■ article

On Josep Ferrater Mora's integrationism: the possibility of oscillating

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abstract

This paper sets Ferrater Mora's integrationist philosophy against the larger background of the opposition between dogmatism and scepticism in the theory of knowledge. Oscillating between these two positions, which is key in Ferrater Mora's definition of integrationism, can help us unlock the unresolved tension caused by their dichotomy and also poses its own difficult questions in the process.

key words

Josep Ferrater Mora, integrationism, theory of knowledge.

§1. The "ism" game will only shed its phenomenological light if we understand what classifies the isms. Our answer must be particularly precise. Isms are like labels, but what do they label? What, exactly, lies beneath them? For if we insist upon some vague and general notion and ignore the fact that scholars and schools naturally classify isms according to their typical character, we fall short of a satisfactory answer. Further examination is needed and should determine the second level of our philosophical enquiry: by not playing the isms game we will be able to resist vague and self-serving systems of classification. And in an examination of the dogmatist–sceptic divide, the particular isms we have chosen are also positions or theses which will become answers to the question of the possibility of certainty in knowledge.

One might suppose that 'our' reason for studying philosophical isms — which for each of us effectively becomes 'my' reason — is so we may use whatever is at our disposal to define a position regarding philosophical problems that is properly 'ours'. This will either be predetermined, engraved upon our being at the time of our birth and so reminiscent of the Coleridgian maxim that "every man is born an Aristotelian or a Platonist" (which, incidentally,

the Argentines mistakenly attributed to Borges); or it might be the confused choice we make when exercising 'our' preferences in the context of 'our' active social lives. But if we wish to discover our personal position, the study of isms can help us determine that position and polish it to a fine glow, illuminating arguments that justify and defend it. We should also remember that while this exercise is innocent enough in itself, it can also lead us, as it did Narcissus, to being overly self-concerned[1]. What we must generally do is adopt the paying customer's coolheaded approach to the philosophies laid out before us, keep an eye on what we are being offered and select what suits our personal taste. One way or another, we need to regularly remind ourselves that "we do not practise scholarship for our own benefit alone"[2].

One of the ambiguities of all isms is that the positive or negative meaning that colours their names is hidden. Another is the ease with which we can doubt or simply not know whether the name of an ism was brought into being by those who espoused the doctrine or was coined later by others. The Cubists knew they were Cubists, so to speak, but the pre-Socratics clearly never enjoyed this collective knowledge of themselves[3] and neither did the practitioners of the Renaissance. The Dadaist, existentialist and Surrealist sceptics did practise this self-reference and the term 'communist', which was first printed in large letters across the title of the book the Manifesto of the Communist Party, moved like a spectre across the Europe of 1848. On the other hand, the term 'Christianity' is quite absent from both the Gospels and the Nicene Creed while, finally, the ism describing Ferrater Mora's philosophical method and approach — integrationism — is self-assigned.

A number of practical considerations for the study of any ism, therefore, would be the careful examination of the root of the term, the moment in which the term was first used, its most broadly accepted exponents, the clearest antitheses to it, the vicissitudes it has experienced in its passage through history and, finally, not only how convenient its use has become but how far it operates as a manner of label. Indeed, Ferrater Mora himself set out to do just these things and so our first port of call must be the entry on Integrationism in his *Diccionario de Filosofía* (Dictionary of Philosophy)[4].

1   See Appendix II of Jordi Sales, *A la flama del vi*, Barcelonesa d'Edicions, Barcelona, 1996: Convivencialitat, narcisisme i la possibilitat de l'escriptura filosòfica i la vida acadèmica, pp. 141–145.

2   Malebranche's insightful writing on the defects of scholars in *Recherche de la Vérité* deserves to be more widely read.

3   In this respect, note that even after an entire century scholarship still fails to pay heed to the words of John Burnet and insists on using the term 'pre-Socratic'. See John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, London, A. and C. Black, 1892.

4   As well as the references to Ferrater Mora's works themselves (*El ser y la muerte. Bosquejo de una filosofía integracionista*, 1962 (ed. rev. in *Obras Selectas*, V, 2), especially "Introducción"; *El ser y el sentido*, 1967, XIII, §4, and applied in many of his works), note C. Nieto Blanco, *La filos-*

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§2. A philosophical position, ism or school of thought is always nourished by a nucleus which resists the inevitable moments of weakness this philosophy experiences in the outside world and which holds the fort against the collective weight of the world's counterproposals. The strength of these nuclei becomes clearest when the ism enters what might be called a 'transition'. From the Socratics to the Stoics and Academics, the School of Pyrrho or the Sceptics, in the philosophical moment these positions originally emerged we see transitions as changes of position: for example, the scholar Antiochus of Ascalon (150–68) made the transition from scepticism to dogmatism, as Philo of Larissa (160–77) before him had also done; and Aulus Gellius' teacher Favorinus of Arelate (80/90–150) crossed from Platonism to Scepticism, at least to avail himself of "a convenient rhetorical strategy"[5]. Further below, I will examine the historical phenomena and data associated with the highly complex position of Eclecticism, which Antiochus, Philo and Favorinus all clearly adopted and which Ferrater Mora fears his Integrationism also borrows from; but first I wish to address in phenomenological terms the reason and manner in which certain aspects of Ferrater Mora's philosophical thought become possible: the oscillating movement between opposing points, the adoption of mixed positions and also the nature of the dialogue between the poles.

The term eclecticism comes to us from the Greek *eklegein* meaning 'select' or 'choose'. For Antigonus of Carystus, its doctrine first emerged with Antiochus of Ascalon and the Stoics Panaetius of Rhodes (185–110) and Posidonius of Apamea (135–51), and it culminated in the writings of Cicero (106–43). In modernity, Leibniz has been a repeatedly cited exponent and in the XIXth. century the term was used explicitly by Victor Cousin (1792–

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    ofía en la encrucijada. Perfiles del pensamiento de J. F. M., 1985, "Segunda parte: método filosófico", Chapter XIV; J. Pagès, "Integracionisme i continuisme. Mètode i ontologia a la filosofia de J. Ferrater Mora", *Revista de Catalunya*, 53 (1991), pp. 24–36; J.-M. Terricabras, "José Ferrater Mora: An Integrationist Philosopher", *Man and World*, 26 (1993), pp. 209–218; C. U. Moulines, "La distinción entre hechos y valores: una perspectiva integracionista", in S. Giner, E. Guisán (eds.), *José Ferrater Mora: el hombre y su obra*, University of Santiago de Compostela, 1994, pp. 87–05; J. Echeverría, "El integracionismo de J. Ferrater Mora: una filosofía abierta al porvenir", in *ibid.*, pp. 107–125.

5   S. M. Beall, "Gellian Humanism Revisited", in *The Worlds of Aulus Gellius*, ed. L. Holford-Strevens & A. Vardi, Oxford, 2005, pp. 206–222.

1867)[6]. The Integrationism that Ferrater Mora posited in the century just gone by is also characterised by an eclectic's willingness to select details from opposing positions in order to think about these together and examine their meaning beyond their greater or lesser importance as ingredients of controversy.[7]

Historically, one common feature of these eclectic moments is that they have occurred at the end of lengthy periods of explicit scholarly debate, of which four are notable: the moment during Cicero's lifetime when the Dogmatists, Stoics and Epicureans opposed Scepticism in the debate on the problem of the criterion; b) the moment coinciding with Leibniz when the Aristotelians opposed mechanism in the debate on movement and physics; c) the moment during the period of Cousin's eclecticism, in the debate between the Kantian system, common sense realism and Cartesian scepticism; and d) the Integrationism of Ferrater Mora, between logical positivism and scientific philosophies on the one hand, and existential philosophy and various European schools of humanism on the other.

For the moment, however, one thing should be made clear: eclectics are selectors who choose details from opposing positions in order to answer questions and resolve debates. And the debate on the possibility of the certainty of knowledge acquires new edge if we cast our opposing factions not simply as Dogmatists and Sceptics but as 'affirmers' and 'researchers' accusing one another of being Dogmatists and Sceptics, and if the battle itself is fought under the watchful eye of a number of 'selectors' who pick and choose details from either side of the enemy lines. What remains to be seen, of course, is how exactly our selectors might cross the line to do this.

§3. But first, we need to find the visual gradient or vantage point that reveals where that line is drawn so we can oscillate between the two points and beat the isms at their own game, as it were. A number of important questions must be also be asked about the direction in which our enquiry will move. First, how can it travel from one position to another? Second, how might its diversity be explained? And third, what common ground is shared by the arguments that have been used when the two positions were the subject of debate and were themselves the result of a constructive dialogue between specific thinkers who were either affirmers or researchers?

One might argue the experience that informs the Dogmatist's position is somehow more primary and original than the experience informing the Sceptic's: that its reality 'comes before' the Sceptic's because we can only

6   Victor Cousin, *Cours de philosophie professé à la faculté des Lettres pendant l'année 1818 sur le fondement des idées absolues du vrai, du beau et du bien, publié avec son autorisation et d'après les meilleures rédactions de ce cours par A. Garnier*, Hachette, Paris, 1836; cf. Patrice Vermeren, *Victor Cousin: le jeu de la philosophie et de l'État*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1995.

7   Josep Ferrater Mora, the entry "Integracionisme" in *Diccionario de Filosofía*.

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identify errors in what we once affirmed. But while this is certainly a natural order of events, we still need to ask from exactly where this thought emerges and exactly what we mean when we argue that affirmation is 'more primitive' than negation (§3) and that the facticity of error 'comes after' (§4). And we will always be able to mediate between our affirmers and researchers (§5) if we identify the particular way they join when they collide — which because their formal incompatibility is clear, obliges us to distinguish between what we affirm and the basic circumstances in which we affirm (§6).

§4. What do we mean when we say that affirming is more primitive or original? The initially rather awkward-looking answer is that affirmations are original in their quality of being almost but not completely affirmations or else not really being affirmations at all. For example, today is Thursday 8 November 2012. It's half past eleven in the morning and just a while ago we all gathered in this room at the Institute of Catalan Studies, the Sala Prat de la Riba, to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Josep Ferrater Mora. Each of us got here a different way, either by taking a train or driving or walking, but all those ways worked fine, however sceptical we may be about the value of human knowledge. Whatever we're doing and wherever we are, then, our basic human situation is always already an affirmer's cognitive success story, and this provides the basis for our actions. Furthermore, our constant experience of communication generally consists of successful rather than unsuccessful events. So before becoming a philosophical position and a response to the ever-present possibility of sceptical negation, dogmatism already constitutes something very basic in us which phenomenology refers to as "natural attitude" or the "general thesis of natural attitude": each of us is constantly faced with what we form part of, which is the reality of our time and space; we take it as it comes and we form part of it together with all those others who are accounted for therein and with whom we can therefore constantly communicate. Doubting or denying data from the natural world has to come after this first set of circumstances, whose constancy we — or I or you — modify that doubt or denial.

The existence of the world and its unity is familiar to all men as the incontrovertible evidence by which the general thesis of natural attitude is named. (Its author, Edmund Husserl, proposed that "no doubt about or rejection of data belonging to the natural world alters in any respect the general positing which characterizes the natural attitude".)[8] The general thesis does not gain certainty, substance or determination by being an already affirmed reality and its nature is not predicative, and yet the philosopher who reflects on its mere, constant exercise can formulate it as a predicative thesis in the very sim-

8   Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Philosophie*, Book
    I: *Allgemeine Einführung in die* reine Phänomenologie, §30 [1913].

ple affirmative statement "the world is". In the exact way we describe it here, this primary or primitive truth holds that all men are potential interlocutors and immediately allows them to perform this role in a common world. Alfred Schütz refers to Husserl's natural attitude as the "life-world"[9], and what Husserl posits in the general thesis and Schütz describes in the life-world correspond to the first of the three meanings of dogmatism in Ferrater Mora's *Diccionario* (6a ed., Vol. I, p. 856) as applied to the theory of knowledge:

The typical position of naive realism, which will admit not only the possibility of knowing things as they truly are (or in themselves) but also the effectiveness of this knowledge in its daily, direct association with things.

Although in general terms the language of informative dictionary entries should not be made an issue of, in the definition above I confess that the verb 'admit' causes me some discomfort. But if we linger with it, the word can also help us distinguish between the different facets in that notion of a 'primitive affirmation': 'admit' is transitive and is variously used to mean 'receive', 'allow entry' (into a place), 'accept' (as in 'accept as true or worthy') 'permit' and finally 'suffer' (as in 'allow for' or 'tolerate'). The knowledge we normally fall back on to guide us in any given situation does not do its job so well because in some way we have 'admitted' its potential to do so, or have previously deliberated that this would be a good moment to clear the deck and let that knowledge take over. To return to my example of us here on this Thursday 8 November, when we saw or were told which room to come to we did not consciously classify this information as either knowledge or truth. Affirmation, then, is more primitive and more original than any mistrust, suspicion or relativist positing about the effectiveness or viability of affirming might be. In its original circumstances, affirmation is experienced as the basis for guiding acts which for the affirmation are possibilities rather than subjects and which affirmation therefore poses as such. We have not 'admitted' anything before affirming and, for this very reason, are subsequently able to admit. This phenomenon of the original character of the affirmation, where original means 'comes before', is what Husserlian phenomenology described as the Urdoxa or original belief, from the German prefix ur- meaning origin and the Greek doxa meaning 'primary' or 'first' doctrine. Husserl used it to identify the basic belief or certainty that validates all affirmations that have been determined. It denotes what is modified in affirmative positions that are supported by a clear enough modifier. Epistemological terms like *evidentia* (clarity, illustration or representation) derive from the handbooks of rhetorical figures that allow orators to say what they wish to say. I will return to this below but here I only observe

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9   Alfred Schütz, "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences", *Journal of Philosophy*, 51 (1954): 257–272, now in *Collected Papers: I. The Problem of Social Reality*, Martinus Nijhoff, the Hague, 1962.

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that the basic cognitive condition available to us is this pre-predicative assurance that "the world is" and that this world provides a common space for exchange or trade between the interlocutors who inhabit and drive it.

§5. The facticity of error. However far back our memory goes, acts of affirming mistakenly, misinterpreting or misunderstanding and the experience of being led astray or disappointed have always been part and parcel of the life we lead as we negotiate multiple realities, affirmations and human groups. It has always been so and we have invariably moved between the experience of being right and being wrong. Indeed, Descartes reflected on this at the beginning of *Meditationes* when he recalled that "Several years have now elapsed since I first became aware that I had accepted, even from my youth, many false opinions for true"[10]. *(Animadverti jam ante aliquot annos quàm multa, ineuente aetate, falsa pro veris admiserim.)*

The facticity of error is the idea that error is already here with us and that we do not need to posit its existence or conjure it up somehow because we have always had the experience of it. We only realize that we err, however, because the substance of a new affirmation invalidates an older one and causes us to look back and see our mistake. And so it is also true that the moment of our erring always exists in past time when we did not recognise it as such, in the memory of a moment when the alarm bell rang and one affirmation replaced another, and in our constant exercise of a primitive affirmation which guides us. It is quite true, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty observes, that when sensory perception hides from our eyes the presence of one particular thing, it reveals another[11]. So it is that the horizon offers us a constant stream of given presences: as we draw closer to the tree trunk on the beach, it reveals itself to be a rock and Merleau-Ponty argues that while we may have lost the trunk, we have actually gained the rock. And if we lose the rock we will perceive something else in its place because the world always gives us something to perceive and to affirm.

This is also very true of our constant experience of presence and affirmation, where we will always affirm before we refute. But Merleau-Ponty's observation is inadequate when contrasted with the experience of Cartesian doubt because our repeated experience of erring undermines our cognitive response and reveals its vulnerability. Everything depends on how severe the

10 R. Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, AT, VII 17; IX 13: Animadverti jam ante aliquot annos quàm multa ineunte aetate falsa pro veris admiserim, et quàm dubia sint quaecunque istis postea superextruxi, ac proinde funditus omnia semel in vitâ esse evertenda, atque a primis fundamentis denuo inchoandum, si quid aliquandofirmum et mansurum cupiam in scientiis stabilire; sed ingens opus esse videbatur, eamque aetatem expectabam, quae foret tam matura, ut capessendis disciplinis aptior nulla sequeretur.

11 M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Gallimard, París, 1945.

wear and tear is and how far our cognitive structure becomes dislodged. If we were mistaken before but in no way imagined we were mistaken until the warning bell rang, who can be sure we are not always mistaken? To return to Merleau–Ponty's example of the beach, couldn't that rock disappear just as the trunk had? And even if something else appeared in its place, would that not also disappear and would this process not continue indefinitely? Error follows affirmation because in erring we experience the refutation of what we previously affirmed. And at the same time this 'coming after' that characterizes refutation is a driver of scepticism and makes us wary of generalizing about refuting one affirmation or another: the fact that many affirmations have been refuted does not mean this will be the fate of all affirmations.

§6. The possibility of mediating between opposites: the collision of two forces. Between 'yes' and 'no' there will always be a mediating mechanism to help us reach either response so that the answer could be 'yes' under one set of circumstances and 'no' under another. But the important thing is to mediate in a way that does not undermine the basic force of the 'yes' or 'no' answer, meaning the primitive force of dogmatism on the one hand (the cognitive effort we constantly exercise in primitive affirmations that are never entirely invalidated) or the weight of scepticism on the other (bearing down on that effort of ours and sapping its strength in the moment we detect our error and witness the invalidation of our past knowledge). If the debate on the possibility of certainty in knowledge has any meaning in the philosophical tradition it is in the constancy of the collision between these two forces, which revitalizes the primary or original possibility of the philosophical life. The weakness of dogmatism is simply the facticity of error: if we can affirm and be guided by affirming, why is it that we occasionally err? Always and at the same time, it would seem, we experience the pull of two conflicting conditions: on the one hand, a sense of eu–phoria or well-being in the world-that-is and on the other, indignation in the face of shortcomings or inadequacies that repeatedly demonstrate our erring nature. And this particular polarity, we might argue, deserves to be explored in our examination the theory of knowledge rather than be sidelined to the fields of psychology or anthropology.

Often less systematically obedient than the scholarship of philosophy and readier to risk embracing complex notions, the field of literary criticism has found particularly able commentators on the all–encompassing nature of this collision. On the subject of the twentieth-century Italian writer Carlo Emilio Gadda, for example, one critic proposes that Gadda "oscillated" between a condition of euphoria prompted by his radiant vision of infinite "co-motivations" and an aesthetic and restrictive scepticism which warned that "however hard we work we are still condemned". Throughout his literary career, this critic argues, Gadda swung fairly constantly between "the poles of eu-

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phoria and of melancholy and indignation''. And in a poem of 1930, between 'summer's sullen midday', 'winter's long silences' and a welling up of absence and 'infinite certainty', the Italian writer Lalla Romano keenly evokes a similar kind of polarisation which we might describe as 'absence in plenitude' or 'richness in desolation':

SILENZI

D'estate, nel silenzio dei meriggi,
sopra la terra esausta ed assopita,
incombe il peso d'una enorme assenza.
Ma dai grandi silenzi dell'inverno,
sopra la terra rispogliata e nuda,
infinita certezza si disserta.
Tutto perdemmo: fu sprecato il tempo
sì breve del fiorire, ma ora il cielo,
non più velato dalle foglie, immenso,
di luce inonda gli orizzonti, e nulla
fuorché il cielo è vivente sulla terra,
una più vera vita è in questa morte[12].

Oscillation describes a kind of variation, perturbation or fluctuation in the time frame of a given medium or system. In the immediate surroundings of the collision between the answers of the affirmers and researchers to the question of the possibility of certainty in knowledge, there is also a kind of joining of elements — a 'system' in the archaic sense of the word (something 'united', 'put together') — that oscillates, to-ing and fro-ing from a central position or condition to opposite extremes. In a passage in the Phaedo, Plato's protagonist uses a series of images drawn from the basic notions of movement and stability to express such a sense of transit or oscillation, in this case between assent and doubt. The scene is the prison of Athens on the day of Socrates' death and the passage in question is Phaedo's words after he has explained to Echecratides the substance of Simmias' and Cebes' objections to the logoi Socrates used to defend the immortality of his soul. In this moment Phaedo speaks for all those who are listening to the philosopher and for the two Thebans; and according to Gadamer, the profound dejection of the assembled listeners that it evokes has no lyrical equal in all the poetic canon[13].

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12 Silence / In summer's midday sullenness, / upon the ravaged, ragged earth / falls a vast absence. / But in winter's long silences, / the earth stripped naked / reveals infinite certainty. / We have lost everything: our time wasted / and its brief blossom now sky borne, / no longer veiled by leaves, immense, / the horizons flooded with light and nothing / but the heavens here on earth, / a truer life that lives within this death. (Translation by the author.)

13 H. G. Gadamer, *Der Anfang der Philosophie*, Philipp Reclam, Stuttgart, 1996 (translation to English by Rod Coltman, The Beginning of Philosophy, Continuum Publishing Company, 1998).

"Now all of us, as we remarked to one another afterwards, were very uncomfortable when we heard what they said; for we had been thoroughly convinced by the previous argument, and now they seemed to be throwing us again into confusion and distrust, not only in respect to the past discussion but also with regard to any future one. They made us fear that our judgement was worthless or that no certainty could be attained in these matters."[14]

Phaedo's words bring together the language of feeling, the language of discourse, mode and assent, and the language of movement in the sense of toppling or falling. The language of feeling in the assembled company's pleasure-to-pain transition records their fragile state ("all of us [...] were very uncomfortable"), while the language of discourse observes their oscillation from belief to doubt (of the logoi) and the particularly graphic language of movement describes their situation as a manner of fall ("and now they seemed to be throwing us again into confusion and distrust").

§7. The distinction between theory and attitude. If isms are doctrines, they become easy to refute. But what do we need in our enquiry? Should we refute one doctrine by adhering to another or oscillate between one and another? Or perhaps we should do neither of those things and return instead to the relative virtues of a simple system of classification which distinguishes between the theoretical moment of a doctrine and the attitude that sustains it. If we do this, we will identify four different positions in the collision between Dogmatism and Scepticism: at either end, we find what might be termed 'theoretical radical dogmatism' and 'theoretical radical Scepticism'; but in between these poles there is also an attitude of dogmatism on the one hand (call it an 'affirmative attitude') and an attitude of scepticism on the other. And that, summarised in the figure below, may be the clearest description of what we need to examine in the Dogmatist–Sceptic divide when addressing the possibility of certainty in knowledge:

> *theoretical radical Dogmatism…………………………………denied by the facticity of error*
> *an affirmative attitude…………………………………………………………basic confidence*
> *a sceptical attitude……………………………………………………………………basic doubt*
> *theoretical radical Scepticism………………non-verifiable hypothesis and contradictory statement*

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14 Plato, *Phaedo*, 88c, translated by Harold North Fowler, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1966: πάντες οὖν ἀκούσαντες εἰπόντων αὐτῶν ἀη δῶςδιετέθημεν, ὡς ὕστερον ἐλέγομεν πρὸς ἀλλήλους,ὅτι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔμπροσθεν λόγου σφόδρ απεπεισμένους ἡμᾶς πάλιν ἐδόκουν ἀναταράξαικαὶ εἰς ἀπιστίαν καταβαλεῖν οὐ μόνον τοῖς προειρημένοις λόγοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὰ ὕστερονμέλλοντα ῥηθήσεσθαι, μὴ οὐδενὸς ἄξιοι εἶμ ενκριταὶ ἢ καὶ τὰ πράγματα αὐτὰ ἄπιστα ᾖ.

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Theoretical radical Scepticism is a doctrine on the possibility of certainty in knowledge which holds that no knowledge is immutable and no affirmation is absolutely assured. As a doctrine, Scepticism always supposes (remember Descartes' "les […] extravagantes suppositions des Sceptiques") and as a theory it is necessarily a hypothesis because we cannot decide that all affirmations may be refuted simply because many are. One of scepticism's two favourite debating strategies is to enumerate examples of common human error (error reflected in optical illusion, colour blindness, the changing value of temperature or variation in the taste of foods, etc.); the other is to insist on the diversity of customs and beliefs between peoples and cultures. Together these strategies form the powerful arsenal of Sceptical argument as this is found in the tropes of Aenesidemus or Agrippa, for example. But theoretical radical scepticism contains the contradiction that, because it is a doctrine, it must actually affirm that it is true; or at least in order to say anything at all, it must say that it is true that there is no truth, and admit that this is a proposition of sorts. So we come up against a semantic wall that like all such walls must be scaled using the distinction between language and metalanguage; but in the case of theoretical radical Scepticism its value is undermined because the distinction itself would have to be recognized as valid, useful, healthy, efficient and in some way truthful. One appreciates, th erefore, exactly why Spinoza referred to Scepticism as "a sect of mutes" and how we might more clearly understand it as an 'attitude of rejection' of all theory than as an assertable doctrine.

As an attitude, scepticism is the expression of doubt. A popular saying holds that "the scalded cat runs from cold water". The cat hasn't proved to itself that all water burns; it has simply decided it has no desire to be scalded again. And like that cat, the Sceptic runs from *epokhē*, ancient Scepticism's suspension of judgement, which is an attitude to be conquered, because he has tired of the anxiety and disappointment involved in watching one affirmation topple before the next; and because sceptics no longer want to suffer this, as Sextus Empiricus observes, "without holding opinions we follow ordinary life in order not to be inactive"[15].

On the other hand, theoretical radical Dogmatism is refuted not so much by the innumerable arguments of scepticism — which, as noted above, will always contain a contradiction — as it is by the facticity of error and the appearance and vulnerability of the primitive affirmative capacity. In his *Diccionario* entry on Scepticism, Ferrater Mora has in fact observed that this dogmatism is as impossible to formulate as theoretical radical Scepticism, because it would have to affirm that "nothing is illusory" and, in grammatical terms, assign a modifier to a subject which does not exist because it is "nothing".

15 Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, I, 21–22.

Another particularly interesting and even more subtle aspect of its self-refuting nature is that Sceptics can employ negative Dogmatism in a similar way to the argument used against them. Once again, as Sextus Empiricus observes: "Even someone who denies that all things are relative eo ipso confirms that all things are relative. For by his means of opposing us he shows that 'All things are relative' is relative to us, and not universal".[16] Ergo: just as the Sceptic cannot radically affirm his position, neither can the dogmatist radically negate the thesis against his. This, I argue, effectively confirms that the fundamental principle of Scepticism is its negation and the fundamental principle of Dogmatism is its affirmation: when the two factions attempt to exchange roles, the result is an utter failure.

Beyond such subtleties, however, one can argue that more than a doctrine, theoretical radical Dogmatism is the common denominator in all those positions that say criteria can be used to successfully differentiate between true and false propositions. Contrary to the sceptical attitude, the dogmatic or affirmative attitude is driven by confidence, which David Hume calls "belief", Husserl refers to as *Urdoxa* (or *Urglaube* at a more intense level) and Karl Jaspers understands as "philosophical faith" or "faith reasoning". Confidence in the movement that primitive affirmation constantly and repeatedly produces operates as a kind of indestructible substrate of all human experience. The American philosopher George Santayana (1863–1952) spoke of an "animal faith" and argued that Scepticism was "the chastity of the intellect"[16]. But in order for it to be such, first there has to be a libido and also some preventive measure against lascivious excess. Santayana's phrase aptly recalls the perennial debate between sceptical attitudes and affirmative attitudes (the term 'affirmative' being preferable to 'dogmatic', which seems better suited in its more frequent or common service in the description of issues of social tolerance amongst the world's citizens).

In this new century and as apprentice scholars whose vocation has called them to the study of philosophy, our path must take us to the heart of the debate or the game between isms, in all its complexity and in the experience of the possibility of oscillating.

Translation from Catalan by Barnaby Noone

16 Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, I, 135-140.
17 G. Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith: Introduction to a System of Philosophy*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1923, pp. 69–70: "Scepticism is the chastity of the intellect, and it is shameful to surrender it too soon or to the first comer: there is nobility in preserving it coolly and proudly through long youth, until at last, in the ripeness of instinct and discretion, it can be safely exchanged for fidelity and happiness". cf. V. Cervera, A. Lastra, *Los reinos de Santayana*, Biblioteca Javier Coy d'Estudis Nord-Americans / University of Valencia, Valencia, 2002.