

Interparadigmas translation

FROM METHODOICAL DOUBT TO THE DISBELIEF PRINCIPLE: TOWARDS A SCIENCE OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

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ABSTRACT. Broad questioning is a distinctive feature of modern science. It is believed that modern science can research everything, as everything can be questioned. The epistemology of René Descartes, specifically the process of methodical doubt, is the decisive conceptual support for the idea of scientific omniquestioning. Descartes, inspired by the axiomatic and deductive model of geometry, established a system of rational truths with the intent to sustain all research and scientific knowledge. This article problematizes the rationalistic character of the definition of scientific inquiry instituted by methodical doubt and its consequent limitations in terms of scientific method and object. The first part succinctly reproduces the argument of methodical doubt and considers specific aspects of it. The second part presents the disbelief principle as an alternative conception of scientific inquiry and suggests implications that amplify the conception of cognition in experiences. The third part outlines the possibility of a science of self-consciousness, which also encompasses extrasensory perceptions or parapsychism, made viable by the referred to transformation of the concept of scientific enquiry.

Keywords: methodical doubt; disbelief principle; self-consciousness.

INTRODUCTION

This work, despite in the form of an article, can be considered an essay, given its exploratory and conjectural and not exhaustive or exegetical character. The purpose is to present and make plausible an *intuition*, according to the following conjecture: *if* methodical doubt occupies a central place in the formation of the concept of modern science, in the broadest sense; *and if* this place is simultaneously of possibility and of limit; *then* its substitution for another element of questioning, the *disbelief principle*, would establish a broader possibility and broader limits for the science.

The context in which this work is situated is critical to the implication of Cartesian epistemology, a long and complex tradition, dating back to the days when Descartes brought to light his metaphysical ideas. Cartesian epistemology demarcated a before and an after. He established the very concept of modern epistemology, therefore all subsequent discussion necessarily has to consider it, either to agree or disagree. The humanities or science of the spirit, since the nineteenth century debate Cartesian epistemology, as they need to establish epistemological *status* to the knowledge of the human being, being excluded by Descartes from the scientific field. The problem with the epistemological *status* of humanities is presented in different strands, among which are presented in this paper. However, there is a new science that is at stake, conscientiology, which has a central element of particular delicacy when considering the history of epistemology: extrasensorial perceptions or parapsychism. Unlike parapsychology, which approaches parapsychism in the experimentalist tradition closer to the natural sciences, conscientiology proposes a participative methodological approach, similar to what Windelband (1980) denominated *idiography*, the specificity of human sciences, as opposed to the nomothetic, from the natural sciences. Still, despite the context related to the humanities, there are also naturalistic elements, an approach yet to be elucidated, although escaping from this article's scope. In the manner of Castro

(2011), parapsychic phenomena face a conceptual problem, in this case, epistemological or, more precisely, paraepistemological.

The epistemological thinking of Descartes, on the one hand, managed to capture and pacify a deep knowledge crisis ongoing at the time, and, on the other hand, and maybe for the same reason, introduced certain very strong and lasting images or institutions about what modern science really is. Methodical doubt and *cogito* or self-consciousness are at the core of the socially current idea of science: it doubts everything and is a creation of human ingenuity, from our mental faculties, and not a divine, absolute revelation; consequently, science would be unlimited and also infinite in its range of possible objects. If it's difficult to categorically demonstrate a connection between these epistemological constructs and modern science (if one can speak of modern science), the opposite is also the case; how to deny a connection between methodical doubt, *cogito* and, so to speak, the spirit of modern science? Modern science is based on unlimited doubt and in the power of human thought. But then again, can one really affirm that science doubts everything? That everything can be scientifically studied? That science is unlimited and virtually infinite? The tension between a science related to methodical doubt and the effective limits of scientific thematization, which systematically excludes parapsychic experience, is the central problem faced here. Parapsychic experience failed to achieve, throughout history, the epistemological status that would enable it to be investigated in its own specificity and particularity, i.e., from the participant's or first person perspective. The Cartesian epistemological construct, it is presupposed here, has an important share of responsibility in this limitation. Deep down, what is at stake is the thesis that modern science is the heir of Cartesian rationalism, as noted in certain *a priori* limits to possible objects, such as parapsychic experiences. The artificiality of methodical doubt is an indicator element of these rationalist restrictions and was pointed out, for example, in Burt (1983), Nudler (1998) and Faria (2007). Rodis-Lewis (1996, p.98), biographer of Descartes, registers that even he admitted in a letter to Mersenne “has passed too rapidly on this pure spirituality”, referring to the substantial distinction between thought and extension, one of the deductive truths arising from the method.

Thus, the aim is to test the recapitulation of an epistemological *Gordian knot* – methodical doubt – in order to reconceptualize the dubitative or questioning core of modern science, modifying the scope limit and mode of doubt, opening the possibility to attribute an epistemological *status* to parapsychic knowledge. That is to suggest elements for a conception of self-consciousness which is likely to be investigated scientifically. If scientific research of personal experience is possible; and if parapsychism is a part of personal experience; then scientific research of parapsychism is also possible. This is the ambitious background program that aims to make an essayistic approach to the problem.

It can be said that the purpose of this article is both conceptual and experimental, as both approaches end up becoming integrated with each other. When transforming self-consciousness, from dubitante to disbelief, the concept of science is transformed, but also, from a pragmatic point of view, the reader's self-consciousness is implicated, as the epistemological axis ceases to be an abstract and universal self-consciousness, but a concrete and particular self-consciousness, as in the example of the researcher-reader. When replacing methodical doubt, in the modern epistemological nucleus, to the disbelief principle, self-consciousness will have, as will be demonstrated, the attributes of *thosenity* and *theoreticality*, both able to be thematized for scientific research, in this case, rather, self-research. The consciousness not only thinks, but it manifests itself theoretically (theoretically and practically) through the thosenes (thoughts, sentiments and energies), not only as a thinking being (*res cogitans*), but a thosenizing being. The science of consciousness, from these epistemological foundations, is conscientiology, proposed by the doctor and independent research Waldo Vieira, in 1981, in the book *Projections of the Consciousness – A diary of out-of-body*

experiences (1995).

In the first two parts, a presentation and comparison between methodical doubt and the disbelief principle will be made, in order to, in the third part, withdraw implications for how to define self-consciousness and, finally, establish reflections about the possibility of a science of self-consciousness that enables the study of personal experiences, including **parapsychic** ones.

1. Methodical doubt

The epistemological project of René Descartes had a central role in the constitution of a conceptual framework for new scientific knowledge and technological innovations, which collided head-on with the classical model of science, whose reference were the canons of the Greek world.

New knowledge was not deductible from the Greek philosophical systems, i.e., Platonic or Aristotelian, and even less so from the Bible. This epistemological limbo was quite acute in Descartes time and this is also why his contribution had the reach that it had. Descartes managed to formulate not only an ontological, but a human epistemology, centered on the cognoscente subject. In fact, he established epistemology itself, as a self-disciplinary field. Cartesian epistemology stems from the reflexive relationship of a thinking being with himself, self-consciousness in first person, which could be any one of us. With this he says that knowledge is, indeed, produced by the human being, which is, at least to himself, a thinking being, a *res cogitans*. It's a nowadays trivial verification, that knowledge is, in the first place, a product of human thought, i.e., the thoughts of human individuals. Doubt as a manifestation of a self-conscious being received central *status* in the constitution of modern science.

The new philosophy of Descartes was first introduced in the preface of the book *Discourse on the Method*, published in 1637. In this text, he presents a kind of summary of what would, four years later, be published in the *Meditations*. The question of method, central to modern science, was largely introduced in epistemology by Descartes. The problem of valid knowledge was formulated in terms of reliable means, which to some extent is an analogy to the conservation of truth in the syllogism structure, based on geometric reasoning. If the premises are true, the conclusion also will be. With the adequate method, it's possible to ensure the transmission of truth from simple to complex statements. The syllogism or form of the valid argument is the structure used in geometry, especially in the *Elements* of Euclides, considered by Descartes, to be the model of scientific knowledge (1996, p.79).

The Cartesian method briefly consists of, reported in *Discourse of the Method*, the following items:

- a. Criterion of evidence or indubitability: only accept the truth of what is clear and distinct.
- b. Analysis procedure: divide the problem to it's most simple parts.
- c. Composition procedure: follow the order of simple to compound knowledge.
- d. Enumeration procedure: make general reviews in order to omit nothing.

Doubt, therefore, is present in the first item of the Cartesian method; it is the beginning or base for the application of this method. In the book *Meditations*, published in 1641, Descartes presents in more detail and precision this method, starting with doubt, when proposing doubt to all his previous knowledge, acquired since childhood, including the college where he studied, the famous Jesuit institution of La Flèche. This doubt, however, is applied to categories of knowledge and not to each item of knowledge otherwise it would not be practicable. The philosopher divides knowledge into empirical and rational, a division

known since ancient times, and starts to test them through questions purposely prepared, in the manner of a skeptical exercise. Empirical knowledge is easy to put in doubt, simply by raising the hand to common deceptions of the senses or else to dreams, verisimilar hallucinations. Every sensorial perception is capable of being a mirage or a dream. Rational knowledge is harder to doubt, to the point of Descartes suggesting the existence of a misleading divinity or evil genius that would directly interfere in the rational thinking and surreptitiously introduce some mistake, which would be imperceptible, keeping for all purposes an appearance of unquestionable truth. The only knowledge completely immune to methodical doubt would be the immediate knowledge of self-consciousness, expressed in the statement “I think, therefore I am” (*Cogito ergo sum*).

All knowledge is mediated by representations, and this is the problem with the reliability of knowledge, as we only have access to representations to confirm the truth or falseness of the representations. We operate solely with representations. But the thought of self-consciousness has a distinct character; it's an intellectual intuition of the being. It is at the same time a representation and a reality. The reality of the representation, i.e., of something thought, is the same reality as the thinking being. Therefore when this being thinks about their existence, the truth of this thought or statement is given instantly.

In the words of Geneviève Rodis-Lewis (1996, p.97), “The *Cogito* (...) is not a reasoning, but the direct representation of an inseparable connection between “I think” and “I am”; in other words, “I am a thinking being””.

When considering the totalizing representation of reality, the attainment of a truthful representation presents several difficulties. If there's no comparison of the representation with the reality, because all you have are representations, it's necessary to have a criterion to distinguish between the true and false representations. Descartes proposes the criterion of evidence, which consists of identifying representations that are clear and distinctive, that is, with nothing obscure and no confusion with others. The statement of *cogito* - “I think, therefore I am” - is an example of representation or evident judgement, as there's nothing hidden and the thinking being is not confused with another thing, for thought is an unmistakable attribute of its own. The criterion of evidence, as stated above, is also one of indubitability. Only the evident is indubitable; the evident is what can't be put in doubt, for it is clear and distinctive so as to leave no possibility of doubt. To Descartes, it's impossible to doubt the evident.

The objective of methodical doubt would be to eliminate all knowledge that is doubtful, that is, that could raise any doubts. Objections raised on the categories of knowledge, according to their empirical or rational source, are doubts. For knowledge to support a whole system of knowledge, it would have to be indubitable, that is, evident by itself, clear and distinct. The *cogito* is this support base, because its truth is evident. The existence of the thinking being (*res cogitans*) is evidenced by its immediate effects, namely, the thoughts (*cogitationes*), because, unlike the content of other classes of representations, the thought (*cogitatio*) is immediately linked to the source. Representations relating to the extension (*res extensa*) or to divinity (*res infinita*) do not immediately link to the thinking thing, because they are thoughts.

Indubitable knowledge, in other words, evident, is the fundamental principle of geometry, in which the entire system is based. Just as the point is the first definition of Euclidean geometry, the *cogito* is of Cartesian epistemology. The analogy is broader than it seems, as the criterion of truth in both are the same, the immediate truth for reason, and rational self-evidence. While not putting geometry in the sphere of undoubted rational knowledge, even by presupposing the idea of extension, its place is occupied by *cogito*. The point, for Descartes, wouldn't be sufficiently self-evident, because it's not clear and distinct, that is being composed of and involving extension and thought. Here is precisely the

epistemological revolution of Descartes: the substitution of an evident object of knowledge by an evident subject of knowledge. The coincidence between the subject and object of knowledge allows self-evident, axiomatic, *absolute* and indubitable knowledge. In the meantime, this first truth, of rational nature, establishes a rationalist primacy in science hard to uproot. This rationalistic element is configured as a set of *a priori* beliefs limiting the possibility of scientific thematization, that is, the limits of the method define the limits of the objects. Modern science is essentially dubitative, inquisitive; but to which extent? Is it open to any doubts? What can be and what cannot be doubted in modern science? That is, what is a genuine scientific problem?

The skeptical procedure of methodical doubt makes a systematical review of the classic and medieval epistemological legacy, however, doing it in a rationalistic way. By justifying the first truth as “pure reason”, Descartes establishes the first item of his method, namely, the self-sufficiency of reason over the senses to discern truth however science historically arising from this epistemology is also experimentalist. If the empiricism of modern science is possible through rational statements, then one can assume it's limited *a priori* by reason and, therefore, that *the experience in disagreement with such postulates of reason cannot be studied scientifically*, or, more directly, *it's not scientific*. It's evident that science is a rational enterprise, but not necessarily *rationalistic*, meaning the primacy of reason over the experience of human knowledge. If this is so, it becomes necessary to revisit the Cartesian *cogito*, the originating *locus* of modern science, resuming the negative procedure of methodical doubt, however in a non-rationalist manner. Then, with this objective in mind, the disbelief principle is presented and characterized.

2. The disbelief principle

The disbelief principle is part of the *corpus* of the neuroscience conscientiology and in it, it plays an important role. In any published or verbally communicated material within the context of conscientiology, the disbelief principle is explicitly presented, addressed directly to the speaker, that is, the reader or student. In periodicals or books, the principle is printed on the cover sheet or on the last page, and in classes or conferences it appears on a *banner* or fixed panel, thematization legible to everyone present. The reason for such a procedure, beyond transparency and institutional honesty, is epistemological. The disbelief principle is central to conscientiology's scientific proposal. There is no conscientiology or conscientiological research without the disbelief principle. Therefore, the comprehension of the disbelief principle is a priority for anyone who wants to understand conscientiology, from the first contact.

The disbelief principle consists of two parts: one negative and one positive. The first two statements are negative, exhorting not to believe, that is, not to accept the information offered, whatever its origin: authority, book, imagination, among others. To believe is to admit the truth from the information offered, extrapolating by will its character solely by thesis or hypothesis, from the perspective of those who did not produce but received it ready. The act of believing based on authority is and always has been very common, at least, because the act of believing is free, by simply wanting it and also because one thinks (in a Cartesian way) it would be impossible to test all the information received, therefore, it is *impossible not to believe in anything*. Not believing means not to admit a truth without experience, which is different than not admitting a hypothesis as a hypothesis. Information are hypotheses, possibilities, this is its natural character for those who did not personally experience them. *It is impossible not to have hypotheses, but it is possible, indeed, not to believe them*. Experiences do not stop being tested, all the time, from the hypotheses one keeps collecting and building on. In other words, one makes use of the information from the

hypotheses that they have, even though they have not yet experienced them. Moreover, one always has the hypothesis before the experience; theory usually precedes practice. *To believe is to admit the truth of a theory before practice.*

The enunciation of the principle is made in an imperative manner, addressed in the second person, as follows: ***Do not believe in anything. Not even in what is being affirmed in this text. Experiment. Have your own personal experiences.***

The first sentence is an invitation for denial in the act of believing, not necessarily the denial of all faiths one by one, but operating as a wholesale suspension of judgment, so to speak. The act of discrediting is so unconditional, in itself, with regards to the act of believing. To believe or disbelieve, different from knowing, the will is sufficient. Methodical doubt always acts in a group of beliefs, but in a different manner and context. Methodical doubt denies provisional and hypothetical beliefs, only until a criterion of truth can be established for it. The disbelief principle denies faiths categorically and definitively, for it intends to point to another form of cognition, different from and previous to beliefs. This form of cognition is personal experience, inevitable and first for all human beings, but underestimated and, worse, restrained, as it deeply marks and forms convictions in the individual.

The second sentence is a reflexive application, including itself in its scope. The act of enunciating the disbelief principle is not an exception, but also the object of disbelief, as the personal pondered and discerned experience is an irreplaceable criterion of knowledge, from the self-evolutionary point of view.

The third and fourth sentences exhort the personal experience in a direct way while experiencing it. In the experience, the person is wholly implied: all their baggage, skills and faculties are simultaneously put in motion, being necessarily participatory and non-neutral. The experience is intrinsically connected to personal evolution, hence the self-evident truth that it has supplied. The evidenced truth is only refutable by another experience. The experimentalist tradition which also constitutes modern science admits it in part, but its other bias, Cartesian rationalism, does not reserve legitimate epistemological status to the experience in first person, only to third, or, at best, to the first person plural, as with social sciences. The possibility of a science of personal experience or self-scientificity based on methodical doubt and *cogito* is inexistent.

The concept of cognition at stake in the disbelief principle although nonetheless exempted from it, is the primacy of personal experiences in the construction of knowledge. Ultimately, the criterion of personal knowledge is its confirmation or denial of the experience. Under the point of view of life wisdom or evolutionary intelligence, to know is to acknowledge what solves life problems. There's pragmatism in terms of the use given to information.

The denial of rationalistic beliefs admitted by Descartes, in his formalist conception of rationality, results in the suspension of an entire fragmented model of human experience. The experience, or the way in which each person experiences life at every moment, occurs as a singular, individual and complex whole, composed by sensorial elements, emotions and thoughts in which analysis and decomposition are to be didactic and non-substantial, at the risk of losing the individual or characteristic vital element from the experience. The ontological distinction between sensorial experience and rational thought, proposed anciently, until reaching Descartes, is not able to accompany the specificity of experience, and marks since the beginning the differentiation of epistemological status between opinion (*doxa*) and science (*episteme*). An opinion is only sensorial, while science is rational. However the totality of experience is a complex synthesis of these sensorial and rational elements, among others, whose absolute separation is not made without important losses. Analysis is methodologically necessary to understand, what is different from the ontological categorical

distinctions, in the manner of what was done by Plato and later by Descartes.

The disbelief principle maintains the dubitative core of science, a legacy of Cartesian epistemology, however broadening the scope of the doubt, therefore, the object. Thus, it's not necessary to presuppose a rationalist concept of the human being. On the contrary, the principle also includes this belief, giving emphasis to the experience, being the first, obscure and confused human reality, before the inevitable geometrical formalism of Cartesian epistemology.

The proposal up to now presents to redefine the concept of questioning in the scientific method, namely, from methodical doubt to the disbelief principle, bringing repercussions to the role played by self-consciousness, also fundamental to modern science. If methodical doubt reveals self-consciousness as an exclusively thoughtful, unextended, subject of scientific method, although, by definition, excluded from possible scientific objects, the disbelief principle reveals self-consciousness as a *pensenizante*, in other words, whose experiences are constituted by thoughts (*tho*), sentiments (*sem*) and energies (*ene*), connected in an inseparable unit and, yet, objectively cognoscible. Next, this transformation in the concept of self-consciousness, due to the redefinition of questioning in science, will be exposed.

3. Methodical doubt, disbelief principle and self-consciousness

Self-consciousness establishes modern science through the *cogito*, in turn resulting from methodical doubt. The evident truth of the statement "I think, therefore I am" (*Cogito ergo sum*), when considered, establishes a point of support or fundamental foundation, in the words of Descartes, science's building. The image of the self-conscious subject represents the great turn in modern epistemology, for it transfers the axis from being to knowledge, in terms of the product of human thinking and its subjective faculties. The human being is, in modern times, the origin of knowledge. However, this epistemological operation of knowledge radication in the subjective faculties, simultaneously excludes the subject from the scope of legitimate objects in science. The thinking thing (subject, *res cogitans*) is for the method, just as the extended thing (*res extensa*) is for the object.

It was necessary to include subjectivity in knowledge to settle the huge epistemological crisis current back then; however, it was necessary to include subjectivity in order to exclude it again, "through the back door". The inclusion of the subject in epistemology, paradoxically, is also its exclusion from the investigative scope of science.

Modern science has had, from its origin, a conflictive relationship with self-consciousness. Methodical doubt allows for the suspending of judgement to the whole classical tradition, including the scholastic, and affirm the primacy of the *self-conscious subject*, producer of knowledge, first instance of human reality, earlier than even the divinity (*res infinita*), from the epistemological point of view. To Descartes, the only thing we know, with absolute surety, without a doubt, is that we exist as thinking beings. Methodical doubt leads to self-consciousness, which epistemologically sustains modern science, but it cannot be studied directly, in other words, studied by itself.

It's worth remembering that since Plato, science is of the intelligible, therefore, of the universal, and never of the particular. Historical science, from the nineteenth century, came to break this precept, but without reaching the particular subjectivity, which, incidentally, was not its intent. Wilhelm Dilthey and his collaborators, as in the example of George Misch (1950), are honorable exceptions to defending the role of autobiography in the historiographical method. This circle of intellectuals was the key to discussing the epistemological status of the humanities or spirit sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). The distinction between nomothetic and idiographic sciences, proposed by Windelband (1980),

was emblematic of this debate. Idiography would be the method of spirit sciences and nomothetic, of the natural sciences.

Modernity is the time of the individual, whose principal characteristic is self-consciousness – Descartes placed it, with great insight, at the core of epistemology. However, self-consciousness is not a legitimate object of modern science established by itself, for it is subjective, while science studies what is objective, synonymous to extensive (*res extensa*). The subjective is a sign of modernity, a basis for epistemology and modern science, but it's not, *because it cannot be*, studied by this modern science. Subjectivity is simultaneously the possibility and limit of modern science: it enables modern science, for this is solely a result of the fragile human thought and not some divine revelation; and the limit of modern science, as, for being unextended, is ineffable to the method that this same self-consciousness stipulates and sustains. If it is considered that behind the *cogito* exists a procedure of methodical doubt, and that both are conceptually necessary to sustain scientific exemption in relation to tradition, superstitions, impositions, etc.; then it's necessary to ensure these basic attributes of modern, hypothetical, progressive and laic science. Methodical doubt and the *cogito*, being in a rationalist context, are loaded with assumptions which restrict the scope of science, despite the appearance of the unlimited horizons of modern science, for if there is no longer the limits of tradition, everything could be studied, analyzed and, finally, discovered. However the design of methodical doubt and the *cogito* already conceptually limit this *everything*, for this virtual unlimitedness of science is misleading. The *everything* of modern science is to be subsumed, somehow, to the category of extension, to become positive, as has been exposed by the representatives of the so called critical theory of society, for example, Adorno and Horkheimer (1985). How is it possible to maintain the laic and universalistic project of modern science, yet broadening the epistemological scope to the scientific study of the particular self-consciousness?

The disbelief principle, a concept proposed by Vieira (1994), looks promising as a substitute for methodical doubt, permitting another approach to self-consciousness and leading to other scientific developments. While methodical doubt conveys a rationalistic and deductive self, the disbelief principle allows for a pragmatic and experiential self-consciousness, in which categories in the manner of thought, extension and infinity, mutually exclusive in the Cartesian epistemology, can be reintegrated into a self-evolutionary personal experience. Hence, forming a new link between self-consciousness and scientificity, and giving epistemological conditions to a science of consciousness or conscientiology.

The personal experience, a positive element of the disbelief principle, enables an entire conception of non-fragmented, although complex self-consciousness. The self-consciousness of each experienced moment is different from the model of the modern epistemological subject, "processing machine data". The evidence is composed by several elements, which fulfill the spectrum of self-consciousness, the intuitions and also the cognition that goes beyond the body, space and physical time, known as extrasensory. These elements, among others, constitute, at every moment, an experienced and self-conscious totality. The reflexivity or attention of self-consciousness of one's own experienced content increases the accuracy with regards to their differences, its relations and origins. The self-reflexive accumulated experience concerning self-conscious experiences makes it possible to climb to better levels of lucidity as to one's personal self-manifestation.

Self-consciousness, with a focus on personal experience, derived from the disbelief principle, has some attributes, proposed by conscientiology, as follows.

One may consider the set of self-conscious content and constituents of the experience as a manifestation of consciousness itself, which produces it from its interaction with the environment. The manifestation of consciousness in its experiences, in general, is composed by thoughts or ideas, emotions or sentiments and also by energies, that is, consensual forces

that confer higher or lesser intensity and range. By means of summary and terminological economy, this inseparable whole produced by the consciousness in its manifestations is denominated *thosene*, in other words, *thought+sentiment+energy*. Thosenity is proposed, as an attribute of self-consciousness through the disbelief principle. Only this attribute already brings various epistemological implications, for example, it lacks the mind – matter dualism, because energy establishes communication of thoughts and sentiments with the environment; also this same energy ends the idea of a merely theoretical, contemplative or intellectual manifestation, for every consciential expression is an act with its proper impacts firstly in itself and then in the environment. The second implication is directed towards another attribute of self-consciousness, which it is important to explain here, namely, the inseparability between theory and practice or theorice (*theory + practice*).

The attribute of *theoricity* is due to thosenity and means that there's an unceasing and open circularity between theory and practice. All the time, every articulated theory by a consciousness is having practical implications, while every consciential practice is all the time being, somewhat, reflected conceptually. It is clear that the level of this varies widely according to the maturity and experiences of everyone. Theoricity, therefore, is associated to the attribute of *developability*, since the tendency of these circles of theory and practice is the evolution of the manifestations of the consciousness, becoming each time more lucid.

An experiential concept of self-consciousness, from the disbelief principle, enables one to think in an objective way regarding certain consciential attributes, for example the above mentioned one, thus opening the possibility for scientific research of self-consciousness or self-research.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: FOR A PARAPSYCHIC SELF-COGNITION

The procedure of methodical doubt, the basis of Cartesian epistemology, is a central element of modern thought per se and, thus, of modern science. All modern thought from the denial of tradition, preconceptions, and dogmas establishes a kind of “zero point” of thought, in which there's an opening to build new knowledge. Doubt is an inextricable feature of modern science. Common sense already understands that science does not propose absolute truths, but hypotheses which sometimes are confirmed and sometimes refuted. Descartes epistemologically opened this way of thinking, in his elementary lines, on methodical doubt. Science should systematically enforce doubt to know, and this doubt turning, above all, to tradition. The notion of the hypothesis, so dear to modern science, is indebted to methodical doubt.

From methodical doubt, valid knowledge was proposed by Descartes to the point of making ontological and also epistemological distinctions. There were, thus, three types of beings and substances: *res cogitans* (thinking being), *res extensa* (extensive being) and *res infinita* (infinite being). The differentiation between these three categories would allow the criterion of evidence or clarity and distinction to apply, because the main lacks of distinction are those that combine substances. For example, the human being is a combination of thought and extension, categorically distinct substances. To know the human being, it is necessary to separately study the substances that compose it, so as to later investigate the interaction between them. This is the analytical method.

Knowledge, for Descartes, could be represented as a tree whose roots would be metaphysics, the trunk would be physics and the branches, particular sciences, with an emphasis in medicine, which in fact, was the ultimate goal pursued by him.

Metaphysics would treat the *res cogitans* and the *res infinita*, while the proper sciences would treat the *res extensa*. In fact, physics has become a modern science for excellence, a model for the others.

After all, despite the Cartesian intention of obtaining reliable knowledge about matter, to improve the quality of life of mankind, history and its successors extended this intention to the whole of science, restricting it to the geometrically describable, even in a broad sense. Personal experience, including parapsychism, was left out of this scope, from the solid, yet rationalist, epistemology established by Descartes.

The return of the dubitative or questioning core of science, officially established by Descartes, replacing the rationalism of methodical doubt for the pragmatism of the disbelief principle, enables the conception of self-consciousness in an experiential, complex and integrated manner rather than abstract and metaphysical. And this conception, in turn, allows for the proposing of new attributes in the manner of thosenity, theoricity and evolutivity.

It's worth highlighting that comprehending science from a thosenical self-consciousness, not just thinking, does not logically mean, opposition and abandonment of the range of achievements in modern science, with bases settled in materialism or in the objectivity of extension (*res extensa*). The consciential experience covers unexplored fields of research, because, until then, it is without epistemological status. The quality of consciential life has no limits to expansion, when researched from personal experiences through thosenity. The disbelief principle reveals fields of activity of the consciousness where it is not even suspected, before the ineffable intraconsciential reality. If self-consciousness is not an abstract concept, but an active reality, the work of self-consciousness is not only possible, but an inviting field to be explored. If self-consciousness is an objective action, then what are the ethical and political implications of this so practical science of self-consciousness? These are issues to be studied, considering that the aporiae brought by the new does not justify the denial of this new, but, rather, the deepening of studies to be overcome.

The denial of authority (or authoritarianism) from tradition, by doubts or questioning, and the affirmation of self-consciousness are central and indispensable elements to modern science. The issue, as outlined in this article, is to remake this path, recycling rationalist preconceptions (biases) and putting in its place the disbelief principle, whose base is the self-evolutionary rationality inherent to personal experience. Self-consciousness evidenced by the disbelief principle is thosenized and theoretical, integrating thought, extension and infinitude into the continuum of its energetic manifestations.

The present article aims, by criticizing the Cartesian elements of epistemology, to open the logical possibility for new objects in scientific research, inside the complex range of self-conscious experiences, in particular extrasensory and parapsychic perceptions. Such a possibility would contribute, in turn, to the largest program of legitimation of paraepistemology, associated with a science of consciousness or conscientiology.

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