

## ANALITINĖ FILOSOFIJA

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### **Positivism and its adversaries: Bradley, Collingwood, Nietzsche and Heidegger**

It seems that many present-day philosophers regard positivism as a venerable old gentleman whose stormy youth passed away long ago and whose position has finally and irrevocably been established. His fierce youth is indeed over, yet the issue of its position is not so easily concluded. Positivism's place in philosophy – its relation to other trends – is far from being finally determined. It is very likely that many philosophical movements are indebted to it more than they may like to admit. There is a clear need to define more precisely positivism's place in, and influence on, the philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Analysing the relation between an influential philosophical movement and other movements is in itself an important issue requiring close attention, yet the need has recently become especially acute because of the sharp post-modern critique of positivism which, according to many postmodernists, is the real embodiment of the diabolical spirit of modernism. Comparing positivism with present-day postmodernism, which differs substantially from the image drawn by Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard, merits its own separate investigation. In this article I would like to concentrate on the reaction to positivism made by the philosophers active in the last third of the nineteenth century and in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, and thus begin the project of reflection and analysis which a movement as influential as positivism has long deserved.

Positivism's influence upon the nineteenth century is attested by the name attributed to it by some authors: the positivist century. During the century bearing its namesake, positivism had many friends. Yet its foes were by no means small in number. The positivist movement was very critical of many traditional and newer philosophical schools, therefore it is quite understandable that it brought upon itself an open and sometimes passionate critique.

Positivist philosophy was a pre-eminent trend of post-Hegelian philosophy, yet, at the same time, it was only one of a group of rather kindred trends of

thought. The general trait or constitutive feature uniting this family of thought was the sympathetic attitude of all trends towards science, its methodology, and promises of objectivity and certainty, an attitude characterised by their aspiration to be or at least to look like a "scientific" philosophy. This group includes Marxism, pragmatism, critical rationalism, postpositivism, and some other less important schools. When looked at from a positivist perspective, analytic philosophy, a very important member of this group is a special case because it overlaps with positivism itself. Sharing some important attitudes and principles, members of this group are, nevertheless, not merely kin. They are also frequently rivals who are (or were) competing for dividends to be earned from close association with modern science which, as many would claim, has shaped and continues to shape Western civilisation.

The relations between positivism and kindred philosophies included elements of both sympathy and rivalry even if, in some cases, sympathy was carefully concealed. Younger philosophies close to positivism had an interest in emphasising their differences from their philosophical father and did their best to prove their superiority. At the same time, they were either unwittingly or unadmittedly dependent upon it to a rather significant degree.

Relating philosophical trends outside this group to positivism is entirely different. The new (i.e., post-Hegelian) philosophies which did not regard science as their beacon were, in general, more adverse to positivism and took a stance toward it characteristic of hostile adversaries, not simply of rival kinsmen. Positivists often accused them of engaging in activities which had nothing to do with cognition. At least one of them – existentialism – countered the accusation by claiming that positivism is not a philosophy at all. Another strategy widely used both by new and not-so-new philosophies for defence against positivist criticism was to censure positivism as being a lower, superficial, and simplistic philosophy void of any deep insight.

Positivism's philosophical adversaries are numerous and it is not easy to present a full list of them. Their philosophical positions diverge widely, yet most of them belong to two camps: the first consists of trends continuing in the tradition of classical German philosophy and the second includes schools and philosophers who are opposed to traditional philosophy but confront it in a radically different way than positivism.

The main goal of the present article is to examine the reaction to positivism by these two kinds of adversaries located substantially farther afield from positivism than Marxism or pragmatism. It is a difficult and delicate task to single out the philosophers best fitted for the role of representing these two kinds of adversaries. After some consideration, I opted for Bradley and

Collingwood as representatives of the tradition of classical German philosophy and for Nietzsche and Heidegger as the spokesmen for the non-positivist opposition to traditional philosophy.

Before examining their relation to positivism, I want to draw attention to the fact that the first reaction to positivism within the *academic* philosophy of the 19th century was, at least in France, that of simply ignoring it, and not attacking it. Positivism came into being outside of, and in opposition to, academic philosophy, thus it is not very strange that academicians met it first with disregard and only later, perhaps, with disdain. In Comte's native France, most chairs in philosophy at universities at his time had been held by adherents of Maine de Biran and Victor Cousin. Representing spiritualism and various forms of eclectic metaphysics, they did not regard positivism as a serious philosophy even worthy of a careful critical examination and, likewise, did not encounter overwhelming pressure to address the issues in which positivists were interested. They stood on entirely different theoretical ground and remained aloof from positivist appeals and arguments; however, after the 1860's, the initial strategy of ignoring positivism quite counterproductive or at least ineffectual became in France and everywhere else: the popularity of positivist ideas became so great that philosophers who completely ignored them faced the real danger of becoming totally ignored themselves.

In universities across the English Channel, the attitude towards positivism was a bit more receptive. In the mid-nineteenth century, academic philosophy in Britain was dominated by the Scottish school of common sense which was closer to positivism than French spiritualism; however, even in Great Britain, John Stuart Mill's criticism of William Hamilton, the leading representative of the Scottish school, did not bring about a serious and immediate response from academic circles. Two decades later, when adherents of Kant and Hegel gained the upper hand in British universities, they faced a different situation. Characteristic of this change was the appeal of T. H. Green to British youth to close their texts of Mill and Spencer and open Kant and Hegel.

When proposing a new version of absolute idealism in an epoch which, under the influence of positivism, was opposing all kinds of absolutism, the leading representative of absolute idealism, Francis Herbert Bradley – “indisputably the greatest British philosopher between J. S. Mill and Bertrand Russell” (Honderich [1995], p. 100) – was bound to launch a counterattack on the prevailing philosophy. The main focus of Bradley's attacks was empiricism. Richard Wollheim, a renowned Bradley scholar, remarked: “Behind every diatribe of Bradley's there is an original to be found in the works of the Empiricists; nearly everything that he said of value, he said against

something said first by them; if he was certain of anything, it was that they were wrong. It is they, therefore, who provide the true background to his metaphysics" (Wollheim [1959/69], p. 18).

In the last decade of the 19th century, when Bradley started to develop his doctrine of absolute idealism, the empiricist tradition in Britain was represented mainly by Mill's positivism; thus Mill and especially his *System of Logic* became the primary target of Bradley's criticism. He was unhappy with almost all aspects of Mill's philosophy, including his logic and ethics; above all, he was unhappy with his epistemology and treatment of mind and matter. Attacking Mill in many of his works, particularly in his main metaphysical treatise *Appearance and Reality* (1893), Bradley became known as an irreconcilable critic of Mill. He censured Mill's phenomenalism and his whole psychological theory based on associationism. Already in *Principles of Logic*, published ten years before *Appearance and Reality* and denouncing a psychologistic approach to logic, Bradley claims that "...to talk of an association between psychical particulars is to utter mere nonsense" (Bradley [1883/1922], p. 306). Bradley disapproves of Mill's account of freedom and causation, of his conception of responsibility, of his treatment of the problem of inference, of his conception of proper names as having denotation but no connotation, and of his whole conception of philosophical method. Of special importance to Bradley as a proponent of absolute idealism is the critique of the conception that we have knowledge of separate facts. Mill is only one of many philosophers who claimed that we know or are able to know them, yet while arguing against the possibility of having such knowledge Bradley mainly had Mill in mind.

In short, it seems that Bradley disagreed with practically everything Mill had written. When treating ordinary things as merely appearances misrepresenting Reality which has a unitary and comprehensive character of the Absolute – the ultimate individual from which ordinary things are only abstractions – Bradley *had* to denounce all of Mill's empiricist and positivist conceptions; however, when the most famous representative of the next generation of British idealists, Robin George Collingwood, endeavoured to rethink the relation of Bradley to Mill, he came to a not-so-surprising conclusion: "Bradley is popularly regarded as an opponent of Mill," says Collingwood, "but he was never so much that as a disillusioned and rather cynical follower. He constantly subjected Mill to sharp criticism, but his aim in this criticism was not to annihilate Mill's doctrines, it was to amend them into a form in which he could find them acceptable" (Collingwood [1940/72], p. 154). In *Appearance and Reality* Bradley claimed, ironically, that "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct"

(Bradley [1893/1930], p. XII). Referring to this *dictum*, Collingwood continues: “Bradley’s epigram represents the state of mind of one who has begun by accepting the first principles of positivist metaphysics, that all the presuppositions we can detect underlying our thought must be justified, and justified by an appeal to observed facts; has gone on to recognise that in practice this justification regularly fails; but has not yet taken the step of inferring that the game is not worth the candle...” (Collingwood [1940/72], p. 154).

To better understand what Collingwood had in mind, we must briefly turn to his philosophy, all the more that he is sometimes regarded as the most profound and significant idealist critic of positivism. He paid considerable attention to it: the second part of his influential *Essay on Metaphysics* (1940) is devoted to the scrutiny of anti-metaphysics, including positivism as a major development within it.

Before examining more closely Collingwood’s arguments directed against positivism, it is worth saying a few words about Collingwood’s notion of metaphysics. Not only being a philosopher but a historian and archaeologist, Collingwood looks at metaphysics with a historian’s eyes. According to him, “...metaphysics is the attempt to find out what absolute presuppositions have been made by this or that person or group of persons, on this or that occasion or group of occasions, in the course of this or that piece of thinking” (Collingwood [1940/72], p. 47). The crucial notion used in this definition – that of absolute presupposition – is defined by Collingwood in the following way: “An absolute presupposition is one which stands, relatively to all questions to which it is related, as a presupposition, never as an answer” (Collingwood [1940/72], p. 31). He emphasizes that absolute presuppositions, contrary to relative ones, can neither be questioned nor verified: moreover, they are *not* propositions. They cannot even be regarded as true or false; this distinction does not apply to them at all. They are just taken for granted, treated as given and pre-supposed. “Thus,” claims Collingwood, “any question involving the presupposition that an absolute presupposition is a proposition, such as the questions ‘Is it true?’, ‘What evidence is there for it?’, ‘How can it be demonstrated?’, ‘What right have we to presuppose it if it can’t?’, is a nonsense question” (Collingwood [1940/72], p. 33). To engage in such questioning is to practise something which may be called pseudo-metaphysics and is the task neither of the scientist nor of the metaphysician. It follows that the scientist’s job is not to state absolute presuppositions but only to presuppose them. The metaphysician then comes along to detect and expose them, but not to justify them.

Thus understood, metaphysics is a historical science and its questions are questions concerning which absolute presuppositions have been made on specific occasions or by specific schools of thought. Answers to *these* questions are propositions, and if they are correct, they are true historical propositions. Typical examples of such historical metaphysical propositions are the following: Newtonians presuppose that some events (in the physical world) have causes and others not; Kantians presuppose that all events have causes; Einsteinians presuppose that no events have causes (cf. Collingwood [1940/72], p. 49–51). Of course, Collingwood is fully aware that some metaphysicians treated phrases like “All events have causes” as propositions; however, according to him, say, when Spinoza claims that Nature is the same as God, he, in fact, asserts a historical fact concerning the foundations of science in a specific epoch. According to Collingwood, then a metaphysician is a special kind of historian.

Collingwood forwards the following arguments to counter positivism. First of all, he emphasizes that the positivist theory of scientific method is both ahistorical and naive. Its principal shortcoming is the claim “...that the ‘facts’ of which a scientist speaks are observed by the mere action of our senses” (Collingwood [1940/72], p. 44). According to him, they ignore that by means of our senses we only “undergo feelings” and fail to see that facts such as a certain astronomer’s observation of the transit of Venus taking place are always historical facts which are not at all apprehensible to our senses.

“In the second place,” says Collingwood, “it was rash of the positivists to maintain that every notion is a class of observable (if you like, historical) facts. This amounts to saying what in fact positivists have always tried more or less consistently to say; that scientific thought has no presuppositions. For if the function of thought is to classify observed facts, there must be facts available for classification before thought can begin to operate. And once facts are available there is no need to presuppose anything” (Collingwood [1940/72], p. 146).

Moreover, as is maintained by Collingwood, positivists have misunderstood the function of metaphysics in general and have never grasped the absolute presuppositions correctly. They have misinterpreted them as relative presuppositions having the status of verifiable propositions. “Thus the positivists,” claims Collingwood, “ostensibly the inveterate enemies of all metaphysics whatever, were in practice exponents of a certain metaphysical method. This was to take absolute presuppositions which, by dint of perfectly sound metaphysical analysis, they detected as implied in the methods of natural science, and then, turning into pseudo-metaphysicians...to justify them on

positivist principles, that is to exhibit them as generalisations from observed facts” (Collingwood [1940/72], p. 149). The characteristic positivist application of this metaphysical method is, according to Collingwood, Mill’s discussion of the principle of the uniformity of nature.

Does Collingwood’s critique of positivism hold water? First of all, it is worth emphasizing that when criticising the positivist conception of scientific method, Collingwood, like many others before and after him, facilitates the task of critique by slightly misrepresenting the positivist point of view. Mill, in fact, never claimed that facts “are observed by the mere action of our senses.” On the contrary, when analysing the notions of observation and experimentation in the third book of his *Logic*, Mill emphasises that observation (not to mention experimentation) involves intellectual analysis and maintains that facts are discovered in general through the process of observation or experimentation directed by previous knowledge or new suppositions. Comte is even more aware of the role of theoretical presuppositions for finding new facts. He stresses that in the case when previous theoretical knowledge is lacking, its role is played by pure speculation or fantasy. Except for a few beginning years, logical positivists also had a rather clear idea of the role of theoretical knowledge for the discovery of facts; thus, Collingwood is wrong in supposing that positivists regard suppositions irrelevant for empirical research.

As to the *absolute presuppositions*, Collingwood’s claim that positivists deny their existence may be right when applied to the representatives of classical positivism. It loses its force, however, when applied to such modern positivists as Carnap. The status of Collingwood’s absolute presuppositions is identical with that of Carnap’s meaning postulates, so positivists *may agree* with him that there are unverifiable presuppositions in science.

Collingwood criticised positivism as a philosopher, continuing the tradition culminating in Hegel. Positivism confronted this tradition, yet some post-Hegelian philosophers opposed the tradition even more ardently than positivism did. From their point of view, positivism, continuing an orientation towards cognition at the cost of other forms of human action as well as giving priority to the universal over the particular, was too close to classical rationalism. Concern for human life, which is irreducible to the search for truth, requires the philosopher to look for a philosophy radically different from both the classical and positive philosophies.

This attitude is common to such diverse thinkers as Thomas Carlyle, John Newman, and Søren Kierkegaard. Its most important representatives are of course Friedrich Nietzsche, in the 19th century, and Martin Heidegger, in the

20th century. Heidegger used to call Nietzsche the last metaphysician, yet Nietzsche, who defined his philosophy as inverted Platonism, was rather (if not radically) critical of *traditional* metaphysics. In the first pages of *Beyond Good and Evil*, he quotes an imaginable metaphysician who wonders: "How could something originate in its antithesis? Truth in error, for example. Or will to truth in will to deception? Or the unselfish act in self-interest? Or the pure radiant gaze of the sage in covetousness? Such origination is impossible; he who dreams of it is a fool, indeed worse than a fool; the things of the highest value must have another origin *of their own*—they cannot be derivable from this transitory, seductive, deceptive, mean little world, from this confusion of desire and illusion! In the womb of being, rather, in the intransitory, in the hidden god, in the 'thing in itself' – that is where their cause must lie and nowhere else!" Nietzsche's response is harsh: "This mode of judgement constitutes the typical prejudice by which metaphysicians of all ages can be recognised; this mode of evaluation stands in the background of all their logical procedures; it is on account of this – their 'faith' that they concern themselves with their 'knowledge', with something that is at last solemnly baptised 'the truth' (Nietzsche [1886/1974], p. 15–16).

At least when attacking metaphysics, Nietzsche may be regarded as an ally of the positivists: moreover, his sarcasm and irony is likely a more effective weapon than the positivist criterion of empirical significance.

When criticising metaphysics, positivists regarded themselves as heralds of progress brought about by the development of science. Nietzsche was of rather high opinion about science and in some works, especially those written in the second period of his philosophical development, he did not conceal his praise for it. His stance toward other issues did not greatly differ at the time (especially in the years 1879–1881) from that of positivists. "It is indisputable," notes Heidegger, "that prior to the time of his work on the planned magnum opus, *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche went through a period of extreme positivism...Such positivism, though of course transformed, became a part of his later fundamental position also" (Heidegger [1961/91], p. 154). In applying the methodology of his genealogy, then, he pretended to be a researcher of the kind scientists are, interested in examining, without sentiment or bias, the development of morals and explaining the consequences of adopting different systems of morality.

This does not mean that Nietzsche was an objective investigator of the evolution of morals. The partisan moralist (or anti-moralist) in him quite often takes the upper hand over the impartial researcher. Of course the same may be said about 19th century positivists. It seems that one of the main



differences between him and the positivists is his denial of any link between the development of science and social progress. Opposing positivism, Nietzsche claims that the autonomy and sovereignty of science achieved (to a degree) in the 19th century is closely connected with making itself *free* from oppression from ideals (see Nietzsche [1887/1988], p. 441). According to Nietzsche, Comte's positivism – with the domination of the heart over the head – sensualism in epistemology, and altruistic dreams so peculiar to him are a continuation of the 18th century tradition.

Nietzsche characterises the 18th century as “feminine,” setting it off both from the 17th century (“aristocratic”) and the 19th century (“animalistic”). In the 18th century, emotions prevail. In this respect, it substantially differs both from the 17th century dominated by reason and to the 19th century, dominated by lust. Nietzsche's opinion about the value of feelings is rather low, and that means that his opinion of the 18th century is similarly low. Accordingly, Nietzsche does not treat Comte's positivism (as well as Romanticism) with very great respect, partly because of the same reason and partly because of a general disregard for Englishmen. J. S. Mill is referred to by Nietzsche as a “typical empty-headed” (see Nietzsche [1886–1887/1988], p. 362) or, in the best case, as “mediocre.”

Nietzsche was clearly unhappy with the positivist tendency to reduce almost all philosophy to the history of scientific method. Regarding Comte as the main representative of this unfortunate tendency, he nevertheless inscribed Comte's name onto his short list of the greatest methodologists. Nietzsche included only four names on the list—Aristotle, Bacon, Descartes, and Comte – and treated positivism in general with more regard than he treated Mill. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche presents something like a concise history of overcoming Platonism and its idea of the *real world*, which he regarded as the main error of philosophy. This schematic account, peculiarly similar to Comte's scheme of the progressive development of the human mind, includes six stages and positivism, because of his denial of the attainability and knowability of the real world, is placed rather high on the list. It occupies the fourth and partly the fifth stage immediately preceding Nietzsche's own philosophy which he (like Hegel) regards of course as the last word in the advance of philosophical thought. Nonetheless, Nietzsche was rather critical of positivism's epistemology and moral theory.

Of decisive importance in Nietzsche's argument against positivism is his critique of the positivist notion of facts. “Against positivism,” says Nietzsche, “which remains at phenomena claiming that ‘only facts exist’ I would say: no, exactly (gerade) facts do not exist, there are only interpretations. We can

state no facts 'in themselves': maybe it is nonsense to want something like this. 'Everything is subjective' you say: but already this is rendering: the 'subject' is not given but something which is made up, something stuck behind" (Nietzsche [1886–1887/1988], p. 315). From Nietzsche's point of view, facts in the positivist sense, (i.e. facts as the solid foundation of knowledge) are an expression of the longing for support, the firm basis needed for any believer. They are needed for people who crave something steadfast, unshakeable, and immovable. Such people strive to be strong and firm; however, this striving is, in fact, an expression of their weakness, not firmness. "Most people in old Europe, as it seems to me," says Nietzsche, "still need Christianity at present, and on that account it still finds belief...Some still have need of metaphysics; but also the impatient *longing for certainty* which at present discharges itself in scientific, positivist fashion among large numbers of the people, the longing by all means to get at something stable (while on account of the warmth of the longing, the establishing of the certainty is more leisurely and negligently undertaken): even this is still the longing for a hold, a support; in short, the *instinct of weakness*, which, while not actually creating religions, metaphysics, and convictions of all kinds, nevertheless – preserves them. In fact, around all these positivist systems there fume the vapours of a certain pessimistic gloom, something of weariness, fatalism, disillusionment, and fear of new disillusionment...." (Nietzsche [1907/1965], p. 395).

Nietzsche emphasises that not only does positivist epistemology nurse the needs of the weak; positivist morals conform to the needs of the weak-minded and weak-willed. He claims that from a moral point of view, positivism does not differ from socialism which, in turn, is a continuation of the Christian tradition. In *Morgenröthe* Nietzsche claims that Comte "overbaptized" Christianity with his famous formula *vivre pour autrui* (live for the other). Mill's doctrine on sympathetic affection, compassion, and utility springs out of the same source as Comte's formula. Positivism gives priority to the community over the individual; thus, it inevitably leads to the weakening and overcoming of the individual. He is treated by positivists only as an element and instrument of the Whole, be it the State, Nation, or something else (see Nietzsche [1881/1988], p. 123–124). Positivist communitarianism (even in Mill's liberal version) is, of course, repulsive to Nietzsche. His moral attitude, requiring one to contrast the slave morality (based on the Christian tradition) to that of masters, is very different from the altruism of classical positivism.

Notwithstanding serious discrepancies between Nietzsche's theories and positivist moral theories, the variance of their philosophies is not so great as it may seem at first glance. Nietzsche's claim that positivists rely on bare facts

is not supported by the examination of relevant positivist utterances. As to Nietzsche's allegation that positivists are hopeless collectivists and do not differ much from socialists, we should draw the attention of the reader to the fact that positivist collectivism does not imply egalitarianism. Equality is not a positivist creed. Comte has spoken about this quite openly when analysing the role of scientific and political elite in a perfect positive society. The opposite characters, Comte's *High Priest* and Nietzsche's *Superman*, have not a few intriguing common traits.

The positivist influence on Nietzsche was most pronounced in the middle period of his philosophy, yet, when criticising positivism, he was firing at it most often from afar: the basic presumptions, principles, and especially the style of his philosophy differed greatly from those of positivism. Martin Heidegger, who openly acknowledged his indebtedness to Nietzsche, was even more remote from positivism. There were not many points of contact between him and positivist philosophy. Even still, positivists felt open enmity towards him. For positivists, he was the embodiment of metaphysical thinking in the 20th century. As such, he had the "honour" of being chosen by positivists as a target for a direct critique. Carnap, in his well known article "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language," devoted much space in showing that Heidegger's pronouncements broke the fundamental rules of logical syntax and lack any cognitive meaning. As for Nietzsche, positivists were much more indulgent. In his works they encountered few metaphysical pseudo-statements in the genre of Heidegger's "The Nothing itself nothings" kind, and praised him for avoiding the major error of confusing empirical investigation with the expression of attitude. "We find there," wrote Carnap, "for instance, an historical analysis of specific artistic phenomena, or an historical-psychological analysis of morals. In the work, however, in which he expresses most strongly that which others express through metaphysics or ethics – *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – he does not choose the misleading theoretical form, but openly the "form of art, of poetry" (Carnap [1932/59], p. 80).

In his early works Heidegger preferred a much more theoretical style than that characteristic of Nietzsche, yet, in his later years, Heidegger began to favour a more poetic manner himself; thus, if made later, Carnap's judgement of Heidegger could have been more lenient. In the early thirties, however, Carnap's verdict was pitiless: after analysing in detail an excerpt from Heidegger's "What is Metaphysics?" Carnap decided that "...a metaphysician himself here states that his questions and answers are irreconcilable with logic and the scientific way of thinking" (Carnap [1932/59], p. 72).

Heidegger was not hit hard by Carnap's critique. His calm reaction is easy to explain. In the text analysed by Carnap he states himself that "The very idea of 'logic' dissolves in the whirl of a more basic questioning" (Heidegger [1929]). In another text which contains an answer to Carnap – although his name is never mentioned – namely, in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, the essential material of which was presented in 1935 at the University of Freiburg in the lecture bearing the same title, Heidegger repeatedly claims that "more basic questioning" begins with the question "Why there are essents rather than nothing?" (Heidegger [1953/61], p. 1). Not being chronologically first, it is first in rank for philosophy because it is the most far reaching, the deepest, and most fundamental. Basic philosophical questioning is inquiry into the *extra-ordinary*, it is itself "out of order," a "mystery of freedom."

Positivism never asks this question. It renounces philosophy's search for the first and last grounds of the essent. According to Heidegger, it betrays in this way the real aims of philosophy being one (among many) of its misinterpretations. He claims that asking the question about Being is a part of humanity's history on the earth, although relating this question to decisive historical questions may seem very remote and indirect. While the human spirit was strong, however it saw this relationship.

Unfortunately, the spirit and the world, which is always the world of spirit, is darkening. "The essential episodes of this darkening are: the flight of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the standardisation of man, the pre-eminence of the mediocre...Darkening of the world means emasculation of the spirit, the disintegration, wasting away, repression, and misinterpretation of spirit" (Heidegger [1953/61], p. 37). This disintegrative process had begun long ago, yet Heidegger emphasised that the first half of the nineteenth century was of special importance in this weakening of the spirit. One of the current explanations links the degradation of spirit with the collapse of German idealism. Heidegger's point of view is different: "It was not German idealism that collapsed; rather, the age was no longer strong enough to stand up to the greatness, breadth, and originality of that spiritual world, i.e. truly to realize it, for to realize a philosophy means something very different from applying theorems and insights. The lives of men began to slide into a world which lacked that depth from which the essential comes to man and comes back to man, so compelling him to become superior and making him act in conformity to a rank. All things sank to the same level, a surface resembling a blind mirror that no longer reflects, that casts nothing back. The prevailing dimension became that of extension and number. Intelligence no longer meant

a wealth of talent, lavishly spent, and the command of energies, but only what could be learned by everyone, the practice of a routine..." (ibid., p. 38–39).

In 1935 Heidegger especially blamed the United States and Russia for the "demoniconslaught" that destroys "all rank and every world-creating impulse of spirit, and calls it a lie" (ibid., p. 38), although it would be difficult to show that they were responsible for the transformation of European spirit which began, as Heidegger claims himself, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Like Nietzsche previously, he links the degradation of human spirit with the advance of industrial mass society fostering equality and subordinating science to the needs of technology. Spirit, according to Heidegger, becomes reinterpreted as intelligence, "or mere cleverness in examining and calculating given things and the possibility of changing them and complementing them to make new things" (ibid., p. 38). Cleverness, practice, and the division of labour and organisation marks this falsification of spirit into intelligence, which can be taught, learned, and used as a tool by others.

What is positivism's role in this process? Heidegger does not give a clear-cut answer to this interesting question. Is it one of the causes (or even the main cause) which brought about the deterioration of spirit, or is it only a consequence of its emasculation. He is more interested in emphasising positivism's narrow-mindedness. Positivism's only use of intelligence consists, accordingly to Heidegger, in "the ordering and explanation of everything that is present and already posited in time" (ibid., p. 39). The energies of the spiritual process become subjects of conscious cultivation and planning. Science is deprived of its metaphysical roots. Spirit misinterpreted as utilitarian intelligence degenerates and loses its ability to stand in openness to the essent. It ceases to *know* because it is not able to stand in the truth.

The presentation of positivism as one of the forms of the emasculation of the spirit (another one Heidegger mentions is, characteristically, Marxism) is a summary dismissal of Carnap's criticism contained in his *Elimination of Metaphysics*. According to Heidegger, our concern for logic is based on misunderstanding due to the failure to understand the question about the essent and its significance. It bears evidence to the progressive forgetfulness of being. He writes, "For it cannot be decided out of hand whether logic and its fundamental rules can, altogether, provide a standard for dealing with the question about the essent as such. It may be the other way around. Perhaps the whole body of logic as it is known to us, perhaps all the logic that we treat as a gift from heaven, is grounded in a very definite answer to the question about the essent; perhaps in consequence, all thinking which solely follows the laws of thought prescribed by traditional logic is incapable from the very

start of even understanding the question about the essent by its own resources, let alone actually unfolding the question and guiding it toward an answer. Actually it is only appearance of strict scientific method when we invoke the principle of contradiction and logic...in order to prove that all thinking and speaking about nothing are contradictory and therefore meaningless" (Heidegger [1953/61], p. 20–21).

In a clear reference to Carnap's contrast between the logical form of statements of the kind "Rain is outside" and pseudo-statements about the nothing (cf. Carnap [1932/59], p. 70–71), Heidegger continues: "It is perfectly true that we cannot talk about nothing, as though it were a thing like the rain outside or a mountain or any object whatsoever. In principle, nothingness remains inaccessible to science. The man who truly wishes to speak about nothing must of necessity become unscientific. But this is unfortunate only so long as one supposes that scientific thinking is the only authentic rigorous thought, and that it alone can and must be made into the standard of philosophical thinking. But the reverse is true. All scientific thought is merely a derived form of philosophical thinking, which proceeded to freeze into its scientific cast. Philosophy never arises out of science or thorough science, and it can never be accorded equal rank with the sciences. No, it is prior in rank, and not only "logically" or in a table representing the system of sciences. Philosophy stands in a totally different realm and order. Only poetry stands in the same order as philosophy and its thinking, though poetry and thought are not the same thing" (Heidegger [1953/61], p. 21).

Heidegger's stance towards positivism and logical analysis practised by it is rather clear. Metaphysics and philosophy are not sciences at all, and the logical requirement which may be applicable to sciences are completely out of place in the context of basic questioning.

Heidegger's attitude toward positivism did not change much later, although in some post-war articles he seemed to take a more conciliatory stance by emphasising its role in the development of Western civilisation, which he no longer divided into the "demonic" United States and Russia and the potentially more spiritual, virile Germany which was depreciated by their negative influence. On the other hand, he blamed even more vigorously all classical metaphysics for its forgetfulness of Being. It is manifestly this critical stance which made Heidegger, in one sense, an ally of positivism.

According to Heidegger, philosophy ends in the present epoch, finally finding expression in scientific theory and in social activity based on science. The end of philosophy means the triumph of science and technology, and at the same time, the triumph of the social organisation adequate to it. The end

of philosophy means the beginning of a world civilisation based on Western, namely European, thinking. Positivists could only applaud such claims.

They would be less happy, however, to hear from Heidegger that science, even science denying its philosophical origin, cannot get rid of its philosophical source and always bears its mark, and because philosophy is, as he maintains, metaphysics, science clearly then cannot rid itself off metaphysics. In addition, Heidegger repeatedly claims what is for him self-evident but that with which positivists would obviously disagree, that positivism itself is a kind of metaphysics. To be more exact, he admits that positivism is an antipode of metaphysics, but maintains at the same time that the antipode of metaphysics is a kind of metaphysics. Carnap and other positivists would regard this claim as additional evidence confirming their assertion that Heidegger's pronouncements transgress the boundaries of logic. Heidegger, however, makes this claim almost in passing: for him it is evident that the negation of metaphysics is itself metaphysics. It is obvious how he would respond to an indignant positivist rejoinder "We do not *negate* metaphysics in the sense the term is used in logic: our statements are not negations of the statements made by metaphysicians." Heidegger would say that he is using the word *negation* in a different sense from the sense used in *their* logic. To Carnap's proposal for Heidegger to explicate this sense or meaning and lay down the rules of his *own* logic (or language), Heidegger would retort that he is not interested in logistics. The possibilities of a fruitful discussion would very soon be exhausted.

Claiming that positivism is pure metaphysics, Heidegger maintains at the same time that it is poor metaphysics. In *Nietzsche* Heidegger asserts that positivism is *below* Hegel's metaphysics while at the same time being dependent upon it. In post-Hegelian philosophy Heidegger holds Marx and of course Nietzsche in higher regard; however, in other texts, especially in those in which he deals with the problem of the *end of philosophy*, he maintains that there is no reason to speak about one philosophy being above or more perfect than another. That means (contrary to what was said in *Nietzsche*) that no philosophy can be preferred over another.

At the same time he claims that the end of philosophy does not mean there are no more tasks for thinking. On the contrary, there is one extremely important task which is accomplished neither by philosophy in the form of metaphysics nor by the sciences originating from it. A world civilisation is emerging. Its present basis is the scientific world outlook, yet it is quite possible that in the future, world civilisation will overcome the scientific conception of a person's place in the world. Heidegger believes that the main task of thinking is to clear the ground for such an overcoming.

It is precisely the overcoming of metaphysics (blamed by Heidegger for its forgetfulness of Being and moving away from things) which is the task uniting Nietzsche, Heidegger, and positivism. Positivism has set this task first. All later efforts to overcome metaphysics depend upon this first attempt. Heidegger may believe that in overcoming metaphysics they are more radical than positivists who oppose metaphysics while remaining at the same time within its confines. Positivists, however, are of a different opinion. They hold that his repudiation of classical metaphysics and resounding return to pre-Socratic thought do not make him better than post-Socratic metaphysicians. By deliberately breaking the rules of logic – it does not matter *why* he contravenes them – Heidegger places himself beyond the boundaries of meaningful discourse and deprives himself of the possibility to say anything of cognitive interest.

By all means, this positivist judgement about Heidegger may be too severe, yet it seems that Heidegger's hope that the character of world (civilisation which has been shaped by the positive, scientific world outlook) may radically change has so far been proven futile.

Lets ask a simple and straightforward question: did positivism's adversaries win a decisive victory? The answer is twofold. On the one hand, the adversaries succeeded in revealing positivism's weaknesses and even prospered by undermining positivism as a distinct philosophical movement. Positivism was dispersed and scattered and does not exist any longer as a separate and integral trend of philosophy. But did the adversaries annihilate it? Did they remove positive thinking from the philosophy of the end of the twentieth century? Did they drive out positive thoughts, beliefs and attitudes from science, politics, and everyday life?

Judging from the continuing preponderance of positive ideas – and we may claim, the increasing globalisation of pragmatic, progressivist Western culture approaching the turn of the millenium – it seems that the positive outlook remains at the heart of our civilisation and to overcome it once and for all without destroying the very foundations of our way of life and our evermore common culture is much more difficult than its most prominent critics may think.

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## Reziūmė

### Evaldas Nekrašas

#### POZITYVIZMAS IR JO PRIEŠAI: BRADLEY'S, COLLINGWOODAS, NIETZSCHE IR HEIDEGGERIS

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami kai kurie pozityvizmo vietos filosofijoje aspektai. Pozityvizmo priešai skiriami nuo atstovų tokių filosofijos krypčių kaip marksizmas ar pragmatizmas, kurios, kaip ir pozityvizmas, siekė atstovauti mokslinei filosofijai, siejo socialinį progresą su mokslo pažanga ir buvo veikiau pozityvizmo sąjungininkai, kojojantys po ta pačia mokslo vėliava, nei priešai.

Pastarieji – tai filosofai, neigę, kad filosofijos moksliskumas yra jos neprilygstamos vertės rodiklis. Jie priklauso dviems pagrindinėms grupėms. Vieni tęsė filosofijos (visų pirma vokiečių klasikinės filosofijos) tradiciją, kiti jai oponavo, tačiau remdamiesi nuostatomis, priešingomis pozityvistų nuostatomis.

Pirmuosius straipsnyje reprezentuoja F. H. Bradley's ir R. G. Collingwoodas, antuosius – F. Nietzsche ir M. Heideggeris. Tarp teorinių priekaištų pozityvizmui, kuriuos padarė šie mąstytojai, bene įtikinamiausiu atrodo Collingwoodo teiginys, kad pozityvizmas nesupranta, kokį vaidmenį moksle vaidina absoliučios (neverifikuojamos ir apskritai nevertinamos tiesos terminais) prielaidos (*presuppositions*) ir nesuvokia, kad jo taip kritiškai vertinamos metafizikos uždavinys ir yra tokių negalimų pagristi prielaidų identifikacija. Vis dėlto atrodo, kad šis priekaištas negali būti be išlygų taikomas visiems pozityvistams.

Antrosios grupės mąstytojų, kritikuojančių tradicinę metafiziką, santykis su pozityvizmu yra gana prieštaringas. Nietzsche pozityvizmą laiko silpno žmogaus filosofija. Kartu jis mano, kad pozityvizmas vis dėlto yra pranašesnis už visas ligšiolines filosofijas ir yra tiesioginis jo. Nietzsche's, filosofijos pirmtakas. Heideggerio, kaip ir Nietzsche's, santykis su pozityvizmu yra dvilypis. Viena vertus, pozityvizmą jis laiko šiuolaikinės epochos dvasios išraiška, esminiu moderniosios civilizacijos elementu. Kita vertus, pozityvizmas jam tėra specifinė metafizikos rūšis, kuri turi būti įveikta kartu su visa ikisokratine metafizika. Deja, jo projektas ant pozityviojo mąstymo formuotos civilizacijos pagrindų sukurti visiškai naują civilizaciją, gebančią išgirsti užmirštos būties kalbą, yra, regis, visiškai utopiškas.

Pozityvizmas kaip *vientisa* filosofijos kryptis šiandien neegzistuoja. Jo priešai gali manyti jį pergalėję. Tačiau iš tikrųjų pozityvūs protas toliau lieka mūsų civilizacijos šerdimi. Įveikti jį nesugriaunant pačių mūsų gyvenimo būdo ir kultūros pagrindų yra, matyt, sunkiau negu atrodo iškiliems jo kritikams.