

## S u m m a r y

Title	The Project of a "Philosophy of Language and Culture" in Gustav Shpet
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### The Purpose and the Composition of This Thesis

"What is philosophy?" It's so difficult to answer this question. Probably the answer "it is the investigation of being" would be one of the most accurate ones among many. As is generally known, in the West the philosophical investigation of being is traditionally called "ontology" or "metaphysics". They were principal for Western ancient and medieval philosophy.

But, with regards to Western European modern philosophy, all of it did not intend to maintain that tradition. Skepticism such as British empiricism (J.Locke, D.Hume), attended to criticize traditional metaphysics, and the latter suffered serious damage. In this way, whether the investigation of being could be continued or not came to be a matter for argument.

The influence of the Western European modern criticism to traditional metaphysics exercised on the non-Western European countries. In these areas, as well as Western Europe, tradition of metaphysics received a severe blow, and philosophers of these regions began to argue about the possibilities of the investigation of being.

In this thesis we are concerned only with Russian philosophy among other non-Western European philosophical traditions. Russian philosophers after modern ages also argued passionately about the future of metaphysics. But we, of course, cannot see all of these arguments. We concentrate our attention on a certain Russian philosopher of 20th century: Gustav Gustavovich Shpet (Густав Густавович Шпет 1879-1937).

This thesis is composed as follows:

#### Part I. "Outline of Life and Thought of Gustav Shpet"

- ① Life
- ② Secondary literature
- ③ Periods of the thought

In chapter ③ we divide the development of Shpet's thought into three periods:

- 1) 1901-1910: Shpet studied philosophy at Kiev and Moscow Universities.
- 2) 1910-1916: Shpet formed his own philosophical project.
- 3) 1917-1929: Shpet carried out the project.

Only the 2nd period is the subject of this thesis.

## Part II. "Analysis of the Texts Belonging to the 2nd Period in Shpet's Thought"

- ① "Hume's Skepticism and Dogmatism" (1911): Shpet appreciates Hume's skepticism and accepts it.
- ② "One Method of Psychology and Where It Leads" (1912): Shpet overcomes the skepticism and aims at future reform of ontology.
- ③ "Appearance and Sense. Phenomenology as the Fundamental Science and Its Problems" (1914): Through a reception and a criticism of E.Husserl's transcendental phenomenology ("Ideas I") Shpet organizes his project as a "philosophy of language and culture" or a "hermeneutic – semiotic ontology".

## Analysis of the Texts Belonging to the 2nd Period in Shpet's Thought

### ① "Hume's Skepticism and Dogmatism" (1911)

He defined his philosophical theme through deep studies of Hume's Skepticism.

The questions "what really exists?" or "what exists in itself?" or "what kind of things exists ultimately?" are completely characteristic of traditional metaphysics. According to metaphysicians, *it is only a particular thing that really exists*. On the contrary, in their opinion, all other things exist secondarily, depending on the real existence of the particular thing. Thus all of metaphysicians so eagerly tried to find out such a thing. Their search, however, resulted in failure. They just postulated so many different kinds of what really exists.

Hume refused all kinds of what really exists. But this means saying that *all things don't really exist*, all the world is something like fiction or illusion. Hume couldn't be satisfied with this conclusion, but, on the other hand, didn't return to fruitless search for what really exists. In this way he was caught in a dilemma.

Shpet admires Hume's thorough skepticism. In Shpet's view, Kant, for example, was a halfway skeptic, so he couldn't entirely free himself from the metaphysical way of thinking.

### ② "One Method of Psychology and Where It Leads" (1912)

In order to solve the dilemma that Hume faced, Shpet studies his contemporary psychological (epistemological) theories. As a result, he claims that it is necessary to abandon the subject – object dichotomy for resolving the dilemma.

Generally speaking, object is what really exists, and subject is what doesn't exist (someone says that subject *is* what really exists, but then, for him object is what doesn't really exist,

namely, he just reverses the order). Accordingly, if the distinction between object and subject is completely abandoned, the discrimination between what really exists and what doesn't really exist should be also abandoned. But what does this mean? This means that *all of things really exist*.

Shpet learned the idea of abolishing the subject – object dichotomy from Western European psychologists – philosophers such as W.James, H.Bergson, and in particularly W.Dilthey (his descriptive psychology). And besides, he sees the similar idea in Russian philosophers of 19th and early 20th century such as P.D.Yurkevich, V.S.Solov'ev, L.M.Lopatin, S.N.Trubetskoj.

### ③ “Appearance and Sense” (1914)

Shpet supports Husserl's concept of intentionality, because this concept implies inseparability of subject and object. Shpet, however, argues that even Husserl doesn't completely abolish the subject – object dichotomy, since he accepts the concept “object itself” as the substance beyond “appearances” and the concept of “pure I” as the ruler of consciousness. Shpet tries to erase “object itself” and “pure I”. But then, a question arises: why can “appearances” keep unity and order without any substances and any acts of consciousness? Shpet answers: “appearance” is something like “word (logos)”. Every “appearance”, as a “word”, has its own “sense” in the total context, and this means that *everything really exists*, if it is comprehended in the whole (not in the abstract, but in the concrete whole). This is the main idea of Shpet's project of a “philosophy of language and culture”.