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Retractatus on the Ontological Epistemology

Masao Matsumoto

In this article I wish to discuss once more on the same topic which I treated in "Tetsugaku" No. 35 (1958, Nov.). Using exactly the same apriori method of Cartesian school which requests doubtless evidence as its starting point, I am here to prove that philosophy is a theory of "being" and far from being a theory of "consciousness." Not terms of consciousness, but terms of being and its categories are primarily evident, so philosophy must methodologically depend upon such kind of elemental concepts. Here we have the logical part of ontology which considers the being in general and the categorical modes of being.

This being in general, however, is no more than "something." Whether it is, in the sense of thing in itself, the real objective being or not, we have no assurance for certainty as yet. It must be decided solely by aposteriori method of verification that any object-concept, which is composed of elemental terms of being and its categories, does coincide with thing in itself and is truly objective. Though elemental concepts in logic are evident, the object-concept, composed of those elemental ones, is hypothetical and very much to be doubted, so it must depend on indirect verification in statistical way. Here we have metaphysical part of ontology which considers real being in general and its fundamental regions.

Philosophy should be doubtlessly evident at the methodological starting point in apriori sense, but in her inevitably dogmatic conclusion, which is thus always hypothetically exposed to any aposteriori verification in wide sense, she would be still inevident and does not cease to be doubted hereafter. These two features correspond to the series of both natural order and epistemological order in Aristotelian philosophy. In a word, the analysis of the elemental concepts in retracing along the epistemological order, is

logical and the synthesis of the composed concepts in retracing along the natural order, is metaphysical. The former corresponds to the contemporary semantical analytical philosophy and the latter to the Weltanschauung of scientific qualities. And these two apparently inconsistent trends should be well unified in Aristotelian ontology which starts from the first principle of epistemological order and yet strives for the first principle of the natural order.