Cultural – Philosophical Debate concerning *the german Origin*, the Specificity and the Evolution of the analytical Philosophy

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Abstract. In the following lines, we consider the current debate concerning the origin, the specificity and evolution of analytical philosophy. We will try to motivate the idea that the origins and evolution of analytical philosophy are not entirely due to the British philosophers; in fact, this problem can't be properly explained in a proper way in terms of a single tradition, which would come true by the removal of another one. Regarding the evolution of analytic philosophy, we identify aspects of the German tradition, the British tradition as well as some new elements genreatet by the interaction between positivism and American pragmatism.
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The question about what distinguishes the analytical philosophy from other philosophical orientations was considered by a great number of thinkers with the characterization and the definitions given often placed on a dispute ground. The terms of this dispute refered to problems such as: the position of analytical philosophy towards philosophy in general, the specification of the orientation opposed to the analytical philosophy ("continental philosophy" or "phenomenology"), the problem of the "roots" of this orientation in philosophy, etc.

One of the contemporary authors, whose works incited this dispute in the last decades of the 20th, is Michael Dummett. In his work *Origins of Analytical Philosophy*, Dummett shows that:

> What distinguishes analytical philosophy in its diverse manifestations, from other schools is the belief, first, that a philosophical account of thought can be attained through a philosophical account of language, and, secondly, that a comprehensive account can only be so attained (...); therefore, analytical philosophy was born when the "linguistic turn" was taken. (Dummett, 1994: 4-5)

Dummett also asserts that the orientation opposed to analytical philosophy is not "continental philosophy," but phenomenology. In his previous work, *The Roots of Analytic Philosophy*, Michael Dummett raises other problems, some of them welcome with discourses which are highly representative for the contemporary philosophical speech. Among these problems, one can distinguish the following: German or British origin of analytical philosophy; whether or not analytic philosophy and phenomenology have common roots; the relationship between the analytic philosophers' and Frege's work, Bernard Bolzano's idealist realism and Franz Brentano's intentional realism; the place attributed in the analytical philosophy to such authors as Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell, etc.

Although he doesn't agree with Dummett when the latter says that the split of contemporary philosophy into "continental" and "analytical" is wrong, Dagfinn Føllesdal reproaches Dummett for having given a too narrow definition to the *analytical philosophy*. Føllesdal says:

> The traditional classification of contemporary philosophy, with analytic philosophy as one trend among others, is therefore misleading. It would be better to say that the analytic/non-analytic distiction runs *across* other divisions. One can be an analytic philosopher and also a phenomenologist, existentialist, hermeneuticist, Thomist, etc. Whether one is an analytic philosopher depends on what importance one ascribes to argument and justification. There are, for example, phenomenologists who are more analytic, and others who are less. In the same vein we classify philosophers from all eras of the subject's history. Thus Thomas Aquines is one of the most analytical Thomists. And Aristotle, Descartes, as well as a large number of other truly great philosophers are analytic philosophers. (Føllessdal, 1996: 206)

Another author, Ray Monk, says:

> take the term *analytic* literally, namely as referring to a descomposition of complex phenomena into simpler constituents. What distinguishes modern analytic philosophy from the ham-fisted mental analysis of the British empiricists is that it employs sophisticated logical techniques to identify the structures and components of propositions. (Monk, 1996: 56)

But, Glock finds such a characterization inadequate. In ascribing to "analysis" a sense merely analoguous to chemical analysis, it rules out the possibility of understanding why Wittgenstein can be properly called an analytical philosopher. For

both the later Wittgenstein and Oxford linguistic philosophy deny that propositions have ultimate components or even a definite structure. For Wittgenstein and Oxford philosophy, analysis means the description of the rule-governed ase of expressions, and of their connections with other expressions by way of implication, presuposition and exclusion. Peter Strawson has coined the label *connective analysis* for this kind of procedure; but as he himself points out, the term *analysis* is misleading in so far as this procedure is so longer analogous to chemical analysis. (Glock, 1999: 138-9)

A different position is sustained by authors such as Peter Haccker (in *The Rise of Analytic Philosophy*, 1997) and Hans Sluga (in *Frege on Meaning*, 1997), who understand analytical philosophy in a genetic way, as a historical part of the philosophy schools who influenced one another and involved into debates, in problems such as "the decomposition of something into its components," without having in common a single doctrine, problem or method.

Regarding the *sources and the evolution* of the analytical philosophy, we mention first Michael Dummet, who, in *The Roots of Analytic Philosophy* shows that "neither Russell, nor Moore represent the source of analytical philosophy" (Dummett, 1993: IX).

The sources of analytical philosophy were the writings of philosophers who wrote, principally or exclusively, in German language; and this would have remained obvious to everyone had it not been for the plague of nazism which drove so many German speaking philosophers across the Atlantic. (Dummet, 1993: IX)

For Dummett, birth of analytical philosophy: 1884, when Frege published his *Grundlagen der Arithmetik*. Dummett points out the exact date or moment when the "linguistic turn" was taken: the decisive step was taken in section 62 of Frege's *Grundlagen der Arithmetik,* with the statement of the *context principle*. Here, Frege begins by asking about the nature of numbers and ends with the meaning of sentences containing number words (Dummett, 1993: 109).

Further on, Dummett calls Bolzano "great grandfather of analytic philosophy"; as he initiated "the extrusion of thoughts from the mind":

Frege was the grandfather of analytical philosophy, Husserl the founder of the phenomenological school, two radically different philosophical movements (Dummett, 1993: 26)

To a student in 1903, the two would have appeared certainly not as opposed, but rather as "remarkably close in orientation, despite some divergences of interest" (Dummett, 1993: 26). What determined the split of traditions? Dummett's response:

If the linguistic turn is accepted as providing the defining characteristic of analytic philosophy, then what made it possible for the analytic school to take it and impossible for the phenomenological school to do so, must play a major role in explaining their divergence (Dummett, 1993: 26)

In the case of the phenomenological tradition it was Husserl's generalization of the notion of sense or meaning (in order to arrive at his conception of noema):

this generalization precludes the linguistic turn: language can play no special part in the study or description ofthese non-linguistic mental acts. Frege's notion of sense, by contrast, was incapable of generalization. (Dummett, 1993: 26-27)

One of the defenders of the idea of the non-British origin of the analytical philosophy will be David Bell. In his article *The Revolution of Moore and Russell: A Very British Coup* (1999), Bell shows that the analytical philosophy didn't come out first by Moore and Russell, as a consequence of the rejection of the British idealism practised by Bradley, McTaggart, Ward and Stout.

It was only subsequently, with the arrival of Wittgenstein in Cambridge, the gradual assimilation of Frege's thought, and the emergence of positivists in Vienna, that the analytic tradition became susceptible to signifiant non- British influence, or came to include any major non-British developments. (Bell, 1999: 195)

G. Moore is, of course, for Bell too "the major, but by no means the first" British participant in the debate engaging Ward, Russell, Meinong, Husserl, Brentano, but

many of the terms and goals of this debate originated in Germany during the 1870's, in the attempts by philosophers, psychologists, theologians and others to come terms wit, and contribute to the emergence of psychology as a discipline in its own right. (Bell, 1999: 208)

In the same direction, Bell will talk especially about Brentano's massive influence on Moore, mentioning that

> the one exception in which Moore differed from Brentano is the principle of mereological atomism (the wiew that there were no *organic wholes* or *internal relations* and that any part of a complex could exist independently of its occurance in that or in any other whole. (Bell, 1999: 206-7)

But, even in this respect, by 1903 Moore had himself changed his original view, and rejected the mereological atomism: "at this point his Brentanianism was complete" (Bell, 1999: 207).

Hans-Johann Glock will also place himself on the side of "the German filiation" of the analytical philosophy; for him, too, the analytical philosophy starts on a German ground of thought, at the same time with Leibniz şi Kant, especially by the ideas regarding the non-empiric nature of philosophy, considered as "metatheory of the natural sciences". "Indeed, there is only a single step from the idea that philosophy is a meta-theory of the science to Carnap's slogan that philosophy is the *logic of science*" (Glock, 1999: 142).

The step to be taken through Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: the "lingvistic turn" according to which logic is to be understood by reference to language. For this author,

> Although at present analytic philosophy is practiced mainly in the English – speaking world, it is to a considerable part the invention of German speakers. Its emergence owes much to Russell, Moore and American Pragmatism, but even more to Frege, Wittgenstein, and the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle. No one would think of analytic philosophy as a specifically Anglophone phenomenon, if the Nazis had not driven many of its pioneears out of central Europe. (Glock, 1999: 137)

It is therefore obvious that for Glock too the origin of the analytical philosophy must be connected to "the surprising German analysts," Leibniz, Kant and some Neo-Kantians and its development with the "relationship between Kant and Frege' antinaturalism"; even "the general logicism which Frege shares with some Neo-Kantians goes back to Kant himself" (Glock, 1999: 161).

The opposite position, expressing the idea of the British origin of the analytical philosophy, was and still is, as we know, strongly defended as early as the 6th and the 7th decades of the 20th century. At this point we only mention J. O. Urmson, Berry Cross, Hermann Phillipse and Nicla Vassalo. For all these "Russell and Moore are the co-founders of the analytical movement" (Urmson, 1960: 19); they represent the "sources" of the analytical philosophy, which also results from the analysis of the stages of the history of the analytical philosophy, which is done by all these authors.

Urmson, in *Philosophical Analysis. Its Development between the Two World Wars* (1960), showed that:

> Russell and Moore, the co-founders of the analytic movement, were at first in reaction against Brandley and Neo-Hegelian philosophers, a reaction only the stronger because both Moore and Russell had been admires and, more or less, followers of Bradley in their philosophical youth (...). Logical atomism was a reaction against an extreme realism which had replaced the philosophy of Bradley for both Moore and Russell. (Urmson, 1960: 1-2; 4)

Nevertheless, particularly and suprisingly motivates this author,

> It would be a mistake to think that, because in his logical atomism Russell and those he influenced were reacting against Brandley's monism and the realism which he had accepted from Moore, Meinong and Frege, the analytic movement... was in its earlier form predominantly anti-metaphysical. Logical atomism was presented as a superior metaphysics which was to replace inferior ones, not as an attack on metaphysics as such. (Urmson, 1960: 1-2; 4)

Barry R. Cross, in *Analytic Philosophy. An Historical Introduction* (1970), also considers that Moore and Russell represent the "sources" of the analytical philosophy. This results from the analysis of the stages of the analytical philosophy which Cross does:

– "the early realism and the analysis": the task of which was to discover the meaning of a philosophical phrase, by its reformulation, in order to classify it. Representative: Moore.

– "the logical atomism": associated with Russell's and Wittgenstein's works. Their main preoccupation: building the ideal language, "having a syntax that describes the structure of the world, reshaping it".

– "the logical positivism of the Vienna circle": which had as purpose to clarify the language in order that it could serve to the aim of science.

– "the analysis of the ordinary language": which has in view "the diversity of the language".

In the 90s, this position is asserted again by Hermann Phillipse and Nicla Vassallo, who criticize especially Dummet's idea that Frege would be "the great grandfather of the analytical philosophy".

A special position was proposed by Henryk Skolimowschi as early as in his work *Polish Analytical Philosophy* (1967):

> The actual beginning of analytical philosophy can be taken as the publication of Russell's *On Denoting* in 1905 (…). However, I shall suggest that the roots of analytical philosophy reach much deeper, and that its development in an embryonic way occured during the two preceding centuries. (Skolimowsky, 1967: 8)

For the Polish author, the origins of the analytical philosophy are not entireley due to the British philosophers; this problem couldn'n be explained in an adequate way in terms of a single tradition, which would suppose the removal of another one.

In fact, Skolimowski suggests that we shouldn't neglect the "German line" either, nor the English one regarding the problem of the origin and of the evolution of the analytical philosophy. We are trying to motivate in favour of this statement in what follows:

a) The "relationship" between Frege and Kant occurs frequently in the interpreters' works regarding the problem of the distinction between meaning and significance: for Kant, only the pure concepts have a meaning, which is given by the objects to which they refer; the meaning (named by Kant "logical significance" – different from the significance) names as well "the simple unit of representations," that is "the form of the synthesis to which no content is given". For Frege, the significance of a name is the object it designates, while the meaning of the name is the way in which the object is given to us by the respective name. As we know, the authors of the logical empirism will reconsider the problem of the meaning and of the significance, finally identifying them and reducing them to the descriptive content of the enunciations. We also mention that it is Frege who, on the ground of the logical analysis of the language, will approach problems such as the removal of the error

sources, the necessity to establish a "perfect language" from a logical point of view (especially for the "needs of mathematics"), the relationship between the meaning of an idiom and its intersubjective control, etc. The analytical philosophers of the 20th century will be fully interested in these problems.

b) Bernard Bolzano and Franz Brentano are also "pioneers" for the later analytical research. Bolzano used to understand logic as the science about the rules of the unification of knowledge into a system, as well as about the rules to find out the truth and avoid errors; it has to become "a canon" of knowledge, not only its "organon". Moreover, in his work *A theory of science* (1837), he showed that logic is claimed to enlighten the conditions on which people can come to the knowledge of the truths.

Franz Brentano raises in his turn problems which will become some serious preoccupations for those who will use the analysis method: the semantic analysis of terms (considered as a way to solve the philosophical problems), the edification of science by observation, its position on what is given directly by experience, the necessity to make the formal logic agree with the empirical realism, the trial to "reconstruct the formal logic," the proposal to resort to the logical analysis of language in order to frame its use in rules meant to prevent its slide into constructions without an empirical base etc.

c) On the other hand, we can't deny Russell's and Moore's role in the constitution of the specificity of the analytical thought, by the "conceptual analysis," by the critique of the common language, insufficiently supervised by the logical control, by the position of the philosophical speech under the ontological exigencies of the symbolical logic, by the transformation of the critique of knowledge into a critique of language (this idea will be present mainly in Wittgenstein's work, as part of the logical atomism initiated with Russell), etc.

On these conditions, the analytical philosophy can be understood as a result and as a process of the meeting of the two traditions: the German one and the Anglo-American one.

We also consider that M. Dummet's, Jocelyn Benoist's and Barry Smith' opinions regarding some common roots of the analytical philosophy and the phenomenology are worthy of being taken into considerance (even if Dummet insists especially on the major distictions between these two philosophical currents). We don't simply refer to the "Kantian

openings," which have interested not only the "analysts," but also Husserl and Heidegger, but also to Bolzano's ideas regarding the outrunning of the psychologism or to those concerning "the field of significances," ideas for which *The Phenomenology* was to be deeply greatful. Trying to overrun the "Freegean studies" of the *Phenomenology* proposed from the interior of the analytical philosophy by the Norwegian Dagfinn Føllesdal (in his work *Husserl und Frege*, 1958), Jocelyn Benoist (in *Représentations sans objet aux origines de la phénoménologie et de la philosophie analytique*, 2001) looks for the "common origins" but also for the elements of separation regarding the "refentiality exigency" and by means of the so-called "tripartite scheme": representation, meaning, reference on the one hand, act, content, object, on the other hand. We understand that, for the French phenomenologist, the origins of the analytical philosophy must be searched in connection with Bolzano and Brentano and, even deeper, in connection with the "Kantian representationalism"; then, the proto-phenomenologic Husserlian period (the one before *Ideen*...) also belongs to the analytical philosophy and the separation between "Frege's line" and "Husserl's line" is occasioned by the "discrimination – inside the analytical philosophy limits – between the intentionalist use and a non-intentionalist use of the tripartition representation/act, meaning, reference" (Benoist, 2001: 8). The other mentioned author, Barry Smith, will discuss especially about the influence of Brentano's "intentional realism" on Husserl, in the problem of the intentionality of the conciousness phenomena, or in that of considering "the living of the evidence" as a criterion of truth, as well as about the influence of the "semantic analysis of terms" – proposed by the Austrian F. Brentano – on the analyst philosophers.

Of course, identifying such "common roots" doesn't mean at all neglecting the importance of the major distinctions which settled between these philosophical perspectives.

The problem of the evolution of the analytical philosophy also concerns its extension in the American space of thought. As early as in 1965, Robert Ammerman, in *A Short History of Analytic Philosophy* shows that:

> In the United States, where Positivism almost from its inception had found many sympathetic listeners, the original doctrines of the Vienna Circle have often been combined with the tradition of American Pragmatism. Since Pragmatism and Positivism always shared many features, it is not surprising that some philosophers

have been able to write in both tradition simultaneously. Quine is an excellent example of an original thinker who shows in his writings the influence of both Positivism and Pragmatism upon his thought. (Ammerman, 1965: 9)

Ronald N. Giere expresses himself in a somehow different direction in his study *From Wisenschaftliche Philosophy to philosophy of Science* (1996). The author talks about the "American line" born from Carnap's, Reichenbach's and Hempel's researches, line which is followed by their students in Chicago: Hillary Putman and Wesley Salmon (Reichenbach's students), Richard Jeffrey (Carnap's student), Adolf Grumbaun and Nicholas Rescher (Hempel's students). Ronald Giere also underlines the development of the logical empirism in America, often to the prejudice of the pragmatism upheld by W. James and Dewey and this is grounded in an older distinction introduced by Reichenbach between epistemology and psychology.

Another author, Karl Otto Apel, in his work *Charles Peirce, From Pragmatism to Pragmaticism* (1981), talks, on the one hand, about the influence of the Neo-Positivist analysts on Peirce's thought and, on the other hand, he tries to catch Kant' influence on the American philosopher. Thus, he states:

In Peirce, the neopositivists could find already formulated all of their key problems and, as it seemed at first, even the solutions, such as semantic approach to philosophizing (linguistic analysis), the problem of the criteria of the meaning of sentences, and the solution to this problem through the so-called principle of verification. (Apel, 1981: 6)

Except that, Apel adds,

The discussion of the principle of verification led to the insight, long anticipated by Peirce, that it is impossible to reduce the meaning of general concepts to sense data (or to reduce scientific propositions to so-called protocol sentences), and that we must be satisfied with the *prognostic relevance* of theoretical concepts (or, respectively, of whole theories. (Apel, 1981: 6)

Having discovered some similitudes between Peirce and Wittgenstein, Apel will find their ground in some Kantian openings. In fact, Apel emphasizes a certain similarity between the two by saying that both "have shown the problem of the conditions of the possibility of philosophy to

be the problem of reflecting by means of language on the conditions for the possibility of experience posed by language" (Apel, 1981: 118). For Apel, Peirce's major contribution to analytical philosophy lies in his achievement of "a language-analytical or semiotical transformation of transcendental philosophy" (Apel, 1981: 80).

For Apel, Charles Peirce, "this Kant of the American philosophy," was the one who inaugurated "the critical reconstruction of the *Critique of pure reason*". In fact, Apel's theory is that "Peirce's philosophical approach may be understood as a semiotical transformation of Kant's transcendental logic" (Apel, 1981: 81).

CONCLUSION

We have become used with the statement that the analytical philosophy began in England, as a reaction to the neo-Hegelian idealism asserted by Bradley and Taggart, as well as to Meining's Platonist idealism and to the phenomenological philosophy. In this article we have tried to show that such a statement may be considered nowadays at least doubtful.

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