

Overview

Reseña

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The last century has left us with the most significant and important reflections on science and its work. Evandro Agazzi has stood out for being one of the greatest Italian thinkers in the field of philosophy of science. The book that is presented to the reader, is the result of a more or less bumpy path within the academic and editorial world, since it has its origin in the reflections made in a 1969 volume entitled *Temi e problema di filosofia della fisica* and of which the present editing takes up certain parts. Essentially, the philosopher's constant concern for the scientific objectivity, which he once discovered in the topics of physics, is taken up again. However, Agazzi's exercised thinking has managed to keep his main philosophical concerns latent through the years, proof of which is that the ideas presented in this book are an almost biogra-

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phical compilation of the Italian philosopher. The author develops his reflection on science making use of «retrospective», that is to say, that this thick volume is an interconnection of the affections that the ideas of objectivity and rigor have had on the very development of science, and how this has permeated the deepest layer of our understanding of reality, since, taking up the Husserlian historical imprint. Agazzi eidetically recovers the key conceptual developments that have constituted the scientific vision of our times without forgetting the ethical needs that must accompany objectivity and rigorous scientific work, which is why he found it necessary to speak of an ethics of science (p. 462).

Agazzi, as a good teacher, is clear in his writing, therefore, the non-specialized reader will be able to approach easily his ideas, since there is no lack of explanations of the concepts that the specialized public may already possess. In this way, the non-specialized reader will be able to learn from Agazzi and at the same time understand Agazzi, while the specialized reader will be able to have a new perspective on problems that had appeared to him, until then, in a foreshortened way.

We must recognize here the work that Agazzi has developed towards the last sections of this book, where science and its foundation appear to the reader; reflections that revolve around the «cognitive status of metaphysics», which increases the possibility of understanding the particular objects of scientific thought itself. Agazzi stresses that it is important for any form of empiricism to consider the so-called «preliminary framework» under which the subject has a certain cognitive predisposition towards the elements that are presented to him sensitively. Thus, it presents us with an impression of consideration of the universal, of the metaphysical prior to the work of science, namely, that science, if it is to consider itself as a human task focused on Truth (chap. VIII). It must take into account as a primary, prior and meaning-giving field the metaphysical «network» that is expressed in the ways of human knowing, as its «universal background». Agazzi knows that meta-

physics may be ignored but not eliminated, since the intelligibility of reality owes its effectiveness to it (p. 476), however, positivist philosophies have endangered these notions by flatly antagonizing metaphysics and the labors of science, for which I must rethink the dilemma. For Agazzi the scientific revolution did not get rid of metaphysics, but that revolution that tended to emancipation was the provider of the necessary metaphysical framework of the new vision of science to guarantee its ability to understand. So that «knowledge by reflection», which is seldom taken into account by the contemporary scientific method, has a more than important role beside the empirical and theoretical knowledge that today fills objective thought.

Undeniably, Agazzi has managed to systematize completely a clear vision of the object of study of science, namely, that realism (Chapter V) through which both metaphysics and science are effectively approached. This is not reduced to a purely static object, but that reality as such is in a constant state of fluctuation and that therefore the fundamental constituents of matter as well as ideas or concepts are constantly changing historical situations and cognitive dispositions. This balances the progress of philosophy with that of science. So that its objectivity depends not only on its object and method, but also on the intersubjective framework that the historical situation refers to at each moment; for this reason, the intersubjective work of science must also be taken into account, since it is the most effective path towards objectivity itself. In this study, Agazzi does not insist on the same problems of science, against the metaphysical part of knowledge. It shows a new perspective through which these problems can be understood, the same perspective from which the new challenges of contemporary science, since the approach to reality must not be permeated by prejudices, much less in the field of intelligibility of the world around the human being.

Scientific objectivity and its contexts has been published by the Economic Culture Fund in conjunction with the Universidad Paname-

ricana and is an edition and translation revised by the author based on the English version published by Springer in 2014. This is not the first book by Agazzi published in Spanish (there are five more that came out in the past decades). However, with the appearance of this new edition, it will be easier for Spanish speakers interested in his thought, to know it inside and outside the classroom. It represents the work of a lifetime devoted to the clarification and systematic elaboration of a thought that now reaches such a large segment of the philosophical public as Latin America, thanks to the distribution network of the Fund for Economic Culture. We could say, without fear of being mistaken, that the appearance of this edition is a great step in the proliferation of «Agazzian thought»; that today it is supported by its own trajectory, with its multiple translations, numerous articles, multitudinous conferences and that this book that is added to this considerable philosophical production.

Now, all that remains is for its pages to bear fruit, to generate discussion, and open up a network of comments and influences on the current philosophical field, and most importantly, to mark the academics and students who are interested in the rigor and objectivity of the human sciences. Since reflection on this already represents a certain advance of human reason over the use, status and understanding of science today.