

VLADIMIR BRANSKIJ

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Vladimir Branskij is an outstanding philosopher, a representative of the St. Petersburg Ontological School, a teacher, founder of the scientific school - social synergetics, who left a huge scientific legacy in the field of philosophy of physics and social science. He studied and defended the Candidate's and Doctor's thesis and until the end of his life worked at the Faculty of Philosophy of Leningrad State University.

His work can be divided into several periods.

The works of the first period were devoted to the philosophical problems of modern physics. In the 60-80s of the 20th century, the philosophy of physics became that unique island of freedom, where one could develop practically any ideas without looking at communist party organs. Nothing of the kind existed in other spheres of substantial philosophical knowledge.

It was during this period that V. P. Branskij, one of the representatives of the Leningrad school in the field of the philosophy of science, created a cycle of three monographs: “The Phil-

osophical Importance of the Visibility Problem in Modern Physics” (Leningrad, 1962); “Philosophical Foundations of the Problem of the Synthesis of Relativistic and Quantum Principles” (Leningrad, 1973); “The Theory of Elementary Particles as an Object of Methodological Research” (Leningrad, 1989). These three monographs are interconnected and permeated with a single concept. The first monograph shows the influence that physics of the 20th century (relativistic and quantum physics) had on the development of world philosophy: the classical concept of the multiplicity of worlds (Democritus, D. Bruno, and others) developed and generalized in the concept of the multiplicity of worlds (ontological non-geocentrism).

Naturally, the question arose about the inverse influence of philosophy on physics, i.e. on the heuristic role of ontological non-geocentrism in the development of physics in the twentieth century. For this, it was required to investigate the general “mechanism” of the heuristic role of philosophical principles in the formation of a physical theory. This problem was solved in the second monograph. It revealed the dual (“dialectical”) nature of theoretical knowledge as a kind of synthesis of empirical and speculative knowledge (the irreducibility of the speculative component).

Simultaneously, Professor V. P. Branskij has shown that the heuristic function of philosophical principles is not deductive (as natural philosophers of all ages believed), but rather selective, and the selective function is by no means reduced to the regulative function about which

positivists wrote. At the same time, it became clear that one can't speak about the heuristic role of philosophical principles, if it is not clear beforehand how they differ from non-philosophical principles. Thus, the problem of the heuristic role of philosophy in the formation of scientific theory has been closely related to such a fundamental problem as the question of the nature of philosophical knowledge. This issue was examined in detail in a completely new plane (the transition from conventional research to meta-research and analysis of the relationship between meta-empirical, meta-speculative and meta-theoretical research).

We can see how the problems of the methodology of science were closely associated with philosophical problems in the works of the Leningrad School of Philosophy of Science (unlike of many domestic and Western colleagues). It is also very interesting that in the field of the so-called positive philosophy of science developed at Leningrad State University, the focus was not on the problem of demarcation of scientific and unscientific knowledge (as was the case in the neo-positivist and post-positivist philosophy of science), but rather the heuristic role of philosophical principles in the formation of a new fundamental scientific theory. It turned out that the latter problem is more substantial and deep and includes the first as one of its aspects. After the above works it became clear that the tendency to devaluation of scientific knowledge and scientific activity, characteristic of post-positivism, eventually underestimated the problem of the heuristic role of philosophical principles in the formation of a scientific theory.

The general solution of this problem in the second monograph of V. P. Branskij, naturally, posed the problem of practical use of this solu-

tion. Since the central problem of modern theoretical physics was and still is the problem of constructing a general theory of elementary particles, it became necessary to study the selective function of the principle of ontological non-geocentrism (PON) in the formation of the theory of elementary particles (TEC) for the practical use of new results obtained in the field of the philosophy of science at Leningrad State University. This problem was solved in the third monograph of this cycle. The result was extremely interesting and unexpected. The fact is that the main obstacle on the way to constructing a TEC is the absence in modern physics of a meaningful synthesis of relativistic and quantum principles. At present, there are two diametrically opposite approaches to the solution of this problem in the literature: the synthesis of the general theory of relativity and quantum field theory (the superfield approach is most clearly manifested in studies on quantum cosmology); synthesis of the special theory of relativity and non-relativistic quantum mechanics (most clearly manifested in research on the quantum theory of relativity).

The monograph "Theory of Elementary Particles as an Object of Methodological Research" fully demonstrated the practical significance of the philosophy of science developed by the Leningrad philosophers for constructing the most fundamental natural-scientific theory. In this monograph, research work in the field of the philosophy of physics merges with scientific research in the field of theoretical physics. Here, for the first time, a meaningful synthesis of the methodologies of Einstein and Bohr was carried out, and a detailed program for constructing the quantum relativity theory was developed with a detailed description of its explanatory and predictive functions. Thus, the heuristic function of the new philosophical principle (what is the

PON) is demonstrated not in words, but in actions. The methodology of the scientific research developed in this cycle of monographs received its generalization and completion in the collective monograph “The Dialectics of Knowledge” (edited by Prof. A. S. Carmin, L., 1988), in Chapter XX of this monograph, entitled “Scientific Research” (V. P. Branskij, V. V. Ilyin, K. M. Oganyan).

After the development of the problem of the philosophy of natural science, set out in the cycle of monographs by V. P. Branskij, the research was continued by the author in a number of articles. The most important of them were the following: (1) *The Heuristic Role of the Philosophy of Science in the Formation of the Theory of Elementary Particles* // Bulletin of St. Petersburg State University. St. Petersburg, 1993. Ser. 6. Issue. 2; (2) *Lessons of the Theory of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics and the Prospects for their Synthesis* // Herald of St. Petersburg State University. SPb., 1996. Ser. 6. Issue. 2. (The article was dedicated to the triple jubilee in 1995 - the 90th anniversary of the special theory of relativity, the 80th anniversary of the general theory of relativity and the 70th anniversary of quantum mechanics); (3) *The Principle of Beauty in the Theory of Elementary Particles* // Bulletin of St. Petersburg State University. SPb., 1999. Ser. 6. Issue. 3. (The article was devoted to the heuristic role of the axiological aspect of philosophy.); (4) *Synergetics and Cosmology (The Philosophical Foundations of the Cosmological Model of the Universe)* // Vestnik SPbGEU. SPb., 2014. Ser. 19. Iss. 4. (The article was devoted to the main philosophical problems of modern cosmology).

The second period is the philosophy of social science and the synergetic theory of globalization. As the history of science shows, at-

tempts to develop a methodology and philosophy of the humanities without taking into account the achievements of the methodology and philosophy of the natural sciences of the 20th century do not go beyond the mere journalism.

This was favored by the fact that in the early 90s were ripe all the prerequisites for the formation of a new scientific discipline known as social synergy (the general theory of social self-organization). This discipline was a natural intermediate between natural science and social science. Therefore it was not by chance that in the activities of some philosophers there had come a sharp turn from the philosophy of natural science to social synergetics. This rotation, of course, facilitated by the events of August 1991, because under the totalitarian regime of the free development of the social problems of synergy would be impossible. Said rotation is particularly apparent in the new series of three monographs by V. P. Branskij: “Art and Philosophy (The Role of Philosophy in the Formation and Perception of a Work of Art on the Example of the History of Painting)” (Kaliningrad, 1999); “Social Synergetics and the Theory of Nations” (St. Petersburg, 2000); and “Social Synergetics and Psychology (Self-Organization Theory of the Individual and Society)” (St. Petersburg, 2001). The works of this series are closely interrelated and form a unified conception, as we have seen in the first cycle. But there the role of the unifying conception belonged to ontological non-geocentrism, while here a similar role was played by the so-called synergistic historicism.

V. P. Branskij left a rich scientific and pedagogical school which successfully continues to develop scientific and pedagogical traditions, working in various universities in Russia and abroad.

V. P. Branskij, in addition to scientific and

pedagogical activity, was enthusiastic about intellectual and historical tourism. He had a rich collection of reproductions of paintings (the second best in St. Petersburg). V. P. Branskij was an obsessed traveler and a great lover of artistic photography, constantly maintained contacts with scientists from different countries. He was always marked by an active life position, which was reflected in various conferences, congresses, and forums.

I would like to mention some of my memories related to our cooperation. In 1981, by the recommendation of the head of the Philosophy Department of the Academy of Sciences of Armenian SSR Professor Suren Avetisyan, I was sent for graduate studies to the Department of Philosophy for Natural Sciences at the Leningrad State University to Professor V. I. Svidersky (the teacher of Prof. Suren Avetisyan and Prof. Vladimir Branskij).

After meeting Professor V. I. Svidersky, on his recommendation, I was sent to Professor V. P. Branskij (since Professor V. I. Svidersky believed that he was old and “let his students do the work”) with the aim of continuing research in the field of philosophy of physics. From that moment until the end of Professor V. P. Branskij’s life, we developed and created his synergetic school, the ideas of which were reflected in the courses on social synergetics for postgraduate students and undergraduates (in St. Petersburg Universities), as well as in numerous mono-

graphs, collective works, conferences, etc.

One of the notable examples was the visit of Professor V. P. Branskij to Yerevan together with Leningrad philosophers for the International Conference on the Philosophical Problems of Argumentation by Academician G. A. Brutian’s invitation (1986). This event was the basis for the cooperation of the two schools, in which my historical mission was predetermined.

Since that period, Armenian philosophers Eduard Markarian, Suren Hovhannisyan, Vartan Torosyan and others started active and constant visits to Prof. Branskij’s problematic seminars on materialistic dialectics.

In conclusion, I would like to note the special attitude of Professor V. P. Branskij to his students. Friendly attitude towards his students was combined with discipline, scientific ethics, respectful attitude towards the personality of graduate students (for example, in 1.5 years a graduate student defends a thesis or is expelled). Professor V. P. Branskij always followed the professional growth of his students and was proud of their achievements continuing the best traditions of his scientific and pedagogical school.

The life and work of V. P. Branskij is a vivid example of a scientist, citizen, teacher and organizer of science, who managed to create a philosophical school and maintain friendly relations with colleagues from all over the world.