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Understanding Horizons In Methodology of Socially-Humanitarian Cognition

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In the given article we consider the conditions and perspectives of development of understanding. Evolution of understanding in capacity of cognitive tool is analyzed with a due consideration of change in the system of scientific knowledge. Authors describe and name stages of understanding development and define its determinants. Correlation between scientific rationality type and model of understanding was ascertained, and so, for the exploring of modern stage of understanding development the principles of postnonclassical rationality were researched. It was fixed, that modern scientific rationality can be treated as "understanding" one. As an example, we investigate the theory of "responsive" rationality by B. Waldenfels, where understanding exists as paradigm and synthetic model of understanding is revealed.

Keywords: socially-humanitarian cognition; cognitive tools; scientific rationality types; semiotic, ontic, gnoseologic, praxeologic modi of understanding; models of understanding; "responsive" rationality

Introduction

It seems that rapt attention philosophy had paid on the problem of understanding during the XX century, uncovered all mysteries of this human dominant phenomenon and gave irrefragable answers to the question about importance of understanding among humanity's methods. Investigations made in hermeneutics and philosophy of language (Dilthey, Gadamer, Ricoeur) highlighted key points in this field. Understanding in capacity of scientific problem had gone out of fashion and this entailed positive consequences. Now we can impartially and well-grounded investigate a question about understanding because urgency of such research is determined by external, concerned

with logic of science evolution as a whole, and internal, concerned with regularities of evolution understanding as phenomenon, reasons.

The scientific methodology specialization becomes clear in the beginning of XX century as the opposition of «sciences of nature» and «human sciences» and the opposition of scientism and anti-scientism. This particularized exploration strategies are not correspondent to modern scientific conception of world. Modifications of cognitive standards arise from the situation of changing scientific rationality types.

Thus, tendency towards humanization of natural science, perception of the nature becomes a sort of a dialog in which researcher questions the nature about its sense. As founders of

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synergetrics – one of the most profound theories in the modern postnonclassical science – said, in epistemology today the aspiration to structure the world amplified with the desire to understand it. It may be noted, that strict monological scientific approach replaced by flexible interpretative and dialogical, the most important part in which is played by understanding because it gives an opportunity to investigate different schemes of intersubjective and intersystemic interactions.

Understanding being the element of socially-humanitarian cognition at XX century endured common for the whole science transition from nonclassical to postnonclassical phase in self-evolution. Therefore, the dynamics of socially-humanitarian methodology causes the necessity of its philosophic substantiation. While science self-reflection is rising, the significance of understanding is growing too.

It is important to emphasize that because of supposed evidence and clearness of «understanding» both as the sort of the concept and the denoted phenomenon its semantic field began to enlarge spontaneously. From the ordinary point of view understanding is the capability to comprehend, to perceive the substance, the meaning of something. Understanding is often interpreting as the thought component that provides relations appeared between already known characteristics of cognizable object and new characteristics. It is popularly in psychology to explain understanding as the clearing of significant internal of outward things. Some research workers describe understanding in the meaning of extra knowledge that founded at harmonious work of all human centers and that develops extraordinary capabilities.

Reflexive analysis of understanding caused by the ambiguity, concerning its definition as process, technology and result. «Erosion» of the value of the concept «understanding», caused by its «clearness by itself» (M. Heidegger),

requires return to history of understanding in order to find in it bases for a stricter, clearer and more critical operating with this concept. Since the methodological value of understanding is growing, we can mark the necessity of the investigation of its structure, modi and models.

The usage of the term «understanding» in the area of new computer languages may be considered as demonstrative in this regard. Appearance of the new virtual space of communication requires appropriate resources, which ensure accumulation, storage, transferring of information, universal means of coding, and consequently, the means of decoding, which are thought as means of understanding. Very cooperation between person and the artificial intellect transfers the problem of understanding into the plane of the technical-engineering solutions, filling it with new content. Understanding acquires the value of «pragmatic ontology» in the contemporary linguistics, in different lingual practices. Cognitive theories developed as interdisciplinary studies make it their aim to create the system, where all processes taking place through understanding of discourses will be coordinated (T.A. van Dijk, V. Kintsch). The field of application of the «understanding approaches» is increasing, and as a result of this the return to the philosophical comprehension of the phenomenon of understanding can be indicated.

In philosophy, the problem of understanding is actualized in such periods of the cultural-historical process, when previously stable communications between basic sense-constitutive concepts are disrupted and new Weltanschauung tasks exceed the limits of accumulated experience and theoretical thought. Possibility and conditions of mutual understanding become obstacles important to eliminate. Understanding determines the quality of life, incomprehension, as many contemporary analysts note, «threatens by nonexistence» and leads to «the alienation

of senses from each other, the no acceptance of other senses», other traditions and the cultures, which begin to be received as strangers, who do not have right to exist.

Understanding acquires additional significance as «social praxis» while using «phronestic» (by V.I. Bakshtanovsky) technologies. «Phronesys» means practical knowledge that presupposed the individuality of application; it is located between epistema and tekhne, theoretical knowledge and skill-knowledge. This practical knowledge is not external; it appeared as the result of understanding, internal consciousness of the localized acting association (Bakshtanovsky, 2006). To «understand» means «to know what to do with this knowledge, to display the skills to apply it, to teach and convey it aptly to others» (Grondin, 2000, 76). Contemporary humanitarian technologies become «understanding» (for example, «understanding sociology», «understanding jurisprudence», «understanding ethics»), that can be considered as reciprocal reaction to the propagation of the expert knowledge ideals, that have caused the specific unification. Individual's existence manifests itself in a unique fore-structure of understanding. The emergent trend in human science research recognizes that the scientific method alone cannot explain human experience or, more importantly, precipitate an understanding of it (Holroyd, 2007).

New possibilities of understanding as methodology come to light as a result of attempts to create the theory of understanding made in the investigations in the logic and the methodology of the science that began at 70-80 years in XX century. Significance of understanding depends on the fact, that it could be the element of methodology both socially-humanitarian and natural sciences. And what is more, science and its methodology becomes the object of understanding. In view of this approach any components of

the investigation even those, which that are not scientific, also must de include into cognition. Moreover, in science itself exists the tendency to become «understanding». Thus, «case-studies» is an innovative educational technology, which is oriented to situation studies, since the cultural objects do not yield to explanation on the basis of general laws and are assumed understanding and phenomenological description.

In the study, depended on the situation, the variety of types and forms of knowledge «shows» itself, and the analytic methods using in research of social content of knowledge and oriented for the understanding begin to predominate in epistemology itself.

The purpose of this study is to discover the basic tendencies and directivity of the processes of converting understanding in contemporary socially-humanitarian knowledge and to define the most adequate to the postnonclassical type of rationality model of understanding. This investigation has to uncover the dynamics of understanding in the social-philosophical methodology, solving following questions: how was defined methodological status of understanding and how it was transformed from the earliest ideas about it up to now? What are the factors and the conditions, which influenced changes in status of understanding? Is there a correlation between the variety of understanding and the type of scientific rationality? What special features does possess understanding in present development stage of scientific methodology?

Materials and Methods

Analysis of modern native authors as L.G. Ionin, V.G. Kuznetsov, A.A. Mikhaylov, V.N. Porus and others became the theoretical basis of work., because in their studies different, in the first place, methodological, aspects of understanding as the phenomenon are investigated. It is necessary to emphasize specially that elaborated problems

required the use of interdisciplinary approach and bringing to works on social philosophy, history of philosophy, theoretical sociology, hermeneutics, science of language, general linguistics.

As the methodological basis of this study have been choose the dialectical principle of the unity the historical and logical and dialectical analysis, which reveals development and evolution of understanding in such oppositions as subject-objective/subject-subjective models of knowledge; understanding/explanation; scientistic/anti-scientistic traditions in the methodology of knowledge. Furthermore, in the course of a study the method of comparative-historical analysis; the method of structural-functional analysis; the hermeneutic principles of analysis; the method of simulation were used.

Results

A comprehensive study of understanding in the methodological system of socially-humanitarian knowledge founded on the method of the unity of historical and logical made it possible to establish that the types of scientific rationality caused the dynamics of role, status and content of understanding.

The historical analysis of the development of understanding both in philosophy and in theoretical sociology allows fixing the evolution of understanding from the procedure and skills to the category, the principle and the method. We defined the basic stages of understanding development in capacity of the cognitive tool: exegetic-rhetorical, hermeneutics-axiological, and linguistics-ontological. The significant criteria for this typology accepted ideas about the purpose, subject and object of understanding, and about the approaches to the interpretation of language and text, which were relevant to characterizing period. The representative signs of stages were determined and described.

Exegetic-rhetorical stage:

Understanding consists in the immanent interpretation of text with the purpose to reconstruct the existing sense. Subject of understanding is interpreter, who reconstructs, but not creates sense. The object of understanding is text with the sense inserted in it by creator. Text could be understood from itself: the whole from the parts composing it, the part from the sense and the content of the whole. However, text is extra-historical by itself. Language is considered as the method of logical categories and laws existence. The reflection above understanding has a nature «the instruction to skill».

Hermeneutics-axiological stage:

The efforts of understanding are directed toward recreation author's way of thinking by means of «the penetration» into his internal peace, the identifications with his personality. Subject of understanding is interpreter, congenial to the author, in his own way reconstructing the author's thought on the basis of empathy. The object of understanding is the Other. The Other is understood by growing accustomed, the generality of spirit, and the reference to the transcendental universe of values. Language is a special world that have been established by spirit and functioned as the mediator between the spirit and the object world. Reflection above the understanding is the theoretical substantiation of the universal method of operation, directed toward understanding the thoughts of another.

Linguistics-ontological stage:

Understanding consists in interpretation and explication of the senses, symbols, rules which are generally significant. Subject of understanding is participant in the communication in the «vital space» with other people. The object of understanding is the whole world, which can be understood as a result of «sense horizon fusion», creative attitude toward experience and tradition. Language is considered as the universe of

meanings. Reflection above the understanding is the clarification of the conditions of the veritable «effective» existence.

The most obvious principles of postnonclassical type of rationality give the opportunity to consider understanding as the precondition of any knowledge, the characteristic of the human life, a necessary stipulation of any activity. It has allowed to define the understanding status as the «paradigm». The understanding in the new status – as the paradigm – reveals itself in philosophical systems of K.-O. Apel and J. Habermas, and this permits to establish the basic characteristics peculiar to understanding at present time. These characteristics are universality, unity of ontological, methodological and axiological concernment, integration of a theoretical and practical orientation. The present stage of development of understanding can be named as ethics-pragmatical.

The philosophical reflective analysis has led to detection of some features of socially-humanitarian knowledge, which cause the importance of understanding, first, in social science and humanities. Among such features, we can mention the textual nature of cognizable objects, dialogical character of cognitive procedures, orientation to revealing of senses and values. Description the specificity of understanding in comparison with such method of natural-science knowledge as explanation, allows accentuating its universal character. Understanding as the certain way of existence organizes theoretical, all kinds of day-to-day and communicative activities. The requirement for understanding stimulates cognition; the initial pre-understanding underlies scientific investigations.

Addition of the historical analysis of understanding with the logical has demanded its examining in such modi as gnoseological (understanding as the method of knowledge), semiotic (understanding as the technique of disclosing of the signs maintenance), ontic (understanding as the principle, constituting a social reality or immanently inherent to existence), ethics-communicative and praxeological (understanding as the paradigm, setting the forms of nonviolent interaction) (Table 1).

During research it was possible to describe the basic models of understanding in the system of the socially-humanitarian knowledge, defined by status of understanding as cognitive tool; these models are conditionally designated as «semantics-grammatical», «rational-psychological», «methodical-constructive», «synthetic» (Table 1). In this case, it is established that in the «synthetic» model of understanding, created under conditions of formation the scientific rationality of postnonclassical type, understanding as the paradigm preserves the modi, inherent in it in the previous stages of its evolution, acquiring in this case new ethics-communicative directivity.

Example

The synthetic model of understanding, developed during given research, reveals on the example of «responsive» («reciprocal») rationality by B. Waldenfels. «Responsive» rationality represents, in contrast to the supremacy of united reason, the space of the encounter of many, each of which is the rationality of the limited order. As consequence, it is necessary to base the possibility of the realization of communications equal in rights and to describe understanding conditions. Semiotic, gnoseologic, ontic and praxeologic modi of the synthetic model of understanding are shown in the views of B. Waldenfels.

«Reciprocal» indicates disposed to understanding of the Other, another Ego, the Stranger. Understanding, preserving technical status, assumes a certain attitude to it, readiness for interaction with the Other. The following condition for understanding is the systematic

Table 1. Models of Understanding

Appellation of the Stage and its Representatives	Status of Understanding as the Cognitive Tool	Understanding Modus	Type of Scientific Rationality	Appellation of the Model
Exegetic-rhetorical Aristotle, Augustinus Sanctus, Ast	technique, procedure	semiotic	preclassical	semantics-grammatical
Hermeneutics-axiological Sleiermacher, Dilthey, Weber	category, method	gnoseologic	classical	rational-psychological
Linguistics-ontological Heidegger, Gadamer, Schutz	principle	ontic	nonclassical	methodical-constructive
Ethics-pragmatical Habermas, Apel, Waldenfels	paradigm (technique + method + principle)	semiotic + gnoseologic + ontic + praxeologic	postnonclassical	synthetic

organization of the dialogue, in which Self and Alien, preserving difference are adjoined and interact. The new type of communication formed in culture as «a network of relations» leads to the appearance of «between-sphere», «between-area». «Between» means opposition «Self» and the «Other»: «Self», «Own» – that is in possession, the «Other's» – that is inaccessible. At the heart of understanding, thus, occurs the analogy with «possession»: own «vital world» is basis, principle for understanding of the fact that is new. As B. Waldenfels noted: «The alienness in the midst of myself opens paths to the alienness of the Other… The otherness of the Other will be forever derived from the own. The Other appears as an alter ego, i.e. strictly as a second me» (Waldenfels, 2002). That which is understands serves as ontic basis of «the vital world»: the «Alieness» is cogitable, when the modification «of our own» is seen in it.

«Responsive» rationality proves the new «responsive» ethics in which the understanding appears in its paradigm status. Ego is not contained completely by Self; therefore it is always forced to regulate relations with the Stranger whom unavoidably meets. The reciprocal theory establishes the possibility to the Stranger to start talking on its own behalf, without being incorporated in the routine and consequently without being deprived of his own voice. The Other as not-Me, as another subject demands sympathetic relation, an equality and self-value recognition. Interactions with the Other are regulated by ethics. The postnonclassical type of rationality forms as the model of knowledge and action the paradigm of understanding in which it appears as technology (possession of values into the communication), as method (empathy, interpretation of the Other as self), as ontological (dialogue as the base of any interactions) and ethical (co-existence of Ego and the Stranger with equal rights) principle.

Understanding as the paradigm proves possibility of «answer», being the base, the method and purpose for it.

Resume

Those changes have occurred in the system of scientific knowledge in the XX-th century, connected with the replacing types of scientific rationality, have the important consequences for determining of a role and value of understanding as the phenomenon in contemporary philosophy and methodology. New type of rationality defines as communicative, in which initial understanding is the necessary condition of the

very possibility of communication, and reaching mutual understanding becomes its purpose. Reconsideration of cognitive activity leads toward assertion that the understanding should be included in the structure of scientific rationality, since the knowledge is the joint activity of subjects. Subject of cognition is collective subject; therefore, the nature of scientific knowledge is treated as communicative. The interpreting reason, in contrast to the legislative, does not insist on its absolute superiority, it participates in the dialogue and is interested in its continuation. The activity of the interpreting reason is connected with sense creating and with understanding; the deductive approach to knowledge is substituted by interpretation from the different prospects.

According to the classical approach to the process of knowledge based on the subject-objective opposition, knowledge these are either detection of the existing sense or attributing it to an object. In the first case, knowledge and understanding are identical, in the second they are opposite. In accordance with the subject-objective scheme the sense is set initially, its carrier is either object, or the subject. In nonclassical researches, the understanding is examined in the subject-subjective cognitive model: the sense is created anew in the process of interpretation. Subject, being involved in certain cultural tradition, extracts senses from its funds, but at the same time constantly creates something new (V. Porus). In the course of historical development, the understanding acquires the paradigm status in connection with the formation of the new type of rationality. In preclassical type of rationality, the experiment place occupied the complete contemplation of the nature; understanding took the form of procedure, technology, skill and has been directed on decoding, extraction of the sense hidden in a sign. The success in understanding has been caused by grammatical and contextual competence of knowing.

The formation of classical type rationality has led to the appearance of the new, methodological, status of understanding. The correct method of knowledge promotes to fix the profound truth, and for «human sciences» in that function had been designated an understanding method. Understanding both as «the empathy», which makes possible for one subject to discover another, or as the reconstruction of subjective sense, which was assumed by the acting subject and which was in practice the reason for action, conjectures that man is also the object of knowledge, but specific, and he can be gotten to know by means of the adequate method.

«Understanding» as the method had been characterized by clearness and severity, but this qualities were replaced while its wider examination as the principle in the rationality of nonclassical type. In the nonclassical type of scientific rationality subject in the common image of the world is an observer, who in many respects determines the purpose, the method and result of research (Viktoruk, 2002). The understanding of rules, self-understanding and mutual understanding are the basic principles of social interactions, the understanding gets value of the form of a life, inherent for it internally, fundamental determination of human life, ontological basis of human existence.

The coming-to-be and self-organizing paradigm strengthens in postnonclassical type of scientific rationality. As consequence, the truth is described not as a copy from object, but as a process of its creating, constructing. As a result «the humanization» of natural characteristics occurs. Man is included in the image of the world not only as the participant of natural processes, but as system-forming principle, as the basis of any knowledge about the world. In the reality, where all is a process and there is nothing out of a process, the position of «the external observer» is occupied by «self-transcendenting subject»,

who can be understood only in the dialogue, in which the new sense is born. For self-realization «Ego» needs the Other, who's existence allows to compare and carry out distinction.

Thus, at the modern postnonclassical stage of scientific rationality understanding crystallizes all characteristics inherent in it during the previous periods of evolution.

1. Understanding is qualified as a condition of any mutual relations with the Other in which the tolerance requirement is realized.

2. Understanding keeps value of the method that allows comprehending the subjectivity, which is presented at all kinds of activity.

3. The understanding is a principle, a basis of human individual and social existence, the form of taking root in the world, which is expressed in language.

4. The understanding is the ethical imperative characterizing action: nonviolent achievement of the consent is a necessary condition of implementation of any interaction.

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Горизонты понимания в методологии социально-гуманитарного познания

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В данной статье рассматриваются условия и перспективы развития понимания. Эволюция понимания как познавательного инструмента исследуется в тесной связи с изменениями, происходящими в системе научного познания. Авторы описывают и именуют этапы развития понимания и определяют их детерминанты. Установлена корреляция типов научной рациональности и моделей понимания, поэтому для исследования современного этапа развития понимания были рассмотрены принципы постнеклассической рациональности. Выявлено, что современная научная рациональность может быть определена как «понимающая». В качестве примера рассматривается теория «респонзивной» рациональности Б. Вальденфельса, в которой понимание приобретает статус парадигмы, и проявляет себя синтетическая модель понимания.

Ключевые слова: социально-гуманитарное познание; познавательные инструменты; типы научной рациональности; семиотический, онтический, гносеологический, праксеологический модусы понимания; модели понимания; «респонзивная» рациональность.