

On the background and the possible impact of epistemology on the emergence of the post of truth

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Abstract

The purpose of this explication is to highlight the background of post-truth as a viewpoint, namely some of the sources and conditions from which it possible emerged. Based on the controversial philosophical developments in general, and especially those of the philosophy of science of the 20th century, which are continuing to this day, the argumentation will reckon, on the one hand, the viewpoint of verificationism, according to which scientific theories are confirmed if the reference of their prediction is ascertained and scientists have to verify them; as well as, on the other hand, the viewpoint of falsificationism, according to which all scientific theories are false and scientists have to falsify them. The elaboration will be expanded, including the contributions of Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, Paul Feyerabend, as well as others. The findings of the philosophy of science that the theories of science are false, that theory have an impact on the formation of facts and perceptions, that the dichotomy of facts / values are collapsed, etc., reveal how perhaps the path to post-truth was paved. The explication will be realized through the theoretical approach, the examination of for and coins arguments and analysis to achieve the conclusion that the post-truth as a point of view could emerge as an indirect consequence of developments in philosophy in general and especially in philosophy of science.

Keywords: *post-truth, philosophy, philosophy of science, verificationism, falsificationism*

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Introduction

In this paper *post-truth*¹, although there is still no author who theoretically has elaborated aiming to establish it, it is considered as a viewpoint, also as an approach and as a different way of thinking, as a line of judgment and assessment, as a style of communication and expression; it has already taken some contour, and will certainly continue to be profiled and clarified even more in different spheres. The objective is to examine the sources and conditions that, unintentionally, paved the way for the perception of post-truth as a concept and as a point of view. The approach here will be focused on some development of the philosophy of science which has created, without any prior intention, the conditions that made possible the post-truth outlook. Of course, this intellectual product cannot be attributed exclusively to the philosophy of science, since the greatest merits have its mother - philosophy.²

The structure of the paper will start by describing some purport aspects that characterize post-truth as a point of view, showing its meaning. It will continue with the philosophy, presenting the tensions and mutual undermined point of views that were considered as true. More attention will be devoted to what may have led to the decisive shaking of the conception of truth: the philosophy of science, where will be presented the viewpoint of verificationism that put the truth in the epicenter of

¹ On November 16, 2016, Oxford Dictionaries announced the post-truth as the words of year 2016. This shows, of course, only one thing, that this concept has attracted attention and has become so widespread that it represents an approach already manifested. At <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>, seen on November 20 2017.

² On the impact of politics and technological development on the emergence and spread of the post-truth, see Hajdin Abazi, "Substantial transformation: Post-Truth in Today's Media", included in proceedings of Second International Conference on Communication and Media Studies entitled "Media History and Media Transformations" held on September 23, AAB College, Pristine. 2017.

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development as a measure of scientific progress, and the viewpoint of falsificationism that shows the impossibility of reaching the truth and as an alternative brings falsification as the epicenter of the scientific progress. Then there will be put forward some conceptual aspects that show the truth is not so immune and self-evident as it is claimed, but it is influenced and perhaps even produced by theories. Thus, it will be shown how the philosophy of science, as a philosophical discipline that deals directly with science, revealed that science could function well without having an objective or regulatory principle of truth. So philosophy of science just removing the conceptual obstacles (that the fact is not pure, that there is no fact-value dichotomy etc.), paved the way for the advent of a post-truth viewpoint. In conclusion, will be laid the idea, based on the perspective outlined here, that philosophy and especially philosophy of science, both, but especially the last one, without any predetermined purpose, is a natural contributor to the creation of the conditions for the emergence of post-truth.

Post-truth and its meaning

There is no theorist who has embraced the post-truth point of view and has come up with some elaboration to date, so to outline it somehow has to be based on different sources and the scattered thoughts. The genealogy of the post-truth concept is yet

only a historical aspect³, but what matters here is the fact that it is manifested as a point of view and as an approach.⁴

It seems like Matthew Norman, a columnist at London's "The Independent", will be right in the assertion that "... we've entered a post-truth world – there's no going back now." ⁵ It should be recognized that Norman had hit correctly: the world has entered the age of post-truth and there is no return. We are already living, since 2016, in a world where post-truth is increasingly spreading as a viewpoint and as an approach. This is a development that is going on and will continue its own trajectory, generating amusing reactions but also exerting its own influence.

To show the true nature of post-truth as a view and approach, Norman brought insights from a satire of *Baldwin*⁶. Since Trump

³ "Post-truth" seems to have been first used in this meaning in a 1992 essay by playwright Steve Tesich in *The Nation* magazine. Reflecting on the Iran-Contra scandal and the Persian Gulf War, Tesich lamented that 'we, as a free people, have freely decided that we want to live in some post-truth world'. There is evidence of the phrase 'post-truth' being used before Tesich's article, but apparently with the transparent meaning 'after the truth was known', and not with the new implication that truth itself has become irrelevant. A book, *The Post-truth Era*, by Ralph Keyes appeared in 2004..." at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>, seen on November 20 2017.

⁴ The Oxford Dictionaries have declared the post-truth as the word of year 2016, since its use compared with the previous year has increased by 2000%. The main source of its spread was politics, also post-truth in politics, and this was linked to the "EU referendum in the UK and the US presidential election" in 2016. Look at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>, seen on November 20 2017.

⁵ Matthew Norman, "Whoever wins the US presidential election, we've entered a post-truth world – there's no going back now", "The Independent", november 8, 2016, at <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/us-election-2016-donald-trump-hillary-clinton-who-wins-post-truth-world-no-going-back-a7404826.html>, seen on November 20, 2017.

⁶ Alexander Rae Bolwind in the role of Donald Trump, Kate McKinnon in the role of Hillary Clinton, and Cecily Strong in the role of Erin Burnett, on her news show *OutFront* on CNN. For more see Dennis Perkins, "At the end of an ugly campaign, Trump and Clinton of SNL go into a sense of well-being", November 6, 2016, at <https://news.avclub.com/at-the-end-of-an-ugly-campaign-snl-s-trump-and-clinton-1798253954>, seen on November 20, 2017.

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perceived like Burnett was defending Hillary Clinton, he says, "Why are you defending her, Erin? ... I've heard from a lot of people that you're lezzing her?" Erin says "That - doesn't even make sense." Trump adds, "It doesn't matter, Erin, because I said it. And now half the country believes it". Norman's conclusion is that "The truth has become so devalued that what was once the gold standard of political debate is a worthless currency."⁷

American comedian Stephen Colbert, in 2005, popularized an informal word relating to the same concept: *truthiness*. This word was defined by Oxford Dictionaries as 'the quality of seeming or being felt to be true, even if not necessarily true'. *Post-truth* extends that notion from an isolated quality of particular assertions to a general characteristic of our age.⁸ Matthew Norman writes: "A few weeks ago when a friend repeated the old canard about Hillary being terminally ill, I prissily pointed out that this was simply not objectively true. "I don't give a toss about objective truth," he said with what might serve as the heraldic motto for the age. "Everyone's free to choose their own truth."⁹

As a viewpoint post-truth expresses a state which is no longer characterized by its basic word (the truth). The basic word is no longer characteristic and does not have the weight it has once as a purpose to find what matches the reality. The approach focused solely on the viewpoint of its basic word, its basic concept, seems to have become insufficient to express the whole of what is claimed. Perception is no more generated exclusively from the basic word, but from many other elements, factors, circumstances, motives, feelings, experiences and the like. Although such tendencies have been expressed throughout the history of mankind, but by becoming a public way of

⁷ Matthew Norman, quoted article.

⁸ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>, seen on November 20, 2017.

⁹ Norman, quoted article.

communication in countries (like USA and Great Britain) where freedom of speech was believed to be based on truth as a pivot and as a reference to judgment and assessment, the post-truth approach is a phenomenon which shows that public opinion, the citizen, is perverted in his interest in the truth and that besides it are set other aspects that seem to have importance, such as feeling, experiencing, interest, experience, individual belief, personal perception and so on. The XXI century seems to turn up with this new course of approach and reflection.

A pretty clear understanding of Oxford Dictionaries: “The compound word *post-truth* exemplifies an expansion in the meaning of the prefix *post-truth* that has become increasingly prominent in recent years. Rather than simply referring to the time after a specified situation or event – as in *post-war* or *post-match* – the prefix in *post-truth* has a meaning more like ‘belonging to a time in which the specified concept has become unimportant or irrelevant’. This nuance seems to have originated in the mid-20th century, in formations such as *post-national* (1945) and *post-racial* (1971)”¹⁰

But the prefix *post* is not a determinant, but it gives you an idea of a state. It does not define that state; it shows just it is no longer the state of the former, that it is a new state but not yet more precisely defined. So it maintains the traces of the overcome state, the color of the viewpoint that has already been shifted, indicating that it is not trendy anymore, is no longer valid, at least not as it used to be, but that has not yet been achieved in another, new, different state.

Matthew Norman discloses a possible reality to be kept in mind: “Inhabitants of internet-created bubbles, where algorithms feed their prejudices and misconceptions with coseting confirmations of whatever they have selected fir their

¹⁰ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>, seen on November 20, 2017.

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besoke truth, are axiomatically beyond the reach of fact." He continues: "The conditions ...to capitalise on the relegation of objective truth to a quaint but irrelevant electoral artefact will survive him" because "Trump is not the originator of a frantic desire to flee reality. He is its manifestation."¹¹

The essence of the post-truth point of view thus can be expressed by the fact that it is "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief"¹². This conception may be a trend of our time, but it is not a totally unknown spirit, since in the history of thought similar trends have been manifested from time to time through the centuries not only in politics but also in philosophy, and especially during the 20th century in the philosophy of science that would have had an impact, though indirectly, on the emergence of post-truth, which could even be a source of it, interesting to be explored.

The disputable propensity of philosophy

The lexicographic meaning of the term philosophy is "love of knowledge," knowledge is considered what is true; ergo philosophy was conceived as true love, true knowledge, and not all possible knowledge. True knowledge, which philosophy aimed to achieve, relied on a stable state, in existing phenomena, consistent relationships, and in events that took place, just as they did. What characterizes philosophy unlike other disciplines of knowledge was that it did not require specific knowledge, but wreaths of knowledge that went beyond concrete knowledge, seeking and finding (possibly) general principles universally applicable and without any exception, and that different

¹¹ Norman, quoted article.

¹² <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>, seen on November 20, 2017.

philosophical theories were "self-sustained"¹³ in the sense that they did not rely on any authority, but on the consistency of its the arguments and the views put forward.

Despite this (that philosophy was the love of knowledge), it had the other side of the coin. From the beginning to the present day, philosophy has manifested the propensity of disputability as an inclination to disagree with the existing theories, no matter how true they seemed to be and despite the authority of the author. Philosophy has always been notable by constant search, starting from marked achievements to go further, to excavate here and there, criticizing, and attacking with arguments and counter-arguments the point of views that have claimed the truth, until being refuted because of their instability and serious defects against what they claimed. These critics themselves or others have put forward an alternative point of views, which, having dominated for a while, suffered the fate of their ancestors.¹⁴ This is the path of the development of philosophy over the centuries: disputing, criticizing and going further; so for example did Plato (427-347 BC) against Socrates (470-399 BC), Aristotle (384-322 BC) versus Plato; Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) versus René Descartes (1596-1650); August Comte (1798-1857) versus Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-1776), Immanuel Kant, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) etc.

All this kind of development in philosophy, seen from the standpoint of the examination here, show that the philosophers themselves would attempt with all their power to collapse those truths that their colleagues had put forward, indicating their

¹³ Hajdin Abazi, *The Collapse of Olympus. The fall of the gods – the rise of the mankind. (Philosophical Essays on the Liberation from the Old Worldview)*. Olymp, Pristine, 2016, p. 356. It will be cited shortly: Hajdin Abazi, *The Collapse of Olympus*.

¹⁴ For a review of such development, see Hajdin Abazi, *The investigation of rationalism in philosophy of science*, Zef Serembe, Pristine, 2014, pp. 279-309, 339-382, 413-422.

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instability, and by formulating own theories with the same claim for objective or secure truth. This propensity has been manifested in philosophy since its origin in Greek antiquity. For example, Thales (about 620-546 BC) had formulated a point of view of the world by taking water as the primordial (arché) substance through which he provided an apparently consistent and well-grounded explanation, that's why the disciples among them Anaximander (about 610-546 BC) and Anaximenes (about 585-528 BC) embraced his point of view as expressing the truth about the world. The same disciples by critically reflecting later will discern shortcomings in Thales's explanation, and they refute it and gave their alternative theories of the world's explanation: Anaximander with the doctrine of apeiron and Anaximenes with the doctrine of air. ¹⁵

Like Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes as well as other philosophers such as Pythagoras (about 570-495 BC), Parmenides (late sixth-middle of the 5th century BC) etc., believed that there was an objective, certain truth, that could be known. All of them trust at that and that's why they tried to find it and then tell to others through theoretical articulation. The belief that there is a secure, universal, and everlasting truth is perhaps inherited, embedded in religious beliefs. Instead of the deities, it was searched for a relationship, a state or a kind of objective, respectively permanent existence. This embedded outlook as far as it is known, besides Homer and Hesiod the two most ancient Greek poets, first who shaken it was the philosopher of Greek antiquity, Xenophanes (about 570-478 BC). He wrote: "The certain truth, no one has known, / Neither will know ... "¹⁶. This postulate has, without doubt, stunned the foundations of the philosophy of that time, because it

¹⁵ For the echo of the importance of Tales' viewpoint and its overcoming of his disciples, look at Hajdin Abazi, *The Collapse of Olympus*, pp. 207-359.

¹⁶ Hajdin Abazi, *The Collapse of Olympus*, pp, f. 361-481; quoted from p. 382.

undermined the bases upon which its trust on the truth was established and enjoyed a supreme, certain, objective authority.

Yet another philosopher with the name of antiquity, Heraclitus (535-475 BC), in this spirit, had claimed that it is not in the nature or character of the man to possess the true knowledge¹⁷. "Heraclitus says everything moves, Socrates asserts in the *Cratylus* dialogue, and nothing resides, and he resembles existence with a flowing river and says" twice you cannot go in the same river."¹⁸ According to this doctrine of permanent change, the change which made everything fluid, it seems natural that man does not has to claim any knowledge to be called true. Plato will try to formulate another objective existence- ideas as true realities and perceptual reality as its reflection (e.g. cave allegory¹⁹); but he revealed shortcomings in his theory which expressed as self-reflection in *Parmenides*' dialogue²⁰, dealing the difficulties of linking the singular of the objective idea to the plurality of its reference in the perceptive world.

As a consequence of these intellectual developments in which unintentionally but by its snooper nature led the philosophy to the emergence of an extreme point of views like the thesis of the non-existence of Gorgias (about 483- circa 375 BC), who went so far as to assert that nothing exists, and if yes - it cannot be recognized, and if that happens it cannot be communicated²¹. Then Protagoras (490-420 BC), which measure of all things, certainly including the knowledge of the truth, found in man, as

¹⁷ Qouted according to *Popper - Collected Works* (Albanian translation) (ed.) David Miller, p. 29.

¹⁸ Platon, *Kratylos*, Skrifter, Bok 2, p. 406.

¹⁹ Platon, *Staten*. Skrifter. Bok 3, Atlantis, Stockholm, 2013, pp. 293-302.

²⁰ Plato, *Parmenides*. Skrifter, Bok 4, Atlantis, Stockholm, 2006, especially pp. 54-67.

²¹ *Gorgias well-known assertion is: i) Nothing exists; ii) Even if existence exists, it cannot be known; iii) Even if it could be known, it cannot be communicated* For more see Colin Francis Higgins "Gorgias (483 – 375 B.C.E.)" at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/gorgias/>, seen on December 2, 2017.

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an individual: "Man is the *measure* of all things: of things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not."²² Plato, through Socrates, has given Protagoras the right that if it is to rely on perceptions the truth is just as everyone experiences it²³.

Over the centuries one of the most widespread points of views among philosophers had been the belief that the truth had an independent, objective existence. The ancient Greeks believed that this truth could be caught only by the mind, the reason. George Berkeley (1685-1753), in the *Three Dialogues*, in the first dialogue between Philonous and Hylas, examines the relationship between existence and perception, with a few nuances of Protagoras, reaching what is a well-known saying: *esse est percipi* (being is to be perceived), meaning the existence exists only when it is perceived²⁴. In other words, this meant that if it is not perceived by anybody, then nothing existed, not even the truth (god here appears as perceptive and consequently that makes existence possible). This trend led further David Hume, who would give the first place the passion compared to the reason, pointing out the superiority of the former: " Reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."²⁵. Such assertions, no doubt, will have brought remarkable concuss to the existing philosophical concepts, a kind of collapse of what was considered the opposite, also the perceptions and passions were secondary to the reason which was primary. These points of view, at the very least, had brought about a rough overture with what appears to be the goal of reaching the viewpoint of

²² Platoni, *Thaetetos*, Skrifter, Bok 2, Atlantis, Stockholm, 2001, pp. 150, 164, 173.

²³ For more, see Hajdin Abazi, *The Collapse of Olympus*, pp. 508-509, 510-527.

²⁴ George Berkeley, *Principle of Human Knowledge, Three Dialogues*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, pp. 107-147.

²⁵ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature (1739-40)*, Book 2, Part 3, section 3, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1896, f. 283.

post-truth. The emphasis on perceiving as a source of existence from Berkeley and emphasizing the emotions and perceptions of Hume as the basis of knowledge were arguments that it was not the only reason but also others sources of knowledge that had to be taken into account, if not more, at least as much as reason.

The breakdown of trust in truth as an indicator of the progress of science

Philosophy had finally, through Immanuel Kant, brought together the two philosophical directions, that of rationalism and empiricism, unifying both approaches. Given the ascertainment that "reason cannot perceive and sense cannot think", Kant claims that "without content thoughts are empty, and perceptions without concepts are blind", so the alternative is their unity: "Knowledge, expressed Kant, begins only when these two abilities [reason and perception] unite."²⁶ Further, it is Auguste Comte who, by disguising metaphysics from philosophy, elevated rationality to the highest stage of intellectual development: "liberated reason" has entered into the "final phase of positive rationality".²⁷

With this heritage, the first decades of the twentieth century will bring the constitution of the philosophy of science as a separate discipline, by the followers of Comte's positivism as well as by Ernst Mach' (1838-1916), and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889- 1951), gathered in the Vienna Circle, known as logical positivists²⁸. By condensing the positive achievements of science and philosophy, the logical positivists will constitute an

²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (Albanian translation), Libri Shkollor, Pristine, 2002, p. 68.

²⁷ Auguste Comte, *Om positivismen*, Bokförlaget Korpen, MINAB, Surtre, Sweden, 1979, p. 14.

²⁸ Some of most prominent names are Moritz Schlick (1882-1936), Otto Neurath (1882-1945), Hans Hahn (1879-1934), Rudolf Carnap (1891-1970), Alfred Ayer (1910-1989) etc.

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approach known as verificationism, which "expresses a theoretical viewpoint ... the essence of which is the conviction that the purpose of [scientific] research is the verification of theories"²⁹, that only the assertions that can be empirically verified, also through the senses, are cognitively meaningful and create possibilities for ascertaining their verity. In other words, scientific theories are verified if the reference to their prediction is ascertained through observation. The success of science was measured by the number of verified assertions, that is, with the discovered truths. It seemed that the viewpoint of the logical positivists had reaffirmed and revived in the worldview the long-standing belief that truth could be achieved, this time through various sciences - and this was apparently an indispensable indicator while science continues to this day makes wonderful discoveries, previously unknown.

As to fade triumphal exaltation, at the time of bloom and broadness of the viewpoint of the logical positivists, appeared an opposed theory: the falsificationism of Karl Popper (1902-1994) expressed in the *Logic of Scientific Disclosure*, in 1935. Popper claimed not only something contrary to the theory of verificationism but also quite unusual, especially considering that science was on the march with its achievements: that the progress of science was made through the falsification of scientific theories that were held for the truth. This was a reversal of the belief.

Popper claimed that a theory was scientific only if it was testable and contained potential falsifiers such as basic statements³⁰; namely that each scientific theory excludes some

²⁹ Hajdin Abazi, *Has Science Got Any Basic Principle? On the developments in the philosophy of science about the scientific progress*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Balti, 2017, p. 12.

³⁰ Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Routledge Classics. London and New York, 2003, p. 19.

events, which stood as potential falsifiers³¹. Any of them could falsify the theory. Scientific theories cannot be verified, but they could be falsified. This should have been so, since, as the history of science witnessed, every scientific theory, which some for centuries was believed to be true, was shown in the end to be false; therefore, Popper's intent was that as soon as possible succeed to falsify a theory that seems true, the science progressed faster. The whole transformation into science through falsification, according to Popper, was made to come nearly the truth, but without ever achieving it.

What a logical positivist considered being a mistake or a fruitless work when a theory was proven to be false; Popper considered it as the greatest potential success of science³². With the unmatched intellectual courage, Popper overturned the dominant conviction that science progressed through knowing the truth, and instead showed that true, genuine success and real progress is made exactly when a theory casts off after being shown by the facts that it is false. Its place, to accomplish the mission, must, of course, be taken by another theory that has resisted trials of falsifying, but one day would inevitably suffer the same fate as its predecessor. As soon as this happens the science would progress faster – that's why precisely the scientists' activity had to be characterized by attempts to falsify each of the dominant scientific theories. Popper's great merit is that he not only legitimized the falsification as valid but succeeded too in arguing that for such reasons the rejection of an old theory and its replacement with a new one were the way of development and progress of science, as well as of human knowledge.

The task of sciences from the beginning was considered as the disciplines they had for mission to discover the truth and that the

³¹ Popper, *ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

³² Hajdin Abazi, *Has Science Got Any Basic Principle?* p. 17.

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activity of scientists was famous precisely through their discoveries with which new knowledge was formed. But Popper changed this course and opened another perspective where the attainment of the truth had been eliminated and its place was settled by scientific research with the objective of falsifying the scientific theories that claimed the truth - through which the change of various sciences throughout history was well explained. Expressed in the spirit of the topic here, it can be said that scientists' research to verify theories became devalued and scientists' effort to falsify them become valuable. The approach was overturned. The greatest transformations in science were related to the research attempts achieving the falsification; it was not the verification but the falsification that stand as the foundation to the scientific revolution, as the decisive turning points of progress. So, it was Popper who undermined the authority of truth in the philosophy of science and advocated for counter-equivalence of falsification. What's most interesting about Popper's approach is that he did not deny the truth; on the contrary, he regarded it, somewhat like Kant, as "regulative principle", being in reality unattainable. 'Eureka' was the discovery of counter-facts that showed a scientific theory to be false.

Science works alike even without the truth

The overthrow Karl Popper caused by the falsificationism philosophy of science was a response to the great question of how the fundamental turning points in the development of science took place throughout history. Popper had come to argue that decisive for the progress of science was the falsification of a theory and not its veracity. There was no denial of the existence of the truth, but it was shifted away as not capable to be determinative of intense scientific transformations - such could be the opposite, and this seemed to be an overthrow of what

seemed logical, right, proper, and it may appear as the most destructive viewpoint in the philosophy of science, dispelling what should be the epicenter of developments and doing it an approach that overturned the scientific research. It should be kept in mind that falsificationism was not nihilism; it was an approach with precise criteria as for how to reach the falsification, which was not easy but rather difficult and complex enterprise according to the concept of Popper. Falsificationism showed there was not a single approach to science, that, in fact, there were other possibilities of approaches and explanation, and it enriched the resonance of philosophy of science on science.

In any case, it seems that unintentionally Popper had opened the "box of Pandora". Another philosopher of science would postulate that science can work well even without the concept of truth; like Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend as well as Hilary Putnam.

The biggest push in this direction, with no doubt, made Thomas Kuhn in his masterpiece *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1962). Kuhn asserted, contrary to Popper, that "we have to give up the notion, whether explicit or implicit, that paradigm changes are offered by scientists and those who learn from them, closer to the truth."³³ This means, according to Kuhn, that science is not intended to offer any pre-determined purpose, including the truth. The scientific research he conceived as an effort to bring nature, or any part of it, to the mold of paradigm, so that the facts are reconciled with theory. Kuhn also states more clearly that the sciences can be developed "without the help of any set goals, to attain a genuine science embedded once and for all."³⁴ For Kuhn, "the development of science, similar to

³³Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Albanian translation), Dukagjini, Tiranë-Pejë, 1997, p. 234.

³⁴ Kuhn, *ibid.*, p. 237

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biological evolution, is one-way and irreversible,"³⁵ and in analogy with the evolutionary concept, he points out that conflict between community members to find solutions to the faced problems is the best way in the exercise of science, and this leads to its future³⁶. Clearly, as I have said elsewhere, Kuhn submits his viewpoint that science does not need to be based on the notion of truth and that it is not its purpose of achieving any truth.³⁷

Paul Feyerabend has criticized Kuhn that he, removing the purpose of truth³⁸ as a preoccupation and objective of scientific research, has stripped science of its essence. But at the same time, he himself offers an anarchistic philosophy of science, according to which each theory can be held by each group of scientists, and the very fact that a group supports and trusts it, it is fair and legitimate for them. Feyerabend does not offer any way to distinguish the veracity of different theories, even when they may be of the same discipline and contradict each other. Feyerabend's assertion that science is the path to knowing truth and reality³⁹ remains an ornament that has no weight at all, since not only the various and contradictory theories are considered legitimate if a group of scientists holds them but, moreover, even the various spells like woodoo are equivalent to science. If it is clearly seen, the anarchist attitude of Feyerabend is the greatest undermining of truth, until there is no way how to distinguish

³⁵ Kuhn in Lakatos & Musgrave, *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Proceedings of the International Colloquium in the Philosophy of Science, London, 1965, Cambridge University Press, London, 1970, p. 246.

³⁶ Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Albanian translation), pp. 235-236.

³⁷ Hajdin Abazi, *The investigation of rationalism in philosophy of science*, (in Albanian), p. 196.

³⁸ Paul Feyerabend, "Consolations for the Specialist", në Lakatos & Musgrave, *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Proceedings of the International Colloquium in the Philosophy of Science, London, 1965, Cambridge University Press, London, 1970, p. 201.

³⁹ Feyerabend, *Mot Metodtvång – Utkast till en anarkistisk vetenskapsteori*. Arkiv modena klassiker, 2000, p. 8.

and recognize it, which means that each may seem true without being at all

Being Popper's follower, Imre Lakatos could not advocate the truth; instead, as a middle way, he postulated that the progress of science is measured by the discovery of new theories and new facts⁴⁰. This sounds similar to what Kuhn calls puzzle-solving, which implies calibration of facts with theory and vice versa. Hilary Putnam, however, persuasively argued the collapse of fact/value dichotomy⁴¹, showing, in accordance with Kuhn, Feyerabend and Lakatos, that they are in fact intertwined and undivided between themselves, which actually collapses what is known as objectivity, since if the facts are not independent of the values (theories) then they are not objective. Thus, in a way, the pillar reference of the fact as an objective and independent existence is theoretically undermined.

The paleness of reliance on the truth authority

The twentieth century's philosophy of science resulted in the paleness of any support of what was known as objective. The logical positivists believed that the facts were data, meaning that they were pure, that is, they were not influenced by theories⁴², and that is why they believed facts could be faced with the reference of various theories as a stone of proof to judge whether or not they were true. And if the facts were pure, then they would serve as verity references.

⁴⁰ Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Research Scientific Programmes" in Lakatos & Musgrave (ed), *Criticism and Growth of Knowledge*, Proceedings of the International Colloquium in the Philosophy of Science, London, 1965, Cambridge University Press, London, 1970, pp. 118, 155-157, 170, 175.

⁴¹ Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and other essays*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts & London 2002, p. 1-8, 44, 137.

⁴² Alfred Ayer, *Logical positivism*, The Free Press, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1959, pp.18-19, 144.

But Popper, the contemporary of logical positivists, argued that experience is influenced by theoretical viewpoints and that the facts are not as pure as the logical positivists believed. Thomas Kuhn went even further when he points out that our concepts (e.g. paradigm, tradition, worldview, metaphysical credence, etc.) tell us what entities the universe contains⁴³ which then scientists do research to find them. In this spirit, Feyerabend showed how the embedded theories affect the perceptions of scientists, which impede them from expounding the new facts as well as realities that were different from those cultivated by tradition⁴⁴. In other words, Popper, Kuhn, and Feyerabend argued that our observations, perceptions of the facts, are influenced, if not determined, by the theories.

The last blow in this direction was given by Hilary Putnam. Putnam showed that there was no real separation between facts and values (viewpoints, beliefs, theories) that they were intertwined and interdependent⁴⁵. What will be considered the fact, indeed, depends on the values the scientists or groups of scientists have accepted and operates with them. Objective, or true, can also be considered something only if the values give it such an attribute; but contrary to these values - facts, as well as truth, are accepted neither as facts nor as truth.

In such a state when the philosophy of science has broken the foundations so far trustworthy, and while there is no other theory that has overcome and provided an alternative, there is no need to look absurd either the 'alternative fact' or the fake news, as well as 'alt-right'⁴⁶ etc. These, as well as others which may flourish, appear to be the fruit of the vacuum that has

⁴³ Kuhn, *The structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Albanian translation), p. 24.

⁴⁴ Paul Feyerabend, *Mot Metodologjës*, p. 50. He says that facts "are compound by old ideologies".

⁴⁵ Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and other essays*, pp. 1-8, 44, 137.

⁴⁶ 'Alt-right' (alternative rights) see <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>, seen on December 3, 2017.

remained behind the shift of truth and facts as objective existence.

Closing notes

From what has been said here, though in thick lines and well-known things but posed in the context of post-truth, it seems quite natural the emergence of new approaches: above developments in philosophy led to the collapse of the authority of the truth. Different philosopher and philosopher of science indicated that truth, facts, and human observations are impregnated with, if not determined by, theoretical point of views. That is to say, facts that are considered objective have been argued to be intertwined with values, and only when they are compatible then facts become facts, otherwise not.

Philosophy of science showed that science even without being guided by the concept of truth, without the objective of knowing the truth can function in alike, in the sense that scientists can do their research. This does not seem as strange after it has been argued that the facts are not only impregnated by the theory but also the dichotomy between fact and theory / value does not exist as it was believed, that, indeed they are dependent and conditioned with each other.

In the end, having in mind that in this discussion no attention has been paid to the general social and technological developments have also had its powerful influence on the emergence of post-truth, however it can be asserted that if the philosophy of science provided historical data that theories of science are false, that the facts are not objective and independent as believed, that facts are not separated from the values, that science can achieve knowledge even without being guided by the truth. If so, then unintentionally philosophy of science has created the philosophical conditions, also the needed spirit and climate, and has paved the way for the emergence of a post-truth

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concept. This background of the philosophy of science and its impact seems to shed light on the emergence of post-truth as the approach and as a point of view as a natural fruit of intellectual development. Here is not explicated if this approach and this point of views are right or not, it will be determined by future intellectual developments if they will bring any response that goes further or exceeds it.

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