

Leszek Kolakowski; ALIENATION OF REASON "Phil. or, if you prefer, anti-phil. doctrine"

Preface: "to grasp the meaning, i.e. inferences to be drawn"
Bring reader to closer understanding of its ~~main~~ function in OUR CULTURE

- characteristics, themes: 1) Phenomenalism (NO diff. bet. essence & phenomenon)
- 2) Nominalism
- 3) Denial of cognitive value
- 4) Belief only in scientism

p. 9 "Positivism is a collection of PROHIBITIONS concerning human knowledge."

Wittgenstein - Carnap who merely wants to distinguish "not only rejects cognitive; bet. meaningful & unverifiable claims of metaphysics; statements they refuse it any recognition."

moderate wing which says SOLONG AS metaphysics makes no scientific claims, it is legitimate

p. 215: According to Mach's theory, science is an extension of animal experience & has no other meaning than the totality of experiences on which it is based... but then

"HOW CAN WE ACC'T. FOR THE PECULIAR FACT that over many CENTURIES man's being has ascribed to 'REASON' the ability to discover 'necessary' features of the world & for so long a time failed to see that these features are fragments of imagination?.. (typed p.)"

p. 210: "science as a self-sufficient activity which exhausts ALL possible ways of appropriating world intellectually."
"THE LANGUAGE IT IMPOSES EXEMPTS US FROM THE DUTY OF SPEAKING UP IN LIFE'S most important conflicts."

Bertrand Russell scientific ideology "pragmatic interpretation of truth"

p. 211 HUSSERL interpreted 19th c. positivism as SYMPTOMATIC OF CULTURAL CRISIS but thought it possible to overcome by phil. means & devoted his lifelong labors to this task."

"The philosophical work of our day has found itself caught--to a great extent under the influence of positivist criticism--bet. the phil. of life & the lurid Manichean vision."

so-called phil. of life & empirio criticism have affinities with PRAGMATISM, (pp. 154-174) "show how a positivist postulates tilt into their opposites."

p. 156: "Peirce explicitly goes so far as to say that the meaning of the judgment is (entirely) exhausted in its practical consequences & acc'd'ing to him this is what defines PRAGMATISM." after 1890 he changed, criticized phil. determinism, came out in favor of freedom, asserted new creations are possible.. abandoned his earlier nominalist interpretation of scientific laws" BUT it is earlier & more famous phil. which is imp. in his of positivism.

p. 160 spirit of utilitarianism carried to radical consequences & extended not only to the world of value but also purely COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS" what do I get out of this?
Dewey not so much interested in individual success--

Ch. 2-Positivism Down to David Hume "It is possible to begin the life of Europe positivist thought almost anywhere for many strands we regard as of primary importance in contemporary positivist doctrines had antecedents in antiquity."

Handwritten notes:
1870
1890
1900
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000

Handwritten notes:
but Hume carried empiricism to ultimate
consequences of Hume's wk.
Destructive
p. 32 "There is hard intellectual behind every sentence"

Hume's conclusions glaringly incompatible with his intentions.

Ch. #3 Auguste Comte; Positivism in the Nineteenth Century
Ch. #4 Positivism Triumphant 10 yrs. after Comte's death--Chas. Darwin Galude Bernard, Introd. to Experimental Medicine J S Mill, Herbert Spencer's "System" AND KM's CAPITAL.

Ch. 5 Positivism at the Turn of the c. EMPIRIC CRITICISM p. 104: "an attempt to do away with subjectivity"
p. 132: "world org'd. by science... is result of creative human energy whence that man is a way responsible for the 'thing' his scientific thought constructs." This conviction was to become the fundamental feature of OUR OWN CENTURY'S THOUGHT that exerted a long-lasting influence in the most various quarters."

Ch. 6 Conventionalism--Destruction of Concept of Fact concerned with problems posed by advance of physics. p. 135 which involved physical propositions--problems resolved by Einstein's theory of relativity YET HE CREDITED MARCH WITH HIS KEY CONCEPTION... not to do away with epistemological but demarcate it from science. "They did this by ascribing a conventional meaning to scientific propositions."

Handwritten notes:
p. 176 Ch. 6
None
Logical Empiricism: A Scientific Defense of the Scientific Method
new to Analytical Phil.

No such thing as synthetic a priori judgments
Most active center in Vienna in 1920s
Carnap
Popper
W. Heisenberg

p. 202 "Logical empiricism, then, is the product of a specific culture, one in which TECHNOLOGICAL EFFICIENCY is regarded as the highest value, the culture we usually call 'TECHNOCRATIC'".
Handwritten notes: This anti-phil. rev. p. 189 ff. against historicism

p. 203: IT IS AN ACT OF RENUNCIATION FROM TROUBLESOME PHIL. QUESTIONS which it denounces in advance as fictitious; it also frees us from the NEED TO STUDY HIS)

p. 206: "The sheer rigor of the positivist rule has awakened intellectuals to their own responsibilities, & in my opinion have been of practical aid in countering attempts to blur the boundaries bet. the scientific & the obligation of the believer."

--Conclusion

13014

To the Rationalist mind of the 19th century... *Handwritten notes: Rationalist mind, 19th century, made a mistake for reality*

HM on Positivism "as pervasive as the practice of men"

p. 113: "the phil of common sense, appeals to the certainty of facts... amounts to giving up the potentialities of mankind for a false alien world."

"the positivist attack on universal concept on the ground that they cannot be reduced to observable facts, cancels from the domain of knowledge everything that may not be a fact."

p. 145: "Essence seeks to liberate knowledge from the worship of observable facts & from the scientific common sense that imposes this worship. Hegel recognized an intrinsic connection bet. mathematical logic & wholesale ACQUIESCENCE in facts & to this extent."

ANTICIPATED MORE THAN 100 yrs. of the dev. of positivism
Decade after Hegel's death European thought entered era of POSITIVISM
new SCIENTIFIC temper AFFIRMING existing order AGAINST negating it
Very different from that which later positivism

Comte-1830-1842
Stahl 1830-37
Schelling 1841
vs. those elaborated after 1877
Positivism conscious reaction against critical & destructive tendencies of Fr. & Ger. rationalism
Stahl Prussian monarchy phil out to destroy Hegelian phil principle
Comte out to destroy heritage of Descartes & Emp of rev."

1st 2 of c. Positivism destroyed metaphysical illusions esp. in the natural sciences -- EXCLUSION of ALL that cannot be verified by observation.

ORDERED INTO rather than EMANATING FROM severed social theory from its connection with negative phil.
abandoned pol. eco. as root of social theory
renounces phil. critique by exclusion of phil. concepts from study of society & thus founds sociology as ind. "science"
obliterates opposition to social reality

FE coined word His. Mat; Plekhanov that of diahat.
WHEREAS MARX's use of word material was to designation basic & primary conditions of HUMAN EXISTENCE not just "matter" or physical determinism & Newtonian mechanics. ON THE CONTRARY, in direct opp. to mechanical mat., by way of DIALECTICS and actual class struggles developed HUMANISM.

opposed both new idealism (as if world was product of idea) & old materialism
his empirio-criticism supported rising idealistic trend in phil. of science & influenced Bogdanov after DEFEAT of 1905

Matter different in 19th c. when it appeared to be the very stuff of nature
turn of 20th c. when, for Mach, atoms were mental artifice not susceptible to sense experience
now, when all physical phenomena of which men are aware

W. Heisenberg, "All elemental particles are made up of the Atlantic Monthly, 11/59, p. 113 same stuff, ENERGY. Matter exists because ENERGY assumes form of elemental particles"

Handwritten notes on left margin:
Comte
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Stahl
Schelling
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opposition to
social reality

Handwritten notes on left margin:
Dialectics
Mach
1905

Handwritten notes on left margin:
TRANSF. OF MASS INTO ENERGY

Handwritten notes on right margin:
Rat. aim is that of a country
15th of 19th c.

Handwritten notes on right margin:
Why? Because...
theory of 19th c. = heavy reaction to Mach's 18th c. idealism

Handwritten notes on right margin:
(new) Kantianism instead of V.I. Lenin

Handwritten notes on right margin:
17th c. astronomy related to world trade
18th c. scientific revolution
20th c. atomic physics & 2. for world mass spec

13014

To Ha. *Hegel's phil is not a theory of reality. It is a theory of the mind. It is a theory of the "idea" for reality.*

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(3)

... as from - well, you could almost say directly - Thus Lenin's view on energy

critics are not only limited to those who were specifically devoted to that subject without any bias or prejudice as a fact. There are none (incidentally) (flats) & see Phil N. P. ...

Which definitely deny the more or less vulgar interpretation. Yet one would think that the few remarks in P. N. ... would tally as against ...

With ... indeed he leaves me having ...

But ... The ... reader no doubt would be attracted

Later ...

Irony, why is ... fact is ... statements ...

in Science

rel. Phil. & Science - despite ...

... who was close to ... research credits ...

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI THE ALIENATION OF REASON

The primary aim of this subjectivism without a subject was to formulate the idea of "pure" experience. For this purpose it was necessary to track down those elements in the current scientific image of the world that had been "thought into" it, not necessarily, not even primarily, in order to reject them entirely, but in order to demystify them, to grasp their origin, and to assign them their proper place. This kind of positivism, the most complete philosophical exposition of which is known as "empiricriticism" was concerned above all with genetic problems: it inquired into the origins and function of knowledge." (p. 104)

A second peculiarity of this philosophy, which also relates it to such else in the intellectual climate of the period, was what might be called its "activism": its abandonment of the idea that human knowledge is the truer the more it submits to reality and the more faithfully it mirrors the laws governing it. Like the literary "materialism" of the period (in striking contrast to Zola's "experimental novel"), the empiricriticist interpretation of knowledge is in keeping with an idea of man as a being primarily characterized by his active role in the world." (p. 106)

Lenin, however, launched a sharp attack on empiricriticism, citing the philosophy expounded in such writings of Engels as were then known. His work is a defense of the materialist position, and in it he regarded empiricriticism as a subterfuge in which lurks a content identical with Berkeleyan idealism. . . . Lenin opposed to this doctrine a materialist and realist doctrine that he called "the theory of reflection." (p. 122)

Lenin agrees that there is no difference between the phenomenon and the Kantian thing-in-itself, but according to him this does not imply that the phenomenal world understood as a complex of impressions is the only accessible one; it implies only that there is nothing absolutely unknowable." (p. 129)

Lenin also uncompromisingly criticized his adversaries for accepting empiricritical interpretations of the most important philosophic categories. Among other things, he defended the concept of causality on the grounds that it describes actual necessary connections between events, and that it cannot be reduced to a purely empirical functional relation. He also defended Engels' view of the cognitive functions of time and space." (p. 130)

Lenin's book played an important part in the subsequent history of Marxism, particularly after Stalin summed up its main ideas in a popular article titled "On Dialectical and Historical Materialism," which for several years was obligatory reading in all Soviet Schools. . . . When we look back over the leading empiricritical ideas, we are especially struck by the following features: (1) the philosophical destruction of the subject;" (p. 151)

Subjectivism without Subject
Phil. destruction of the Subject

Escape from Commitment

Phil. destruction of Subject

Subjectivism without a Subject

Empiricriticism

Activism

Empiricriticism

Lenin's attack

Berkeley

Causality

True Space

Reflection

Lenin

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Phil. destruction of the subject
Subjectivism without a subject

Current image of the world

Activism

Voluntarism

Empiriocriticism

Materialist and realist doctrine

Stalin

Empiricist Criticism

active role in the world

Reflection

Causality

Materialist and realist doctrine

Subjectivism without subject
Phil. destruction of the subject

"Escape from commitment"

As positive & distinctive whole?

Diachronic continuity

"The purpose of this book has been to present a few doctrines important in the history of positivism and to show that each of them is an aspect of the cultural background out of which it arose. Each phase of positivist thought is a specific variation of the dominant intellectual style. At the same time, however, a diachronic continuity is clearly disclosed when we compare successive versions of positivism; . . . This leads to the question whether positivism also discloses cultural features justifying its treatment as a distinctive whole." (p. 207)

"Philosophers who, like Jaspers, do not look upon philosophy as a type of knowledge but only as an attempt to elucidate Existenz or even as an appeal to others to make such an attempt, do not transgress the positivist code. The latter attitude is nearly universal in present-day existentialist phenomenology. Awareness of fundamental differences between "investigation" and "reflection" between scientific "accuracy" and philosophic "precision," between "problems" and "questioning" or "mystery" is expressed by all existentialist philosophers, Heidegger as well as Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel." (p. 208)

Escape from commitment

"Suffering, death, ideological conflict, social classes, antithetical values of any kind—all are declared out of bounds, matters we can only be silent about, in obedience to the principle of verifiability. Positivism, so understood is an act of escape from commitments, an escape masked as a definition of knowledge, & invalidating all such matters as mere figments of the imagination stemming from intellectual laziness. Positivism in this sense is the escapist's design for living." (p. 210)

Neuralization of experience & inner essence

The least restrained positivist-Avenarius—is the most radical. His neuralizing of experience is at the same time liquidation of the fictitious "inner essence" within which the "Outside" world supposedly manifests, discloses, & subjectivizes itself." (p. 214)

Like all allegedly metaphysical riddles, the whole problem of necessary truths results from the abuse of words, from grammatical inertia (hypostatizing abstract terms, substantializing verbs and adjectives, etc. - Hobbes said the last word on this subject. In short, according to the positivists, we are dealing with an error." (p. 215)

error?

Not quite energy squandered

"The enormous efforts made in the history of culture to discover this paradise were wholly chimerical. Nonetheless, the vast amounts of energy squandered in these explorations and the extraordinary tenacity with which they were carried on are worth pondering, all the more because the explorers were perfectly aware of the technological inconsequences of their efforts. After all, what seventeenth-century writers called "moral certainty" - i.e. conditions under which we may recognize the truth of a given judgment although our reasons for doing so have no absolute character—is entirely sufficient in scientific thought. From the point of view of collected knowledge, the desire for an epistemological absolute, i.e., "metaphysical certainty," is fruitless, and those in question of this certainty were perfectly aware of the fact. And yet, we repeat, philosophy has never given up its attempt to constitute an autonomous "reason," independent of technological applications and irreducible to purely recording functions." (p. 216)

What Heidegger does not explain is precisely what makes him famous & the work as he makes it the Husserlian & also he has never said that he is called to be just a theorist

of positivistic & distinctiveness

Positive Community

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Goal of Commitment

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Neuralizing Experience of Inner Essence

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