

УДК 81'373.42

On The Meaning of the Word “Philosophy” (on History of the Word)

Gennadiy V. Boldyguin*

University for Humanities

19 Student Str., Ekaterinburg, 620049 Russia

Received 14.08.2013, received in revised form 03.09.2013, accepted 25.10.2013

The main subject of this article is the shift of meanings of the term “philosophy” in the different historical periods. “Philosophy” in ancient Greece was used in its literal sense – the love of wisdom – to explain the special cult “knowledge for the sake of knowledge”. It was believed that this “love” is the mother of all sciences. In the future, the word “philosophy” meant mostly “the love of knowledge” and a set of theoretical science. The word “philosophy” began to be used to refer to a particular branch of knowledge with its own issues (different than the issues of special sciences) only in the 19th century.

Keywords: philosophy, nature, practical knowledge, theoretical knowledge, science, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Voltaire, Newton, Kant, Hegel.

Every culture has words that in combination with two or three others express its essence, behavioral, cognitive and aesthetic ideals inherent to it. They constitute a rather small set of questions that are *eternal* for the given culture, as well as a rather narrow corridor of possible answers to these questions. There is no use explaining to a more or less well educated person which culture it is about when he or she faces words like *tao*, *Vedas* or *zen*. Such key words also include *philosophy*, which together with *nature* and *theory* characterize the way of thinking inherent exclusively to *European science* and unknown to great eastern civilizations until the second half of the 19th century.¹

“Names have their fate, but few of them had such a strange fate as the word “philosophy” – wrote W. Windelband at the turn of the 20th

century. [4; 28]² Within long centuries of its existence the term *philosophy* has gained new meanings that excluded seemingly forever *love for wisdom* from the range of phenomena they used to denote before. This phrase itself now seems to be an accidental name for the spiritual formation, the essence of which the modern philosophers speak about. History is irreversible, and at present it seems inappropriate to use the word *philosophy* in its original meaning. However, it is inexcusable to ignore this meaning, as it is about the support frame of European culture of thought. There was a time when this word was used in its literal meaning as *love* of a certain kind, which served for ancient Hellenes an explanation of strange acts and speeches of some of their contemporaries they were astonished of.

© Siberian Federal University. All rights reserved

* Corresponding author E-mail address: bgv47@mail.ru

Complex words, including *philosophy*, can never come into existence as the result of accidental combination of sounds. All of them are young as compared to words of *first denomination* and have specific, though not always known, inventors. Those who created them acted well consciously, combining different roots in one word, as the existing words could not be adapted to denominate brand new things and phenomena absolutely different from what existed before them. According to the legend, the invention of the word φιλοσοφία is attributed to Pythagoras, who allegedly refused modestly the title of a *sage*, as in his judgment only gods were really sage, and for men it was appropriate to be called *lover of wisdom*. But rumors attributed to quasi-mythical Pythagoras and to secret religious and political union of *Pythagoreans* much of something that his adepts could absolutely neither know, nor do. The word *philosophy* does not appear in reliable written sources of the 6th and 5th centuries BC, and therefore it is unknown which meaning was read in it, for example, by Anaxagoras or Democritus, and whether they used it at all.

Apparently, the word *philosophy* was designed in Socratic circle that ironically opposed their *love for wisdom* to the alleged wisdom of the sophists; and this word stayed within those limits for a certain time. Aristophanes, who knew Socrates well, calls him in his comedy “*The Clouds*” not a philosopher but a *sophist* most probably because the words *philosopher* and *philosophy* were unknown to most readers and viewers of his play. The first written surviving examples of the term *philosophy* appear twice in the copies of speeches of rhetorician Isocrates who used to be a part of Socratic circle. But it really passed in generic usage due to Plato’s dialogues – copied many times – containing well developed judgments on *philosophy* and *philosophers*. It is to note that he does not attribute to these terms pejorative meaning, sincere or pretended.

He did not use this word to denominate a certain special *science* as opposed to other sciences, nor a certain *syncretic science* that later gave birth to *individual sciences*, nor a *worldview*, nor an *ideology*, nor an *activity that clarified the meaning of the sentences* and nor anything else that was called in the next centuries *philosophy*. Plato used this term to denominate *love* of a special kind that his followers called *platonian* after the man who was the first to describe it. Indeed, it would have been strange to expect from Plato, who was an eyewitness of the invention and probably a co-inventor of the word, that he used it not in its literal, but in figurative sense, which emerged centuries and millennia later in the minds of his unknown followers. But as for *love* in its different manifestations, his attitude was really serious.

Plato has described its several varieties, and thanks to them human life with its social structure, material and intellectual culture differs drastically from the existence of all other social animals. It’s about *erotic love* aligning humans with other animals but different from purely animal passion due to their aspiration for the *beautiful*. It’s also about *Mammon* creating colossal fortunes and therefore opportunities for putting into practice the most ambitious projects. This includes as well *vanity*, love for honors, pushing people to commit both heroic deeds and crimes. This is also about *love for power* which, according to Plato, emerges from vanity and is especially obvious and strong with politicians and military commanders. But Plato’s main interest and special amazement concerned two varieties of love that, according to him, were inherent to the utmost to *philosophers by nature*. One of these is *love for wisdom* as such, and the second is *love for truth*, for knowledge for knowledge sake. [7; 475 a-e, 486 b-c]

Since the 6th century BC among pragmatic Plato’s compatriots – cultivators and craftsmen, merchants and seamen, soldiers and statesmen –

emerged people who took interest in absolutely useless questions. Does everything consist of water, fire and air, of atoms and empty space or of anything else? Will Achilles overtake the tortoise or not? Is the Sun really red-hot stone of the size above Peloponnesus? *Is everything really a number?* The answers to those and similar questions obviously could not be useful in politics, commerce, crafts, military art or agriculture, in none of practical activities of ancient Hellenes. Nevertheless, they argued to each other, trying to prove the veracity of their views as if something important in their lives really depended on that. They were proving the veracity of Pythagoras' theorem that their Mediterranean neighbors and they themselves used for centuries when measuring land and doing construction work. They were proving lots of theorems useless for themselves and their nearest descendants, including theorem on building only five possible regular convex polyhedra.

What made those people tick? What makes our contemporaries tick? What is the practical sense of the proof? And does it exist at all? If needed, we use the theorem knowledge without thinking of their proof. Why mathematics without proofs is unthinkable for us? And why was it easily thinkable to Chinese in the 19th century? In first translations of European textbooks in geometry into Chinese proofs were completely absent. Most likely Chinese translators did not find any practical usage for them and considered them somewhat intellectual decorations or certain *European ceremonies*. For most ancient Hellenes the desire of some of their contemporaries to prove the veracity of their views seemed as strange as this.

Plato, who was sure of the use of mathematical knowledge for managing the state and for military art, understood clearly practical uselessness of the proof, explaining that business – pointless according to the majority – with *love sickness*

similar to a *delirium* of a person in love who can neither think, nor speak of anything else but the object of his or her affections. According to him, *philosophers'* disregard of everyday business, their poverty, the lack of skills for crafts and civil disputes are because of their love for truth. In Plato's opinion it was not a way of subduing someone else's will by power lovers – as the proof started to be interpreted in the 20th century – but a mean making it possible for *philosopher* to make sure that he finally took hold of the truth, object of his unconditional love. As the result, *philosophers by nature* feel from the proof a special *enjoyment, pleasure* unknown to *aspirants for honors, chrysophilists* and *tyrants*. [7. 582 a-e; 586 c – 587 e]

Every one of us who managed to puzzle out a proof of any theorem for at least once in his life or to solve a problem by himself knows this *pleasure* of achieving the truth that does not appear when thinking about future benefit (e.g., about cash reward) or honors (at least about a praise from the teacher). The fact that *enjoyment* feeling from finding such a proof is familiar to most of us means that we grew up in the realm of culture and its most important constituent is the *cult of truth*. This cult requires valuing certain *knowledge not as useful means* that may be *used* to achieve another more important goal for us, but as the final *goal*, as the most important value for which people sometimes sacrifice their lives and even their immortal soul.³ What knowledge is this? And do we aim at achieving any knowledge for knowledge sake?

The answer to the second question is obvious and simple: not any. We appreciate the oldest and the broadest *practical knowledge* – recipes, regulations, instructions, checklists and everything that is now called *know how* – for their *usefulness*, for a possibility of *using* them as *means* for achieving other *goals* that are more important for us, than the *know how* itself, though

it may cost more, being the subject of commercial secret. Practical knowledge is the knowledge of action; without it the achievement of the desired goal would be impossible. As these goals and actions are *ours*, and it is up to us to put them into practice or not, to act in one or another way, according to Aristotle, they are *not always the same*, and for this reason we *make decisions* on our acts. [3.1112 a30-1113a20]

Until recently practical knowledge expressed in imperative was not linked to the knowledge on subjects inaccessible for arbitrary modification and to their ontological properties, on which, according to Aristotle, *we don't make decisions*, as, for example, *on the cosmos*, *on the past*, or *on incommensurability of diagonal and side of the square*. [3. 1112 a16-17] This knowledge expressed in indicative mood is not a practical *mean*, as it doesn't and even can't say anything about *possible* or *needed acts* with subjects of their cognitive interest; and therefore, is useless for achieving someone's pragmatic goals. Such knowledge after Aristotle was called *theoretical*, *contemplative* (from the word θεωρία – contemplation, observation). *Theory* for ancient Hellenes was both sensuous contemplation and *speculation* (e.g., of *numbers*, *atoms*, *ideas and forms*) that they valued higher than the former – closely associated with passions – considering it to be independent from emotions. However, sensuous contemplation was for them also θεωρία, theoretical cognition.⁴

European science owes the development of the cult of non-practical knowledge to freedom that came down on Hellas in the 7th and 6th centuries BC due to a relatively fast disintegration of clan links of the population. Former morals that dictated the rules of conduct with the clansmen and outlanders without any options did not work any longer in the context of heterogeneous and *multipeople policy*, whereas new forms were only forming. The cult of *sages* has emerged in

chaos of unregulated and therefore unpredictable acts causing fear and the desire to fend off preventively a recently kind neighbor and even relative. By *wisdom* they meant the highest degree of mastership in any business, but especially the art of finding a way out from the most difficult everyday situations without infringing on the interests of other people. A legend (and it was a legend already for Aristotle) attributes to the *sages* who managed to harmonize their relations with the neighborhood the invention of *polity*, such a form of community life, including heterogeneous and multi tribal individuals, that is regulated with *nomoi* (νόμοι), agreements concluded by the general meeting of citizens and necessarily put into writing afterwards. That is specifically the written form of νόμος (most often translated as *law*) that was different from λέξις (literally – word), oral form of former inter-clan and intertribal agreements.

However, *nomoi*, as it turned out, as opposed to unwritten rules of community life were easily broken or cancelled (sometimes temporarily and then were called *psefisma*) in spite of the sacred promises not to modify them. Certainly the laws limited the lawlessness of the individuals, but not in such compulsory way that they could be compared to former *taboos*. This made them for most Hellenes unfavorably different from unwritten and single option clan morals and practices. The discontent about new system of freedom limitation, which did not create invincible obstacles for the free-will of individuals, caused hidden search for force majeure against which ancient Hellene's soul – knocked out by freedom – could finally lean and which could serve a basis for future inviolable legislation.

One of the results of such a search has become the formation of the concept φύσις (*nature*) at the turn of the 5th century BC. By *nature* Hellenes meant at that time not the *world as a whole*, not *cosmos*, neither *Universe*, but an

essence inaccessible to arbitrary modification. This essence determines a way of independent appearance, existence and annihilation of things, similar to what we mean when speaking about *human nature, nature of science, thought* etc. Main meanings of the word φύσις were defined by its opposition to the word τέχνη (*art, skill*), another *source* of appearance, motion and modification of things requiring from people not only skills, but efforts, sometimes really serious ones. A variety of τέχνη was πραξις (*practice*), specific – according to Aristotle – art of *acts* or actions in respect of other people.

Efforts to cognize *natures of things* (that's exactly how – in plural – ancient Hellenes used to write the expression, believing that every class of things had its special *nature*) inaccessible for modifications and therefore independent on *our decision*, caused the development of the foundations of *theoretical* cognition. It had to present its subjects not in terms of their possible usage, but in their own *natural* properties regardless of their usefulness or uselessness, beauty or ugliness, pleasance or hatefulness. Theoretical cognition both then and now has to answer the question “what *is*” (and not *thought to be*), “what *was*” and “what *will always be*”, and not the questions like “*what is better, than something that is*” and “*what should be done to achieve this better*”.

But how correlate *love and wisdom*, or love for practical knowledge and love for *truth* as the final *goal* of theoretical cognition? Can be considered as *philosophers* those who due to their sight and speculation study things holding deliberately back from practical actions on them to avoid distorting their *nature*? Socrates, as it is known, gave up on cognition of different *natures* he was keen in his youth in order to concentrate on the cognition of *Good* and ways of its achievement; in other words on cognition of *wisdom*. Plato found his own solution of the question about the correlation

of *philosophy* and love for truth by returning to mythological interpretation of natural processes that became predominant in the Middle Ages.

Hellenes' myths were about the cult of *art-skill* sanctified with belief in Olympic gods who only due to the skill of each of them in corresponding craft (including Hermes' theft skill) managed to win their more powerful cousins – the Titans. Plato, reasoning about the *nature* that makes something appear and change without anybody's apparent efforts, claimed that what was meant by φύσις was in fact also τέχνη, though not human *art*, but *celestial* (θεϊ τέχνη). [8; 265e] Based on such understanding of φύσις he speaks about presiding deity as master of art – *Demiurge*; and as for the theory of the origination of things and on *cosmos*, he calls it *believable myth*, meaning by *myth* a special literary genre that had a specific subject – deeds of gods and heroes. Thus, *curiosity* (φιλομάθημα) of those who aim on cognition of *nature* of things is in essence an aspiration for the cognition of *celestial wisdom*, though not always intended. A passion for useless knowledge incomprehensible for most contemporaries now got its explanation. *Love for wisdom* (φιλοσοφία) that have seized certain people makes them go in for theoretical research; after Plato it was called *mother* of all sciences – mathematics (that included astronomy and theory of music), logic, physics, ethics and in Hellenes period even mechanics.

Ancient Romans, who won Hellas in military confrontation but could not resist the charm of its culture, translated into Latin almost all Greek scientific terms. However, they could not find an analogue for the word *philosophy*. Their practical mind polished in permanent battles, state arrangement, creating legal institutions, field works and agricultural production was uninterested in questions the answers to which could not bring any use. Acknowledging Greeks' superiority in solving theoretical problems –

particularly in mathematics and physics – Romans accepted the role of perpetual pupils, only dreaming about getting closer to the knowledge of their teachers. As for independent search for theoretical knowledge, they didn't even dream about that. Consequently, a new type of a scientist emerged in Rome – a generalist who knows all the existing reputable sources, as for example, Pliny the Elder who has become a role model in medieval scholasticism. As for the Greek word *philosophy*, normally Romans – who knew its literal translation – used it to denominate Hellenes' *love for knowledge* that they did not understand much, as well as the whole of *theoretical knowledge* produced by it.

That interpretation of the word *philosophy* has become the target of violent criticism by early Christian apologists and *church fathers* which were jealous about all kinds of love but love for god. Talented and well educated a la Greek they made a lot to suppress the cult of *philosophy* which was accredited among pragmatically oriented Romans due to a strange fashion. One of the deepest Christian thinkers Augustine of Hippo, aiming to discredit philosophy in the eyes of his Roman compatriots, interpreted it as the lowest kind of love, as a certain *lust* exhausting human spiritual power with *aspiration for knowledge*. But *this knowledge* – he addresses to pragmatic Romans – *does not bring any use; people don't even look in it for anything but knowledge*. [1; 308-310]

Throughout all early period of the Middle Ages, which was called *dark*, western Christians – not without Augustine's influence – deliberately suppressed in them interest for individual search for truth, if it appeared. Outbursts of curiosity were considered as Devil's intrigues raising arrogance of a man who dared to think that he was able of cognizing something on his own, whereas in reality we get all our knowledge from God who measured its content and volume for all

of us, sufficiently to achieve perpetual bliss. It had to be the genius of Thomas Aquinas in order to legalize in the eyes of Catholics of the 13th century an interest – caused by Arabic language culture – for theoretical studies of antiquity, for *philosophy*, which was considered after Romans not as a special science, but as *love for knowledge*. Thomas' arguments, proving that such love does not endanger *theology* but, on the contrary, is its *servant*, settled millenarian conflict between curiosity and orthodox belief, unleashing powerful intellectual forces anticipating scientific revolution of the modern history.

Not without Thomas' influence who believed that seven disciplines relative to *trivium* and *quadrivium* do not exhaust *theoretical philosophy* (*philosophia theoretica*) they started to teach at the *faculties of liberal arts* (*facultas atrium liberatum*) in Renaissance period *physics* and *metaphysics*, including *rational (natural) theology* and *rational psychology*; and the faculties themselves were renamed into *philosophy faculties*. Medieval Europe witnessed Hellenistic division of sciences into *theoretical* – taught at *philosophy faculties* – and *practical* – taught at law and medical faculties. A special place was occupied by *practical philosophy* – ethical and political doctrines that were taught at *philosophy faculties*. Then as now studies of *ethics* were not aimed at governing the acts and improvement of morals (then it was church's business and now it belongs to communication media). *Practical philosophy* (*philosophia practica*) was a *theoretical* subject that studied as granted existing reputable doctrines on *morals*.

Scientific revolution of the 17th century added new meanings to the word *philosophy*, though gradually. Throughout a long period of time *philosophy* was considered as *love for knowledge*, which gave the same rights to *physics* and *metaphysics*, *rational cosmology* and *astronomy*, *rational* and *empirical psychology*, mathematics

and *ethics*. Today we easily distinguish Descartes *philosophy* from his mathematical and natural science researches. But Descartes himself who defined *philosophy* as *study of wisdom* meant by this study not only his doctrine on method and two substances, but also all *other* theoretical sciences (speculative, assisted by *intellectual intuition*), including *rational theology, rational psychology, physics, mechanics, medicine* and *ethics*.

It is obvious for us now that *Philosophie naturalis principia mathematica* by Newton delivers not *natural philosophy*, but physics, and Toland's criticism of those *Principles* – given his own reasoning on motion – or let us say Holbach's *System of Nature* is exactly natural philosophy but in no way physics. It is also clear that Voltaire's *Philosophy of History* does not represent reasoning on driving forces of historical process and on its final goals, but a work on history. However, what is clear to us was not clear to Newton, Toland, Holbach and Voltaire. *Philosophy* for them and for encyclopaedist enlighteners was still *love for knowledge* requiring from *philosophers* finding out *what really is* and *really was*. They believed that human mind enlightened with this knowledge will not make a mistake in choosing practical goals and means for their achievement and will not allow the return of ignorant Middle Ages.

In Germany *popular philosophy* fixed the same enlightenment goals, including the requirement to present scientific knowledge in native language. If Latin terms did not need to be translated into Roman languages, in Germany many of them had to be translated into German, often creating new words. Alongside with newly created German terms Latinisms and Hellenisms often subsisted, which made it possible to express different subtleties of similar phenomena thanks to etymologically equal words. Especially lots of new terms that *shocked* contemporaries were introduced by I. Kant, according to his own confession.⁵

Kant was the first in continental Europe to give a university course of lectures in physics based on Newton's works, and was the first to realize all its novelty, particularity of problems that it solved as opposed to previous doctrines on *nature*. Kant uses the neologism *natural science* (Naturwissenschaft) to distinguish this new mathematized science on nature from previous one deprived of mathematical apparatus, of *physics* that he intended to reform on the basis of *critique of the reason* and to call it *metaphysics of nature* or *philosophy of nature*. The word *philosophy*, according to Kant, stops to denominate only *love for knowledge*, but also involves a certain – different from mathematics and natural science – branch of cognition with judgments that will never become *universal and necessary*. If we put together all the definitions of *philosophy* contained in the *Critique of Pure Reason* alone, it would be impossible to unite them in a certain synthesizing definition. But that was Kant's *philosophy* which was the first to denominate a special sphere of intellectual activity with own special problematic different from problematic of sciences that were called later *individual* and *specific*.

A way of understanding specific character of philosophy problems that were not defined by traditional metaphysics with its set of *rational theoretical sciences* and far less by physical-mathematical disciplines have become rare so far attempts to create a special science *philosophy* with its own subject and method, solving its own problems. J.G. Fichte was one of the first to start this trend, having published in 1794 the essay *On the Concept of Epistemology or So Called Philosophy*. But the most consistent in creating new science was Hegel. "My intention – he wrote in *Phenomenology of Spirit* – was to encourage the approach of philosophy to a form of science, to a goal, that once achieved, it could reject its name of *love for knowledge* and become *actual knowledge*."

...The time has come to bring philosophy to the level of science". [5.3] His "system of sciences" consisted of *phenomenology of spirit*, *logic* and 2 parts of *real philosophy* – *philosophy of nature* and *philosophy of spirit*, including *philosophy of history*, *philosophy of law*, *philosophy of religion*, *esthetics* and *history of philosophy*.

This system incorporated all European education, unusual formulation of questions and as unusual answers to those questions and gave rise to numerous imitations and objections. The range of problems that were now considered as purely *philosophical* has considerably broadened. *Philosophy* as a separate subject started to be taught in German universities and even in school classrooms.⁶ However, the transformation of the word *philosophy* as a special branch of knowledge progressed in different ways in different countries. A. Comte drew on traditional understanding formulated by Newton in *Natural Philosophy*, C. Linné in *Botanical Philosophy* (*Philosophia botanica*) and J.-B. Lamarck in *Zoological Philosophy* (*Philosophie zoologique*). He was perplexed about its newly fashionable usage in German lands and even outside. Hegel did not reply to his request to expose briefly in French his *philosophy*, and Comte finally declared that *science* was *philosophy in itself*, and for this reason did not include *philosophy* in the list of sciences that he called "positive philosophy".

However, by the end of the 19th century nobody used the term *philosophy* to denominate natural and historical sciences. *Philosophy of History* by Voltaire and Herder has become just *history*, *Botanical Philosophy* and *Zoological Philosophy* – just botany and zoology, and *philosophy of nature* by Newton – just *physics*. But the term *philosophy of history* did not disappear. *Gnoseology*, *epistemology* and other purely *philosophical* disciplines emerged. One of the most educated people of his times W. Windelband, referring to the variety of

meanings of the word *philosophy*, has declared a universal *right to call philosophy whatever he wants*, having defined it as *critical science on values compulsory for everybody*. [4;40] That is how another philosophical science *axiology* has appeared.

Even more *philosophies* formed in the 20th century. They are *philosophy of physics*, *philosophy of mathematics*, and just *philosophy of science*, *philosophy of social* (die Socialphilosophie) and plenty of others, including *philosophy of philosophy*. It could seem that a variety of competing schools and trends having their own interpretation of the word *philosophy* must have caused a radical lack of understanding among their adepts. However, that was not the case. Marxists and neo-thomists, existentialists and logical positivists, representatives of phenomenology and linguistic analysis distinguish easily, for example, *philosophy of physics* from physics itself, *philosophy of mathematics* from mathematics, *philosophy of science* from science etc. despite their critical attitude towards other doctrines. It turns out that in spite of all declarations on originality of their own views our contemporaries rely upon some common understanding of the word *philosophy*.

It is true, however, that in some cases the ways of using this word make us look back to its history, as they leave perplexed people who belong to different scientific traditions. That is how the situation is in English speaking and French speaking scientific communities with science degree *Doctor of Philosophy* (PhD) which is given after defense of a thesis in one of theoretical sciences. If it is about practical sciences, a degree of *Doctor of Law* or *Doctor of Medicine* is given. Even stranger looks the use of the word *jurisprudence* by Anglo-French legal profession. They use it not in the meaning of acting *law*, not of the profession of graduates of legal faculties, but in the meaning of *philosophy*

of law which means, according to them, not the interpretation of the law from a perspective of any philosophy doctrine, but the *history* of law *studies* and legal institutions. Similarly to Voltaire *history* in this case is interpreted as *theoretical* science, as its subject does not succumb to arbitrary modifications. And from this medieval perspective originating from Aristotle⁷ *history of law* is classified as one of *philosophical sciences* which aims at establishing what really was and is not subject to arbitrary modification unlike practical sciences.

If we take for granted the division of knowledge into *practical* and *theoretical* – which is not as ancient as it may seem – the ones that formed in the last two hundred years are not a little more practical than Anglo-French *philosophy of law*. *Philosophy of science* is not practical. Otherwise, thanks to *methodology of science* it would show the *way* (from Greek μέθοδος, literally means the way) to each and every one to discoveries in physics, biology, chemistry etc. For the same reason are not practical *philosophy of arts*, *philosophy of politics* and other *philosophies*. Not practical are also natural science theories, thought the expression “there is nothing more practical than a good theory” is used quite often. In order to become *useful*, laws, phenomena and effects discovered due to them should come across the sight of an inventor, who conceives the world and its components through the prism of categories of *goal* and *mean*, and who is not capable of bearing with something that is and therefore will always be the same. Their mind is oriented towards a better future that will never come on its own, in natural way. This intellectual gift to invent something better than existing in its highest manifestations is spread amongst people not a bit more than the gift of genius theorists famed for their scientific discoveries. Alexander Popov, who was a practicing engineer and did not invent

electromagnetic waves, had enough of that. The discovery was made by H.R. Hertz who has never imagined how it could be used in practice.⁸ In spite of the common opinion not practical are also economy theories. Their thorough studies have made nobody as rich as, for example, *dropout* Bill Gates. Then what is so amazing about the fact that philosophy, as at the moment of its birth, is still useless and does not represent a mean to achieve certain more important goals? Do people study it for its own sake? It is a kind of luxury for those who have – as at the times of Aristotle – *almost everything needed, as well as something that makes life easier and brings pleasure*. (2;982 b 20-25) People from poor states cannot afford it. But they also cannot afford physics, chemistry, biology and other theoretical sciences.

Modern philosophy is the emanation of European cult of *knowledge for knowledge sake* that requires the achievement of truth, whether it is useful or useless. Philosophy together with other theoretical types of knowledge, including all varieties of art studies and social studies that emerged together with it at the turn of the 19th century, supports this cult. As Socrates – who used to look for wisdom amongst craftsmen, politicians and poets – modern philosophy in its best manifestations addresses any skills and studies to share the wisdom of their creators. But broadening our knowledge on all aspects of human activity it does not find *wisdom* neither in politics, arts, religion, technology, science, everyday life, nor in anything else that pretends to possess it. For this reason people don't really like philosophers, as before. Moreover, they rather dislike them, as aiming to achieve the truth, they destroy arrogant belief in own *wisdom* of politicians, clergymen, economy commanders and others, including all kinds of connoisseurs who advertise right recipes of happy life. There is no wisdom in the world, but it is impossible to ban loving it even after another disappointment in claimants to possess

it, and to hope for its principal achievability. The word *philosophy*, both nowadays and at the time of its invention means first of all *love for wisdom* which takes possession of us and gives birth to cognition of something that is, was and must always be.

Reference

1. Aristotle. *Metaphysics*.⁹
2. Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*.
3. Augustine of Hippo. *Confession of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*. Moscow, 2006. 440 p.
4. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit. Oeuvres in 14 Volumes. Vol. IV*. Moscow, 1959. 440 p.
5. Kant, I. *Tracts and Letters*. Moscow, 1980. 709 p.
6. Lozinsky, S.G. *Fatal Book of the Middle Ages*. Introductory article to Sprenger, J., Institoris, H. *Hexenhammer*. Moscow, 1932. P. 3-57.
7. Plato. *The Sophist*.
8. Plato. *The Republic*.
9. Windelband, W. *Selected Works: Spirit and History*. Moscow, 1995. 688 p.

¹ The term *European science* (introduced by E. Husserl) is used here in a broader meaning, including all cultures of scientific thought that formed under the influence of ancient Hellenes genius, specifically medieval Arabic language science, wherefrom philosophy came to medieval Europe under the name of *falsafah*, making *European science* speak with strong Arabic accent.

² In square brackets the first figure represents an index number of the source in the Reference list at the end of the article; other figures mean either the page number or line numbers in ancient authors' works.

³ *Francesco Barbaro*, patriarch of Aquileia, who lived in the decline of the Middle Ages, in the 15th century, tried, according to the accounts, to make a deal with the Devil with only one purpose – to get an explanation of the real meaning of Aristotle's term *entelechy*. See: [9; 6]

⁴ The definitions of the possible meanings of the term *theoretical knowledge* as opposed to *empirical* one started to emerge only in the second half of the 19th century under the influence of representatives of *natural science materialism*, well established at that time. Before that *theoretical* knowledge was opposed exclusively to *practical* one, and the criteria for distinction – similarly to Aristotle – were their subjects that, as it was thought, are cognized in the same way – empirically and rationally.

⁵ In his letter to C. Garve from 07.08.1783 Kant accepts the fairness of reproach in "insufficient popularity" of already published "The Critique of Pure Reason", but believes: "The first shock produced by plenty of absolutely unfamiliar concepts and some even less familiar terms, though inevitably inherent to new language, will pass. Certain things will become clearer, as time goes by (this may happen partially due to my "Prolegomenas"). These things will clarify other things; for this my participation... may sometimes be needed". [6;544]

⁶ Fichte was the first to read his *epistemology as philosophy*, having occupied the first chair of *philosophy* in the newly created (1809) Berlin University. Kant, being professor of *philosophy faculty*, gave lectures on different disciplines, but not on "philosophy". And Hegel gave a course of *philosophy* even in gymnasium classrooms, which made F. Engels call *philosophy* of German idealists *classical*.

⁷ "...*One does not make decisions on the past*" – said Aristotle making distinction between theoretical knowledge and practical action. [2;1139 b10]

⁸ L.D. Landau is attributed a playful definition that he gave after the substantial raise of scientists' salaries ordered by Stalin in 1948: "Physics is a way of satisfying one's curiosity at the state's account". And yet Landau knew better than many theoretical physics and its practical potentialities.

⁹ Works by Aristotle and Plato of any edition with notes on the line numbers.

О значении слова «философия» (об истории слова)

Г.В. Болдыгин

Гуманитарный университет

Россия 620049, Екатеринбург, ул. Студенческая, 19

Основной темой данной статьи является изменение понятия «философия» в различные исторические периоды. Слово «философия» использовалось в Древней Греции в своем дословном значении – любовь к мудрости – для того, чтобы объяснить особый культ «знаний ради знаний». Считалось, что «любовь» является матерью всех наук. В дальнейшем слово «философия» означало в большинстве своем «любовь к знанию» и теоретическую науку. Слово «философия» начали применять относительно особой области знаний с ее собственным предметом (отличным от предметов других научных направлений) только в XIX веке.

Ключевые слова: философия, природа, практические знания, теоретические знания, Платон, Аристотель, Аквинский, Декарт, Вольтер, Ньютон, Кант, Гегель.
