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POST-TRUTH AND CRITICAL THINKING: IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN EDUCATION

Summary. The article is devoted to the consideration of ideological transformations of worldview knowledge, directly related to the functioning of the public imagination and the formation of both group and individual identity. The comprehension of socio-cultural dynamics related to the situation of post-truth and the implementation of guidelines, strategies, techniques, practices and methodologies of critical thinking in the field of education are also considered. **The aim** of the article is to consider the phenomenon of post-truth in the modern information field in relation to the concept of critical thinking and their explications in the social institution of education. The main attention is paid to the philosophical understanding of these phenomena in the context of philosophical and anthropological measurement of trends in the socio-communicative sphere of human existence. **Methodological principles** are the philosophy of information, the development of the paradigm of transhumanism, the search for modern world theory and practice, social philosophy. The article considers the essential preconditions and consequences for the humanitarian sphere in general and education in particular the current state of affairs with insufficient philosophical articulation of the concepts of post-truth and critical thinking. **Scientific novelty.** The article proves the ambivalent nature of the correlation between the phenomenon of post-truth and the concept of critical thinking on the occasion of the social institution of education and the sphere of social imagination. **Conclusions.** Critical thinking, based solely on skepticism, has been found to function as a precondition and a meaning-destroying element of post-truth as a theoretical construct and cognitive mechanism. The threat of dehumanization of the problem field of modern humanities outside the actualization of symbolic and axiological bases of human identity, which is relevant for both scientific discourse and education, is emphasized. Emphasis is placed on the need for a humanistic reinterpretation of critical human thinking, expressed in its social activity, identity acquisition and self-actualization.

Key words: post-truth, critical thinking, self-actualization, identity, social activity, self-education, education.

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ПОСТПРАВДА ТА КРИТИЧНЕ МИСЛЕННЯ: ІДЕОЛОГІЧНІ ІМПЛІКАЦІЇ В ОСВІТІ

Анотація. Статтю присвячено розгляду ідеологічних трансформацій світоглядного знання, безпосередньо пов'язаних із функціонуванням суспільної уяви та формуванням як групової, так і індивідуальної ідентичності людини, а також осмисленню соціокультурної динаміки, пов'язаної з постанням ситуації постправди та впровадженням настанов, стратегій, технік, практик і методології критичного мислення в царині освіти. **Метою статті** є розгляд феномену постправди в сучасному інформаційному полі у взаємозв'язку з концепцією критичного мислення та їх експлікаціями в соціальному інституті освіти. Основну увагу приділено філософському осмисленню зазначених феноменів у контексті філософсько-антропологічного виміру тенденцій розвитку соціально-комунікативної сфери існування людини. **Методологічними засадами** є філософія інформації, розвиток парадигми трансгуманізму, пошуки сучасної освітньої теорії та практики, соціальної філософії. У статті розглянуто сутнісні передумови і наслідки для гуманітарної сфери загалом і освіти зокрема наявного стану речей з недостатньою філософською артикульованістю понять постправди і критичного мислення. **Наукова новизна.** У статті доведено амбівалентний характер кореляції між феноменом постправди та концепцією критичного мислення принагідно до соціального інституту освіти та сфери соціальної уяви. **Висновки.** З'ясовано, що критичне мислення, оперте лише на настанову скептицизму, функціонує як передумова та смислодеструктивний елемент постправди як теоретичної конструкції та когнітивного механізму. Підкреслено загрозу дегуманізації проблемного поля сучасної гуманітаристики поза актуалізацією символічних та аксіологічних підстав людської ідентичності, що є актуальним як для наукового дискурсу, так і для сфери освіти. Наголошено на необхідності гуманістичної реінтерпретації критичного мислення людини, експлікованого в її соціальній активності, набутті ідентичності та самоактуалізації.

Ключові слова: постправа, критичне мислення, самоактуалізація, ідентичність, соціальна активність, самовиховання, освіта.

Urgency of the problem. This research was prompted, firstly, by the unconscious and, accordingly, unthought nature of social dynamics associated with the post-truth situation in conservative, in their nature, educational social communities and, secondly, by the ideological transformations of world-view knowledge directly connected with the functioning of public imagination and the formation of both group and individual identities. The transformations of humanitarian reflections in connection with the emerging phenomena of information and hybrid wars are also relevant in this context. "Such a situation is also complicated by the specific rigidity, inflexibility of the basic epistemological model of constructing information in a digital environment and its reception by a person, say, from the Internet" (Marchenko O., Kretov P., 2019, p. 205). It also seems important to create a paradoxical situation at which the implementation of techniques, methodologies, and attitudes of critical thinking into educational practices and technologies of strategy enhance and sharpen the destruction of the semantic foundations of the world's picture, based primarily on intellectual channels of digital communications.

The purpose of the article is to consider the correlation of the post-truth phenomenon in public and individual consciousness and the concept

of critical thinking in the field of education. Education in this is considered not only as a social institution but as a universal communicative space in which the formation and transformation of value orientations systems, behavioral models, ideological constructions and the world picture (M. Heidegger) take place altogether.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Taking as a starting point the thesis that after the 2015 year in the economic-social segment of civilization there are already only "big data" (Gartner's, 2015), as well as after the recognition of *the post-truth* lexeme by the *Oxford Dictionary* in 2016 and world information campaigns connected with hybrid manipulative practices in the social and political spheres, we must admit the boundary problematization of the concept of reality in the world, created by contemporary information and communication technologies. If the Internet and global social networks make a media-communication platform of a total nature, taking on not only the functions of informing people and communities but also creating a specific space and forms in existence of information, then the post-truth phenomenon is increasingly global in scale since it can supplant traditional forms of existence and exchange of information in the human world. The information space, in which the boundaries between the message

and the fake coherent to reality are critically blurred, loses criterion determinability and acquires a critically larger number of links between parts of the whole, generating a conceptual reality that is derivative from information one, which boundary problematizes the subjectivity of the recipient.

The post-truth era raises the post-fake era. Such rhizomatic structure, due to the prevalence of conditionally horizontal, explicated in the digital communication space links between the recipient as a cognitive agent and impersonal sources of targeted information over conditionally vertical, covering the information reception and comprehension, obtained in the process of direct interpersonal communication and experience of involvement into social groups of various degree of generality, stipulates the emergence of the ideal situation to activate ideological influences as soft power (J. Nye) through digital information environment (One Internet, 2016). It seems, the idea concerning simply adapting to the standards of Western democracy created by global communication platforms of “ungoverned space” is too optimistic. T. Owen writes:

Platform companies began as tools to help us navigate the digital world and to connect us with our friends and family. These companies are now auto manufacturers, global advertising companies, telecoms, the central distribution channel of the free press and, critically, are absorbing many of the functions once delegated to democratic governments. We simply must bring them into the spirit and norms of our systems of collective governance. Doing so will require moving beyond a strategy that treats the symptoms of how these platforms negatively impact society and instead focus clearly and urgently on the structural causes of these problems. (Owen T., 2018).

Note that with this consideration, the phenomenon of post-truth cannot be interpreted only as a derivative epiphenomenon, a necessary component for the technological progress of mankind in general and “digital communication” (P. Watzlawick) in particular. None of the existing versions of the contemporary philosophy of information as a direction views the post-truth situation as critical and such that casts doubt on the very production of the meaning and man’s vision about the social and cultural dimension of his/her life. Rather, it is about optimizing the existing ways of people interacting in the digital communication space and in the “man – computer – man” system.

In fact, post-truth and politics associated with it are defined as those which, through the accentuation of the emotional-existential sphere of a person in information messages and the appeal to emotions and personal beliefs, usually not based on facts, form such public opinion that does not directly correlate with actual reality and it is its tendentious

manipulative interpretation or complete denial in the possibility of the existence of truth adequate to the facts. It is significant that MIT Press, Essential Knowledge series put out the work “*Post-Truth*” by Lee McIntyre (McIntyre L., 2018), which claims to have a holistic understanding of this problem as a common and recognized by scientific communities. The author dismisses the emergence of the post-truth of the postmodern paradigm in philosophy and humanitarian knowledge. But if we consider this phenomenon as immanent to human culture and the socio-political conditions for the formation of civilization, one can assume that post-truth has always been present in the Western tradition. If we derive the post-truth phenomenon from the very nature of the “wisdom of the West” (B. Russell), appealing to individualism as the basis of anthropocentrism in the ancient tradition, then the very possibility of more than one interpretation of the same group of facts is rooted in the fundamental concept of the subject, sub cognition, experience and understanding of reality. It is significant that if we consider the post-truth phenomenon in the context of the collision of tendencies in modern “metaphysics of presence” and postmodern, deconstructing the conceptual structure of social imagination “philosophy of difference” (in J. Derrida’s terms), they are paradoxically in tune since from different points of view they problematize the subjectivity of the speaker and the recipient of linguistic description of reality as a picture of the world.

Presentation of the main research material.

Enlightenment epistemological and axiological apology of the logo-phono-centric Reason of I. Kant, expressed from different points of view to the critical reflection of L. Wittgenstein and M. Heidegger, has transformed into a Foucault-Lyotard-Deleuze’s dispersed narratives and discourses of the power in post-structuralism and post-Marxist critique of cynical reason (P. Sloterdijk) and the sublime object of ideology (S. Žižek). The facts, presented by reason, are deprived of legitimacy and pragmatic effectiveness in the sphere of social communication, and they are only as a building material and a fueler for post-truth. At present, this problematique is actualized in such contemporary philosophical explications of social conceptions about reality as narrative ontology, object-oriented ontology, enactivism, symbolic anthropology, the tradition of dialogical philosophy. But when we are talking about the post-truth of the 21st century, this phenomenon presupposes, first of all, not epistemological and not ontological, but a political context. It is about transformation in forms of human interaction with the world related to the development of information and communication technologies when the sphere of social impersonal “digital communication” absorbs or significantly

limits the traditional interpersonal one. Of course, the concepts of “the war of languages” (R. Barthes), “differentiation” as a set of individual phrase modes that form a “grand narrative” and at the same time confront it (J.-F. Lyotard), “the conflict of interpretations” (P. Ricoeur), actor-network theory (B. Latour), finally the death of the subject (M. Foucault), like traditions of post-structuralism and constructivism in general influenced the emergence of the post-truth phenomenon. But its existence as a mechanism for the destruction of meaning, the devaluation of the valuable bases of information and knowledge about the world and related subjectivity, activism, identity and self-positioning of a man in the informative civilization is primarily associated with the practical aspect of the socio-political dimension of human life and directly with the sphere of ideology. Within the framework of the political discourse, which, due to information and communication technologies occupies an increasing percentage of the information field, the fact is connected with the meaning, but the meaning is regulated, that is, its reception can be foreseen and embedded as part into a certain entire worldview.

The deideologization program (R. Aron), connected with the concepts of multiculturalism and multipolarity of the world, is changing in the information field with the ideology of the total latent presence of politics. Therefore, the post-truth phenomenon testifies not to the irrationality of populism and the irresponsibility of politicians, but rather to an effective mechanism for manipulating of individual and group consciousness and public opinion. Post-truth, then, gives a person a comfortable opportunity to avoid the fear of dependence on the enslaving semantic whole, to focus on being free from responsibility for one’s own meaning-making, for oneself and one’s identity in a situation of uncertainty, that is, understanding of facts and consequences, decisions and actions is replaced within this mechanism by either an emotionally comfortable illusion of anarchist “freedom from everything” associated with the sphere of cognitive and responsibility, or sociopolitical apathy, indifference as a consequence of the imagined deprivation the very possibility of a meaningful true and non-repressive policy. The problematization in the notion of truth exacerbates the collisions intrinsic to democracy between conflict and consensus, the representativeness and control of communities, the coherence and efficiency of government. When it comes to protecting against manipulative technologies based on the post-truth phenomenon, researchers are appealing to a strategy of understanding (Kirkpatrick A., 2017), changes in forms of verbal behavior in social networks (Tsipursky G., Votta F., & Roose K. M., 2018), media literacy formation (Spratt H.E., Agosto D.E., 2017), responsibility and skepticism (McIntyre L., 2018).

Obviously, to smooth out the influence of digital communication in general and the post-truth phenomenon caused by the practices of using the fake news in particular, at the level of the instrumental reason, it is almost impossible without cultivation of total distrust of the recipient of information, which in turn is one of the tasks of war for consciousness. Ch. Taylor wrote:

The instrumental stanes involves our objectifying nature, which means...that we see it as a neutral order of things. That is no facts about how things stand in this order amount to a consideration by itself in favour of one or other definition of the good life but only, if at all, in combination with some value premiss drawn from elsewhere (Taylor Ch., 1989, p. 383).

Currently, the newest metatopic space is being formed, which is communicative one and it is formed by a common understanding, without being reduced to it. Unlike the modern space, the contemporary one in the post-truth existence is also based on the principle of depersonalized information within the digital communication space, which involves not only interpersonal communication but also the accurate tracking of the source and origin of the information. Fake news anonymity for the average consumer of information is securely protected by algorithms of technologies of their introduction. Technologies that allow generating the simulated audiovisual content, which is virtually indistinguishable from deepfake without special hardware and software, have made it boundary difficult to verify the congruence of factual reality and its representation in the media dimension of human sociality. To resist the emotional-affective influence of the post-truth information space, grounded on the use of relevant symbolism solely in the sphere of cognitive is hardly effective. Post-truth is paradoxically manipulating the man through man himself, from the inside, on the prelogical and preverbal plane of immanence (G. Deleuze), appealing to emotional resistance to formulated value systems as repressive, rather than through the external imposition of standard ideological clichés and stereotypes, how this happens in the case of propaganda.

The informational entropy of post-truth can be contrasted with value and motivation systems that will function as a meta-ideology that unites people with diverse views. The actualization of the specificity of religious knowledge as existential is relevant in this aspect. Ks. Karol Jasiński notes: “The religious truth thus relates to the whole man. It touches the very beginning and the source of his identity. It includes a human being who is fully immersed in it somehow” (Jasiński K., 2015, p. 32). In the era of digital communication technologies, the essence of truths of faith, religious truth and knowledge as holistic, existentially and axiologically rooted in paradoxical manner is an effective means to counter the post-truth

technologies rather than pure factuality and the simplistic positivist scientific picture of the world.

Therefore, despite the importance of the philosophical aspects of the post-truth phenomenon in direct and immediate response, its practical consequences in the sphere of mass consciousness, the formation of public opinion and one of the leading social institutions implementing and providing them is education.

Within the social institute of education, the post-truth phenomenon can lead to the following critical destabilizing shifts: a) loss of trust in communication between the participants of the institute, for example, between teachers and students, inspired not by internal causes and processes, but by external influence, information attacks and depersonalized skepticism, suggestion of social cynicism and despondency; b) formation of a specific mode of reception in humanitarian knowledge as fundamentally conditional, optional, ineffective one. At the same time, the resistance to the existing social roles and receptions of the symbolic series in the generally accepted ideological discourse is intensified in parallel with the formation of skeptical attitude and false stereotypes and clichés (for example, regarding the prerogative for the truth of news and information from the virtual network in comparison with other sources) connected with the acceptance of digital communication as main, and not the additional way of communication; c) the blurring of the criterion foundations in distinguishing the adequate and inadequate information both in socio-political and epistemological spheres, which makes it boundary difficult to build an effective, fact-based, knowledge-intensive, but adogmatic flexible picture of the world, falsification of the personal experience, based on the manipulatively imposed group consciousness and identity, – mythologization of consciousness; d) strengthening the age-related crises of identity by imposing improper, culturally and socially unstipulated to it forms; e) external manipulation of the ideological content and orientation of youth movements and subcultures.

The problem in the formation of critical thinking in education under these conditions is of paramount importance. Critical thinking in education is functionally connected not only with learning but also with upbringing – self-improvement, self-realization and self-actualization as a purposeful formation of personality in the process of human life and, above all, various forms of social activity (Olubiński A., 2018). The scientific literature deals with the formation of skills for critical assessment of web resources and security on the Internet, “technologies of critical thinking” as certain cognitive algorithms, critical thinking as an element of civic education, methods of selecting Internet information, etc. But

the problem of comprehending the very phenomenon of critical thinking remains, which seemingly appears to be a routine way of reception and comprehension of reality only with the added attitude of critical position to the object of thought. There are quite many interpretations of the problem of critical thinking in education, which can be grouped on the grounds of accentuating the forms of its existence and implementation into philosophical and psychological approaches. The first involves the formation of certain cognitive settings, which should be used by the person who thinks critically, and this determines his participation in social institutions and forms of communication. The second focuses on the formation of behavioral models, skills, and ways of treating reality as interacting with it rather than thinking as in the first case (Uribe-Enciso O., Uribe-Enciso D., Vargas-Daza M., 2017). Critical thinking is also seen as a thought process aimed at making intelligent decisions (Ennis R., 2008); the process of conceptualizing, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information, collected empirically or theoretically (Defining Critical Thinking, 1987); the form of effective criterion thinking that optimizes judgment, decision-making and self-assessment (Lipman M., 2003); a way of thinking that is protected from the manipulative influence of poor arguments (Tama M., 1989); the process of evaluating and forming judgment based on personal beliefs (Siegel H., 1991) and, finally, the ability to interpret, analyze and evaluate the input information from existing prior views (Facione P., 2000). Note that none of the mentioned researchers refers to the concept of skepticism as a worldview basis for critical thinking in the philosophical dimension, predicting implicitly the value-based approach of epistemological realism. In the dimension of cognitive psychology, skepticism as a methodological instruction is also ineffective, since it inevitably foresees a doubt on the cognitive agent.

Even without appealing to the principle of trust (N. Wilson, W. Quine, D. Davidson), which captures the coherence of reality and judgments about it within the exchange of information between people, it seems obvious that it is not easy to distinguish thinking as “being in thought” and critical thinking, discussed in the scientific literature. To think within the bounds of logocentric tradition means to use the subject-object dichotomy and within the traditional Aristotelian correspondence theory of truth to compare the content of one’s own judgments with the available experience – empirical, social, theoretical. It is impossible to think uncritically under such an interpretation since it would mean the absence of apperception, the initial picture of the world with which new information is compared. Kantian a priori of sensuality, or Wittgenstein’s early concepts (*“The Tractatus*

Logico-Philosophicus” 5.6 – “The Limits of My Language Mean the Limits of My World”), or his later concept of the language game capture space of thought that is critical and analytical by definition. Another thing is that the post-truth phenomenon illustrates the approach to such a space as the decentered, anti-logo-phono-centric space of Deleuze’s “fold” or “chora” in the interpretation of J. Kristeva. Contemporary information and communication technologies paradoxically install such critical thinking, which emphasizes skepticism as an epistemological attitude in itself as a component of the post-truth phenomenon. The absence of criteria for distinguishing between true and false, a reality that emerges as a rhizomatic object and a global simulacrum, makes such an understanding of critical thinking problematize. In the post-truth situation, the process of introducing the manipulative product of the personal imagination into the public imagination appears as an endless recursive extension of the conditional Overton window. Under such circumstances, critical thinking has to appeal not primarily to the sphere of factual and epistemological, but to the sphere of axiology and the vision of identity, which are only capable of making reality monolithic. We can assume that

...symbolism of media space for contemporary philosophical anthropology is not just a marker of the specifics of the current situation and the epiphenomenon in the progress of science and technology, so to say, in anticipation of technological singularity (V. Vinge), but the basis of social existence and forming visions about human identity in being and society. (Kretov P., Kretova O., 2017, p. 44).

The post-truth situation, at which facts “do not work” in the process of education or in the formation of public opinion, stipulates appealing to the symbolic structures of cultural and linguistic meanings as the foundation of personal identity at the preverbal level to the value orientations at the discursive level. Since the logic structures the description of reality, then cognitive tools of consciousness, above all the analytical approach to information are vulnerable, particularly from the side of what, according to Wittgenstein, should be silent about, practical philosophy as ethics and axiology. To think critically for

the time being can mean relying primarily on one’s own and group identity and value system.

Conclusions and prospects for further exploration. The practice and implementation of critical thinking in education in the post-truth situation, presuppose for the person as the carrier of identity and the system of values and the cognitive agent simultaneously: a) formed foundations of mental activity as a certain system of epistemological attitudes; b) the opportunity for applying these foundations to develop practical skills in analyzing information under the direction of the authority, acknowledged by itself, in order to form an algorithm for such activity; c) reliance on a holistic worldview as a picture of the world, which would be characterized by openness, flexibility, orientation to effective motivational attitudes and behavioral models, as well as positive philosophical views, not relying on skepticism and agnosticism as conceptual approaches to knowledge; d) understanding the probability in the manipulative nature of the information and the distortion of state of facts in the description of reality within the media space; e) experiencing the truth of reality as a blessing in the value sphere and the world cognition as an attitude in epistemological, based on the personal and group experience in dialogical communication within, in particular, the social institute of education; g) awareness of responsibility for sovereign cognitive subjectivity and the experience of critical thinking as a value.

It is important that the post-truth phenomenon, actualizing primarily the political and ideological segment of the world picture and description of reality, also deforms the actual potential cognitive intentional of a person in education or self-education, which may threaten with the limit narrowing of his worldview to professional or vocational training in education beyond a wide humanitarian context. In this way, the individual becomes a model object for ideological manipulations. The seeming non-alternativeness of the post-truth phenomenon in digital communication generates social fatalism and disbelief, while critical thinking involves accentuated activism and subjectivity of an individual in the social, ideological and value spheres.

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