

THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY IN SLOVENIA: A BRIEF SKETCH

Frane Jerman

Every nation has its own cultural tradition, which includes the development of philosophical thinking. What is included under the term "Slovene philosophy"? First, the texts of all Slovenes, irrespective of place where they lived; and second, the texts of all philosophers who lived in some locality in Slovenia and are not of Slovene origin. Slovene philosophy has been written in three languages: in Latin, in German and in Slovene.

Many philosophical manuscripts were written, from the Middle Ages on, in Slovene monasteries. One famous medieval manuscript is that of HERMANNUS DE CARINTHIA (12th century), which contains the treatise *De essentiis* with commentaries on Aristotelian philosophy. The majority of our medieval manuscripts contain scholastic disputes about some of the distinctions between Thomistic and Scotistic ontological and logical questions.

The first printed book of Slovene philosophy is *Parvulus philosophiae naturalis* written by MATIJA HVALE in 1513. This is a commentary on the textbook by Albert The Great. Hvale discriminated logic in favour of nature and thus was one of the first humanistic philosophers at the University of Vienna.

We should also mention the professional Slovene philosopher ANTON ERBER [or Erberg] (1695-1746), who wrote in an old-fashioned Latin style. He followed the Spanish Jesuit philosopher Suarez and rejected the philosophy of Descartes. Professor Boh is going to tell more about his philosophical writings.

The Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries broke with the scholastic way of thinking. Empirical methodology took the place of the old deductive logic. In Ljubljana the Enlightenment resulted in the first printing house (which was housed in the Academia Operosorum) and in the work of the great natural scientist BALTASAR HACQUET. The Academy was not interested in philosophy. The truly "enlightening" Slovene philosophers of the time were JAKOB ŠTELIN, ANTON AMBSCHEL and MARTIN KURALT, but the most influential was FRANZ SAMUEL KARPE, Professor of philosophy in Olomouc, Brno and Vienna. All these Slovenes were active outside Slovenia. Štelin dealt with ethics from an empirical standpoint; Ambschel interpreted physics through philosophical arguments in the sense of Leibniz's philosophy; Kuralt's philosophical thinking was pantheistic; and Karpe advocated deism and empiricism following Locke.

Rationalism in Slovenia was imported by the Czech JOŽEF LIKAVEC (1773-1850), Professor of philosophy in Brno and Graz. His most important philosophical work was written in German: *Grundriß der Erkenntnislehre*

oder Metaphysik (1830). In this he advocated the identity of ontology and theory of knowledge. Likavec was impressed by Kant's philosophy and this fact probably caused his removal from Graz to Ljubljana.

A rationalist of an older school was FRANC GMEINER (1752-1824). He taught Descartes' and Leibniz's philosophy as the highest achievements of the human mind. His works were written in German.

In the 19th century we find four philosophers who wrote in German: MISLEJ, NEJEDLI, FISTER and PAJK; each of them has a special place in the history of Slovene philosophy.

A solitary man in the field of philosophy was JOŽEF PETER ALKANTARA MISLEJ (1761-1840). In the immense philosophical system which he devised, he tried to attain the essence of things *a priori* in a mathematical way and with the help of Christian revelation. His argumentation was based on pictorial and not verbal representations.

The Czech JOSIP NEJEDLI (1821-1919) was a teacher of philosophy in a secondary school in Ljubljana for about 22 years. He believed that there existed only one philosophy since its real essence was—in his opinion—definite and unchangeable. He considered empirical psychology, i.e., a theory of thought, as the basic philosophical discipline.

Until the Vienna Revolution of 1848 the priest ANTON FISTER (1808-1881) was a teacher of theology and pedagogy at the University of Vienna. After that Revolution he was condemned to death but he fled to America. In his pedagogical and philosophical works (which exist for the most part as unpublished manuscripts) he tried to affirm pedagogy in Rousseau's sense. In philosophy he advocated religion in the name of reason and was very near to Feuerbach's thinking.

One of the most controversial nineteenth-century figures in Slovene cultural life was JANKO PAJK (1837-1899). He conducted controversies with Stritar, Levec and Levstik. (Particularly famous was his dispute with Levstik about the "hexameter"). He thought that Slovene language was not able to express philosophical and scientific thinking because of its poor vocabulary. As a philosopher he was active almost only in a German environment; the title of his only philosophical book was *Praktische Philosophie* (1893). His main philosophical interest was in ethics. Some of his papers are devoted to history of philosophy, also. It was he who discovered the philosophy of Mislej.

Janko Pajk was the last Slovene philosopher to write philosophical papers in German. From the end of 19th century, Slovene lay philosophy was not systematically organized and (except for Mislej's philosophy) of no originality at all. Toward the end of the century Pope Leo XIII, aware of the lack of ability of official church philosophy to confront modern European thinking, suggested in his encyclic *Aeterni patris* a revival of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. Very soon the Slovene clergy started to fulfil this task. Our version of *Neothomism* started from the utilitarian idea of aesthetics with its demand that art has to serve only religious aims. The leading Neothomist at this early period in eighties and nineties was ANTON MAHNIČ (1850-1920). He was very dogmatically oriented but his

aesthetics was more Platonic than Aristotelian, i.e., much closer to Augustine than to Thomas Aquinas. He subordinated beauty to goodness.

Much more moderate was FRANČIŠEK LAMPE (1859-1900), who tried to fulfil the task of interpreting Thomistic philosophy to young people. His interpretations are still somewhat apologetic but he always stresses the positive features of lay philosophy. His written philosophical papers and books demonstrate a high ability in pure philosophical thinking.

Undoubtedly the culmination of Thomistic thought at the end of 19th century is represented by the philosophy of ALEŠ UŠENIČNIK (1868-1952), Professor of philosophy in the Theological faculty in Ljubljana. His work had a great influence on all Slovene philosophical, sociological and cultural life. With his *Uvod v filozofijo* (1921) philosophy in Slovenia reached the professional level. His approach to philosophy was not orthodox. Ušeničnik considered the theory of knowledge and not ontology as the main philosophical discipline. He thought that the fundamental task of the theory of knowledge was to find answers to the following questions:

1. What should we believe?
2. If we believe in something, what should this be?
3. What is that philosophy is really about?

The basic area of Ušeničnik's philosophy was the theory of truth. He found a certainty of knowledge in the facts of human inner experiences, in the facts of the outside world and in general truths, such as, for example, mathematical truths and laws of logic. He found skepticism and positivism to be the most dangerous philosophical orientations because of their negative relationship to religion. In his many papers and books he criticized the whole of European philosophy from Descartes to Husserl, especially materialistically oriented philosophy

The tradition of Thomistic philosophy has been continued up to our own time with the works of the late JANEZ JANŽEKOVIČ, ANTON STRES, and others.

The period between two world wars was very fruitful for Slovene philosophical thought. In 1919 the University was established in Ljubljana, and finally, philosophy was given a chair. The first university teacher was Franc VEBER (1890-1975), who also became the main creator of Slovene lay philosophy. His philosophy is very interesting for all philosophers dealing with phenomenology or the theory of the object, and the analytic tradition in Austrian philosophy. Since the subject of the present colloquium is Veber's philosophy, I must say something more about his work. He studied philosophy in Graz with ALEXIUS MEINONG, the creator of the famous *theory of the object* (*Gegenstandstheorie*). The crucial concept of this theory was *intentionality* and the true object of his theory of the object was an *intentional object*. The theory is divided into three parts: 1. The doctrine of objects; 2. The doctrine of suppositions (*Annahmen*) and 3. The doctrine of evidence.

At the beginning of his philosophical career Veber strictly followed Meinong's theory of the object. He considered the psychological method of self-observation (introspection) as the main philosophical method. This

method supposed three basic facts: experience, its object and its subject. The main relation between the subject and the object is the relation of *intentionality*, which demonstrates the phenomenological character of Veber's philosophy. From the relation between the subject, his experience and the object, he deduced that "objects" exist outside of a subject's consciousness. Experiences, which correspond to objects, are divided into four classes: *presentations, thoughts, emotions* and *strivings*.

There is a principal distinction between *experiences* and their *object*. The *Object* has logical priority, its content has no limit whatsoever—because everything can be an object—and all truths correspond mutually to each other. This connotes philosophical *dualism* and *externalism*, which is typical of Veber's theory of the object.

Veber published fourteen books and about seventy papers. His philosophy has not yet been fully appreciated. After 1945 he was forced to retire (he even spent one year in prison), and his philosophy was condemned from the standpoint of dialectical materialism as *subjective idealism*. In the eighties, ten years after his death, his philosophy was resuscitated because of works of ANTON TRSTENJAK, DUŠAN PIRJEVEC, IVAN URBANČIČ and others. In 1985 his book *Aesthetics* was republished. Now his philosophy is the object of intensive research by many Slovene and other philosophers (Seppo Sajama from Finland and Wolfgang Gombocz from Austria, for example). His living disciples are VINKO BRUMEN (Argentina), CENE LOGAR (Slovenia), ANTON TRSTENJAK (Slovenia), LUDVIG BARTELJ (Slovenia) and the late VINKO TROFENIK.

In our own days philosophy in Slovenia is divided into three philosophical schools: the *analytical, phenomenological* and *psychoanalytical* ones. Marxist philosophy is dead, and Thomistic philosophy is limited to the theological faculty. Right now, in the state of Slovenia, free thinking of all philosophical schools is flourishing.

This has been, of course, only a brief sketch of the history of philosophy in Slovenia.

Univerza v Ljubljani

POVZETEK

ZGODOVINA FILOZOFIJE V SLOVENIJE

Članek govori o razvojnih stopnjah filozofije na Slovenskem od njenih začetkov v srednjem veku, s sholastičnimi rokopisi, ki jih hranijo samostani na Slovenskem do današnjih dni. Sprva so bili filozofski teksti pisani v latinščini, nato v nemščini in končno ob sklepu prejšnjega stoletja v slovenščini. Članek omenja kot najpomembnejše filozofe Matija Hvaleta (12. st.), Antona Erberja (18. st.), Franca Gmeinerja, Likavca itd. Najpomembnejša filozofa polpretekle dobe sta France Veber in Aleš Ušeničnik. Članek se konča z ugotovitvijo, da gre danes na Slovenskem za razcvet različnih filozofskih šol od fenomenološke do analitične.