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ИДЕЯ КУЛЬТУРОЦЕНТРИЗМА В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФИЛОСОФИИ

Аннотация: Понятие «культуроцентризм» традиционно использовалось для характеристики русской философии XIX в., которая называлась культуросцентричной, поскольку в центре ее внимания стояла проблема культурной самобытности России. В советской России идея культуросцентризма уходит на второй план, поскольку марксистско-ленинская философия позиционирует культуру как надстройку над экономическим базисом. В постсоветской России вследствие кризиса марксистско-ленинской философии происходит серьезный эпистемологический сдвиг — переход от формационного подхода к цивилизационному. В рамках последнего в качестве базиса — основополагающего фактора социального развития — определяется культура. Таким образом, происходит актуализация идеи культуросцентризма. Статья посвящена анализу различных интерпретаций идеи культуросцентризма в российской философии конца XX – начала XXI вв. Цель статьи — продемонстрировать оценку мировоззренческого и методологического потенциала этой идеи ведущими российскими философами. Методологический аппарат исследования складывается в результате синтеза методов: качественного контент-анализа в его историко-философской версии, герменевтики и компаративистики. Авторы репрезентируют как апологетические, так и критические позиции относительно осмысления мировоззренческого и методологического потенциала идеи культуросцентризма, рассматривают возможность превращения этой идеи в принцип социального бытия и познания. В заключении констатируется, что судьба идеи культуросцентризма в российской философии в конечном счете будет зависеть от того, насколько ей удастся обрести концептуальную обоснованность и научную строгость.

Ключевые слова: идея, культура, история идей, культуросцентризм, диалог культур.

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THE IDEA OF CULTURAL CENTRISM IN MODERN RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

Abstract: The concept of “cultural centrism” was traditionally used to characterize Russian philosophy of the 19th century, which was called culture-centric, since the issue of Russia's cultural identity was at the center of its attention. In Soviet Russia, the idea of culture-centrism fades into the background, as Marxist-Leninist philosophy positions culture as a superstructure on top of the economic basis. In post-Soviet Russia, as a result of the crisis of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, a serious epistemological shift is taking place — a transition from a formational approach to a civilizational one. Within the framework of the latter, culture is defined as the basis — the fundamental factor of social development. Thus, the idea of culture-centrism is actualized. The paper provides the analysis of various interpretations of the idea of culture-centrism in Russian philosophy of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The purpose of the study is to highlight the assessment of the worldview and methodological potential of this idea by leading Russian philosophers. The methodological apparatus of the research results out of synthesis of methods: qualitative content analysis in its historical and philosophical version, hermeneutics and comparative studies. The authors represent both apologetic and critical positions regarding the understanding of the worldview and methodological potential of the idea of cultural centrism, consider the possibility of turning this idea into the principle of social being and cognition. In conclusion, the paper comes up with the statement that the fate of the idea of culture-centrism in Russian philosophy will ultimately depend on how it manages to gain conceptual validity and scientific rigor.

Keywords: idea, culture, history of ideas, cultural centrism, cultural dialogue.

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“You can resist an invading army, but you cannot resist
an idea whose time has come”.

Victor Hugo

Introduction

The history of ideas is not only an interesting but also a teleologically significant field of academic research. Arthur O. Lovejoy, the creator of the original academic discipline examined in his work “History of Ideas”, defined this concept as that any attempt to explain how new beliefs and intellectual trends are born and spread. He also asks why teachings tend to dominate throughout one generation, but lose power and influence in another [18].

Ideas — especially philosophical ideas — fundamentally relate to global concepts, man’s place in the world, and socio-cultural evolution; however, they are nothing but models of existence and potential scenarios for the development of human civilization. For many years, the development of mankind was predetermined by the idea of theocentrism. Other beliefs like anthropocentrism and naturocentrism later played an important role in the development of science, society, mankind, education, culture and arts. Ideological ideas can be considered for certain models of existence, scenarios for the development of man and society. The thesis that the insurrection of ideas always precedes the insurrection of people was confirmed by the history of mankind more than once. Hence, any new worldview put forward by the intellectual community must undergo a comprehensive discussion, a detailed analysis of its content, and a scrupulous study of the possible consequences of its implementation.

One of such new ideas circulating widely in the Russian philosophical discourse is the idea of cultural centrism.

It is important to note that the term cultural centrism is also present in Euro-American scientific discourse, but in this discourse, the term does not suggest a belief system. Rather, it signifies a tendency within intercultural communication. The identification of the concepts of cultural centrism and ethnocentrism is typical for the Euro-American scientific discourse. For example, one representative of intercultural philosophy, F. M. Wimmer, identifies four types of cultural centrism: expansionist, integrative, separatist, and transitional. He contrasts this with the positive alternative to the concentric features of pluralism and dialogism [24].

Concerning Russian philosophy, the idea of cultural centrism is regarded largely as a global philosophical idea, that is, a kind of universal principle of existence for a person and society that sanctifies all its aspects. For example, O. V. Khripunkova believes that D. S. Merezhkovsky had a culture-centric orientation. At the same time, the researcher understands cultural centrism as the perception and interpretation of culture as the most

significant phenomenon of society [17]. I. P. Smirnov asserts that the basis of the original historiography of G. P. Fedotov was the culture-centric approach, the essence of which is to justify the nation by culture [14]. Thus, an analysis of cultural centrism provides an opportunity, on the one hand, to assess the creative potential of this idea, and on the other hand, to reveal some trends in the development of modern Russian philosophy. Concerning the methodology of this analysis, qualitative content analysis via historical and philosophical examination as well as hermeneutics seems to be the most relevant object of research (the idea of cultural centrism), and were thus employed by the study's authors.

A historical look at the formation of cultural centrism in Russia

The concept of cultural centrism has a long history within Russian intellectual culture. Initially, it was used to characterize nineteenth-century Russian philosophy. This philosophy was considered culture-centric because it focused on the question of Russia's cultural identity. Russia modernized rapidly under the reforms of Peter I (1672–1725), whose main strategy was to borrow samples of European culture from it and use European cultural examples. That is why the problem of cultural universalism-particularism concerned Russian philosophers. Both Slavophiles (opponents of borrowing European values) and Westernizers (advocates of selective borrowing of European values) posed the problem of the future of Russian culture in the first place. It is no exaggeration to say that Russian philosophy in its thematic content was practically a cultural study, that is, primarily a reflection about the Russian culture. In this respect, it was clearly culture-centered. One example includes the philosophy of N. A. Berdyaev who explicated specific features of the Russian mentality, discovered the cultural essence of the Russian idea, and revealed the cultural origins of Russian communism [3; 4].

In Russia during the twentieth century, the problem of developing Russian culture receded into the background. The prevailing Marxist-Leninist philosophy in the USSR positioned culture as a small part of an underlying economic ideology. However, contrary to the theoretical definition of culture as a secondary phenomenon to economic equality, Soviet individuals identified less as economic individuals, but as elements of specific cultures. One cannot but agree with M. K. E. Weber that the distinctive feature of communism is the absence of an accurate calculation of consumption. Rather, Communist social relations are based on the direct sense of solidarity between the members of the group as well as common values of a non-economic nature [23].

A serious epistemological shift, notably a transition to a new methodological paradigm, is taking place in post-Soviet Russia as a result of the crisis of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the formational approach practiced by researchers for over 70 years. The cultural-historical (O. A. G. Spengler) or civilizational (A. J. Toynbee) approaches are two such examples. Both of these approaches define culture as the fundamental factor of social development. It is at this point that the actualization of the idea of cultural centrism takes place. It is clear that the promotion of the idea of cultural centrism was associated with this critical state of society and the search for a real strategy of national development. The idea of cultural centrism was presented as the saving thread of Ariadne capable of leading society out of the impasse of socialism and toward progress. However, the idea of cultural centrism gained fundamentally different interpretations as it developed. Today, the Russian intellectual community discusses this idea extensively. Russian philosophers, sociologists, and culturologists have divided themselves into two camps: some act as defenders of this idea while others remain their opponents.

Apologetics of cultural centrism

Renowned Russian philosopher and political scientist A. S. Panarin is one of the consistent supporters and advocates of the idea of cultural centrism. In a sense, Panarin is the heir to the ideals of Slavophilism. His concept of “Orthodox civilization” is central to these ideals [11]. However, Panarin understands the idea of cultural centrism not as a narrow participation in national cultural values nor as a retrograde return to national cultural sources. Cultural centrism, according to Panarin, appears as a principle of being, according to which culture is the basis of existence, understanding as spiritual values, religion, and philosophy. Panarin positions cultural centrism as a type of thinking connected with attraction to spiritual dimensions and priorities associated with a certain culture. He characterizes a post-economic person and a post-industrial civilization, opposing the «economic centrism» inherent to industrial civilization [9]. As the researcher states, “the question of the status of spiritual culture, the relationship between economic centrism and cultural centrism is related to the question of the nature of the postindustrial society. The modern Americanized version of liberalism, especially its economic bias, raises the specter that there cannot be a legitimate alternative to economic centrism today, and that any challenge to it is automatically included in the category of retrograde pre-economic traditionalism. Meanwhile, a post-economic person managed to make a statement in all developed countries. The structure of his needs and motivations goes beyond economic centrism” [10]. At the same time, Panarin considers cultural centrism as a way to overcome social disunity: “There are no individual atoms in the culture-centered space; culture, like religion, means a connection, a union of people based on common values” [12].

Panarin is by no means alone in his understanding of the ways of societal development. His conception has points of contact, for example, with the concept of P. Sorokin. Sorokin saw the future of civilization as the transition from a sensitive super-system of values, within which preference is given to material values — an ideational super-system of values — in which intangible, spiritual values hold priority [20]. We note this parallelism in order to emphasize the main idea of Panarin. He expresses this with the help of the idea of cultural centrism — movement of vital signs from material values to ideal.

Famous Russian philosopher V. S. Bibler understands the idea of cultural centrism quite differently. He interprets cultural centrism as a special situation that developed around the world during the 20th century. It is characterized by the promotion of culture in the epicenter of all human deeds. The philosopher states that in the twentieth century, the world wars, universal refugees, social and colonial upheavals, and the rapid acceleration of scientific and technological progress all deprived man of the usual protective shells — state and society itself. When a person is thrown out of his home, from his family, from his social stratum, from the country and into the street, the trenches, concentration camps, or into exile, he is forced to re-form his sociality and his morality. Culture is the only support for a person in this difficult situation. Bibler understands culture not as an independent entity, but as a dialogue between other cultures. He writes, “Culture is there when where there are two cultures <...>. Culture is the facet of cultures, the moment of their mutual development and mutual recovery as a culture”. But such a definition may not be at the expense of a generalization of the same signs different (separately available) cultures, but only in the context of their real communication, reciprocal questioning and responsibility <...> And culture, the more culture, the greater the number of conversations it encourages <...>” [5]. This researcher perceives the world of culture as pluralistic by definition. He believes that dialog is the basis of this world. This logic, in Bibler's interpretation, is not deduction nor induction, but a transduction. He is convinced that

each culture finds itself only in another culture. Different cultures: ancient, medieval, modern, European, Asian, African — are not steps on the ascending ladder of progress but equal types of mind. Bibler notes that, “in the 20th century <...> different values and the intellectual spectra of different cultures converge to meet and destroy their temporal differences <...>. This meeting took place <...> in both the consciousness and the everyday life of every person, be them a resident of Europe, Asia, or Africa” [5]. Bibler understands and interprets culture to be the form of self-determination of human existence, psychology, character, and fate. The existence of the world in this context turns into a “production of culture”, that is the meaning of cultural centrism as a strategy of existence.

Bibler’s concept, for all its originality, is not absolutely unique; however, it has visible points of contact with some ideas of modern European philosophy. We found a certain closeness between the concept of dialogism of V. S. Bibler and the concept of communicative rationality of J. Habermas, who, for example, believes that the moral point of view cannot be found in any “first” principle or in any «last» justification. The sought “moral point of view”, which precedes all moral controversies, arises from the fundamental mutual orientation inherent in actions oriented toward mutual understanding [16].

We also note the clear parallelism in the philosophy of J. Habermas and V. S. Bibler. This makes Bibler's thought quite outstanding in that the transition to cultural centrism means a transition from the monologism of the past to the dialogue of the present and the future.

A well-known Russian researcher specializing in the field of “Big history”, A. P. Nazaretyan puts forward one more interpretation to the idea of cultural centrism. The philosopher understands culture broadly as the world created by man. The researcher determines such a significant fact as the removal of a person from nature, which makes said person all the less natural and more cultural. The promotion of culture in the epicenter of existence is conditioned by the pragmatism of survival — the growing dependence of human life on artificial technologies, transforming the development of culture into the main condition for its existence. Nazaretyan posits cultural centrism as an ideology that assumes a hierarchical evaluation of human qualities and a willingness to sacrifice a substantial part of them for the sake of perpetuating others. As the researcher writes, “I will venture to express the quintessence of ‘cultural centrism’ with the following grotesquely pointed formulation: in the hierarchy of strategic tasks, the preservation of culture is more important and, crucially, more realistic than the preservation of an empirical person (or: art above the nature)” [7]. Assuming that modern humanity is facing a dramatic choice of the development scenario, Nazaretyan identifies three such possible scenarios. The first is physical self-destruction, the closure of the planetary evolutionary cycle. The second is the return of civilization to pre-industrial forms of existence against the background of religious renaissance and other retrograde tendencies. The third is a progressive scenario associated with the radical degeneration of the carrier of the intellect. Nazaretyan is convinced that a rational subject will be forced to artificially transform its material basis to ensure further viability, consistently releasing from the fettering and doomed to degeneration of biological dependencies. Accordingly, he views cultural-centrism as a highly effective strategy for ensuring the survival of man and society: “Having deep historical roots, cultural centrism takes its place along with humanistic, naturalistic and other ideologies, increasing the resource of ideological diversity, which, being in demand at a critical moment, will increase the chances of a Terrestrial civilization to limitless development...” [7].

Some simultaneity of Nazaretyan's concept and philosophy of transhumanism is palpable. Appeal to the ideas of the “classics” of transhumanism J. S. Huxley, F. Galton, J. B. S. Haldane, R. C. W. Ettinger makes the interpretation of Nazaretyan's worldview idea of cultural centrism even more evident.

V. G. Fedotova is another famous Russian researcher who adopts the concept of “cultural centrism”. He is a well-known expert in the field of social knowledge methodology. Fedotova views cultural-centrism as a research program. The essence of this program is, according to Fedotovoy, in the interpretation of culture as the most significant in terms of theoretical and methodological elements of society. The researcher attributes the formation of this program to the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the naturalistic positivistic program of studying social phenomena underwent significant crisis. According to Fedotova, the distinction between nature and culture inherent in neo-Kantianism is the basis of cultural centrism. The discovery of culture as an ontological reality, according to the researcher's conviction, led to the understanding of culture as the main force forming man and society. Fedotova states that cultural centrism was formed as a fixation of the boundaries of the naturalistic program, established the boundaries of the causal explanation. Culture began to be regarded a specific object of knowledge of the sciences of society, requiring its own methodologies. The researcher argues that the first phase of cultural centrism was formed solely as a methodology of the social sciences. The second phase later acquired a general academic value. The extension of the strategy of cultural centrism to the use of natural science methodologies is connected with the interpretation of the natural sciences as the embodiment of the active activity of a socio-historical subject [15].

Fedotova's thoughts are extremely consonant with contemporary European cultural sociology. For example, one of the representatives of the Neoweberian F. H. Tenbruck regards society as an actualized culture [21].

Criticism of Cultural Centrism

The idea of cultural centrism, as already noted above, has both many supporters and opponents. Even its opponents interpret the concept very differently.

Famous Russian philosopher S. N. Artanovsky considers cultural centrism a principle narrowing the horizons of human existence: “Human existence <...> is a multipolar world. The task of philosophy is not to search for its fictitious ‘centers’, but to show the versatility of human existence...” [2].

E. L. Antonova and A. E. Taranova qualify cultural-centrism as the embodiment of cultural conservatism and monism, as an opposition to multiculturalism with the notion that multiculturalism is centrifugal and cultural conservatism is a product of centripetal trends in culture [1].

A. V. Pavlov identifies cultural centrism within Russia as a social and political system imposed by the government aimed at replacing communism [8].

A.A. Sladkova believes that the idea of cultural centrism is fraught with authoritarianism; it is designed to perform the function of suppression of the individual [13].

G. N. Minenko believes that cultural centrism is the “absolutization of cultural determinism”, in which neither biopsychological nor social determinants of humanity and society are considered [6].

The list of challenges and challengers to cultural centrism can be continued; however, criticism in of itself is not the point. Criticism of the idea of cultural centrism should not be considered an excuse for a radical rejection of this idea. This criticism plays an important role — it subjects cultural centrism to challenges that prevent its transformation into an ideological or mythological construction. In essence, the future of the idea of cultural centrism depends to some extent on how much the idea of cultural centrism becomes corroborated or open to further criticisms [19].

Conclusion

Thus, even a brief overview of the concepts of cultural centrism put forward by Russian philosophers allows us to draw a number of important conclusions.

First, despite the fact that cultural centrism as a global philosophical idea is the expertise of Russian philosophy, it does not at all run counter to the world's tendencies in the development of philosophical thought; moreover, it has various points of contact with it.

Secondly, undoubtedly, the idea of cultural centrism has a certain creative potential. Obviously, this idea does not appear by chance, it reflects some important social processes, global intellectual shifts. Appeals to culture can be considered appeals to creativity because culture is a product of human creativity, and creativity is not only an anthropogenic phenomenon, but is also "cultural-genic".

Thirdly, like any idea, the idea of cultural centrism has its Achilles heel. The main difficulty in gaining the idea of culture centrism as an existential principle is the diverse number of differing interpretations of the concept of "culture". We can say that there are just as many definitions of cultural centrism as there are definitions of culture as such. The conflict of interpretations unfolding around this concept is one of the factors that call into question the working capacity of the idea of cultural centrism.

Fourth, the fate of this or that philosophical idea depends not only on how deeply it is worked out both logically and conceptually. It depends on whether the world's intellectual community accepts it or not. The well-known American historian of science Stephen Toulmin regards the evolution of science as a process of increasingly deeper and adequate understanding of various spheres of reality through more adequate concepts. He believed that the development of new concepts is a collective matter for only the intellectual environment makes it possible to survive those conceptual populations that are most adaptable to it [22].

Finally, we should not absolutize the principle of cultural centrism, seeing in it a certain final point of the evolution of society and knowledge.

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