CATEGORY OF “CONTINGENCY” AS A FACTOR IN THE LEGITIMIZATION OF TOLERANCE AND PLURALISM

Abstract. The article highlights the issues of multiculturalism of the modern globalizing world in terms of the complexity of establishing a tolerant relationship between irreducible pluralistic positions of different cultures and suggests their neo-pragmatic interpretation through the centralization of the category of “contingency”.

The relevance of the article is directly conditioned by the current world situation, marked by growing tendencies of cooperation, communication and parity polylouges, but in practice, they reveal some difficulties (and sometimes insuperable) of building a proper level of tolerant relationships.

The method used in this study, in the classical philosophical tradition was called “transcendental”. It is aimed at identifying the conditions for the possibility of realizing a particular phenomenon. In our case, it is the crisis of traditional cultural strategies of the West in relation to the rest of the world.

As a result of applying the transcendental method to the situation of an urgent crisis, we formulate the basic meanings of the self-consciousness of Western culture, conceptualization of which clarifies the causal connection between the past and the present and, thus, explains the nature of the reasons that led to the actual crisis of the Eurocentric worldview.

The purpose of this article is to initiate a process of radical reinterpretation of traditional meanings of classical philosophy due to their irrelevance in the solution of modern sociocultural problems, in particular, the problem of establishing tolerant relationships between different cultures within the globalizing world.


Introduction

About two hundred years ago, in the Age of Enlightenment, when the period traditionally designated by historians as the New Time had reached its culmination, Western civilization finally defined its character through the category of permanent progress.

Other world civilizations, followed by rapidly modernizing regional cultures, considered it their duty to begin to share the fundamental conviction that science and technology will henceforth continue to develop unceasingly, gradually bringing humanity closer to an increasingly perfect state.

Catastrophic events that occurred in the world in the 20th century completely discredited these bright expectations and hopes. The unprecedented success and spread of totalitarian ideologies undermined the notion of the priority value of the freedom of human existence. The colossal successes of theoretical physics in practice turned into global environmental problems. The uncontrolled growth of the world's population, initiated by the increase in favorable living conditions, has formed a mass consumption society that threatens to deplete it in the near future many, including non-renewable, natural resources.

Today the skeptical attitude is caused not only by the idea of unlimited material progress. Its no less powerful crisis is also experienced by the realities of a purely humanitarian property, namely, love of truth, faith in good and beauty.

It is no accident that the outstanding French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss noted that “it’s time to look around, push the traditional framework beyond which our thoughts about the existence of mankind do not go. To embrace a more diverse social experience, more different from ours than the one to which we are accustomed to reduce our horizons” [1].

In our opinion, first of all, this appeal should be directed to the field of intercultural and ethno-social relations, in particular, to such an aspect as the problem of intolerance and the lack of tolerance that takes place in the modern world.
It is important to understand that this problem, which the American political scientist Samuel Huntington very aptly called the “clash of civilizations” problem, is of a fundamental nature. Therefore, the solution of this problem does not depend on the current social, political, economic or cultural situation. It is not something momentary and therefore in the near future solvable. On the contrary, this problem is a natural result of the historically developed centuries-old vector of development of Western civilization, and therefore it casts doubt on the very foundations of this civilization and the underlying traditional categories of classical philosophy.

According to Huntington, “civilizations are dissimilar in their history, language, culture, traditions and, most importantly, religion. People of different civilizations have different views on the relationship between God and man, individual and group, citizen and state, parents and children, husband and wife, they have different ideas about the relative importance of rights and obligations, freedom and coercion, equality and hierarchy. These differences have developed over the centuries, and they will not disappear in the foreseeable future. They are more fundamental than the differences between political ideologies and political regimes” [2].

Method(s)
The exposure of the problem of tolerance deficit in the historical perspective independently sets the initiative for choosing the method of investigation. This is the so-called transcendental method, created by the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant [3].

The transcendental method is aimed at revealing the conditions for the possibility of realizing a particular phenomenon. In our case, the phenomenon, the implicit prerequisites for the emergence and existence of which we must find out, is the crisis of modern Western culture. Accordingly, the result of applying the transcendental method will be the definition of the basic meanings that determine the essence, character and vector of development of Western history and, wider, civilization.

Being in solidarity with Hegel that philosophy is “an era grasped in thought” [4], we will focus our attention not on specific historiographic facts, not on the content-event composition of the culture of the West, but on summarizing ideas of refined philosophical reflection embracing the facts and events not mentioned by us.

Thus, in our study the notions “history of Western culture” and “history of Western philosophy” become equipolar. Or, more precisely, the history of Western philosophy in this study is the key to understanding the history of Western culture, being its eidetic analogue, the semantic structure or, if you will, the intellectual model.

Results
Following the modern American philosopher of the neo-pragmatist trend Richard Rorty, we proceed from the idea that the basis of the entire history of Western philosophy is two fundamental myths [5]. Rorty himself calls them “delusions”. In the more correct terminology of the French postmodern philosopher Lyotard, they should be called “metanarrations” [6]. We opted for the completely axiologically neutral term “myth” in Losev’s sense of the word, as an axiomatic way of constructing an integral system that describes the world [7].

The first fundamental myth of Western philosophy is the idea of the existence of some objective truth that is outside the subject of knowledge. In the light of this idea, the epistemological ideal becomes an adequate representation of this truth by language means. Based on the content of the first myth, it can be nominally labeled as the myth of “objectivism”, or as a myth of “substantialism.”

The nature of “substantialist” representations can vary: from Plato's plural substantialism (the doctrine of the world of eternal ideas) [8] and Aristotle (the doctrine of entelechies as inner essences of things) [9], to the dual and monist substantialism of Descartes (the doctrine of psychophysiological parallelism) [10] and Spinoza (the doctrine of the unity of substance, its attributes and modes) [11].

The first thinker who debunked the myth of “objectivism” (“substantialism”) in the history of Western philosophy was Immanuel Kant, who strictly delineated the noumenal and phenomenal spheres of cognition, and also emphasized the constitutive function of the cognitive activity of man (the truth is created, not discovered).

The second fundamental myth of Western philosophy is the idea of the existence of some unchanging inner human essence, which can be called “self” or “I” with a capital letter (“Transcendental I”). The ideal of cognition in this case is not the adequate representation, but the fullness of self-expression. This myth
can be designated for convenience as the myth of “essentialism” (essence as an internal, unchanging essence).

The German thinker Friedrich Nietzsche with his doctrine of the Superman (“man is something that must be transcended” [12]) can be considered the overturner of this myth. But equally Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard aspires with this doctrine of existentialism (“Man is the synthesis of infinite and finite, temporary and eternal, freedom and necessity, in short, synthesis. Synthesis is the ratio of two members. From this point of view “I” does not yet exist” [13]).

What is the logical connection between the above-described myths underlying the self-consciousness of Western philosophy and the crisis that Western culture is undergoing today?

To clarify this non-obvious mediation, we should turn to the thought of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who summarized the fundamental myths of the European philosophical tradition under the general rubric of “metaphysics of presence”. In another more ironic derivation, he characterized this metaphysics as “onto-theo-telo-phallo-phono-logo-centrism”, hinting at the established way of reasoning in which some central category is selected (Being, Reason, Spirit, Truth, I, Logos, etc.) and then in a binary or hierarchical relationship with which all other categories are built and unfolded [14].

According to Derrida, the very model of binary oppositions assumes the initial asymmetry of its members. For example, in the opposition Logos/Mythos, the first member is labeled as something absolutely positive, connected with rationality, progress, development, while the second member is labeled as equally unconditionally negative, as something illusory, not true, misleading. The same implicit logic of the superiority of the first term over the second is preserved in all cases of binary oppositions: man/woman; right/left; good/evil; science/religion; mind/feeling, etc. In the cultural perspective, all the above-mentioned oppositions somehow go back to the fundamental opposition West/East [15].

Thus, the sequential connection between the ideological foundations of Western philosophy and the modern world cultural situation is clarified.

The position of Europe’s dominant (indulgent) attitude toward the rest of the world follows directly from the belief in the existence of some kind of objective truth, to which only representatives of European culture (this is not always declared, but always implied) have privileged access. That is why they are endowed (or rather they give themselves) the moral right to be teachers of all mankind. This myth justifies and legitimizes any colonial ambitions, be it direct military intervention or indirect lobbying of information trends (despite the seeming mildness of globalization processes, which in essence are inseparable from Westernization, in fact there is an imposition causing a legitimate confrontation. The West, of course, does not introduce troops, but aggressively invades the information sphere. Television, the internet, the press, and literature abound in images of Western culture which are presented exclusively in a positive way that does not allow an alternative).

The myth of “essentialism” (the presence of some unchanging internal essence), although it works somewhat differently, leads exactly to the same results. According to the unspoken agreement, by default the position is accepted according to which the inner “I” (self) of the bearers of Western culture is more genuine, more authentic than, say, the self of the Papuans or Bushmen (it is enough to recall the Hegelian passage that the triumph of Napoleon was a procession of the World Spirit).

That is why any rhetoric about tolerance and pluralism, which is actively articulated today in the space of public discussions, is suppressing itself.

As long as the myth of “objectivism” and/or the myth of “essentialism” is explicitly or implicitly present in the outlook of participants in the intercultural polylogue, even the very possibility of realizing a tolerant relationship will not arise. It is for this reason that the revision and rethinking of the meanings which ground Western culture (and many others following it) become necessary.

As we know from the time of Aristotle, “natura abhorret vacuum”, therefore radical abandonment of the heritage of classical culture is only the first step in solving the global historical and civilizational problem. The next step involves the development of a worthy ideological alternative that would not only avoid the shortcomings of previous myths, but also contain the potential to eliminate any other difficulties that may arise in the mainstream of traditional semantics.

**Discussions**

In our opinion, an alternative to the traditional methods of philosophical interpretation, based on the principles of “objectivism” and “essentialism”, can be the project offered by Richard Rorty in his book “Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity” [16].
In the spirit of classical pragmatism, Rorty considers the cognitive activity of a person in a purely instrumental way. For him, intellectual and moral progress is not a history of understanding, what things really are, but rather a history of producing useful metaphors that help to better describe and explain the essence of the matter, thereby generally improving the human condition in the world. Rorty believes that "old metaphors constantly die in literalness all the time, and then serve as a platform and background for new metaphors" [17].

From this original linguistic presumption, he concludes that such an analogy "allows us to think our language, that is, science and culture, as something formed as the result of a multitude of pure contingencies" [18].

In a radical form, the thesis put forward by Rorty sounds like this: "our language and our culture are just as random as the emergence of, for example, orchids or anthropoids as a result of thousands of small mutations (and the extinction of millions of other creatures)" [19].

In the light of this approach, the status of any culture, any language, or as expressed by Rorty himself, of "any dictionary", is deprived of the possibility of claiming any privileged position. All cultures, languages and dictionaries become equivalent and equipollent precisely because of the randomness of their appearance and origin.

The random nature of human existence, which includes the history of all cultures, according to Rorty, should not be interpreted as a pessimistic postulate. On the contrary, the absence of the highest meaning given from the outside should be interpreted as a positive possibility of creation and self-creation.

In his argument, Rorty relies on such contingency thinkers as Freud, Nietzsche, Davidson and Blumenberg. Briefly summarizing the course of his own thought, Rorty concludes one of the chapters of his book with the following expressive summary: "Once we felt the need to worship something that is outside the visible world. Since the 17th century, we have tried to replace the love of God with the love of truth, referring to the world described by the natural sciences, almost like a deity. Since the end of the 18th century, we have tried to replace love of scientific truth with love for ourselves, the worship of our own profound spiritual and poetic nature, which we treated as another quasi deity. The course of thought of Blumenberg, Nietzsche, Freud and Davidson is aimed at ensuring that we will no longer worship anything and will not treat anything as quasi deity any more, that we treat everything – our language, our conscience, our community – as a product of time and contingency. Achieving this goal, in Freud's words, would mean "to consider the chance worthy of determining our destiny" [20].

Now we turn to the consideration of the connection between Rorty's ideas and the concept of tolerance and the way in which the tolerance for other cultures can be semantically grounded with the help of the category of "contingency".

In the broadest sense, various dictionaries define tolerance as "willingness to accept". Specificity of tolerance as such lies in the object to which the tolerance is intentionally directed. The fact is that this object must necessarily be labeled as deviant in relation to the generally accepted norm. In any other case, one can speak of either acceptance or indifference, but not tolerance. The object of tolerance can be both individuals and entire social groups. At the same time, the subject area of tolerance is not limited to personalized subjects, it also extends to various abstract provisions. For example, opinions, positions, ideological attitudes, subcultural trends, etc.

Thus, with the first definitive approximation, we can note a certain paradox of the nature of tolerance. It is to accept the unacceptable.

If we define tolerance as a kind of intentional attitude, we should specifically stipulate the status of the subject, from which the intention itself comes. Bearing in mind the aforementioned paradox, we are forced to postulate the necessity for the subject to have sufficient competence, which would allow him/her to carry out a tolerant attitude.

That is why we propose to disclose the content of the competence of the subject of a tolerant relationship as an opportunity to philosophically substantiate one's own behavior. In other words, the subject must clearly understand and realize what he/she treats tolerantly, and most importantly – why and what for he/she does it.

If, as an ontological prerequisite for such a rationale, we take the idea of contingency, we can say that the motive that will guide the subject is recognition of the principle of parity of any kind of positions.

In the light of this equality, provided by contingency, the highest specific form of tolerance between irreducible pluralistic positions can be defined as "human solidarity". At the same time, human solidarity should be seen not as a fact, but as a goal to be achieved.
As Rorty points out, “solidarity is achievable not through research, but through imagination, through the mental ability to see fellow-sufferers in complete strangers. ... Solidarity is not revealed by reflection, but is being built. It is created by increasing our sensitivity to certain details of the pain and humiliation of others, strangers to us. This increase in sensitivity makes it difficult to marginalize people who differ from us in their way of thinking” [21].

Conclusions

Summing up our research, we can formulate the following conclusions:

- The myths of “objectivism” and “essentialism”, underlying the self-consciousness of Western culture, make it impossible for a genuine tolerant attitude to other cultures within the modern globalizing world.
- An ideological alternative that can constitute intellectual competition to “objectivism” and “essentialism” is the category of “contingency”, which should be understood in a neo-pragmatic manner.
- The category of “contingency” at the semantic level eliminates the ontological differences between any phenomena.
- The “contingency” of human existence is not a reason for the proclamation of nihilistic moods, but a positive opportunity for creation and self-creation on the condition that henceforth the subject cannot delegate responsibility to any metaphysical instances.
- The “contingency” of all languages, cultures, events, realities means that there is no normative pattern with which everyone should comply.
- The absence of a standard eliminated by contingency legitimizes the diversity and difference of all things, both material and ideal.
- In conditions of contingency, tolerance takes the form of solidarity, which, being a tolerant relation between irreducible pluralistic positions, is not a fact, but a goal facing the subjects of the human community.
- In terms of practical application, the change of conceptual perspective, undertaken in this article, will help to differently reflect the state of the ethno-political processes in Kazakhstan [22].

REFERENCES

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Қараңғыңыз дәүркөңөгө өзүмдөө өөрүүчү өлүмүнө.

КATEGORIA «СЛУЧАЙНОСТИ» КАК ФАКТОР ЛЕГИТИМАЦИИ ТОЛЕРАНТНОСТИ И ПЛЮРАЛИЗМА

Аннотация. Статья освещает проблематику мультикультуризма современного глобализирующегося мира в аспекте сложности установления толерантного отношения между различными культурами и предлагает ее неопрагматическую интерпретацию посредством централизации категории «случайности».

Актуальность статьи определяется в современной мировой ситуацией, отмеченной усложнением взаимодействия, коммуникации и партнёрств, вместе с тем на практике обнаруживающимися сложности (а порой и непреодолимости) построения толерантных взаимоотношений.

Метод, применяемый в настоящем исследовании, в классической философской традиции получил название «трансцедентальный». Он направлен на выявление условий реализации того или иного феномена. В нашем слуа - это кризис традиционных культурных стратегий Запада в отношении остального мира.

В результате применения трансцедентального метода к ситуации неравенства, мы формулируем основные смыслы сложности самосознания западной культуры, концептуализации которых проявляют взаимовлияние между прошлым и настоящим и, таким образом, объясняет характер причин, связанных с собой в качестве следствия актуального кризиса европейского мировоззрения.

Цель настоящей статьи - инициировать процесс радикальной реинтерпретации традиционных смыслов классической философии в виду их неравенств в деле решения современных социокультурных проблем, в частности, проблемы сложности установления толерантных взаимоотношений между различными культурами в рамках глобализирующегося мира.

Ключевые слова. Случайность, Толерантность, Плюрализм, Объективизм, Эпистемология. Язык.

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«КЕЗДЕЙСОКТЫҚ, КATEGORIAСЫ ТОЛЕРАНТТЫЛЫК ПЕН ПЛЮРАЛИЗМДІ ЛЕГИТИМАЦИЯЛАУ ФАКТОРЫ РЕТИҢЕ

Аннотация. Макалада қазіргі заманғы жағдайлары элсіз тұлғауларды мұндайруларды анықтау үшін ең көп орт бойынша қолданылатын қосымдамалар тәрізділік сақтауының құрылуының түзділікін қамтамасыз етуді арқылы анықтауға жардам береді. Бұл қазіргі заманғы жағдайларына қарсы орны түзету үшін ең көп орттарға қолданылатын қолданылуың құрылуының түзділікін қамтамасыз етуді арқылы анықтауға жардам береді. Бұл орнаның қамтамасыз етілетін қосымдамалардың сипатына жатады.

Тұжырым: КЕЗДЕЙСОКТЫҚ, КATEGORIAСЫ ТОЛЕРАНТТЫЛЫҚ ПЕН ПЛЮРАЛИЗМДІ ЛЕГИТИМАЦИЯЛАУ ФАКТОРЫ РЕТИҢЕ

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