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PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF ATHEISTIC EXISTENTIALISM AND HUMANISTIC PSYCHOANALYSIS

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Abstract: The study assesses the relevance of developing the worldview of modern pedagogy and presents the main criteria that can be followed when choosing philosophical concepts and pedagogical teachings. The authors conduct an academic analysis of the current state of philosophy associated with the postmodern approach to equalizing subjectively significant aspects. Based on the analysis of philosophical works of the 20th century, they substantiate the French atheistic existentialism and existential (humanistic) psychoanalysis as philosophical concepts that form a productive worldview of modern people. It is concluded that atheistic existentialism and humanistic psychoanalysis are among the most important trends in philosophy, especially in the 20th century. The above-mentioned philosophical concepts can influence education by promoting a more holistic approach to teaching and learning that considers the intellectual, emotional, and ethical aspects of human experience. These perspectives can help educators create a learning environment that promotes personal growth, self-awareness, and critical thinking, as well as foster the development of more empathetic, responsible, and engaged citizens.

Keywords: philosophy of pedagogy, atheistic existentialism, religious existentialism, existential (humanistic) psychoanalysis, postmodernism, atheism, romanticism.

Introduction

The formation of a child's worldview is a priority task of pedagogy and is of particular importance for upbringing and education. In this con-

text, it is relevant to refer not only to psychology (traditionally associated with worldview problems (Schneider et al., 2015; Schwieler, 2017; Znakov, 2016)) but also to philosophy. At the present stage of human development, the latter is

the form of social consciousness in which one's worldview orientations are rooted (Adams & Clarke, 2016; Loifman, 2002; Bogdanova, 2016).

On the contrary, pedagogy is a science that differs from philosophical knowledge since classic philosophy did not address certain pedagogical problems but somehow expresses some pedagogical views (Rozin, 2007). As a modern sphere of humanitarian knowledge, the philosophy of pedagogy has an interdisciplinary and human-centered nature but it cannot be created without relying on spiritual achievements.

Under the given circumstances, the choice of the right strategy, which would integrate certain philosophical concepts and teachings into pedagogy, requires the main criteria that could guide this choice.

Firstly, it is more expedient to choose those philosophical concepts in which human-centered problems dominate. Being a product of human consciousness, any philosophical doctrine ultimately addresses the problem of a human being. However, it is necessary to consider the concepts covering this issue in a more sublimated form.

Secondly, we need to focus on more recent philosophical concepts originating in the 20th century. Indeed, this does not mean that the philosophical and pedagogical works, for example, by J.-J. Rousseau (1762) or J. Locke (1693), should be set aside. These might have great potential for solving the current problems in the future. However, the analysis of such works requires that additional historical and philosophical preparation, and knowledge of the social realities to which the authors of pedagogical works refer, etc. Then it is possible to adequately interpret these works and apply them to modern realities.

Thirdly, the latest philosophy of pedagogy should have one more important feature, i.e. consistency in relation to the basic tasks of pedagogy. This does not refer to the tasks of pedagogy as a whole but rather the tasks at the intersection with philosophy, i.e. orientational and worldview-based.

Let us formulate the basic principles of this ideological approach to pedagogy from the viewpoint of philosophy. First of all, philosophy in the broad sense is a basic component of the worldview formation that makes it integral (rather than syncretic and mythological, which is typical of both children and adults (Richard,

2014)).

An important component of this productive worldview is the problem of life meaning. Its basic principles can be formulated by the following questions: "Who am I (as a member of a family, team, or society)?", "Why do I exist here and now?", "What is my purpose as a person?", "What is the main goal of my life and does it relate to similar aspirations of other people?". To avoid contradictions with relevant pedagogical tasks, the philosophy of pedagogy must be subject-oriented and pay much attention to the human personality.

This study aims at determining the potential of French atheistic existentialism and existential psychoanalysis to form the foundation of modern pedagogical philosophy.

Methods

We applied a polymethodological approach, i.e. we used general methods of scientific research (analysis, synthesis, description, definition, and interpretation) and a set of other approaches and methods.

The conceptual and categorical apparatus was formed using general scientific methods. The historical-problematic (problem-category) method was used to study postmodern philosophy. Systemic, phenomenological, descriptive, and historical approaches laid the basis for substantiating the need to refer to the philosophy of atheistic existentialism and existential (humanistic) psychoanalysis to develop the worldview foundations of modern pedagogy.

The main source for the study was the works of the predecessors of existential philosophy (Heine, 1958; Kierkegaard, 1843) and representatives of the philosophy of existentialism (Heidegger, 2006; Jaspers, 1994), including atheistic (A. Camus, J.-P. Sartre), religious (E. Mounier, N. Berdyaev, G. Marcel), and existential (humanistic) psychoanalysis (E. Fromm, V. Frankl, A. Maslow).

An additional source for the study was contemporary works on the analysis of postmodern philosophy.

At the first stage of the study, we analyzed the position of postmodern philosophy toward leveling the subjectively significant aspects.

At the second stage, we substantiated French

atheistic existentialism and existential (humanistic) psychoanalysis as philosophical concepts based on the analysis of philosophical works of the 20th century. Subsequently, we formed a productive worldview of a modern person.

Results and Discussion

Our analysis revealed that modern philosophy is associated with the postmodern attitude to leveling the subjectively significant aspects, which is expressed by the famous postmodernist postulate of the “death of the subject” (Dolin, 2013). This attitude reflects the impotence of modern philosophical attempts to form a holistic worldview that is adequate to modern challenges and escape from the most difficult task into abstract manipulations with artifacts (texts). In turn, it gives rise to several problems. Firstly, issues on the meaning of life are removed from the sphere of active philosophical search because they require the maximum personal approach. Given the absence of a universal life meaning, individuals must personally undergo experiences and challenges to discover and attain their own sense of purpose. Secondly, the rejection of subjectivity automatically affects creativity (which is reflected in the postmodern postulate of the death of the author). The essence of creativity stems from the unique gifts and perspectives of an individual. True creativity cannot be reduced to a mere algorithmic process or the compilation of existing creations. It is a deeply personal and subjective expression of one's imagination, originality, and innovative thinking. By its very nature, creativity defies rigid formulas and standardized methods. The personal touch is what distinguishes genuine creativity from mere replication or imitation (“quoting”, in postmodern terms (Skoropanova, 2000)) or imitation (the creation of postmodern simulacra (Skoropanova, 2000)). It is through embracing and nurturing individuality within the creative process that true innovation and groundbreaking achievements emerge.

The circumstances require a critical and thoughtful attitude since they contradict the requirements placed on the modern philosophy of pedagogy and are not able to solve the problems that it faces. It is worth mentioning that the postmodern paradigm is more criticized by post-postmodernism, whose main idea is to consider

individuality (Mozheiko, 2012). In our opinion, post-postmodernism is still not able to offer a worthy ideological alternative to postmodernism due to an insufficient emphasis on the life-meaning component in relation to individuality.

Post-postmodernism interprets individual subjectivity as a problem of “I” and “Other” who need to establish a connection according to mutually acceptable laws of communication (Lipskii, 2012). However, not just communication is required but the establishment of an emotional connection between members of society (the meaning of one's being cannot be realized without the participation of other personalities), which would provide the necessary potential of this society in the fight against the global problems of our time.

Thus, a natural question arises: on what philosophical concepts can a modern person rely? In our opinion, the key to solving this problem is offered by two interconnected powerful philosophical trends of the 20th century: the French atheistic existentialism and existential (humanistic) psychoanalysis. Such a choice requires additional justification.

There is a simplified understanding of the existential aspect of modern philosophical atheism which is interpreted as a purely decadent nihilistic phenomenon provoked by rationalistic positivist philosophy associated with the loss of true spiritual guidelines, which became the ideological core of the quasi-religion of socialism rooted in the Soviet totalitarianism (Yudin, 2017). Moreover, the atheism that was propagated by the Soviet authorities meant a rollback to even more archaic and primitive, in comparison with Christianity, forms of religiosity associated with the cult of the “living God” (“leader of peoples”) and the belief in the onset of the “golden age” (building a communist “paradise on Earth”).

If we talk about the traditions of atheism in modern existential and psychoanalytic spheres, according to I. Garin (1992), they have their origins in the era of romanticism, when individuality was first comprehended as “the ideal position of an individual in the world”. Consequently, the scholar had reason to consider romanticism an early existentialism.

From the standpoint of a fundamentally scientific approach to the history of religion, H. Heine (1958), who defined the era of romanticism, traced the evolution of the image of God from

mythological origins to self-denial in his fundamental work “On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany”. Writing about the “dying God”, Heine (1958) was several decades ahead of the famous thesis of F. Nietzsche “God is dead” (Bokov, 2015). According to J.-P. Sartre (2001), the latter laid the basis of atheistic existentialism and referred to comprehensive studies of representatives of existential philosophy (“Nietzsche and Emptiness” by M. Heidegger (2006), “Nietzsche and Christianity” by K. Jaspers (1994)).

The concept of “the death of God” (Bokov, 2015) has proved to be crucial for modern philosophy in many aspects and is one of the key provisions of postmodern philosophy. In the 20th century, each philosophical trend dwelled on this concept, and a large number of philosophical trends were a direct response to it and the subsequent crisis of religious consciousness.

For example, the forerunner of existential philosophy S. Kierkegaard, who laid the foundations of traditional Protestant existentialism as opposed to orthodox Christianity (a “religion of salvation”), stated the tragedy of human existence, in which the search for God and faith only strengthens and justifies the “extreme situation” (i.e. extreme state of despair), when a person must bear responsibility for their action if it contradicts the norms of traditional morality as a necessary prerequisite for spiritual growth intended to prove the Old Testament story about Abraham and Isaac (Shchittsova, 2006). The issue of despair as a permanent position of a person in the world introduced by S. Kierkegaard influenced the entire tradition of both religious and atheistic existentialism.

Therefore, in dealing with the issue of freedom (key to existential philosophy), the founders of religious existentialism had to compromise the positions of Christian orthodoxy. For example, N. Berdyaev, a prominent representative of religious existentialism, distinguished between passive objectified being and freedom as a sphere of personal creative self-expression. The scholar declared, “God has unlimited power over existence but not over freedom” (Berdyaev, 1993, p. 196). According to the philosopher, the idea of the first irrational freedom forming the core of the universe is directly connected with the doctrine of the fall of man.

The concept of “philosophical faith” as faith

“that exists only together with knowledge” was introduced by K. Jaspers (1994), who can be called not only one of the founders of Christian existentialism but also a forerunner of humanistic psychoanalysis. However, it contradicts the orthodox theological understanding of religious faith as a rejection of knowledge. Thus, this concept is similar to E. Fromm’s views on “rational faith”, including faith in oneself, one’s abilities, and the abilities of other people. In contrast to irrational religious faith, it is a vital component of any mentally healthy and creative person (Fromm, 1990). The thinking of representatives of traditional religious existentialism could not develop within the framework of the orthodox religious tradition.

In the 20th century, there was a popular trend when religious philosophers, such as E. Mounier (1995) or G. Marcel (2007), wrote critical essays on the main works of J.-P. Sartre and A. Camus but had to acknowledge them, recognize, to a certain extent, the legitimacy of a non-religious approach to the issue of human existence, and try to adopt them even if they contradict the main idea of atheistic existentialism. Since atheist existentialists also profess humanistic values, they have to take just one more step towards a religious worldview, without which a person loses moral support. According to such philosophers, it is possible to truly comprehend existential problems only within a religious paradigm. In particular, the existential religious approach to the issues under study can be exemplified by the position of Mounier (1999), who defined the freedom of an individual in close connection with religious transcendence.

The acute vulnerability of the religious-existential understanding of freedom is demonstrated by representatives of Protestant existentialism. R. Bultmann, a founder of dialectical theology prepared “New Testament Mythology and Other Basic Writings.” The book conducts an existential interpretation of the mythological concepts of the New Testament and largely uses the categorical apparatus of M. Heidegger. While equating human freedom with willfulness, Bultmann disagreed with Heidegger at the core of his concept. Bultmann (1992) associated freedom defined as self-will with manifestations of selfishness, self-confidence, pride, or sin for the sake of flesh, including “not only the material things of life, but all human creation and achievement

pursued for the sake of some tangible reward” (p. 96). The only manifestation of freedom for a believer is “freedom for obedience”, which means “renunciation of self-belief and complete trust in God” (Bultmann, 1992, p. 108). Under the terms of humanistic psychoanalysis, this is an “escape from freedom” (E. Fromm).

As A. Camus (1955) wrote in his book “The Myth of Sisyphus”, representatives of atheistic existentialism believed that freedom (the key to existential philosophy) should be understood regardless of religion.

In “The Future of an Illusion”, S. Freud, the founder of classical psychoanalysis, denied the idea that a person should be considered religious if they “confess a sense of human poverty and feel powerless to the whole world”. After all, the core of religiosity is not this feeling but a response to it and seeking help to fight this feeling. The one who is “humbly content with the miserable role of man in the vast world is rather non-religious in the most literal sense of the word” (Freud, 1961, p. 43).

Therefore, statements about the insignificance of a person in the universe, which can often be found in the works of atheistic existentialists, are not provoked by despair and despondency. Or vice versa, such awareness and experience at the artistic level of the fundamental tragedy of human existence is a necessary condition for posing the question of existential freedom. While substantiating this thesis, J.-P. Sartre claimed (2001), “Existentialism is nothing else but an attempt to draw the full conclusions from a consistently atheistic position. Its intention is not in the least that of plunging men into despair. And if by despair one means as the Christians do – any attitude of unbelief, the despair of the existentialists is something different. ...And it is only by self-deception, by confining their own despair with ours that Christians can describe us as without hope” (p. 367).

Thus, the irresistible tragedy of the human lot and the indispensable orientation of a human being into nothing are only the starting point for existential problems based on rebelliousness and constant readiness to fight for human values despite fatal circumstances – existential rebellion (Camus, 1991). French atheistic existentialists grant ideological significance to this concept. Indeed, a person for whom religious precepts do not have the power of indisputable authority and

the otherworldly dimension of being does not exist rebels against everything that threatens their human essence with their own life if it is fruitful, aimed at creative self-realization, and corresponds to human nature. Such a person challenges their own lot, including the world order, which is anti-human in the sense that a person cannot establish and impose their own laws.

In absolute philosophical terms, this fundamental idea to understanding the essence of existential rebellion is expressed by A. Camus (1991) in “The Rebel”: “in the sacrosanct world, the problem of revolt does not arise; it is because no real problems are to be found in it – all the answers having been given simultaneously. ...The rebel is a man who is on the point of accepting or rejecting the sacrosanct and determined on creating a human situation where all the answers are human or, rather, formulated in terms of reason. ...In this manner, only two possible worlds can exist for the human mind, the sacrosanct or the rebel world” (p. 231).

Particular attention should be paid to those intersections that bring together representatives of French atheistic existentialism and existential (humanistic) psychoanalysis. Both directions unanimously recognize S. Freud as a pioneer and researcher of new areas of the human psyche which can shed light on the inner world of a person and overcome the practice of Freudian psychoanalysis in favor of the most existentially oriented variants of psychoanalysis (“existential psychoanalysis” by J.-P. Sartre, “humanistic psychoanalysis” by E. Fromm, “existential logotherapy” by V. Frankl, “ethics of self-actualization” by A. Maslow, etc.).

This is important from the methodological viewpoint because existentialism in a broad sense (primarily atheistic) was how humanistic psychoanalysts tried to overcome the crisis of classical psychoanalysis, with its inherent biological reductionism, fatalism, etc. The constructive criticism of the real vices of French atheistic existentialism was conducted by representatives of humanistic (existential) psychoanalysis, including E. Fromm, V. Frankl, A. Maslow, and R. May. They not only relied on the existential approach to a person and tried to find points of intersection between existentialism and psychoanalysis but also developed the philosophy of existentialism to overcome its methodological weaknesses and fill it with practical content

(Frankl, 1984; Maslow, 1998). There is also feedback exemplified by J.-P. Sartre's "existential psychoanalysis".

Representatives of humanistic psychoanalysis recognized existentialism (primarily atheistic) as an integral philosophical basis for their psychoanalytic concepts. Thus, Frankl's existential logotherapy is entirely based on understanding the psychoanalytic dimension of classical existential categories, such as "freedom", "responsibility", and "meaning of being" (Frankl, 1984).

The outstanding psychoanalyst Maslow tried to comprehend the main points of intersection between atheistic existentialism and psychoanalysis. The scholar highlighted that existential issues united European philosophers and American psychologists. For psychologists, it is crucial that existentialists can integrate authentic philosophy into psychology, which the latter lacks (Maslow, 1968). According to Maslow, the best idea of existentialism for existential psychoanalysis is the "deep dimension of being" or "the tragic meaning of being" often opposed to petty and frivolous existence. The latter can be regarded as a "reduction of being", i.e. a kind of protection from the ultimate problems of existence. Devoid of a deep dimension, psychology does not bring the desired results. The renowned psychoanalyst worried that what is called the "norm" in modern psychology was the "psychopathology of normal" lacking any drama and being so widespread that psychologists ceased to even notice it. Existential studies on the true personality and true human being help "to shed a powerful ray of pure light on this big lie, on this life of illusion and fear – and see that this is a common disease". In the end, Maslow (1998) summed up "that existentialism would not only enrich psychology. It might also give an additional impetus to the creation of a new field of psychology, i.e. the psychology of self-actualization and personal way of being" (p. 121).

Conclusion

The French atheistic existentialism and humanistic psychoanalysis can be considered one of the most significant trends in philosophy in general and the philosophy of the 20th century in particular. Searching for an ideological answer to the unprecedented catastrophism of the 20th century

(two world wars, mass genocides, and totalitarian regimes), they put unique human subjectivity at the center of philosophical reflection. While preserving and developing subjectivity, a person can withstand world catastrophes, where they often act as a grain of sand picked up by the wind of history or a nameless cog in the state machine.

This approach is still relevant due to several reasons. The first half of the 20th century was marked by the common belief that, at least at the cost of extra efforts and human losses (which gave rise to the phenomenon of totalitarianism), one can conquer nature by imposing its own rules on it and, consequently, guide humanity in the golden age of happiness and prosperity. On the contrary, the 21st century has much more sober assessments and shows that humanity has entered a phase of development characterized by both social and geopolitical stability of catastrophism. The former is associated with a drop in living standards and the latter is the result of the geopolitical war of all against all and the deterioration of the planetary ecological situation.

Thus, the philosophy of atheistic existentialism and existential (humanistic) psychoanalysis offers several significant worldview preferences since they are not just a response to challenges, albeit tragic current situations. They also comprehend the meaning of human life and seek such universal principles on which a person could rely not to lose themselves in any historical circumstances. This requires highlighting the universal human position in the world with due regard to the unique social properties inherent in a person. Based on this universal and individual situation manifested in the life of each person, it is necessary to build the basic worldview foundations of the future philosophy of pedagogy.

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