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OF POSTMODERNITY: MICROCOSM VS MACROCOSM
AND THE “INBETWEEN MAN”

Abstract

The ambivalence of meanings in the postmodern theories accentuates the hermeneutic interpretation of concepts: the new “cosmic meanings” have changed the world picture in quite a revolutionary way. Though the views on postmodernism are contradictory, of principle importance is the idea that there are some valid “inventions”, which have given meaning to this term; in politics, it is the rise of neoliberalism and libertarianism. Thus, the paper aims to research the interrelation of the “inner” logic of the “free individual”, his/her micro-and macrocosm in libertarianism with the external political transformations and ideological discourses of postmodernity. The research results show that science and arts allow focusing on the interpretation of the consequences of those phenomena, which are going on at the level of the “political unconscious”. The theorists insist on rethinking the categories of libertarianism: the included concepts are challenging to combine in the principle of the domination of liberty. The focus on libertarianism stipulates the novelty of the research as the postmodern feature, which provides validity to the term “late postmodernism”. The new cosmology of the third millennium gives the possibility to use the term “cosmological postmodernism”.

Keywords: hermeneutics, conceptual ambivalence, cosmological postmodernism, individuation, liberty, reconceptualization.

Introduction

The Renaissance of the recent scientific interest to the concepts of the classical philosophy and the constructs of the modern political theory in the research of the world's transformations and the Human Being in them represents the conceptual approaches that accentuate the phenomena of individuation, non-structuralism, the normalization of unprecedented change, in general; the permanent postparadigmatic transformations in all the processes mentioned above with their incompatible contradictions, which form the “human sense” of history. There is the Human Being – always at the point of intersection of the

natural and the cosmic, the corporal and the spiritual, the rational and the irrational. Nowadays, the stage of “form destruction” (Zygmunt Bauman) increases the ambivalence of the theories, which dynamically change one another, and the latter inevitably leads to the problematization of the meanings and concepts in the “Theory”. The postmodern philosophers, by definition, work in the interdisciplinary theoretical field (psychoanalysis, feminist and gender studies, theology, political sciences, etc.) Considering the “troubles” of the new world order, the most authoritative “high profile” postmodern scientists put ideology and its influence on the various cultural, social and political discursive practices in the

focus of their research (Zizek, 2019). The loss of faith in the eternal classical concepts of the human microcosm and macrocosm is considered to be the outcome of the utilitarian expansion both in practices of consumerism and the ideological tendencies of neoliberalism addressing the Utopian criticism of the market. Fredric Jameson (2009) writes that the culture of consumption is an internal machine from which one does not escape by the taking of thought (or moralizing positions) (p. 206).

The postmodern research of the interpretation in the conceptual field of hermeneutics is stipulated in this paper both by the problem of the conceptual ambivalence in the postmodern theories and the increasing significance of hermeneutics not only in the fundamental metaphysical issues but also in the political theories connected with actualizing the political history and the identity of the postmodern actor (man or woman), their relations with the world in all the diversity of the multiple phenomena of life in the internal microcosm and the external macrocosm of the individual attitude to the society and state. The latter is represented not only in the research of theorists but also in the public activities of some “top-level” politicians. Here the fact that the discourses and discursive practices suggest the possibility of different interpretations of the concepts and ideas allows to attempt reconceptualization of some key notions of the political philosophy, with the special interest to the concepts and practices of libertarianism; the conflict of the individual freedom and the state rights, anarchy and stability, Utopia and reality. Problematization of the political metanarratives of modernity in their postmodern interpretations focuses on the present social, cultural, economic and political conditions in their coordination with the “old school” philosophic conceptions and theories.

Libertarianism as a Grand Finale of the Classical Cosmological “Philosophy of Ordo”

Jerome Drexler (2008) enumerating discover-

ies of postmodern cosmology, which influenced the postmodern human greatly, puts stress on Dark Matter, Cosmic Web, Big Bang, Inflation, Cosmic Rays, Dark Energy, and Accelerating Cosmos. Still, human beings belong to the domains of philosophy and psychology; as a living being, he/she belongs to the problematic field of biology in his/her evolution. Man is a subject of paleontologists, and, of course, people as artists or God believers are under analysis in the literary articism, history of arts and theology. “But what on earth is a physicist doing in this company since man is not his special field of research?” asks Jean Charon (2012). Moreover, most physicists admit that what we know today is likely to be revised significantly in the future. Society, however, does not thrive on uncertainty (St. Claire, 2017). All attempts at theorizing social life, culture or the spheres of politics prove to be so primarily problematic because it is challenging to move from the deconstructive mode to the constructive one. Moreover, here, the fact that science, which traditionally is in the field of constant and ever-going scepticism, always promising a kind of nihilism is of great significance. Furthermore, namely, this, according to William Simon (1996), explains why its history of triumphs is also a chronicle of what was originally viewed as dangerous and demoralizing heresies (p. 10).

Libertarianism, with its etymologically folklore slogan “Live and let live”, is a comparatively new term, which entered the sociocultural discourse during the last decades of the 20th century. However, its theory, closely connected with the liberal ideas of Lock, Hume, Smith and Kant, is rooted in the XVIII century. As a rule, scientists do not argue that libertarianism is an heir to the XIX century classical liberalism. In its most general meaning, libertarianism represents a definite and straightforward in its sense conception: people should be treated as autonomous individuals free to make their own decisions regarding how to live their own lives and how to determine their salvation without constrains in their wishes and

actions (Hamowy, 2008, p. 21).

Peter Vallentyne, the author of the corresponding article in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, stresses: for libertarians of great importance is the value of individual freedom, their aim is formulated as justification of the powerful protection for individual liberty, they insist on stringent limits to coercion, putting the stress on the idea that people cannot be coerced to serve the overall good of society or state. If the man is forced to do anything that violates the rights of other people, he/she cannot serve the good either of society or of their own interests. As a result, libertarians endorse and support solid individual liberty in its various forms: rights for private property, rights to defend civil liberties, equal rights for homosexuals, they endorse drug decriminalization, open borders, etc. (Vallentyne, 2001). As Jason Brennan puts it, libertarianism celebrates the ideal of peaceful cooperation among free and equal people, and its doctrine includes the idea that the rich always capture political power. That is why libertarians proclaim their wish to minimize the power of the rich to protect the weak and the poor. Brennan maintains that most contemporary libertarians have changed the former actualization of the concept of equality. Now many of them are followers of Ayn Rand, her ideas and ideals, artistically presented in her famous novel "Atlas Shrugged" (1957). Jason Brennan (2012) is sure that contemporary libertarianism is a system of thought when it includes such aspects as the value of liberty, human nature and ethics, economic freedom, government and democracy, etc.

The radical anarchist libertarianism denies even the minimal possible coercive state action in the "soft-core" libertarianism "the small state replaces anarchy or the minimal state as the object of ideological advocacy". Thus "libertarianism shades into classical liberalism" (Mack, 2018, p. 3).

In the aspects of the analysis of libertarianism as the continuation of classical liberal concepts, it seems proper to recollect Jameson's words con-

cerning the relations between liberalism and radicalism. The famous postmodernist stresses Michaels' thought that "the critics today who imagine themselves to be radicals are nothing more than liberals, in all the weak and "handwriting" senses of that word" (Jameson, 2009, p. 204). Putting the focus on the necessity of the definite border between radicalism and liberalism, Fredric Jameson continues: the liberal view is generally characterized by the belief that the "system is not really total in that sense, that we can ameliorate it, reorganize it, and regulate it in such a way that it becomes tolerable and we thereby have the best of both worlds" (Jameson, 2009, p. 207). Fredric Jameson is sure that this kind of solution – "nothing in excess" – in fact, can be determined either by the "phantasm" of Plato or the puritanical ethics of suppression. On the other hand, it is worth noting that libertarianism is often analyzed in its close links with conservatism (Brennan, 2012).

The ideology of conservatism is known to be based on the concept of social inequality as its norm. The denial of the state intrusion into the social policy, namely the latter is called by some scientists as libertarianism (Seresova, 2007). In this context, it is worth mentioning that in Petrov's institutional theory, there are two important theses: the understanding of the state as the supreme level of the society development is simply non-moral from the normative side, and from the economic side, the theory of state should be substituted by the theory of bureaucracy, which was developed in the theories of Marx, Petrov, North and others (Konstantinov, 2007, pp. 36-37).

The Ukrainian researcher Mykola Bulatevych in his analysis of the concepts and peculiarities of the civil society functioning, follows Alexander's presumption according to which any civil society is a structural element of the "contemporary society", different from its two other structural elements – economy and state. Each sphere is an autonomous one, developing under its inner logic. On the one hand, economy, state and civil

society counteract one another; on the other hand, they supplement one another in their functions. Thus they stabilize one another and form the “system frame” of contemporary society (Bulatevych, 2019, p. 63).

Generally speaking, at the beginning of the XXI century, in the philosophic and political discourses, the problems of the state and the state systems have been advanced in the theoretical debates. The struggle for “correct” understanding the political conceptions and perceptions is focused on the issues of spreading the resources (financial, intellectual, administrative ones). In the scientists’ opinion, this situation can lead the societies to such disagreement concerning “the values”, which in the final analysis may result in the disruption and ruin of the “state system” as a concept, though in the other case – in the consolidation of the population who share the same fundamental values (Yurchenko, 2007, p. 212). While analyzing the discursive constructs of politics, the researchers claim that, in this very context, it is possible to determine which ideas have been rejected or kept and derived from the historical oblivion (Yurchenko, 2007, p. 215). The accentualization of the libertarian concepts is no doubt belongs to the latter case. It is standard political and philosophical knowledge that in the Antique and Middle Ages philosophy, the ideal state organism was represented by the idea of “Ordo”, given by God as the basic principle of the world/cosmic organization. As for the Renaissance, the burghers are considered to be transformed into the bourgeoisie, which according to Marx’ theory, represented the ideology of the whole nation (Marx & Engels, 1972). Though the “Ordo” had been rejected, Thomas Hobbes, in his “Leviathan”, concerning the structure of the state and society, argued for the rule by an absolute sovereign. It is known by all “students of political philosophy” as an axiom that the war of all against all could only be avoided by undivided government. Furthermore, the theme of the political subject is evident here as one of the most important issues of political

philosophy. Thus, it is not “by chance” that the problems of libertarianism are explicitly or implicitly touched upon in contemporary scientific papers. The political subject is treated as an actor – making solutions and acting in accordance with his/her interests and values (Aksjonova, 2008).

It is worth stressing that this kind of socio-cultural and political vision is steadily being introduced in the philosophic and socio-cultural discourses. In our opinion, the latter is connected with the postmodern transformations of liberalism in its neoliberal version. As Matthew Eagleton-Pierce writes, the key concepts of liberalism have been recently transformed in a global scale, and this term has become not only popular but also somewhat problematic in terms of the neoliberal discourse, its concepts and constructs. According to Matthew Eagleton-Pierce, the same happens with the adjective “neoliberal”, which is used nowadays in the definitions of states, markets, projects, discourses, nationalities, approaches and methods, values and cultures. In his commentary of this “linguistic turn”, the researcher writes that it is often absolutely unclear what makes this or that idea or practice “neoliberal” because in its potential, the term covers everything and anything; in general, it is a label for defining those changes which have been taken place in capitalism since the 80s of the last century. In this context, it is significant to stress Eagleton’s formulation of this idea: neoliberal practices will always be hybrid creations (Eagleton-Pierce, 2016, p. 18). It is obvious that at present, they are effectively being hybridized with the libertarian theoretical approaches and practices.

Postmodernism and the Hermeneutic Interpretation of the “Theories of Everything”

The ambivalent and polysemantic nature of many postmodern concepts, while expanding the problematic field of heterogeneity and vagueness

of the scientific ideas, underlines the impossibility of comparing concepts and thoughts which substitute one another in the dynamics of the unstable systems of the postmodern political philosophy. Decoding the definitions, which are often synonyms, on the whole, decoding the discourse of the postmodern philosophy is, by all means, the problem, which has been under analyses for at least the last 40 years. In his definition of the language of philosophy, Jacques Derrida raised questions about whether it is a “natural” language, the family of such languages, or it is rather a formal code. Though those questions have an old history, notes Jacques Derrida (2012), in the postmodern period, they have become dominating and fixed (p. 207).

Postmodern scientists have been actively using the term “metalanguage” as a technical language devised to describe the properties of ordinary language (deconstruction, poststructuralism, narratology, language personality, etc.). It is an interesting fact that Ludwig Wittgenstein had already come up against the limits of logic in such terms as “metalanguage” in the 20s of the last century (Appignanesi & Garratt, 2006, p. 76). The example mentioned above vividly represents the extent to which postmodern thought is closely linked with the constantly occurring in postmodernism the “trouble” of the words meanings and their senses. For us of principal importance is the difference between “sense” and “meaning” rooted in the works of Gottlob Frege (2012).

Mikhail Bakhtin (1971) asserts that even born in the “dialogues of the past centuries”, senses have never been stable, and they are not stable and final at present because they have been changing and are changed in the processes of dialogues of the time and the nationalities (pp. 381-393, 429-432). Jacques Derrida (2007), connecting sense and discourse, writes that sense of “the sense”, dialectics of emotions and senses, feelings and comprehension have always been taken together with the possibility of the discursive meaning (p. 415). The discourse is critical

because it launches the communicative mechanisms, which operate in culture; the sense that the discourse creates is determined by the term “concept”. The structure of the concept is similar to the cultural system. The culture and the concept are invariants. Both verbal and nonverbal concepts are invariants that represents not the meaning but the sense of the corresponding names (Frege, Bakhtin, Shannon, Wiener, and others). In their famous book “*Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*” Deleuze Gilles and Guattari Felix maintain that there are no “simple concepts”, because in any concept there is always a component that determines it. Any concept needs not only a problem, for the sake of which it is reorganized, or it changes the former concepts, but the whole “crossing” of the problems, where it is connected with other existing concepts (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 24).

In human society, concepts are so significant because they, to great degree, make the process of communication possible. Furthermore, again, if we address Bakhtin’s (1979) philosophic model in communication, “the dialogue” and the “dialogue relations” play a crucial role. But the postmodern problem is that the possibility of dialogues is embarrassed because of the key postmodernist notion – the concept of the hermeneutic interpretation. Richard Appignanesi and Chris Garratt claim that the postmodernism that was shaped in the late 1970s might have been treated as a “European academic fad”, but for some successful developments in science and politics, among which they enumerate global cyberspace, the new cosmology and its aim – The Theory of Everything, the Human Genome Project, Neo-Conservatism, and the complete triumph of a free market (Appignanesi & Garratt, 2006, p. 107). With all due respect and following the ideas of some other scientists, we insist on adding to this list the “Hermeneutic Turn” and the unprecedented accent on libertarianism in its version, modified in the second decade of the XXI century. As for hermeneutics, Caputo maintains that “the one word that I think best sums up

the postmodern turn is “hermeneutics”, which means the theory of interpretation. I treat hermeneutics as the key to the postmodern mutation in the idea of truth” (Caputo, 2013, p. 200). In postmodernism, all concepts can be subjected to interpretation, both the moral ones: the good, the evil, the beauty, the ugliness, the truth, the false; and the cosmological ones: “The Big Bang is just somebody’s opinion, while the Baptists out in Kansas City have their own opinion called Creationism which is just as good” (Caputo, 2013, p. 201). Of course, any interpretation is put in some “frame” (using sociology language), however, we prefer the term “context”, which is surely one of the main philosophic and linguistic notions in postmodernism. We absolutely support the idea of many postmodern theorists: everything is ever determined by context. We cannot “translate” whatever properly without the context, situation and background information. Here arises one of the most significant postmodern notions – the concept of recontextualization. The scientists use the terms “cosmological” and “poststructuralist” postmodernism (Keller & Daniel, 2002). Keller Catherine and Daniel Anne claim that reconstructive postmodern thought supports the ethnic, ecological, feminist and other current emancipatory movements. However, from the point of view of postmodern deconstruction, the reconstructive postmodernism might seem rooted in the outdated concepts of selfhood, historical meaning, reason, and truth, which were central in the concepts of the good, the cosmic meaning, and the enhanced nature. In this project of “revisionary postmodernism”, the reconstruction involves a creative synthesis of modern and postmodern concepts of “truths”. This understanding combined with the growing comprehension of the interdependence of the modern world view with the militarism, nuclearism, patriarchy, global apartheid, ecological devastating of the world provides a great impetus for people to see the evidence of views and to envisage postmodern ways of relating to each other – the rest of nature and the cosmos as a whole

(Keller& Daniel, 2002, pp. 10-11). The idea, which is essential in the context of this article, is explicitly an interpretive one: no appeal to “universal truths” should reconcile the postmodern man/woman with the present order. Going beyond modernity has involved transcending in individualism/ individuation. It has completely changed human behaviour (both biologically and socially), has rebuilt psychic scripts of macro- and micro-cosms against the background of unprecedented internal and external circumstances of choice, pluralism and overall complexity.

Transformations of Libertarianism in the “Late” Postmodernism

The term “libertarianism” is considered to belong to the French libertarian of the anarchism communism wing Joseph Dejacque (1821-1864), who coined it in a letter to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in 1857. In this letter, he criticized Pierre-Joseph Proudhon for his sexist’s views concerning women and his support for private property for production and market economy. It is worth noting that in the “title list” of the most famous anarchist there is Bakunin, thanks to whom the Russian anarchism supplemented the theory of European anarchism with two conceptions, which connected anarchism with socialism/communism: the idea of the collective property for the means of production and the statement of the social revolution as a condition for the realization of the anarchist ideas. Mark Leier points out that Mikhail Bakunin is of keen interest in the XXI century, though the attention paid to him does not clarify his personality or his thoughts; on the opposite, it obscures Mikhail Bakunin’s ideas. The researcher of anarchism and the writer of Bakunin’s biography states that certainly, Mikhail Bakunin was not a pacifist, but he was not a mad bomber or assassin. That sort of violence has been typically the prerogative of the state: “Two world wars, the Holocaust, Communist purges and famines, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Iraq, Afghanistan, Rwanda, East Timur, Kosovo,

Chechnya and four wars for Middle East oil since 1948 should remind us that it is not anarchists who are primarily responsible for terror and violence in the world” (Leier & Bakunin, 2009, p. 3).

Petr Kropotkin, the famous philosopher of anarchism, considered the theory of anarchism as the logical outcome of those liberal and ethic teachings, which were rooted in the principle of the complete removal of the state functions and extension of the autonomy of the moral personality. Many conceptions of the Russian anarchism – in Kropotkin’s thoughts first of all – have not lost their significance yet. Among them, the idea of communal governing based on high moral standards is of great importance in our time of “tectonic shifts”. Kropotkin (1991) focused on the communication of people as the “progress engine”, he stressed the “golden rule” of all the world’s main religions, he wrote that equality in everything was a synonym of justice, and the definition of anarchism (p. 300).

A hundred years later, the American “classical” liberals appropriated the term “libertarianism” for denoting their conceptions which claimed that an individual had rights to acquire, keep and exchange their property; as for the government, its main task was to protect those rights.

At the beginning of the XXI century, the main debates are focused on philosophic concepts of the “left-libertarians”, who, opposed to the “right libertarians”, assert that the natural resources also are the property of the individuals – members of the community, because of the principle of justice. Thus, they can be nationalized only in case of an individual’s permission or corresponding financial compensation (Vallentyne, 2001). At present, among the themes under the analysis of special attention is the problem of the personal right for the natural resources, autonomous property, natural rights and just distribution, world’s property and justice, “corporal” right as “self-property”, parents’ rights, etc. It is necessary to stress that not only left-libertarians, but the right-wing ones advocate the idea of the

right of rational agents for the “complete governing” of their property. Among them, it is worth mentioning the issues of social funds, taxes, rents and such like. Many theorists are of the opinion that left-libertarianism is a form of liberal egalitarianism (Vallentyne, 2001, p. 15). Left Libertarianism has been becoming stronger recently, not only in its economic version but also in the philosophic and political theories. It is represented in many discourses, and the fiction included: Ayn Rand’s novel “Atlas Shrugged” has produced a great impact on the West world readers, and its main idea is represented now as the classical assertion of the political basis of the civilization.

Contemporary libertarian thinkers are demonstrating in their research the defeat of the state and markets in many spheres: private freedom, education, inflation, monopolies’ influence, environment protection, in politics and the police, in courts and the “law”. Murray Rothbard (2006) accentuates that any state which is an aggressor concerning foreign policy does not support freedom in its own country. The scientists put out that the real “benefits” in the state regulation conditions have been kept by the most powerful corporations, which in every case and everywhere, “lead the game on their own field”. In their integration of the libertarian concepts in the analytical theory, such influential scientists as Murray Rothbard claim that political, social, and cultural discourses always interpret world ideas and events intending to form systems of their definite perception and corresponding comprehension. The discourses are selective in choosing the “material”, which matches the traditional matrix of the civil contract theory set by the Western classical philosophy.

Conclusion

The ambivalent and polysemantic nature of many postmodern concepts while expanding the problematic field of heterogeneity and vagueness of the scientific ideas stresses the impossibility of

comparing concepts and thoughts, which substitute one another in the dynamics of the unstable systems of the postmodern “Theory”. The “trouble” of senses, meanings and discourses, which are extremely ambivalent now, is being aggravated with the theories of the new cosmology, which, having changed both the micro-and macrocosm of the postmodern individual, make the possibility of the “harmony” and “equality” in the psychological, political and cultural ways rather embarrassed. The influence of the idea of uncertainty of absolute concepts in postmodernism and their ability and capability to be interpreted by whoever and anywhere adds to understanding the processes under analysis being unsafe or even dangerous both for individuals and the states. These global “tectonic shifts” make the concept of postmodern libertarianism develop in the pragmatic and economic field of the freedom of an individual – a monopolist, billionaire, the “captain” of the late capitalism. The “soft” libertarianism appeal for the transitional period is not supported in the current libertarian movement. Escaping the conflict in the political processes, based on the concept of absolute individual liberty, is considered to be extremely difficult. Thus, the idea of the harmony of the free society represents Utopian thinking, especially under the conditions of postmodernity with its postparadigmatic model of development, its peculiarities of uncertainty and incompatibility.

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