

On the nature of language – Anton Marty’s critique of the concept of nativism in language theory and descriptive psychology

Sobre a natureza da linguagem – A crítica de Anton Marty ao conceito de nativismo na teoria da linguagem e psicologia descritiva

9

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Ein zentraler Aspekt kulturphilosophischer Debatten in den Jahren zwischen 1860 und 1914 war die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Sprache. Wenn der Ursprung der Sprache in der Natur liegt, dann gibt es ausschließlich natürliche Gründe für die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Sprache. Ist jedoch die menschliche Sprache schon ursprünglich ein menschliches Artefakt, dann kann uns die allgemeine Naturgeschichte auch keine Hilfe bieten, um die menschliche Lebensform zu verstehen. Diese Optionen können wir verkürzt „Naturalismus“ und „Kulturalismus“ nennen. Dass wir hier auf ein umkämpftes kulturphilosophisches und kulturpolitisches Terrain blicken, das war Anton Marty (1847-1914) vollkommen bewusst, als er sich mit seiner Dissertationsschrift, die im Jahr 1875 unter dem Titel *Über den Ursprung der Sprache* erschienen ist, in der akademischen Welt zu positionieren versuchte. Marty tritt nun nicht einer der Parteien bei, sondern wendet sich sowohl gegen den Naturalismus und den Kulturalismus seiner Zeit. Seiner Konzeption gibt Marty den Titel „Empirismus“, wobei erstaunlich ist, dass er keine empirische Forschung zum Sprachgebrauch betreibt, sondern nach einer notwendigen Erklärungsart für die Entwicklung von Sprache und Kultur sucht. Seine anthropologische Hypothese, dass der Mensch von Natur aus mitteilbar ist, steht an der Grenze naturalistischer und

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kulturalistischer Deutungen der Kultur des Menschen. In meiner Abhandlung möchte ich zeigen, dass Martys Antwort auf die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Sprache die Debatte nicht beendet, sondern noch verschärft.

STICHWORT

Natur der Sprache; das Konzept des Nativismus kritisieren; Sprachtheorie; Beschreibende Psychologie; Marty

RESUMO

Um aspecto central dos debates da filosofia da cultura nos anos entre 1860 e 1914 foi a pergunta pela origem da linguagem. Se a origem da linguagem reside na natureza, então existem motivos exclusivamente naturais para o surgimento e desenvolvimento da linguagem. Entretanto, se a linguagem humana já for originalmente um artefato humano, então a história natural geral tampouco nos pode oferecer ajuda para compreender a forma de vida humana. A essas opções podemos chamar, abreviadamente, de “naturalismo” e “culturalismo”. Que aqui observemos um terreno cultural-filosófico e cultural-político disputado, já era completamente sabido por Anton Marty (1847-1914), quando ele tentava se posicionar no mundo acadêmico com a sua dissertação, publicada no ano de 1875 sob o título de *Sobre a Origem da Linguagem*. Marty não adere a um partido, mas sim se volta tanto contra o naturalismo e contra o culturalismo de seu tempo. Marty dá à sua concepção o título de “empirismo”, ainda que seja surpreendente que ele não opere nenhuma pesquisa empírica sobre o uso linguístico, mas sim que busque uma maneira necessária de explicação para o desenvolvimento da linguagem e cultura. Sua hipótese antropológica de que o homem seja comunicativo por natureza está localizada na fronteira de interpretações naturalistas e culturalistas da cultura do homem. No meu artigo, quero mostrar que a resposta de Marty à pergunta pela origem da linguagem não dá fim ao debate, mas sim o deixa mais afiado.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Natureza da linguagem; crítica ao conceito de nativismo; teoria da linguagem; psicologia descritiva; Marty

INTRODUCTION

The dispute over the question of which aspects should be taken into account in the study of the origin of language provoked a whole series of debates in the years between 1860 and 1910. Now, 100 to 150 years later, while the content of these debates may appear familiar, the form of the dispute, alternating between factual analysis and grand polemics, is surprising. With his dissertation *Über den Ursprung der Sprache* (On the Origin of Language), published in 1875, Anton Marty took up a fighting stance (MARTY, 1875) which he never relinquished, as demonstrated by his ten articles, published between 1884 and 1892 in the *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche*

Philosophie (the Quarterly Journal for Scientific Philosophy) under the title *Über Sprachreflex, Nativismus und absichtliche Sprachbildung* (On Speech Reflex, Nativism and Purposeful Language Formation).

Before turning to Marty, I would like to make two general remarks:

a. Regarding the content of the debate, I would like to mention the following: Even today, we have no sure knowledge about the beginnings of human culture and the determining forces in the process of humanity's development. Although we can describe the distinctions between non-living and inorganic, and living, organic life, and describe the differentiation of natural and cultural phenomena, we cannot find a reason which allows us to explain and understand them. But today the field of research has become differentiated in a way that allows highly specialised detailed research to be pursued in individual sub-sectors - for example, evolutionary anthropology, developmental psychology, behavioural biology, linguistics, and cultural history research - without the need for answers to the great questions of humanity.

b. In order to understand the form of the debate - and, for example, to be able to classify Marty's polemics - we must realise that the situation in the years between 1860 and 1910 was very different from today. (HARTUNG, 2018) The exponents of philosophy have not yet given up the fight against the disciplines of cultural, natural and social sciences as they become differentiated. This thesis is supported by the debates within the fields of the physiology of the senses (from Helmholtz to Mach and Husserl), psychology (the Wundt-Ebbinghaus-Dilthey controversy) and an area for which there is as yet no name: the question of the origin of culture, of the relationship between natural and cultural history, between thought and speech, or in other words: the question of the relationship between logic, psychology and linguistics. This debate is about humanity's self-perception - fuelled by the dispute on materialism and the reaction to Darwin - and the problem of disciplinary boundaries between fields of knowledge. Before the formation around the year 1910 of new disciplines of knowledge such as sociology, anthropology or linguistic philology, a situation existed where almost anyone could begin a new attempt at determining the relationship between logic, psychology and philology. There are questions here not only concerning the field of logic, as distinct from psychology, but also ideological questions in times of external colonialism and internal anti-Semitism: Does language determine not only the boundary between humans and animals, but also the boundary between individuals, peoples and cultures? What can be classified? And where is the boundary between a scientific and a non-scientific analysis of natural and cultural phenomena?

In the context of these questions, Anton Marty's work concerns the philosophy of language. In my analysis, I will refer to his dissertation and the studies from the

Quarterly Journal for Philosophy mentioned above. I can attach an analysis of Marty's major 1908 work, *Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen Grammatik und Sprachphilosophie* (Investigations into the Foundations of General Grammar and the Philosophy of Language), at a later date. (KRAUS, 1916, 29-40) However, in the context of my contribution here, I will also discuss how far Marty's theory of language can be regarded as a contribution to the Aristotelian studies of the late nineteenth century.

1. THE DISSERTATION PAPER „ÜBER DEN URSPRUNG DER SPRACHE“ (1875)

It is well-known that Anton Marty had already considered Aristotelian philosophy, Christian Aristotelianism and neo-Aristotelian concepts during his years at the Priest Seminary in Mainz. It has been established that he was already acquainted with the writings of Trendelenburg and Brentano in 1867. (cf. KRAUS, 1916, p. 3) From 1869 onwards, Marty studies with Brentano in Würzburg, gets to know Karl Stumpf, is enthusiastic about Brentano's famous thesis that the method of philosophy is that of the natural sciences, takes a teaching post at the Lyceum in Schwyz and - after resigning the priesthood in the same year as Brentano - goes to Göttingen, to obtain his doctorate with Hermann Lotze. His dissertation topic is a discussion of various theses about the origin of language. His paper on the origin of language was published, in a significantly extended form, in the year 1875.

At the beginning of the paper (in the foreword) Marty makes an important distinction when he separates and excludes from the question of the origin of language the question of the (adverse) influence of language on our thinking. It is a fact that this linguistically critical impulse has been of central importance since Plato and Augustine, through Hobbes and Herder to Mauthner and Wittgenstein. (cf. HARTUNG, 2014, p. 560-565) Marty wants at the very least to set linguistically critical reflection to one side because, in his view, it obscures a clear view of the origin of language.

But - as I will argue in my conclusion - in answering the first question, he will implicitly give an answer to the second. This will be as follows: The criticism of language can only be a criticism of the use of language. Marty does not pause for long in his introduction, covering the centuries from Plato onwards with a single remark. His historical and critical overview (MARTY, 1875, p. 4 ff.) begins with Maupertius and Herder, for whom the thesis of the natural origin of language prevails (§. 1. From the beginning to the 19th century). Subsequently, (§. 2. Humboldt's view) he turns to comparative linguistic research and the thesis of the human origin of language. (MARTY, 1875, p. 10 ff.) Marty points out that in the early nineteenth century, the

origin of language was a mystery. Language is attributed to either an inexplicable spontaneous act, an involuntary emanation of the mind (Humboldt) or a work of blind reason (Heyse). The third paragraph offers a discussion of the current views, (MARTY, 1875, p. 16 ff.) which, despite all their differences, have a common denominator. "All scientific treatments unite in the pursuit of understanding language from purely human powers." (MARTY, 1875, p. 17) Marty suddenly emerges with his own thesis, which he offers as "today's consensus": Any analysis of the use of language must, in his view, conclude that language is generated consciously with the objective of communication.

Marty's criticism of contemporary theories of language stands out clearly against this background of thought that on the one hand, the origin of language is to be sought in humans (premise A), and that on the other hand an analysis of language practice permits the sole conclusion that language is created for the purpose of communication (premise B). The linguistic theories that do not share premise A are not granted any further acknowledgement from Marty. He concerns himself solely with the theories that share premise A, but for various reasons not premise B. These include the theories of weak or extreme nativism, among which Marty subsumes the theories of Humboldt and Heyse (extreme) and Steinthal, Lazarus, Müller and Wundt (weak). (KRAUS, 1916, p. 14) According to Steinthal and Wundt, the language of prehistoric humans arises from involuntary reflex movements that evoke certain sound gestures. Marty calls these instinct and reflex theories "nativist". In opposition to these, he sets the theories (represented by Bleek, Whytney, Tylor, Geiger, Madvig) that language is a human acquisition that emerged from a drive to communicate; he terms these "empiricist". By this, Marty means all attempts of language theory to explain the origin of the earliest words without innate mechanical relations between words and ideas.

It is a particular characteristic of Marty's approach - and it is very likely that this is the reason for a significant absence of a discussion of his approach - that he uses much of his energy in his dissertation and in his later papers dissecting the theoretical offerings of other language thinkers into their individual parts and their contradictions. I would like to give you a few examples of this:

Marty's criticism of the nativist theory (MARTY, 1875, p. 18 ff.) of Heymann Steinthal, Moritz Lazarus, Friedrich Max Mueller and Wilhelm Wundt amounts to a discrediting of reflex theory. He summarily dismisses any attempt to establish a relationship - relation or analogy - between reflex sounds and ideas. Marty argues against the hypothesis that man "naturally associates a particular bodily movement with each of his ideas" (MARTY, 1875, p. 18). Marty seeks to limit the influence of innate dispositions on human behaviour. His favourite example is the behaviour of children at play. In consequence, Marty declares the basic idea of nativism - emotional

excitation expressed in bodily movements and sounds - to be one form of human behaviour among many. (MARTY, 1875, p. 34-35) In his view, there is a great deal of flexibility in the expressive form and in the connections between inner emotional experience and external movements. Everything is fluid.

The criticism of Steinthal and Lazarus is applied in a similar fashion to Wundt's approach.

Marty dismisses as fable his thesis that speech and gesture are involuntary reflex movements of a mental apperception apparatus, and his hypothesis that the foundation of language development is rooted in the sensory vigour of primitive humans - a capacity which has been lost to later civilised humans, resulting in their lack of ability to create language. He summarises his criticism by stating that Wundt also sets no importance on the deliberate practice of speech, composed of intention and need for communication.²

In his "Charakteristik der neueren empiristischen Theorien" (MARTY, 1875, p. 44 ff.), Marty discusses the views of researchers for whom language is explicitly a human acquisition. These include the psychologist Johann Friedrich Herbart, the philologist Jacob Grimm, the physician and philosopher Hermann Lotze, the naturalist Charles Darwin and a number of linguists and ethnologists (Bleek, Whitney, L. Geiger, Tylor et al). To the latter he concedes that they have made an attempt to explain the formation of the earliest linguistic phenomena without the unknown instincts of nativism and without the artificial consensus of an unsuitable empiricism, but also without the aid of the intentional creation of sounds for the purpose of designation. (MARTY, 1875, p. 54)³

Marty's strategy raises some doubts. He is clearly not only concerned with rejecting "nativism" as a variant of naturalism *avant la lettre*, but also a culturalism that ascribes all sound and sign meanings to a rational human activity. What will now be decisive is what a third way could look like. In the subsequent sections of his dissertation Marty gives an initial "orientation on the direction to take" (MARTY, 1875, p. 58 ff.) and a "positive description" (MARTY, 1875, p. 61 ff.). What is retained is a negative result of the previous critical analysis: the question of the emergence of language cannot be solved via historical research. All that remains is the path of hypothesis formation and deduction, which Marty presents as properly-understood empiricism.

² Marty: *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*, p 42 43: "The result of our critical examination of nativism is that man currently has no innate mechanical relationship between particular thoughts and particular articulated sounds, and that whoever wishes to assume this for the purpose of explaining the origin of speech in early man must necessarily believe that they were lost to the species in some unknown, if not incomprehensible way."

³ Marty: *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*, p 54.

In a combination of induction and deduction corresponding to the scientific method - principles of reason and experience - Marty shows that language was born out of the desire for understanding and the motivated, intentional but unsystematic formation of initially imitative means of designation. (KRAUS, 1916, p. 15)⁴

The viewpoint of a properly-understood empiricism is this: language is a human acquisition. It is a conscious, intentional communication of the inner life by means of signs. It must be true, even for primitive humans, that known human powers suffice to cause language to emerge even under the most adverse circumstances. There is nothing more to say on the origin of language. It can be assumed that wherever we meet them, and under whatever circumstances we envision them, humans will strive for a "declaration of the inner state and communication of external circumstances". There are simple motives for communication such as feelings and interests, which lie at the origin of the emergence of a form of spoken language and also determine the formation of a complex system of signs. (MARTY, 1875, p. 73 ff.) Language's advanced form of communication differs from its early forms solely by virtue of its great wealth of signifiers and the fact that some signs have become dependent and require clarification by other signs. For the most part, language signifiers are not understood by nature but by habit. There are signs for objects in the outside world which are immediately comprehensible; originally these are imitative sound designations (onomatopoeia). But even behind these elementary structures, Marty says, there is a human drive to communicate and the need to achieve certainty in dealing with others. The search for certainty is the motivating principle for the shifts of sound and meaning that comparative language research has been investigating since Humboldt's time. In Marty's view, changes in language form are accompanied by a transformation of habits, which correlates with a change in the meaning of the signs. (MARTY, 1875, p. 102-103)⁵ However, it is also conceivable for a change of meaning to occur as a result of a transfer of meaning and associational movements, which gradually develop as a habit. For example, forms of judgement may emerge in this way which then gradually become culturally established.

In conclusion, Marty notes that his analysis shows an unstoppable human endeavour to meet the need for communication with phonetic signs, and in doing so to establish further habits, i.e. to build and consolidate a system of signs. In his "concluding statement" (MARTY, 1875, p. 134), Marty summarises the results of his inductive-deductive process: The moment we confine ourselves to directing our

⁴ Cf. Oskar Kraus: *Lebensgeschichtliche Einleitung*, p 15.

⁵ Marty: *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*, p 102 -103.

observations to the demonstrable forces of our human nature, we see a stable correlation between the formation of language and the mental capacity necessary. We therefore no longer assume (inductive) once we can infer the phenomena of language development (deductive). Viewed in this way, a properly understood empiricism may not represent a thesis on the philosophy of history (necessary course of language development), but it can provide proof that the development of language in the light of the above premises - i.e.: language is fundamentally a product of mental factors, but neither of arbitrariness nor of calculation (MARTY, 1875, p. 144) - must "essentially" proceed as described by comparative linguistics. Marty's empiricism offers no new data on language research, merely the claim to be the one and only necessary explanation for the development of language and culture.

2. THE TEN ARTICLES „ÜBER SPRACHREFLEX, NATIVISMUS UND ABSICHTLICHE SPRACHBILDUNG“ (1884- 1892)

If we pause for a moment at this point, then we should realise what Marty delivers in his debut work *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*: a harsh criticism of the contemporary theories of language, together with his own theoretical approach, comprising a simple program:

Language is founded in the drive to communicate - language development results from the endeavour to simultaneously inform and communicate.

If we take a closer look at the ten articles from 1884 to 1892, we find that Marty is primarily concerned with a detailed criticism of Steinthal's and Wundt's approaches, and a definition of the boundary between the empiricist and the nativist concept. Article 1 is dedicated to Steinthal; Article 2 transitions from Steinthal to Wundt; from Article 3 onwards, Wundt is the focus of attention. In addition to his criticism of the subject, what stands out on the one hand is a pedantry in revealing argumentative inconsistencies among his reference authors, and an increasing polemic against them on account of a perceived lack of recognition from the aforementioned group of people for the theory of language in his own dissertation.

In particular, Marty accuses Wundt of a crude nativism (reflex and will) as well as an equivocal, uncontrolled use of terms. Wundt's equation of thinking with volitional activity, his indiscriminate use of the term apperception and his unclear theory of attention are dissected. Marty notes that Wundt uses will and apperception interchangeably, extends the concept of will beyond recognition (Article 5, p. 110 ff.) and disregards altogether the difference between a movement based on an arbitrary affect and a movement arising out of a desire directed towards it.

According to Marty, we should differentiate movements into four classes: acts of will, reflexes, and instinctive and habitual movements. Wundt, however, acknowledges only the difference between reflexes and arbitrary movements, thus defending a nativism that is unclear about its own consequences. This merely serves to cause confusion, as Marty stresses, and does not solve the problem of the origin of language.

It is and remains a contradiction if Wundt, (Ess[ays]. p 276), declares that experience (eg observation of deaf-mutes) compels us to suppose that the intention to communicate was inseparable from the generation of the first expressive signs, and then in the same breath says that language is an activity directly connected to the inner processes of thinking. If language emerged from the intention to communicate, then - for him who does not change the meaning of all words - this means that it is not directly bound up with the processes of the thought expressed in it. (MARTY, 1916, p. 129)

Marty's criticism of Wundt is broadly accurate. Thinking on the mystical element of the philosophy of language has been developing in Germany since the days of Romanticism and Humboldt - and it does, in fact, make sense to find this element in Wundt. Marty summarises this as follows: Words did not originate primarily as signs of thoughts in the service of understanding, but stand in a far more intimate relationship with the thinking process. (MARTY, 1916, p. 130) For Humboldt and his successors, speaking and thinking are, due to the very nature of humans, one and the same. It is a matter of identity and intimate kinship, not parallelism.

Even Wundt's view remained true to this kind of romantic theory of identity. He is guilty of the "confusion of the linguistic and the logical (by which I mean all that is a matter of thought as opposed to linguistic expression)" (MARTY, 1916, p. 141) and confuses the grammatical structure of language with its logical structure. Since we are dealing here with a fundamental concept of neo-Aristotelian philosophy, particularly in Trendelenburg's *Logischen Untersuchungen* (1940) and *Geschichte der Kategorienlehre* (1846), we can identify a difference here to which I shall return in my conclusion. (cf. HARTUNG, 2012, p. 9-26; HARTUNG, 2018, p. 77-96)

In Marty's opinion, Wundt expresses "the extremely nativistic doctrine of a direct equivalence of speaking and thinking" (MARTY, 1916, p. 143). Nevertheless, Marty still manages to use Wundt as an authority for his criticism of the so-called "theory of invention". Wundt recognised that the choice of linguistic signs is not overly founded on rationality on the basis of general insights - the Lazarus-Steinthal theory of the "objective mind" appears to be the background here. According to Marty, while

language formation may occur through choice, it does not do so as a result of systematic reasoning. "The formation of language was not the work of na individual, but the work of the whole, of the people." Nevertheless, individual differences in influence on the formation of language should not be denied.

Speech was a work of the whole, and therefore - as we have already stated in the 'Origin of Language' - this implies that astute and calculated method, which would have had to have the whole thing in mind at each part, played no part in its construction. Each individual step in language formation was a conscious one, insofar as it emerged from the purpose of comprehension, and was usually an elective act; but every linguist thought only of the present need, not a single contributor was conscious of the entire final result, much less the method or methods followed in its construction. In this sense, the formation of language was an unconscious act. (MARTY, 1916, p. 157)

This longer quote contains the essence of Marty's theory of language, which I would like to present in its key points:

- Language is a product of the whole (though it is unclear whether he means a people or humans as a whole)

- Language development results from individual, deliberate, intentional steps aimed at communication and comprehension (though it remains unclear whether the drive to communicate should be understood as naturalistic or culturalistic).

- However, language formation always relates to the present and its interests, not to na overall purpose; in that sense, language formation takes place unconsciously (although it remains unclear why Herbart's theory of apperception plays no role for Marty, and how his idea of "unconscious formation" relates to comparable concepts in Schelling and E. v. Hartmann).

- Development is not random, but it is unsystematic. It is in this distinction that the difference between a correct and an untenable empiricism is founded (MARTY, 1916, p. 158) (leaving unclear why the inductive hypothesis of a "choice" as a voluntaristic element should be more scientific than the hypothesis of a "plan," be it understood naturalistically or culturalistically).

In my opinion, Marty's theory of language is surprising in its superficial decisiveness in the criticism of other positions and in the claim that he himself has developed a new approach that is clearer and more scientific (in the sense of the natural sciences) than the competing offers. The criticism of Wundt's voluntarism is certainly obvious, and is indeed also the core idea in criticisms of Wundt written by Steinthal and Hermann Paul. (HARTUNG, 2019) But where is the true strength in Marty's theory of language?

1. When seeking a rationale for elective actions in language formation, he speaks of laws of acquired association and habit in the field of imagination and judgement. He states that humans formed - and are still forming - language not out of insight, but first out of necessity, then through imagination and the habitual expectation of an identical or similar outcome on the basis of past experience. Marty refers here to Brentano's discourse on the "basic law of acquired associations" and dismisses as unprovable fantasy the psychology of apperception suggested by Herbart's successors - in particular the Lazarus-Steinthal discourse on the "condensation of thought". The justification, i.e. the reasons for this occurring, remains unclear.

2. If Marty is asserting the kinship of habitual judgements and reasonable inferences, between associations of similar things and habitual expectations without deliberation, and thence deducing the emergence of conventional signs, then although he is arguing for an analysis of language formation without recourse to a thesis of correspondence of thought and speech, he is nonetheless not refuting this thesis.

3. So, if Marty resolutely dissociates language and thinking, he can then re-examine the problem of human-animal comparison. (MARTY, 1916, p. 162 ff.) Referring to Aristotle, Locke, Herder and Brentano, Marty assumes a difference in the capacity for abstraction (Aristotle, Locke, Brentano). Since, according to his thesis, the capacity for abstract concepts is directly involved in the choice of means of communication, (MARTY, 1916, p. 169) but animals have only a limited gift for abstraction, they lack both a reflected choice of means of communication and the capacity for complex acts of imagination. (MARTY, 1916, p. 173) Since at this point Marty has to concede the influence of thinking on language, in the sense of a capacity for abstraction - and vice versa the influence of language on thinking in the sense of a supporting associative act - his theory moves close to Steinthal's concept, provoking not an argumentative discourse so much as a polemical volte leading into the discourse on the "mystical darkness of nativism". (MARTY, 1916, p. 174-182, here p. 182)

What else can we say about this peculiar mix of strength and weakness in Marty's theorising? The subsequent articles in his papers, both attacking some and defending others, concern a justification of the principle of habit in the formation of language (Article 7, p 182 ff), agreeing with Darwin against Wundt. There follows a defence of the empirical psychology of the 18th century against Steinthal's criticism (Article 9, p 261 ff), based primarily on Aristotle, Locke and Brentano. In this context, Marty discloses the essence of his argument with Humboldt and Steinthal (269-284), which is founded on the inadequacies of Humboldt's philosophical theory.

The peculiar mistakes of Humboldt [...] are a product of the so-called speculative way of thinking of his time, which was fond of opposing

all previous empirical contemplation, regarding itself as a deeper exploration of things; a way of thinking which comprised - amongst various other illusory solutions - a mistaken understanding of concepts such as mind, judgement, reason and the like. (MARTY, 1916, p. 281)

Ironically, it is Steinthal - from whom he felt he never received recognition - to whom Marty ascribes a "motive of national rivalry" (MARTY, 1916, p. 284) in his criticism of Locke's psychology. In the final article (Article 10, p. 284 ff.) Marty discusses the recent literature in France on the subject of "linguistic origin", for example Paul Regnaud's *Origine et philosophie du langage* (1887). Regnaud is presented by Marty as a key witness against nativism in a double sense: Firstly, he criticises the nativism of Humboldt, Heye, Steinthal and Co., i.e. reflex theory, as unscientific; secondly, he attests to the seductive power of nativism, as he declares language to be an organism, a natural product that is independent of the consciousness and will of humans, thus revealing himself as a representative of a "most extreme nativism". (MARTY, 1916, p. 289)⁶

Before I conclude my presentation, I would like to offer you a true highlight of Marty's blend of factual criticism and polemics. In his eighth article (Article 8, p. 226 ff.), *Über Sprachreflex, Nativismus und absichtliche Sprachbildung* (*On Speech Reflex, Nativism and the Purposeful Formation of Language*), Marty has the satisfaction of discussing a review of his dissertation paper which was published in Steinthal's *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Linguistik* (1877, vol. 9, p 172-184). The author is Ludwig Tobler, the Swiss philologist, to whom Marty directly ascribes an adherence to a nativist standpoint and an unreflective partisanship to the journal's publishers. In doing so, he justifies not even beginning to engage with Tobler's arguments, instead moving to directly critique Steinthal's more recent publications.

This demonstrates that Marty is now ready to moderate his criticism of Steinthal, Lazarus and Wundt, and to ascribe to them a "relative nativism" (MARTY, 1916, p. 228-229). In the further course of his examination of Steinthal's theoretical offer in the light of Tobler's analysis of his dissertation, Marty comes to the conclusion that there is very little difference between himself, the empiricists such as Tylor and Whitney and the relative nativists such as Lazarus and Steinthal in their description of language

⁶ As a result, Regnaud fails completely. "He arrives at incompatible statements which, if they are to have a comprehensible meaning, involve first one, and then another of precisely those theses which the author does not wish to seriously consider. If language is a natural product, then it must be considered completely innate; if it is not - if it developed out of the need to communicate - this means nothing less than that man, guided by the powerful motive of acting according to purpose, has acquired it. Nativism and purposeful language formation form an 'either/or' existential choice from which there is no escape; in my opinion, this became apparent with compelling clarity, first in the *Origin of Language* in response to Geiger, and now to Regnaud." (MARTY, 1916, p. 303-304).

formation, but that the distinction lies solely in the explanation. More precisely, the distinction lies in the genetic question, that is, in the origin of language. (MARTY, 1916, p. 236-237) Marty claims that his approach alone provides a true rationale for language formation because he is not forced to explain fact from fictional premises.

In an aside, Marty confronts the question of why Steinthal does not respond to his dissertation in the fourth edition of his treatise *Der Ursprung der Sprache im Zusammenhang mit den letzten Fragen alles Wissens* (*The Origin of Language in Conjunction with the Last Questions of All Knowledge*) (1888), despite the fact that as editor of the journal he is responsible for the review. He cites an argument between Steinthal and Whitney (*Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*, VIII.2., 1874) which in his view is characterised by ignorance, malice and resentment. In addition, as Marty stresses, Steinthal completely ignores the results of more recent research into the origin and life of language.

But however ostentatiously Steinthal pretends to ignore modern empiricism everywhere, it cannot be denied - as we already began to see in the first of these articles - that the consistency and confidence with which he presented his nativistic theory up until 1871 have since disappeared." (MARTY, 1916, p. 254)

21

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

To sum up: the field of theory formation on the question of the origin of language is, for Marty, a battleground on which there are more opponents than allies.

He accuses the neo-Aristotelians (Trendelenburg and his successors) of a "confusion of the linguistic and the logical" and of confusing the grammatical and logical structures of language.

In this way he robs the development of linguistic and logical forms of its internal teleology, as Steinthal, Sigwart and the young Windelband see it. Marty does, however, attempt to alleviate the problem in ways other than naturalism (language is an organism) or the culturalism of his time (language is an invention). Marty links changes in form within language, shifts of sign meaning, and the consolidation of judgement forms with the drive to communicate and the principle of habits, as well as with certain laws of mental association. These principles and laws are the strongest link to neo-Aristotelian models of language and culture development (Brentano et al).

This is the inductive side of his methodology. Then there is the descriptive psychology method for studying linguistic phenomena, described as manifestations of an inner drive to communicate which maintain their stability through habit. We see here a striking closeness to Dilthey's descriptive psychology, which is known to be influenced by theoretical elements of neo-Aristotelian provenance. The adoption of the philosophy of history is a decisive factor: the why question is forbidden. Habits are expedient in the Darwinian sense, i.e. adaptive in terms of their respective environments. There is nothing more to discern or explain, Marty says, if we do not want to turn back to "darkness". The question of the origin of language is bound up in humans and, more precisely, in their practice of language. The previously mentioned premises A + B are secured by the analytical descriptive procedure.

Like Marty, we therefore no longer assume (inductive) once we can infer the phenomena of language development (deductive). I see here one of the essential features of Trendelenburg's "Theory of Sciences" (see *Logische Untersuchungen*) in effect, but without the background of its natural philosophy. Understood in this fashion, while a true Marty-style empiricism may not represent a thesis on the philosophy of history (necessity of language development), it can nonetheless provide proof that the development of language, in the light of the above premises (MARTY, 1875, p. 144), must "fundamentally" proceed in the way that comparative language research has proven with scientifically verifiable facts.

CONCLUSION

Marty's empiricism offers no new data on language research, merely the claim to be the one and only necessary explanation for the development of language and culture.

That is the factual argument. Now, Marty's polemic against related theoretical approaches, intended to make us forget about the similarities, offers some clues to the problematic parts of his theory, which I have previously termed as a lack of clarity. I will only repeat two points:

- The psychological and logical problem of a possible connection between thought and speech has not been discounted by Marty's premises, indeed it returns in his writings, as we have seen. It also remains an issue for empirical research.

- Talk of the drive to communicate, and habit, are in themselves indicators of a problem rather than a solution. The hypothesis that humans are communicative by nature is at the boundary of naturalistic and culturalistic patterns of interpretation. The principle of habit and the talk of a "totality" of habits obscures the fact that processes of consolidation and transmission of modes of thought and life are highly complex because they have an intersubjective, an intersubjective and a supra-

individual dimension which are linked together in such a way that they are inseparable from each other.

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