

# **Realism and Objectivity (Conditions for Objectivity)**

Director: Prof. Dr. Luca Illetterati

University of Padova – Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and applied Psychology

## **Abstract**

In *The Foundations of Arithmetic* Frege provides a twofold characterization of objectivity. Negatively, something is objective when it is “independent from our representations and from the processes of our mind”. Positively, objectivity is identified with what «is subject to laws, what can be conceived and judged, what is expressible in words (Frege 1884, §26)».

From this starting point, the research project proceeds to focus on the notion of objectivity and on the conditions that allow us to talk about objectivity. In particular the project evaluates the compatibility of the thesis of the independence of objectivity and subjectivity with the thesis that subjectivity – in some way – concurs in the constitution of objectivity itself.

This analysis will be developed in two parts. (I) The first part is a historical-conceptual investigation, focusing on the conditions of possibility of objectivity and based on their Kantian re-definition and on the subsequent discussion this redefinition raises, especially in Hegel’s philosophy and in the philosophy of some contemporary Hegelian thinkers. (II) The second part focuses on the problem of the objectivity of logic and it investigates the consequences of giving up an “absolutist” conception of logic defended by Frege and the emergence of an alternate pluralist conception (mainly due to the development of the so-called “alternative” logics).

### **I.**

The aim of the first section is a rational reconstruction of the philosophical theses that – starting from Kant’s transcendentalism – are aimed at both i) avoiding constructivist solutions (i.e. solutions which claim that objectivity depends on subjective structures to which it is reducible) and ii) a conception of knowledge as a mere reflection of given real structures. More specifically, the research project is aimed at analyzing and testing the compatibility of two theses investigated within classical German philosophy from Kant to Hegel: the thesis of the independence of truth and subjectivity and the thesis that subjectivity contributes to the constitution of truth. Starting from this background, the project will analyze the relationship between logic and ontology. According to Hegel, the claim that thought is objective and independent from empirical subjects implies a radical revision of the way ontology and logic are conceived and therefore the laws on which logic is grounded.

### **II.**

The second part of the research project starts from some critiques raised in philosophy of logic against Frege’s absolutist conception of logic. According to these critiques, this conception of logic is an unsuitable vehicle for reasoning about infinite totalities, vague concepts, or logical paradoxes. The project analyzes the implications of the elaboration of alternative logics (often associated with a philosophical view called “logical pluralism”) on the objective status of logic. The main questions of this section are the following: can we say that the ‘laws of thought’ are universal, topic-invariant, and certain? Or are they relative to context? Is logical pluralism a form of relativism? How is the plurality of logics compatible with the universality and normativity of logic? A central case study for the analysis will be dialetheism.