

THE *OUSIA* OF ARISTOTLE AND THE *IDEA* OF PLATO – IN VIEW OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT. *One can see often in explanations of encyclopedia or lexicons of philosophy that Plato manifested primarily the absolute Idealism, whereas Aristotle verified antagonistically the relevance of realism. It is easy to pick up several parts of their representative works and prove that this thesis is corresponded to the original of Plato and Aristotle. But, in reflections of philosophy, we should not ignore a cautious view, focused just on this starting point: If the above mentioned thesis is used like a slogan, “Plato for idealism, Aristotle for realism”, as it often is, in the meantime there arises a dogmatic position which fixes our mental and intellectual activity only within the frame, so that everyone begins to reflect on Plato or Aristotle from that starting point in a certain framework. A critical and self-critical view of philosophy may bring this position for a query.*

KEYWORDS: *Idealism, Realism, Plato, Aristotle, Reflection in Comparative Philosophy*

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Introduction: The Categorizing of “Plato as Idealist, Aristotle as Realist”

Let us see the present situation that many lexicons of philosophy tend to highlight that Plato was a representative of idealism, whereas Aristotle’s position is characterized by realism.² If someone reads Plato’s dialogue “Phaidros”, he starts from the position of “Plato as a representative of an absolute idealism”, involving that any reflection of the reader establish in the limited thinking that takes for granted that “Plato is an idealist”. If he, the same reader, begins to focus on Aristotle’s “Metaphysics”, his further reflection is limited by the framework of the thinking that “Aristotle is a realist and an antagonist to Plato”. Let us reflect just in a dialectic way in questioning this “thesis”: Was Plato only a representative of idealism? And at the same time we will reflect: Was Aristotle only a representative of realism?

1. Expansion of the idea, based on empirical reality

By this turning point we can find reality in the dialogue of “Phaidros”, ***based on an empirical realistic history accompanied by the persons in social and psychic relations***, as following.³ Lysias, an elder friend of Phaidros advised him that one can be blind when faced with an enthusiastic love (*eros*), so that everyone should reconsider to follow another one, whom he doesn’t love primarily. But “why someone who is only secondary”? As the relation to the latter is without bonding to any enthusiasms, it is therefore better and near to perfection. Phaidros suffers by this advice and returns back to Socrates to listen at what the teacher responses. It is well-known that Socrates, in a deductive way, told the opposition to Lysias:⁴ One should follow the person for whom he has a true love, for whom he can sacrifice himself. Socrates says that a human being can achieve an eternal truth, an eternal goodness and beauty if one is fully concentrated to an intensive love (*eros* in mind and in spirit). The reason is 1) that the true *eros* as a spiritual love is pure, and is not mixed by calculating of one’s own profit or deficit, 2) that this kind of the true *eros* clarifies and enlightens the *psyche* /soul of human, 3) that a human being who finds himself in a situation of true spiritual *eros* is in a position of extraordinary concentration that leads to the preference of sacrificing one’s own self for the dimension of an absolute truth, for a pure goodness and eternal beauty. The soul (*psyche*) which is striving for this unity and purity is vivid, actual, living “forever” as an “*idea*” of the eternal goodness without having any moment of “falling down into death”.⁵

The fact which is very typical for Plato is the process of orientation ***towards “anabasis” for arising from an empirical level to the level of transcendence into the world of idea.***⁶ Though, if we read just this sentence accompanied only by the catch phrase, “Plato as a typical idealist”, it fixates repeatedly an image that presents “*Plato only as an idealist*”: But, in the original, the whole process that starts from an

² Alois Halder, Max Müller, *Philosophisches Wörterbuch*, Freiburg i.Br./Basel/Wien 1988, categories of “Platon” and “Aristoteles”.

³ Plato, “Phaidros” [230 e – 234 b], in: Platon, *Sämtliche Werke* vol. IV, Hamburg 1989.

⁴ Plato, “Phaidros”, [234 e – 257 a].

⁵ Plato, “Phaidros”, [245 c – 250 e].

⁶ Plato, “Phaidros”, [246 e – 254 e].

empirical level and goes further to the world of *idea* is *accompanied by the life experience of the appearing person, including also the dialogue of Socrates and the disciples. Empirical scenes and realistic background of a human life are always at the back of every state of anabasis, arising to the level of idea in the middle of a real empirical position.*

2. The core Concept of Aristotle's "ousia" based on Reality

In this view it is shown evidently that Aristotle goes on in his main works, the "Metaphysica" or "Ethica Nicomacheia", in a polarized way: His organic philosophical system, **based on the term for essential being "ousia"** is explained precisely and *without* any theatrical scenes, without an artist's expression of diverse phenomena.⁷ When Aristotle cited an empirical occasion in the "Ethica Nicomacheia", he shows some *types of human handling in real life*, which are explained very logical, up until an undividable concept like *ousia* – the essential principle of every being – is grasped.⁸ Each case is presented as a kind of "preparatory" to reflect and operate the typical human being's thinking and handling in a critical and a deductive way, whereas Aristotle is standing by as a physician for an integrative cognition to dominate any problematical phenomena of human life.

3. Regard of a political and juristic phenomenon

Plato as "*Idealist*", Aristotle as "*Realist*" – the concept of "*idea*" arises into a pure epistemological world, whereas the concept of "*ousia*" searches for an absolutely rational corresponding of episteme and for a particular thing in the real world. Doesn't this seem to be almost correct? In regard of the political phenomenon Aristotle and Plato handled a quite similar subject – but, contrary to the above mentioned "slogan" they both have a reversed approach, for example to the principles of constructing a rational state.

Let us look at Plato's "State" (Politeia, Πολιτεία) and Aristotle's "Politica" (Über die politischen Dinge Πολιτικά) with the subject on the "Tyrant".⁹ The setting of this subject is almost the same: The process of a decadence of political form is described as a transformation from oligarchy to timocracy, from timocracy to democracy, from democracy to chaos (anarchy) and at last, it appears a tyrant. (It is quite possible that Aristotle referred to the frame of Plato's logic.) But, the most remarkable aspect, which distinguishes Plato and Aristotle, is that Plato explains the decadence and disaster of a tyrant from the view of an *inside of the tyrant and his psyche*, and therefore as the "*most unfortunate, most miserable person*". The way *Plato inputs his philosophical view into the position of a falling tyrant and the way he describes the tyrant's disaster from the inside of human experiences*, is hence very psychic.¹⁰ The tyrant and his decadence are described *empirically* as an *interesting*

⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysik*, vol. A, especially [988 b – 990 a], [990 a – 993 a] bounding to the critique against Plato.

⁸ Aristotle, ΗΘΙΚΑ ΝΙΚΟΜΧΕΙΑ, *Die Nikomachsche Ethik*, Düsseldorf/Zürich 2001.

⁹ Aristotle, *Politik*, (Politica Πολιτικά), VI, Hamburg 1990.

¹⁰ Plato, (Politeia, Πολιτεία), *Der Staat*, vol. IX.

drama of tragedy in a theatre. Plato as a dramatist succeeds the empirical description of a tragedy, whereas he as an author is positioned almost on the “outside of the political parties or groups”.

Just in this respect, Aristotle achieved completely another setting: His mentality and thinking situates perfectly in every dimension of a political problematic. The fatal fall of a tyrant begins just at the moment of a meeting of heads of state in a government, where the interpretation of an article or a paragraph of the law and its accordance to the behavior of the dictator or the tyrant becomes controversial: This is the starting point of an unrest up to a rebellion. With regard to the “*ousia*” the reason for this is evident: The *ousia* of the tyrant is accompanied by the attribute of “*one command, one way of following*”. The relation between the dictator and his citizens insists in a proportion of 1:1. If this proportion of “*oneness*” is broken, the “*ousia*” of a tyrant breaks down. Aristotle’s way of description is herewith never empirical: Contrary to Plato it is highly deductive and dry. Aristotle considers the same fate of the falling tyrant absolutely rigorous and very objective from the “outside” of the disaster, as a pure philosophical observer, treating the disaster in search of the whole causality, the *causa materialis*, *causa formalis*, *causa efficiens* and the *causa finalis*. The deductive way of thinking is purposed to clear up the reason why a tyrant should fall down into a miserable disaster.

Here we see a quite contrary model, as Aristotle elaborates the phenomenon absolutely dualistic in a clear cut dimension from the view of an objective observer, and therefore in opposite to Plato. Plato treats the same phenomenon very psychic and empirical, with a fine description of the falling tyrant from the inside of the personal psyche, coming to the following conclusion: In a fatal disaster all human beings are the same. Do we have a cautious view to state hypothetically that Plato, with the background of his *idea*, turns out to be a “Monist” and Aristotle, based on his *ousia*, is a “rigorous Dualist”?

4. An executively clear analytical Thinking of Aristotle

Aristotle’s thinking bases always on reality. He focuses a general problematic and takes from the whole phenomenon a definitive example, which is typical and happens repeatedly in the human world, like a “preparatory” of natural scientific examination. From this starting point, Aristotle’s thinking goes on rigorously dualistic, allows no contradiction, omitting the logical contradiction of any kind.

Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, vols. Γ and K, are excellent examples that stand in opposite to Plato: The logic to omitting a contradiction. Aristotle manifests his logical position consequently. The core of his logic is:¹¹

‘If a thing A, is described by the sentence [*s is p*], accompanied by a definitive causality *x*, the contrary position, [*s is non-p*] cannot be verified by the same causality *x*. [*p* and *non-p*] cannot be verified at the same time, by the same causality *x* to the same thing A. If one of them is right, the other is false.’

Something, A, which exists as right and verified, the same thing, the A, cannot be

¹¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysik*, vol. Γ, [1011 b – 1012 a], [1012 b]; vol. K [1062 a – 1063 b].

false at the same time. Something, non-A, which does not exist as right and which is not verified, cannot be proved at the same time as right thing and verified thing. Even if Aristotle completes this position immediately in the following part with the remark that a one sided conception brings us to the danger of dogmatic, he distinguishes rigorously that a contradictory predicate to the same subject, should be criticized and omitted. For example: “All things are in movement *and also* in calmness” is a grave contradiction and therefore should be negated. This is a natural scientific, analytical and logical base for the development of all sciences. I will confirm, Aristotle is right, and on the other hand, I would like to question, *if a theme of our philosophical reflection is not positioned in natural science, medicine or cognitive science.* A clear cut dimension [*either A or non-A*], in rejecting any contradiction is not enough.

5. Handling the problematic of Contradiction

Let us view the Plato’s dialogue “Parmenides” and question the “*passing and staying the time just at this moment here and now*”.¹² Every moment in the here and now is “passing”, therefore, it is in movement. The last “here and now” has passed and does not come back again: it is always vanishing. Also in reality, every moment in the here and now is absolutely “the here and now in this presence”; we cannot negate that every moment is always only passing. If we apply the Aristotle’s logic for rejecting a contradiction, he would say dialectical and sharply:¹³ ***If every moment of the here and now is passing, it cannot be remaining in every here and now: Let us call this thesis A. If thesis A is correct, the negation of it, non-A, is false, it must be rejected.*** Does the remaining time only exist in a level of Plato’s *idea*? How did Aristotle operate this contradiction? In Aristotle’s “Physics”, vol. 4, the “present time of here and now”, he mentioned that every moment of “here and now” is passing in reality, but we can collect every passing and coming “here and now” into a mathematical table, we can count them and give to each one a definitive number, so that there arises a physical continuum of “collected times of all here and now”. The “ousia” of the “moment in here and now” cannot be only passing, but it remains forever as a *physical continuum*.

Meanwhile, Plato evolved, referring to the same question in the dialogue of “Parmenides”, his unique logic, namely the one that the moment of here and now is always passing away, but at the same time it remains forever. It sounds quite contradictory, but Plato let this kind of contradiction open for further reflections and discussions. The time of here and now is staying in our *anamnesis* even if the time is passing in reality. We can keep an eye on this contradiction for a further discussion and at the same time we can expect, quasi naively (like “children will get a whole truth” purely and eagerly), that both positions can be verified from logical states; *an absolute liberty of the nous*.¹⁴

The reason for the thesis is stated in his “Timaios”, in which Plato explains that

¹² Plato, “Parmenides” [156 a – 157 b], in: *Sämtliche Werke* Bd. IV, Hamburg 1989.

¹³ See note 10.

¹⁴ Plato, “Theaitetos”, [248 a – 249 d].

the “time” is always in a *contradictory oneness of the three different moments*; present, past and future.¹⁵ The past and the future can *only be recognized in the “present time here and now”*. The past is only arising in the very moment “now”, likewise with the “future”. The “three components of the time world” have a contradiction, because this three world dimensions are passing, are in movement, but in every moment here and now they are remaining and stopping. A wonder of the nature that we can experience and accept the various contradictions in time and space, that we are able to put them into our consciousness, whereas we can think further about the causality of the contradiction with wondering and pleasure. The “idea” of the “time and moment just in the here and now” offers this open dimension for philosophical reflection in an unlimited liberty.

6. Aristotle’s Critique to the “idea lecture” of Plato

In fact, there are several parts in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle in which he represented the critique on Plato’s “idea”. If we read the direct critique against Plato in “*Metaphysics*”, vols. A, M,¹⁶ and the indirect representation against Plato in vols. Γ and K, it is evident that Aristotle criticized Plato’s *idea* based on the principle of his own concept of “*ousia*”. Let us now review the positions of both, Plato and Aristotle and the conceptions of “*idea*” and “*ousia*”. In this comparison we are not in the position of an observer briefly out of the two dimensions of Aristotle and Plato. We put our thinking into the dimension of Aristotle and view the “*idea*” of Plato. And then, we go further to the position of Aristotle and put ourselves into the dimension of Plato’s “*idea*” to review the “*ousia*”. The goal of the comparative reflections is the dialogue between the three positions, original Plato, original Aristotle, and us as the progressive thinking, acting and changing one to grow up our humanity in the present world.

In the “*Metaphysics*” vol. A, the critical view of Aristotle against Plato is oriented towards the basic part of Plato’s “*idea*” lecture¹⁷, i.e. the One and the undefined Two. Aristotle’s argumentations go on accompanied by the aspects which can be summarized in their outline as below:

- a) If the first mentioned “one” as a mathematical number, the “two” cannot be as a pendant of the “one”, since there are many natural numbers after the “2”. If the “One” means a “oneness” of the collection of many natural numbers, it must be a series of many “oneness” in various kinds. If it is so, the “One” cannot be “one”, but “many”: A contradiction occurs in ambiguous ways.
- b) Let us accept, that “one” is the origin which positions parallel to dichotomy and duality of any kind – “great” and “small”, “long” and “short” etc. The “one” is not split, whereas the dichotomy of “great and small”, “long and short” build the “two”. The “one” is the origin, the “two” is the opposite. The “one” as the first against the “two” can be positioned as a causality or an origin of “two” (duality or

¹⁵ Plato, “*Timaios*”, [37 c – 38 b], Hamburg, 1994.

¹⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysik*, vols. A, M, [987 b – 988 b], [988 b – 993 a]; [1080 b – 1087 a].

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysik*, vols. A [987 b – 988 b], [988 b – 993 a]. Cf. note 10.

dichotomy). This kind of “one” cannot be a simple “one”, because every kind of dichotomy has a particular reason which cannot be mixed up to a “one”.

- c) If the “one” is a measure or criterion of all things and beings, it should be accompanied by a series of causalities of that, why the “one” must be set as an origin of thinking and the series of all kind of “*idea*” in plurality. The teaching of Plato for “the one and the undefined two (Great-Small)” has such a weak point and was not completed by exact discourses.

It is well known that Plato’s setting of “one and the undefined two” is a very wide and open definition which seems to be “ambiguous”: I would interpret it as “identity and difference”. The identification of *A to A*, *X to X* is the starting point of every reflection. What *A* is and what *X* is can be a physical phenomenon or an abstract concept, for example “a whole world”, a “whole universe”. The “two” is the beginning of a reflection quite intuitive, but oriented already to knowledge, distinguishing the contrast of *A and non-A*. Plato let us reflect by a widely open dimension to comprehend this and that, whereas the central theme of the dialectic moves from this place to another. Hegel valued in his “Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie”, chap. “Plato”, that the philosophy of Plato is really dialectical. On the other hand Hegel criticizes Plato that his dialectic is “*räsonierend*”, i.e., “spending a lot of words (which are not necessary)” to say this and that, sometimes in a chaotic way. Anyway, Plato oriented his logic likewise Socrates, who gives every dialogue partner *various hints* towards a subject – whereas he will not define the answer dogmatically. Some thinkers (for example Hegel) judge it as a “*chaotic way of uncompleted dialectic*”. On the other hand it is remarkable, that Plato offers so much free space for our intellectual activity – as we see that an uncompleted problem with contradiction always gives stimulations for progressing of our thinking and acting.

7. What distinguishes Aristotle and Plato exactly?

That kind of an “undefined something” which is typical in dialogues of Plato is, viewed from an unlimited dimension of *episteme*, highly interesting because readers and partners of dialogue get a number of impulses by which we can form our own question, our own reflection and our thought to contribute cognitions in various kinds to the subject of *episteme*. Readers and dialogue partners “arise unto a high level of pure cognition”, the “*idea*”. Plato’s *episteme* can be characterized by following aspects:

- a) In an “undefined categorizing” an ambiguous open dimension occurs for dialogue partners to envelop one’s own question, own ideas and concepts to follow the dialogue.
- b) The intensive co-reflection between Plato (Socrates) and readers (disciples) arises spontaneously to the world of “*idea*”, based on the whole background of the real world. This characteristic is received by Aristotle highly critical, often impatiently, whereas Aristotle criticized them sharply. In every part of his critique against Plato it is shown that

Aristotle explains the lacking points of Plato's "idea" based on his own principle "ousia". Let us see, what the advantage of the "ousia" is, by setting our thinking topos directly at that of Aristotle.

For example, if Aristotle takes a natural count in mathematics, he puts without mentioning an abstract principle, that the mathematical subject *must* have a tight relation to the real empirical things in the real world. *Ousia aisthete*, the sensual perceptible thing in a live world which is undividable is "*eidos atomon*", a particular thing like "*atom*" to construct a whole world and universe:¹⁸ This kind of "*atomon*" is grasped by Plato quite differently: it corresponds to a pure mathematic *idea* or an "*idea*" of the soul (psyche) of the whole world: It does not present an individual one, it is rather an *archetypon* which can envelope the collected particulars in an collective unity of "*idea*".¹⁹ Clearly at this viewpoint, Aristotle emphasizes that the "*atomon eidos*" should be a real thing which is corresponded to our knowledge in a proportion 1:1. The differentiation of the philosophical knowledge of Plato and Aristotle shows sharply at the viewpoint by which Plato grasps the source / origin for arising of definitions of various "*idea*" as the "*one*" (*to hen*), whereas Aristotle is willed that every definition of "*oneness*" is straightly distinguished from one kind to another, showing which causality of the definition for this and that "*one*" is verifiable and which is not.²⁰ The way of Aristotle's thinking can be described as analytical, not pure mathematical but quite physical in search of a successful application of mathematical knowledge to the physical continuum. He always searches a tangible point corresponding to a part of a pure *episteme* (a part of Plato's *idea*) and the real empirical things which we can experience in life. In regard of this characteristic the popular position of "Plato's idealism and Aristotle's realism" is not completely false. At least I would say definitively that Aristotle's *ousia* sets a particular thing to the center of his discourse, analyzing it in questioning of its *general causality* and its *general unity of its appearance in a real world*. This effort is executed to achieve a goal and find an undividable answer as a principal unity. The discourse is executed in the analytic logics, often in a deductive way (i.e. "pure" without mixing empirical things of various kind), in which the focus is oriented definitively to find a causality of a real empirical thing which is particular: This orientation is highly suitable for the natural science and medicine in which the empirical phenomena and their preparation build the basic part to construe their scientific systems.

8. Aristotle as the founder and representative of dualism in execution of rigorous logic in view of promoting for analytic scientist cognition

In the above mentioned discourse it is evident that Aristotle's thinking method has an all mighty which is valid in full areas of analytic philosophy, cognitive- and

¹⁸ Hans-Dieter Klein: *Geschichtsphilosophie*, Wien 1984, 2005, chap. I.4; *Metaphysik*, Wien 1984, 2005, chap. VIII.4.

¹⁹ Cf. Erich Heintel, *Was kann ich wissen? Was soll ich tun? Was darf ich hoffen?* Wien 1993, chaps. 20, 32.

²⁰ Aristotle, *Metaphysik*, vol. M, critique to Plato. Plato's discourse of "One" is found in the Dialogue of "Parmenides".

natural science. Its omission of logical contradiction of every kind has a basic merit to execute the envelopment of the thinking in these areas. But, with regard to the general base established by Aristotle, which has been fulfilled by the modern natural and cognitive science, we have to remark that there is also another dimension which is unavoidably ignored: I.e., the clear cut dimension of unverified things, as a “*non-A*” has been put out and omitted in the logic to forbid every contradiction.²¹ The rest phenomena in which the contradictions of various kinds are found as the topos of philosophy, metaphysics and ontology, philosophical anthropology. I am not Platonist, but in a good contrast of “Aristotle’s critique in opposite to Plato” we could reconsider the general view of Plato’s thinking. It opens an unlimited possibility to reflect an eternal truth as an *unlimited oneness* in which an opposite predicates to the same subject is allowed to exist and state: A good example is found in the explanation of Plato’s dialogue “Parmenides”, the topic “time as *passing and staying* in here and now”. In regard of grasping a whole universal truth in an open mind and open dimension, we cannot negate that the Plato’s idea of “*to hen*”, the whole enclosing ONE, since his unique side of the logic, $[s \rightarrow p]$ accompanied by the aspect (φ) and $[s \rightarrow \text{non-}p]$ which is accompanied by another aspect (*non- φ*), is able to set an open dimension for a dialogue of different thinking methods, different cultures and systems of the logic.²²

9. The “ousia” of Aristotle and the “idea” by Plato – What can be contributed via Comparative Philosophy?

Aristotle’s principle of “ousia” has a great mighty to set a part of problematical phenomena to our operational thinking in finding of the causality and the best diagnose to solve it. It is a fundamental motivation for the progressing science, medicine and technology while these scientific methods strive to an absolute correctness in solution of any contradiction. In the frame of the *execution of scientific thought* it is perfect and almost successful. But, it is not all mighty because a query is bound to the starting point of the operation, by setting the preparation as the certain subject for operation: The thinker has to keep a border to distinguish “either truth or false” to omit every other phenomenon which includes a contradiction: If the *being of x* is right, the opposition, *non-x* or *non-being of x* is false. For execution to state a scientific thesis this method is necessary, but a fail development runs *after* the establishing of a certain statement: Everyone believes the right of the scientific verified position, by which everybody tends to omit the opposition of the verified thesis, that only the being of *x* is right, whereas the *non-being of x* or *the being of*

²¹ Compare the type of argumentation by Moritz Schlick, one of the representatives of the Vienna Circle for the subjects of “Self” and “Psyche”, against the “Metaphysical Idealism”: Schlick, *Die Probleme der Philosophie in ihrem Zusammenhang*, chaps. 21, 22.

²² $A (=) [s \rightarrow p (\varphi-x)]$, if it is so, it is forbidden to say, $A (=) [s \rightarrow \text{non-}p (\varphi-x)]$. But, the phenomenon *A* can be perceived, reconsidered and comprehended differently as $A (=) [s \rightarrow \text{non-}p (\varphi-x\alpha)]$, $A (=) [s \rightarrow \text{non-}p (\varphi-x\beta)]$ and so on. Cf. Hashi, “The Logic of Non-Verbality”, in: Wallner and Hashi (Eds.), *Globalisierung des Denkens in Ost und West*, Nordhausen 2011; „Sprachlose Logik“, in: Hashi, Gabriel (Eds.) *Komparative Philosophie der Gegenwart*, Wien 2007.

non-x must fall down. If we define with a doctrine, that a world of truth can be construed exceptionally (only) by scientific methods, for example “either by verification or falsification through a certain scientific method”, this operation is not in correspondence of the essential mind of *philosophia prima*, the fundamental statement of Aristotle what philosophy is.²³ The core of philosophy by Aristotle in origin was able to treat various thinking systems of human kind. If the “*philosophia prima*” in sense of Aristotle strives for achieving a universal truth which is valid for all human beings, we may also have a tolerance, open mind and liberty to find a further thinking system in which the “contradiction” is not briefly omitted, but valued by another reason to promote and envelop a dimensional knowledge of human being.

An example is the principle of Nishida, the founder of the Kyoto School represents that our self is a complex integration of systems which cannot be found in a totalized dimension without any contradiction. In opposite, our self is bearer of contradiction called by Nishida the “absolute contradictory self-identity”²⁴ One of the significant meanings of this term shows the dimension of unlimited discrepancy between our ideals for absolute truth and imperfect states of human knowledge. Expecting to achieve a complete unity of our thinking and acting with an absolute truth, human’s intellect often falls to subjectivism as the execution of its will is exchanged by egoism. Wishing to get an eternal truth, the thinking and acting of a human being is limited by the ending of one’s own life. As human, ours definition of “truth” is accompanied always by contradiction, since an eternal truth is an unlimited one, whereas humans define the truth with our limited language, by limited aspects, by a certain methodology to verify a certain position in executing of one’s own position: An objectivist position of scientific thesis can be accompanied also by this kind of *scientific subjectivism*.²⁵

²³ Aristotle, *Metaphysik*, vol. Γ [1003 a – 1003 b].

²⁴ Nishida, Kitarō, *Complete Works*, vol. 9, Tokyo 1965. *zettai mujuntkei jiko dōitsu* (絶対矛盾的自己同一), “Absolute Contradictory Self-Identity”.

²⁵ Cf. Humberto R. Maturana, *Erkennen: Die Organisation und Verkörperung von Wirklichkeit*, „kognitive Strategien“. C., Braunschweig 1982.

Other than Maturana, Pietschmann integrates the concept of „contradiction“ affirmatively in his principle of Natural Philosophy: Herbert Pietschmann, “Zum Begriff des APORON”, in: H. Hashi (Ed.), *Interdisziplinäre Philosophie der Gegenwart*, Frankfurt a.M. 2009. The principal meaning of APORON is a dialectic integration of the contradictory concepts bounding to the same subject which is valid, especially in Physics and its Natural Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Philosophy. Pietschmann explains that the APORON is one of the further principles developed from his previous concept of „Operationelle Bewältigung der Gegensätze“ (operational mastering of the contradiction): He also mentions that in the background of APORON the “Absolute contradictory Self-Identity”, one of the fundamental principles of Philosophy of Nishida works as an integrative unit of the contradictory pair, [A and non-A], by which the full content of our thinking is enveloped and clarified in the dialectic process. “Contradiction” by Pietschmann (APORON) and Nishida (Absolute Contradictory Self Identity) is not something which must be executively omitted by formal logic or logics of analytical philosophy. Furthermore, the “contradiction” stimulates us to execute a fundamental reflection for solving of problematics which can enrich our thinking dimensions. Cf. Pietschmann, *Phänomenologie der Naturwissenschaft*, Wien 2007, Anhang, A.3.3.

Conclusion

As a conclusion I would state that the finding, understanding and overcoming of contradiction is a motor for progression of our thinking as one of the important motivations in our life. This wideness or open court for understanding, receiving and executing the integration of contradiction and correctness, envelop the whole world of unlimited truth which is bound to Plato in the occidental philosophy, and in the non-occidental philosophy rather to Nishida. It is able to verify that the Aristotle's principle of "ousia" has a kind of all-mighty in the areas of the scientific and analytical cognitions. On the other hand, Plato leaves another mighty in his dialogues which is not completed in view of analytical philosophy – i.e. the significance of contradiction by which the human being is stimulated to achieve a world of unlimited truth.

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