems that are directed against any form of power abuse and violence existing in society. As a rational self-founding and interpretative critical thinking, philosophy unmasks the machinery of alienation and evil production under its different guises thus proving its vital importance for the world community.

References

Arendt, H. 1978. *The Life of the Mind. One volume edition.* San Diego; New York; London: Harcourt Brace & Company.
Badiou A. 2010. Being and Event. London, New York: Continuum.
Badiou A. 2009. Logics of Worlds. Being and Event, 2. London, New York: Continuum.
Bubner, R. 2003. *The Innovations of Idealism.* Cambridge: University Press.
Davidson, D. 2005. *Truth, Language, and History.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Derrida, J. 2007. *Learning to Live Finally.* Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Derrida, J. 2002. *Negotiations.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Derrida, J. 2002a. *Who's Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy I.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Derrida, J. 2002b. *Without Alibi.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.University.
Habermas, Jü. 1995. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
Habermas, Jü. 1994. *Postmetaphysical Thinking.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
Hegel, G. W. F. 1970. *Nauka Logiki. T. 1.* Moscow: Mysl'.
Honneth, A. 2004. "A Social Pathology of Reason: on the Intellectual Legacy of the Critical Theory",in *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory,*ed. Fred Rush. Cambridge: University Press.
Kant, I. 1966. *Ideya vseobshey istoriji vo vsemirno-grajdanskom plane*, in *Sochinenja v shesti tomakh. T. 6*. Moscow: Mysl'.
Kant, I. 1966a. Spor fakul'tetov, in Sochinenja v shesti tomakh. T. 6. Moscow: Mysl'.
Ricoeur, P. 1969. *Le conflit des interprétations. Essais d'herméneutique.* Paris: Editions du Seuil.
Rorty, R. 1989. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Taylor, Ch. 1998. *Hegel and Modern Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Wittgenstein, L. 1964. *Philosophical Investigtion.* New York: The MacMillan Company.
Wittgenstein, L. 1960. *Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations" generally known as "The Blue and Brown Books".*Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Summary

In the rapidly globalizing world, contemporary philosophy should work out a strategy combining universalism and critical approach to a mosaic of its cultural reality. After the demise of classical metaphysics, philosophy is no longer able to address culture with its ideal image portraying the teleological path of its perfection. However, despite its new roles of mediator and witness bridging gaps between different cultural forms, philosophy should not lose its capacity of a self-

founding thinking. Otherwise, it may degenerate into a kind criticism aimed at the unique phenomena and producing no general meanings nourishing cultures. The hermeneutical reason is moving to a new kind of critical universalism getting into prolific negotiations with a variety of cultures, learning from them and producing general meaningful interpretations of human world problems that are directed against any form of power abuse and violence existing in society.

Keywords: metaphysics, post-metaphysical thinking, cultural dialogue, hermeneutical reason, critical universalism

BORIS GUBMAN
Tver State University, Russia
E-mail: gubman@mail.ru