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EPISTEMOLOGY AS A SEMIOTIC CARTOGRAPHY OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE AND COGNITION

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ABSTRACT. The subject matter of this lecture constitutes the idea of mapping or modelling the reality in relation to epistemology as the theory of knowledge resulting from cognition. Therefore, it will be divided into three parts, devoted to the historical background of the study of knowledge, the presentation of (non)human subjects as semiotic world-vision modelers, and the place of epistemology among the sciences of science and the sciences of man. The first part departs from the statement that the notion of epistemology as a theory has been referred, according to historiographical testimony, either to a general state of knowledge or to specific consequences of cognizing and learning activities of human subjects. In recalling their classical cradles, it will be noticed that the hypotheses about the sources of human “wisdom” have confronted the scientific inquiries into the knowledge about physical appearances of accessible reality with the metaphysical reasoning about its inaccessible illusive existence. Accordingly, it seems essential to expose a difference between the knowledge in the materialist (objective realist) and the knowledge in the immaterialist (subjective idealist) sense. On account of this distinction, the perceptual data as roots of experientially produced knowledge, being natural in origin, are counterpoised to the inferential constructs coming from communicational sources of apprehensively reproduced (artificial) knowledge, being artificially created. In the second consecutive part, a particular reference is made to modelling abilities of animals and humans in the extraorganismic perception and intraorganismic apprehension of their surroundings. This part aims at confronting selected views developed in the philosophy of nature and culture on the subjective experience of reality, being interested how the semantic relationships of animals and humans to their existential universes are outlined in phenomenological approaches to individual experience which is consciously realized by senses in a subject-oriented perspective. The point of arrival in the final part, being conclusive for the sake of a detailed substantiation of the purpose of this article, constitutes the two understandings of epistemology specified, firstly, as a set of investigative perspectives which are at the disposal on the subject of science on the level of the sciences of science or, secondly, as a psychical and physiological aptitude for cognizing and learning activities of a knowing subject who aims at achieving a certain kind of information about reality. Assuming that both kinds of epistemology are related to the possession or acquisition of sign-mediated information about reality, in the static or dynamic sense, the paper ends with the postulate to regard knowledge and knowing in terms of a semiotic cartography of human cognition.

KEYWORDS

cartography of ideas, cognition, epistemology, knowledge & knowing, semiotics,

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