DOI: 10.6918/IJOSSER.202204\_5(4).0011

# Hegel's View of Truth Based on the Abstract Spirit

Cailian Shu

School of Marxism, Shandong Normal University, Jinan, 250358, China

### **Abstract**

The practice standard we are familiar with regards practice as the sole criterion for testing truth, and it has been repeatedly verified and examined in experience, and has become a well-known view of truth. Hegel holds that "familiarity is not true knowledge", and the practical criteria that we are familiar with and repeatedly use are based on the object of experience. What we get from the object of experience is only the individual and the part, which is the knowledge of understanding. The knowledge of understanding is bound by the stipulation and finiteness of the object of experience, which is metaphysical. There is no truth from the object of experience. Truth is not a part, but an all-embracing whole, and through its own development it reaches a logical whole. According to Hegel, only spiritual things have unity, and spirit is the unity of opposites. Only by starting from the abstract spirit can we reach the truth.

## **Keywords**

Practice standard; Truth; The object of experience; Abstract spirit.

### 1. Introduction

Hegel constructed dialectics in his criticism of the past metaphysics. Metaphysics is defined by the object of experience. It is intellectual thinking. What it obtains is limited knowledge and can not obtain truth. Dialectics is different from metaphysics. It takes the rational principle as the guide, sublates the intellectual principle as a link of itself, and can establish its own perfect conceptual system and get the truth. Rational principle has its own principles, which are not regulated by sensibility and knowledge. It can construct its own perfect conceptual system from its own principles. In this dimension, the conceptual system constructed by Hegel's dialectics is an all inclusive whole, which is not limited by the object of experience. Dialectics is the sublation of objects, and freedom is obtained in the process of sublation of objects.

# 2. Starting from the Object of Experience: The Stipulation and Limitation of Cognition

Knowledge of the understanding is determined by the object of experience and is metaphysical. The empirical cognition that "practice is the only criterion for testing truth" is based on our transformation of objective objects. Marx believes that since the emergence of human beings, in order to survive, the first historical activity is practical activity. People produce the material materials that they need to survive from practice, after the survival needs are met, other needs will be produced, the production of other needs is also promoting people's practical activities, people get their own experience from practical activities. Some great inventions, such as the compass, papermaking and so on, are the experience and wisdom gained from people's practical activities, and through several tests to verify their correctness, they can be widely used in people's lives. However, the experience that is commonly used by people has some significance for people. However, the experience gained from practical activities can only be regarded as a correct understanding, which is one-sided and has limitations. As a social being, man's social activities are carried out in the interaction with the objective object, and through

DOI: 10.6918/IJOSSER.202204\_5(4).0011

the understanding and transformation of the objective object, he acquires knowledge about the objective object. The process of acquiring knowledge is carried out in practice, which acts as an intermediate link in the formation of knowledge, enabling us to acquire knowledge about innumerable individuals of the object of experience, thus determining the criteria for testing truth by practice. We can test in experience that the first swan is white, or that the ten thousandth swan is white. But we can't infer that the 10,000th swan is also white or black. The etiquette and law system of Chinese traditional culture is the universal experience from people's life, which is in line with people's life norms. It has a strong rationality in governing society, but rationality is not the truth. The traditional system of ritual and law in China is the system of ritual and law evolved from the ethical relationship in the family, which is the wisdom gained from experience. However, although the system of etiquette and law adapts to the development of human beings and society, it can not reach the height of freedom all the time. It is only a part of the good, and the part can not act as the whole, so it can not reach the highest good and the truth. Kant believes that the knowledge obtained from the object of experience is accidental, and it is impossible to determine the universal necessity of scientific knowledge. He believes that understanding is a kind of constitution, which forms knowledge through the processing of perceptual miscellaneous, thus proving the universal necessity of scientific knowledge. However, intellectual knowledge needs to be obtained from empirical objects.In this way, we will be defined by the object of experience, which is limited, and the intellectual knowledge we acquire is also limited, which is defined by the object, and the knowledge we acquire is only partial, which can not reach the infinite knowledge of the essence of things. The proposition of the concept of intellectuality benefits from Kant, who regards intellectuality as constitutive and has the ability to synthesize sensibility. Intellectuality is limited by the object of experience and can only stay on the limited stipulation of things, which is single and onesided. Therefore, the understanding of understanding is metaphysical. Of course, this is not to say that the conclusion of understanding is wrong, according to Hegel's view. The conclusion of intellectuality should be sublated as an internal link of spiritual principles, and the principle of intellectuality should be subordinated to the principle of spirit.

## 3. From the Abstract Spirit: The Spirit Is the Whole

Spirit is dynamic and able to unite all things in nature within itself, as an all-encompassing totality of existence. Hegel believes that perceptual knowledge sees the externality, the subject and object under perceptual knowledge are opposed, and the "I" of perceptual knowledge can not achieve the internal connection of things only by means of perceptual knowledge. Therefore, it is impossible to achieve the unity of subject and object. Hegel holds that the thinking "I" takes itself as the object of cognition, thus eliminating the dilemma of the opposition between subject and object. Here, the thinking "I" is not the understanding of understanding, because the understanding of understanding is metaphysical, and the knowledge achieved is only partial. Therefore, the thinking I here is not the metaphysical thinking "I", but the dialectical thinking "I", which has achieved its own unity. Hegel regards the whole world as a spiritual existence, which is in the unity of opposites. He believed that "the spirituality of the whole world is the unity of opposites". This unity of opposites is the "I" with dialectical thinking. That is to say, as a thinking being, if man only grasps the object from perceptual knowledge or intellectual knowledge, the knowledge he obtains is only partial, the subject and the object are also in opposition, and if he grasps the object from the thinking subject, what he obtains is the knowledge of the essence of things. Human consciousness is the understanding of objective objects. I know a teacup. The teacup is something outside me. It exists as an object outside me. It is in opposition to me and is alien. I have not yet reached the understanding of the essence of things. Self-consciousness takes itself as the object of understanding. The object of understanding turns from the object to the self. In self-consciousness, oneself is unified with

DOI: 10.6918/IJOSSER.202204 5(4).0011

oneself as the object of cognition. Self-consciousness has the ability to unify complex phenomena and contradictions. From consciousness to self-consciousness is the development process of consciousness. Self-consciousness is already spiritual, and then develops to absolute spirit. "What self-consciousness realizes is consciousness itself."This supreme unity of self-consciousness and consciousness, the object of consciousness, is the Absolute Spirit. When consciousness develops to the absolute spirit, it reaches the highest stage of consciousness, which includes the lower stage in itself, thus achieving the unity of the whole process of consciousness development. In the absolute spirit stage, the subject and the object reach the real unity. The absolute spirit is an all-encompassing whole, the whole of nature, human society, Everything is included. That is to say, absolute spirit is the most perfect, which contains all things and human society in itself, and makes all things achieve organic unity in opposition. As the highest stage of consciousness development, absolute spirit is an all-inclusive whole.

Starting from the abstract spirit, what is achieved is the whole. Starting from the object of experience is the knowledge of understanding, and the knowledge of understanding is limited by the object of experience. On the one hand, the objects of experience are limited, and on the other hand, the knowledge obtained by understanding from the objects of experience is determined by the objects of experience. It is metaphysical and impossible to achieve truth. Not being able to reach truth does not mean that truth does not need metaphysics, but that it is necessary to raise the finite to the infinite and the metaphysical to the truth. Self-consciousness is spiritual, in which everything achieves the unity of opposites, so as to achieve the internal connection of things. Only by starting from the abstract spirit can we achieve the understanding of the essence of things, and the spirit is the whole.

## 4. Only from the Abstract Spirit Can We Achieve the Truth

Truth is an evolving process. Hegel believes that truth is a process of continuous development, the essence of things is not simply contained in the beginning of things, if only according to the beginning of things to judge the essence of things, it will often deviate from the nature of things, new things have to go through the development process from the lower stage to the higher stage. The essence of things is often presented in the process of development of things, but from the primary stage of development of things to see its essence, there are great limitations. The beginning is incomplete and needs to be carried out in the continuous development. Truth is a complete system, which contains many links and experiences the leap from one link to another. So as to constantly improve itself in the process of development. Truth is an organic whole of the unity of opposites, the internal links promote the development of truth in mutual struggle, and truth achieves unity in the process of continuous development.

Truth is all. Up to now, human beings, as the subject of practice, have maintained their own survival and transformed the real world through practical activities, and it is in practical activities that they have obtained the correct understanding of things, but the correct understanding of individual things is not equal to the truth, which is the whole of these correct understandings contained in themselves. Hegel believes that the truth is through its own development and constantly enrich itself to achieve that state of perfection, and develop into a logical whole. Hegel's truth is not one-sided, nor is it individual knowledge, but a complete scientific system that includes both the subject and the object.

Only by starting from the abstract spirit can we reach the truth. What is obtained from the object of experience is the individual, and what is obtained from the abstract spirit is the universal. The individual cannot represent the universal. Truth is universal, and the individual cannot serve as truth. Spirit itself has initiative and creativity, and spirit can create objects. It can grasp the essence of the object as a whole, so it can achieve the understanding of the essence of things from the abstract spirit, and it can achieve the truth from the abstract spirit. This does

DOI: 10.6918/IJOSSER.202204\_5(4).0011

not mean that the object of experience should be excluded from the truth. The knowledge of truth needs to be based on the knowledge of the object. Although it is impossible to reach the truth from the object of experience, However, the object of experience still retains its own value, which provides realistic material for the development of truth. The test of truth needs to be based on the object of experience. Truth is a process of continuous development, which can not be separated from the promoting role of the object in the process of development. What we can get from the object is limited. To raise the finite to the infinite and the metaphysical to the truth.

#### References

- [1] Zhang Shiying: Five Lectures on Hegel's Philosophy. Culture and Art Publishing House, 2018 edition, page 23.
- [2] Wang Qingtao, The Inheritance and Development of Traditional Civilization by the Chinese Road . Philosophical Research, No.7, 2020.
- [3] Zhang Shiying: Five Lectures on Hegel's Philosophy. Culture and Art Publishing House, 2018 edition, page 25.