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Lessons of Descartes: Metaphisicity of Man and Poetry

Purpose. To consider the uniqueness of Descartes' way of interpreting poetry as a type of philosophizing that makes it possible to comprehend the metaphysical nature of man. Its implementation involves the consistent solution of the following tasks: a) understanding methodological changes in the philosophy of the 20th century in the process of actualization of anthropological interest; b) argumentation of the importance of poetic thinking for early Descartes in the process of addressing modern historians of philosophy and the thinker's texts. **Theoretical basis.** I rely on the conceptual positions of phenomenology, existentialism and hermeneutics. **Originality.** Finding of the study is that poetic thinking is the most authentic way of meaningful comprehension of the metaphisicity of man. The paper outlines the nature of the expression of this correlation in the philosophizing of the 20th-21st centuries and substantiates the thesis about the importance of the poetic principle for understanding the phenomenon of man in early works by Descartes. **Conclusions.** The paper examined the methodological shifts in anthropologically oriented philosophizing of the 20th-21st centuries and focused on the manifestations of related moments in the philosophical legacy of Descartes. The latter demonstrates the existence of a still underestimated version of interpreting the metaphysical foundations of human existence, the form of understanding of which is poetic thinking. It is a form of caring for the humane in man.

Keywords: Descartes; science; man; anthropology; metaphysics; poetic thinking

Poetically, man lives on this earth.

F. Hölderlin

Art is the miracle of man's return to his true human essence.

F. Iskander

Introduction

At the present stage of history, the demand for understanding man as a carrier of spirituality is relevant. Its meaningful elaboration problematizes his traditional vision as a carrier of rationality. And since the common version of human interpretation is rooted in the legacy of Descartes, the question of overcoming the nihilistic attitude towards him becomes crucial. At the forefront is the question of the presence in Descartes' philosophy of due attention to the metaphysical nature of man and his spirituality. Therefore, it is appropriate to pay attention to the powerful trend of European thought of the 18th-20th centuries, which is based on the idea "back to Descartes" and focuses on the results of the revolution in Cartesian studies over the past fifty years. Attentive attitude to them makes it possible to go beyond the mentioned nihilism and substantiate the paradoxical thesis about the existence of heuristic and constructive potential. Descartes, as the authoritative Jean-Luc Marion emphasizes, is our contemporary. In other words, there are now sufficient grounds for qualifying the teachings of a genius countryman as a full participant in the current dialogue on the future of mankind: "Descartes remains one of our closest contemporaries" (Marion, 1999, p. 352). Its meaningful comprehension is still waiting for its researchers.

Based on these assumptions, I developed a hypothesis about the importance of anthropology for Descartes' philosophizing. My study of the thinker's texts and research literature confirmed the key nature of the anthropological project, the main manifestations of which include the thesis

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of science and rationality limitation, recognition of the importance of religion and the "man-God" connection, attentive (even more, caring) attitude based on the anthropology of metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics (Malivskyi, 2019).

How is the way of interpreting the metaphysical foundations of human existence changing in the context of the crisis of man-made civilization? To what extent is the heuristic potential present in previous philosophizing, and what are the forms of its expression? What is the fate of philosophical legacy of Rene Descartes as one of the authors of the basic project of modernity?

Purpose

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Statement of basic materials

Methodological changes in 20th century philosophy in the process of actualization of anthropological interest

The question of how far Descartes went beyond the modern era and the determining influence of the Copernican revolution is still controversial today. An essential prerequisite for the explication of the authentic Cartesian vision of philosophy is the attention to the peculiarities of the modern reception of metaphysics in general and the rethinking of superficial versions of his vision of metaphysics. Therefore, attention to its rehabilitation forms is appropriate. Describing the demand of the present era as a request for self-development, E. Coreth (1998) qualifies metaphysics as a necessary condition for human self-realization: "conditions of personal self-fulfillment" (p. 6). The axiomatic nature of metaphysical need for human nature is one of the main ideas of the German existentialist Karl Jaspers. It is about the constant human transcendence in the existing being and involvement in the higher being: "The path of a thinking person is a life of philosophizing. Therefore, philosophizing is inherent in man as such. Man is the only being in the world to whom being is revealed in his present being. He cannot express himself in real being as such... He breaks through... the reality of being" (transl. by A. M.) (Jaspers, 1994, p. 455).

Studying the specifics of the object of metaphysics as an understanding of the way man relates to the supernatural (superhuman), it is advisable to connect it with the delineation and reproduction of key prerequisites for human existence. For more information on metaphysics as a doctrine of the human self-development conditions, see my article (Malivskyi, 2020).

Concretizing the vision of the factors for the prevalence of the distorted image of Cartesian metaphysics, it is worth noting the prevalence in the research literature of its technocratic version. The latter, as a significant obstacle to understanding the problem presented in the title of the article, causes a naive and fragmentary reception of the thinker's texts. This is the Descartes' famous thesis about the ability of man to radically change his ontological status and master nature with the help of scientific knowledge. Accordingly, the motives for his philosophizing are related to man's desire for power over the natural world. The drama of this situation is that this

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superficial stereotype is present in the pages of texts by profound thinkers, including Martin Heidegger. For him, the human will is the substance hidden from prying eyes, the main motive that determines the development of European man-made civilization. In the text of "European Nihilism" we read: "Ensuring the highest and unconditional self-development of all the forces and abilities of mankind to achieve unconditional domination over the whole Earth is the secret stimulus that spurs the new European man to new and new impulses..." (transl. by A. M.) (Heidegger, 2007, p. 126).

A significant shortcoming of this approach is related to the narrow interpretation of human nature, in which its vertical dimensions are stolen. However, the powerful genius of the founder of existentialism is that he did not ignore the artificiality and falsity of technomorphic interpretations of Descartes' legacy. Therefore, Heidegger (1993) describes them as an example of the use of someone else's scale in the process of presenting his position: "...Descartes was forced to speak from the plane of the previous one and thus to clarify his principled position from the outside, i.e. always inadequately..." (transl. by A. M.) (p. 131).

Analysing the tendency of Heidegger's attention to go beyond reductionism, it is appropriate to refer to his lecture of 1951-1952. It is about the idea of history developed by him as a set of "sleeping" opportunities that open up to us over time. And since the past is fundamentally incomplete here, accordingly, the main features of the Early New Age project are gradually revealed to us as it is implemented. Of particular value to us is his high appreciation of the constructive potential of art and religion in the pages of "Letter on Humanism", which have been pushed to the background in contemporary culture. In this context, it is reasonable to assume the prospect of freeing the vertical dimensions of man through art. These include emphasizing the importance of poetry as a way of thinking: "Aristotle's still ill-conceived word in his Poetics that poetry is truer than information about things existent remains true" (transl. by A. M.) (Heidegger, 1993, p. 219).

More clearly, the founder of existentialism emphasizes the importance of religion for the modern way of philosophizing as a form of preservation and care for the higher levels of Being. "Perhaps the distinguishing feature of the present age is the closed nature of the Sacred dimension" (transl. by A. M.) (Heidegger, 1993, p. 213). One of the manifestations of this tendency to rehabilitate the higher forms of the human spirit is a recent interview, in which he emphasizes that "only a God can save us".

Studying the manifestations of the idea of the meaningful relationship of poetry and philosophy as two ways of thinking in 20th century philosophy, it is worth paying attention to the position of H.-G. Gadamer as a student of Heidegger. In his opinion: "There is a close affinity with poetic speech and theology". One of the prerequisites for its authentic comprehension is to go beyond the notions of the absoluteness of the epistemological opposition of truth and error: "Both the poetical and philosophical types of speech share a common feature: they cannot be false" (Gadamer, 2001).

Additional convincing arguments about the priority in the modern world of art over science in the process of understanding the humane in man can be found in the works of famous thinkers of the twentieth century. One of them is Bertrand Russell, a famous scientist, thinker and public figure. Emphasizing the dominant role of art in culture, he points out that although both science and art are involved in structuring human life, the age-old tradition of unambiguously linking the achievements of modern culture with science is no longer axiomatic. The link between the demands of the modern age and art seems increasingly convincing. It is art "that should take the

lead – in contrast to the usual preference for applied sciences", so Schlomit Schuster (2005, p. 249) interprets the opinion of Russell.

However, in the process of understanding the article title problem of anthropology and poetry correlation, it is appropriate to pay close attention to the work of early Descartes, where there is one of the first classical forms of its statement. So, how profound and heuristic are the ideas of early Descartes today?

Early Descartes on the place of poetry in the process of human comprehension

It is especially valuable for us to emphasize the importance of philosophy as poetry in the texts of J.-L. Marion, one of the authoritative researchers of Descartes. In his opinion, there is a great distance between the real ideas of this thinker and their school classifications. Therefore, he writes: "...affinities among theology, poetry, philosophy and science in Descartes no longer surprises us..." (Marion, 2007, p. 103). An authoritative researcher rightly considers it a significant flaw of popular interpretations to underestimate the originality of Descartes' point of view, which is related to the status of poetry in his philosophy. Outlining his authentic position, Marion (2007) points out that it is a matter of respect for poets, whom he gives undeniable authority, because "they bear witness to the initial freedom of God in the encounter with the Fates" (p. 115).

The unparalleled importance of this meaningful concretization is confirmed by examples of rediscovery of the key significance of the poetic principle in the work of Descartes. Emphasizing the existence of a demand for an alternative reading of Descartes, Kyoo Lee sees his goal in re-reading the works read many times and making them modern. Summing up recent debates and discussions, she highlights the "Cartesian poetics of image" (Lee, 2013, p. 145), which opens up the possibility of a fuller understanding of the often neglected drama of human existence. A meaningful continuation of this guideline for understanding the constitutive role of the poet is the study of Andrea Gadberry, who rightly warns against the dangers of simple decisions and emphasizes the constitutive personality of Descartes. The researcher rightly emphasizes that we must "study Cartesian poetics seriously", i.e. perceive him as "poet-in-chief" (Gadberry, 2017, p. 749).

Therefore, referring today to the legacy of Descartes, it is necessary to distance oneself from the implications hidden behind the reduced image of his teaching. It involves attention to those alternative courses of thought from realization of which the French thinker refused. By studying the temptations inherent in this era, we get the opportunity to make the modern reception of his work more prominent. This opinion of mine is in tune with the position of modern Cartesian scholars: "To understand what he thought, it is useful to be clear about just what he was rejecting" (Brown & Normore, 2019, p. 5).

In this context, first of all, we should dwell on the seemingly unalterable idea of the direct determining influence of the scientific revolution on the way of Descartes' philosophizing. From the standpoint of modern historical and philosophical science, this influence is not limited to common illusions about the direct transfer of the methodology of mathematics beyond its borders. A detailed study of the issue relating to the priority of a certain type of philosophizing for the French thinker allows us to understand the paradox of his position. As it turns out, it is not only about imitating the ideals of mathematics in the field of philosophy, but also about the development of poetic thinking as its meaningful alternative. Attentive attitude to Cartesian texts makes it possible to substantiate the thesis that he went beyond the temptation to literally transfer

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the methodology of the scientific revolution into the field of philosophy. In other words, it is an indirect version of the completion of the worldview revolution initiated by Copernicus, which is manifested as a meaningful development of anthropology, ethics and metaphysics (Khmil & Malivskyi, 2018).

Justification of the legitimacy of this approach involves focusing on the concentrated form of designation of key insights, which underlies the text of "Early Writings". These include the principles of "wonderful science", which most researchers unequivocally associate with the scientific revolution and mathematical knowledge. However, the results of my study of the French genius' legacy show a prominent place for him of the question concerning the ultimate principles of proper existence and the legitimacy of its interpretation as a manifestation of Descartes' humanism (Malivskyi, 2019). In this context, this point can be interpreted as a convincing argument to substantiate the thesis of the importance for the thinker of caring for the inner world of man. The forms of its manifestation, first of all, include art. The legitimacy of my chosen interpretation of its leading role can be confirmed by the latest achievements of modern humanistic psychology. I am close to and do not object to the opinion of the American psychotherapist David Elkins on the organic unity of soul and art, in particular: "Art is the body of the soul". For this author, the idea of the fundamental non-reduction of art and soul to scientific rationality is important: "Try to keep the soul in rational terms – and you will kill it, as if pierced with a spear, the sharpness of logical thought" (transl. by A. M.) (Elkins, 2005, p. 110). It is difficult to resist the temptation to consider the psychotherapist's thesis as a commentary on early Descartes (1996), in particular his thesis on the limits of the application of logical thinking: "For each of us is a set limit to our intellectual power which we cannot pass" (AT X: 215).

Closely related to this idea for the French thinker is the thesis of deep disappointment in the possibilities of the human mind and active reading of fiction acquires a dramatic sound. And although Hegel pointed out its extraordinary significance two hundred years ago, it still has not been properly understood. This refers to the way of showing a care for the inner world of man. Emphasizing the importance in art of forms of caring for one's own self, Cartesius notes in the text of "Olympian matters": "It may seem surprising to find weighty judgements in the writing of the poets rather than the philosophers" (Descartes, 1996, AT X: 217).

Recognizing the unconditional priority of art over science in the process of understanding human nature, the French philosopher goes beyond the school classification of science and emphasizes the intrinsic relationship of science ("liberal science") with free art (Descartes, 1996, AX: 212).

Considering the thesis of the limitations of human mind, to define it, the thinker in his first notes uses the concept of "marvels". Emphasizing its importance, he points to those forms of its concretization that are related to self-knowledge. These are the three marvels that enable the existence of the "value-semantic universe" (S. Krymsky): "The Lord made three marvels: something out of nothing; free will; and God in Man" (Descartes, 1996, AT X: 218). Analysing his implications, it is easy to see that they involve the existence of inviolable boundaries for rationality. The unparalleled significance of this moment is also noted by the already well-known American psychotherapist: "The mystery of art, like the mystery of the soul, cannot be penetrated" (transl. by A. M.) (Elkins, 2005, p. 111).

When studying other important factors in Descartes' advocacy of the idea of the limited possibilities of human rationality, it is worth remembering the importance of ethical motives for

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him. In other words, it is appropriate to draw attention to the fact that long before Kant he perceived the universalization of scientific rationality as a direct threat to human freedom. The opposition to the world of nature and the world of freedom, which was first outlined by Cartesius in the text of the unfinished "Rules", permeates his other works, including "Passions of the Soul" (Malivskyi, 2019).

The vast majority of Descartes researchers perceive the text of the "Rules" as a realization of the task to understand the nature of mathematical knowledge. Therefore, I think it is appropriate to give some arguments to refute this position and justify the humanistic orientation of the search by early Descartes. The first of them is related to the materiality of early Descartes' wonder as a basic passion ("Passion of the Soul"), the second – to the motives for writing the "Rules". Concerning the wonder, as one of the factors of the poetic worldview, Descartes returns to the deep insights of Plato and Aristotle about the beginning of philosophizing. For him, the very ability to understand is paramount. "Indeed it seems strange to me that so many people should investigate with such diligence the virtues of plants, the motion of stars, the transmutations of metals, and the objects of similar disciplines, while hardly anyone gives a thought to good sense – to universal wisdom" (Descartes, 1996, AT X: 360).

The precondition for its meaningful delineation is attention to the continuity of his position with the position of Augustine, who states the prevalence of man as an object of philosophy. "And men go abroad to admire the heights of mountains, the mighty billows of the sea, the broad tides of rivers, the compass of the ocean, and the circuits of the stars, and pass themselves by; nor wonder that when I spake of all these things. I did not see them with mine eyes" (Aurelius Augustine, 1999, p. 319).

Studying the motives for writing the text of the "Rules", it is worth paying attention to the debatable unambiguous interpretation of them as a task to understand the nature of mathematical knowledge and emphasizing the importance of anthropological interest for the thinker. It is reflected in the still underestimated pages of the thinker's private letter to Mersenne dated April 15, 1630. It is about Descartes' focus on the task of knowing God and himself. As you read them, you inadvertently recall allied formulations in the pages of Saint Augustine's "Confession": "That is the task with which I began my studies" – "the endeavour to know him and to know themselves" (Descartes, 1996, AT I: 144). Here it is difficult not to notice the meaningful continuity with the "Early Writings" of the significance of the cross-cutting problem concerning the proper foundations of human existence. If in the first case it sounds like a question of openness of the human behaviour principles ("What road in life shall I follow?"), the second is an emphasis on the importance of caring for these principles: "I take more trouble, and think it more important, to learn *what I need for the conduct my life...*" (Descartes, 1996, AT I: 137).

It is important for us that its modernized interpretation in 1630 is qualified by Descartes with the phrase "new project", i.e. a new interpretation of an existing problem that has now emerged in a new light.

Bearing in mind the key importance for Descartes of the connection between man and God in the process of writing the "Rules", Descartes addresses the idea of the limited possibilities of science in the process of knowing "the Greatness of God" and His "immeasurable power". Concerned about the vertical dimensions of the human spirit, Descartes abandoned the idea of universalizing the methodology of the natural sciences beyond them. For him, this means caring for the humane in man, that is, caring for the preservation of religiosity: "I want people to get used to speaking of God in a manner worthier" (Descartes, 1996, AT I: 145-146).

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Understanding the implications of Descartes, we should once again turn to humanistic psychology, whose representatives demonstrate the same basic guidelines. Emphasizing the crucial importance of spirituality for human nature, Elkins (2005) points out that it presupposes the openness of our hearts, in which "our ability to feel reverence and gratitude is nurtured and maintained" (transl. by A. M.).

Originality

Finding of the study is that poetic thinking is the most authentic way of meaningful comprehension of the metaphysics of man. The paper outlines the nature of the expression of this correlation in the philosophizing of the 20th-21st centuries and substantiates the thesis about the importance of the poetic principle for understanding the phenomenon of man in early works by Descartes.

Conclusions

As we have seen, understanding the question of what man is and how it is possible to comprehend his metaphysical nature has become relevant not for the first time in our days. Attentive attitude to the past allows us to see that the current state of affairs is largely a critical rethinking of the schematic basic project of Descartes. This involves a fragmentary reception of his philosophy, the result of which is nihilism about the vertical dimensions of the human spirit. In the process of reviewing the dehumanized image of Descartes' teaching, it was discovered that his classical image (scientism) loses its persuasiveness, and is replaced by the recognition of the importance of art and religion. As it turns out, the texts of early Descartes demonstrate his interest in the problem relating to preconditions for the development of the human spirituality doctrine (the limits of science, the importance of art and religion as forms of concern for the conditions of existence and nurturing of the humane in man). This version of the interpretation of the Descartes' philosophy project opens the possibility of a constructive rethinking of common ideas about his antihumanism in the form of nihilism, scepticism, cynicism, relativism, etc.

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Уроки Декарта: метафізичність людини та поезія

Мета. Розглянути своєрідність способу тлумачення Декартом поезії як типу філософування, який уможливує осмислення метафізичності людини. Її реалізація передбачає послідовне розв'язання наступних завдань: а) осмислення методологічних зрушень в філософії ХХ ст. в процесі актуалізації антропологічного інтересу; б) аргументування важливості поетичного мислення для раннього Декарта в процесі звертання до сучасних істориків філософії та текстів мислителя. **Теоретичний базис.** Я спираюсь на концептуальні положення феноменології, екзистенціалізму та герменевтики. **Наукова новизна.** Виявлено, що поетичне мислення є найбільш автентичним способом змістовного осягнення метафізичності природи людини. Окреслено характер вираження цієї кореляції у філософуванні ХХ-ХХІ ст. та обґрунтовано тезу про істотність поетичного начала для осмислення феномену людини у раннього Декарта. **Висновки.** Розглянуто методологічні зрушення в антропологічно орієнтованому філософуванні ХХ-ХХІ ст. та акцентовано увагу на проявах споріднених моментів у філософській спадщині Декарта. Остання демонструє наявність досі недооціненого варіанту тлумачення метафізичних засад людського існування, формою осмислення яких є поетичне мислення. Воно є формою турботливого ставлення до людського в людині.

Ключові слова: Декарт; наука; людина; антропологія; метафізика; поетичне мислення

Received: 25.06.2021

Accepted: 01.12.2021