

Methodological Model for Carrying Out a Historical and Philosophical Experiment

Modelo metodológico para llevar a cabo un experimento histórico y filosófico

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ABSTRACT:

The article is dedicated to the question whether it is possible to carry out a historical and philosophical experiment in the modern philosophical discourse. The preconditions of the present paper are intentions for methodological comprehension of the classical philosophy in the postmodernism practice. The study both gives theoretical grounding of the possibility itself and forms a specific paradigm of such research through the example of Plato's philosophy. In terms of methodology, the authors are at one with postmodernists (J. Derrida, G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, J. Kristeva) who admit the possibility of studying the history of philosophy by carrying out experiments, applying the deconstructive approach and using resources of the modern language and conceptual framework. The paper key concepts are: "conceptual persona", "metaphysical persona" and "relation between conceptual and metaphysical personae". The experimental program of historical and philosophical research follows the principle of the historical and philosophical constructivism stating that interaction between the theoretical philosophy and the historical and philosophical science should be fruitful, i.e.

RESUMO:

El artículo se dedica a la pregunta si es posible llevar a cabo un experimento histórico y filosófico en el discurso filosófico moderno. Las precondiciones del presente trabajo son intenciones de comprensión metodológica de la filosofía clásica en la práctica del postmodernismo. El estudio da fundamento teórico de la posibilidad misma y forma un paradigma específico de tal investigación a través del ejemplo de la filosofía de Platón. En términos de metodología, los autores se encuentran en uno con postmodernistas (j. Derrida, G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, j. Kristeva) que admiten la posibilidad de estudiar la historia de la filosofía realizando experimentos, aplicando el enfoque deconstructivo y utilizando recursos del lenguaje moderno y del marco conceptual. Los conceptos fundamentales del papel son: "persona conceptual", "persona metafísica" y "relación entre la persona conceptual y metafísica". El programa experimental de investigación histórica y filosófica sigue el principio del constructivismo histórico y filosófico afirmando que la interacción entre la filosofía teórica y la ciencia histórica y filosófica debe ser fructífero, es decir, pragmático. Mediante la elaboración de un programa de

pragmatic. By drawing up a programme of a specific experimental research, the authors demonstrate that the history of philosophy can use cognitive guidelines of a specific philosophical school for identifying new aspects of development of the philosophical thought. The modern philosophy is able to rise to a new level of development, taking into account the results of the classical philosophy and applying the modern research methodology. The present viewpoint is grounded in a detailed and consistent way in the text of the article that is also an experimental model of philosophical comprehension of the given scope of study.

Keywords: Methodology, experiment in philosophy, history of philosophy, postmodernism, Plato's philosophy.

investigación experimental específica, los autores demuestran que la historia de la filosofía puede utilizar las pautas cognitivas de una escuela filosófica específica para identificar nuevos aspectos del desarrollo del pensamiento filosófico. La filosofía moderna es capaz de elevarse a un nuevo nivel de desarrollo, teniendo en cuenta los resultados de la filosofía clásica y aplicando la metodología de la investigación moderna. El presente punto de vista se fundamenta de manera detallada y coherente en el texto del artículo que es también un modelo experimental de comprensión filosófica del ámbito de estudio dado.

Palabras clave: metodología, experimento en filosofía, historia de la filosofía, postmodernismo, filosofía de Platón.

1. Introduction

The urgency of creating a methodological model of carrying out a specific historical and philosophical experiment was grounded to some extent in the classical philosophy of Socrates and Plato; however, that does not mean it is of less importance for the modern philosophy. The constructive nature of the history of philosophy, possibilities of creating different types of studied topics, as well as various methods and methodological techniques makes it necessary to fix the principles of a specific program of historical and philosophical research. The necessity of such an approach is determined by the modern philosophy need for being philosophy (Austin, 1961).

2. Literature Sources Review and Research Methodology

In a broad sense, the research theoretical basis is the history of philosophy itself. More specifically, the subject basis includes Plato's philosophical legacy, while the theoretical and methodological basis is provided by concepts from the postmodernists' philosophy (Derrida, 2000; Deleuze and Guattari, 2009; Kristeva, 1980; 1986).

Among the prevailing methodological models of historical and philosophical knowledge, the postmodernism model seems to be the most appropriate for objectives and standards of a thought experiment as well as for the nature of the empirical material that was collected in the field of the ancient philosophy. Let us describe briefly both aspects that make postmodernism and a thought experiment closer to each other. In the postmodernism paradigm that was formed on the basis of the structural analysis, one of the main cognitive techniques is so-called deconstruction (Derrida, 2000, pp. 128–129, 137, 141) that implies clarifying only one aspect (external, as a rule) of the studied phenomenon with all its underlying structures. Another reason for choosing postmodernism as a paradigm basis of the experimental program of historical and philosophical research is its fundamentally methodological nature. That allows for considering any given structure not as a real but a supposed or possible subject of the historical and philosophical process.

In our opinion, the postmodernism paradigm seems to be adequate and well-timed for studying Plato's works. Here it is necessary to stress that, despite the accusations against postmodernism concerning inadmissibility of historical and philosophical experimentation, a thought experiment in such material was carried out long before the appearance of this philosophical movement by those philosophical schools that reject the possibility of its application. It is referred to interpretation of the ancient philosophy and Plato's school in Neo-Kantianism, positivism, Hegelianism, Marxism and other theoretical-philosophical and historical-philosophical schools of thought that can only be called "thought experiments" due to their narrow-mindedness.

Now it is necessary to examine the structure of a proposed experimental historical and philosophical program for studying Plato's works. It should be noted from the very beginning

that the program is not reduced but principally well-balanced. It means that it is not limited by one of the cognition levels but admits interaction of several levels of historical and philosophical cognition. However, well-balanced models are divided into complete and partial types. Carrying out a thought experiment in Plato's works implies the emphasis on methods of the cognition theoretical level such as idealization, modeling and formalization that contain already elaborated empirical material. So, it can be stated that this program is partly well-balanced, as it almost does not involve an empirical level. At the same time, the conducted thought experiment has strongly-pronounced philosophical nature. This statement is connected not so much with the subject under experiment (i.e. with Plato's works) as with the research guidelines as such, and self-awareness of the research is one of the key issues for them. For that reason, the most important tools for identifying hidden aspects of Plato's works are the above-mentioned subjective epistemological method, subjective reconstructive method and guidelines method that are parts of the metatheoretical level of historical and philosophical cognition and that demonstrate the attitude of researcher's self-awareness towards the evolution of Plato's self-awareness. In terms of organization, a metatheoretical component of the experiment is not a separate stage of the research. Instead of this, it is a part of the process of reasoning and constructing philosophical genre models, as well as of examining the evolution of Plato's works through its perspective. So, specifying the nature of the structure of the proposed version of experimental historical and philosophical program, it should be admitted that it's organized into a theoretical and metatheoretical model.

Having identified the specificity of the historical and philosophical programme structure, it is necessary to discover the nature of its content. The constructed experimentation model that was examined in terms of its content may be recognized with certainty as a genre model. The model belongs to the communication type of research programs due to its nature, objectives and goals. It is opposed to two other types of organizing historical and philosophical cognition – subjective and nomological ones. It is to be recalled that a subjective type of historical and philosophical programs aims at identifying a subject and driving force of development of the topic, process or phenomenon under study, while a nomological program concentrates the researcher on fixing regularity of this development. By contrast to this, a communication type of research programmes studies means of formation and transfer of philosophical knowledge. Among the communication models, the genre concept of historical and philosophical cognition holds a special place.

3. Results

By its concept, the genre model is a synthesis of the rhetorical and textological models. Together with the rhetorical model, the genre one goes beyond the analysis of written sources because many literary genres have their own basis in different speech practices. For example, the dialogical genre has its origins in philosophical disputes and juridical discussions; the philosophical poem, in its turn, is related to aoidos' legends; scientific and philosophical treatises trace their roots in priests' directives. On the other hand, the nature of an artistic form is largely determined by the specificity of writing. For example, in contrast to speech practices, the dialogical genre allow for both developing a theoretical position and re-constructing views of its actual and potential opponents. Similarly, the philosophical thought that is developed in a poetic form cannot but fall under the influence of those peculiarities which are related to the poem structure and rhyme, as well as of the necessity to apply images, metaphors, allegories, symbols, etc. In its turn, the orientation of certain ways of philosophical thinking to rigor, provability and testability of proposed ideas expressed itself in a prosaic literary form.

A variety of reasons can determine the application of the genre model in historical and philosophical cognition. The most important of them are desire for identifying main conditions of philosophy appearance, necessity of discovering certain aspects of philosopher's works, ascertainment of regularity of the interaction of aesthetic consciousness with other spiritual forms in different periods of time or in different philosophical movements, schools, concepts,

etc. For example, concentration on an artistic form of philosophical works for addressing the issue of the philosophical knowledge genesis from the mythological thinking is related to the fact that myth was originally expressed in a poetic form. So, when analyzing the first philosophical works, it is impossible to leave out an issue of literary genres of these works and the extent of dependence of their content on the form of their expression. Another reason of using the genre program of historical and philosophical research is identifying the main motif in the works of a certain author.

In the same manner as in other models of historical and philosophical cognition, the genre research program applies empirical, theoretical and metatheoretical methods. An empirical component of the genre model is actualized through different linguistic, literary, artistic, critical and other stylistic methods for studying philosophical texts. In its turn, theoretical methods of the historical and philosophical program are presented by an aesthetic component of a specific philosophical text. The texts themselves may be considered as ideal constructions acting as a specific subject of phenomenological, structuralism, Marxism, Neo-Kantianism and other types of research. The theoretical methods are closely connected with metatheoretical methods that develop different forms of self-awareness of an aesthetic component of philosophical thinking. Aesthetic self-awareness of philosophical thinking shows itself in addressing the issues of interrelation between philosophy and art, value and cognitive thinking, as well as in explaining the choice of artistic means for expressing different types of worldview.

The first methodological precondition of a thought experiment in historical and philosophical cognition is that a researcher has his/her own specific philosophical views. Such a precondition is formed with the use of a subjective reconstructive method that, in fact, is nothing more than self-reflection of the historian of philosophy. As a rule, a researcher, even he/she belongs to a certain philosophical school, proposes his/her own version that differs significantly from other interpretations and needs identification and specification. So, it seems necessary to fix our own philosophical position before carrying out a historical and philosophical experiment in Plato's works.

The second precondition of carrying out a proposed historical and philosophical experiment is accurate fixing of self-awareness of the philosopher under study. This task is completed by a subjective epistemological method that is aimed to express the logic of developing views of a certain philosopher, school or movement.

The third precondition of implementing an experimental program of historical and philosophical research is identifying its author's attitude towards the theoretical material under study. Addressing the issue is possible by applying a guidelines method. The method is about clarifying the nature of those guidelines which are a kind of lens for the researcher in perceiving the subject under study. The importance of the guidelines method is both in the variety of epistemological guidelines (criticism, apology, interpretation, popularization, overthrow, among others) and the possibility to change them in the process of historical description and reconstruction. Identifying specific features of this method is an important result of this research.

4. Discussion

Direct construction of an ideal model and observing its core subject is carried out on a theoretical level of historical and philosophical research. Idealization (the first method of theoretical cognition) is applied in developing such concepts as "philosophical genres", "conceptual and metaphysical personae", "relation between conceptual and metaphysical personae", etc., that are elements of the genre model. In this regard, let us examine the results of applying the methods of idealization and theoretical modeling not separately but in their interrelation.

Firstly, let us touch upon the process of forming the most important elements of the genre model. This process is fixed initially with the idealization method, and then with regularity of

the given model functioning. The indicated methods develop with the help of theoretical modeling. So, the genre model includes three essential elements: a conceptual persona, i.e. author's position in a chosen literary form; a metaphysical persona, i.e. speculative reality that can be described; a type of relation between conceptual and metaphysical personae, i.e. artistic and intellectual means of expressing speculative reality. Let us examine each point in a more detailed way.

Notion "conceptual persona" was taken from book "What is philosophy?" authored by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, where it is defined in the following way: "The conceptual persona is not the philosopher's representative but, rather, the reverse: the philosopher is only the envelope of his principal conceptual persona and of all the other personae who are the intercessors, the real subjects of his philosophy" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, pp.74–75). In the presented research, notion "conceptual persona" got an additional aesthetic sense and is used in general and specific meanings.

In a narrow sense, a conceptual persona is understood as Plato's position in different periods of his work, for example the positions of correspondent or stage director in setting forward the Theory of Ideas. Each of them, on the one hand, did not exhaust Plato's ideas and his creative potential and, therefore, was his specific role; on the other hand, each of them determined the choice of methodological and artistic means for representing the speculative being. Therefore, one should not consider a conceptual persona as identical to Plato's personality; it is only one of the structural elements of the philosophical genre and, as a structural component, it is independent of the author. For example, when materializing a rhetoric version of the philosophical dialogue, any person, if he/she were Plato, would have to take a reporter position. Conceptual persona's involvement into the genre structure turns the genre into quite an independent force that is able to dictate (to a certain extent) its will to the philosopher.

Now let us dwell on the aesthetic specificity of the notion. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari used the notion of conceptual persona for denoting the subject of the philosophical thought as such. At the same time, it is opposed to "aesthetic figures". The reason of such opposing is that "art thinks no less than philosophy, but it thinks through affects and percepts" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, pp. 76). In the proposed paper, this statement served as a basis not for separating a conceptual persona from aesthetic figures, but for their examination as a single whole, viz. as a conceptual persona of the philosophical genre. Here it should be noted that such conjunction is not universal, it is not spread over the whole philosophy but is used as an aesthetic method for analyzing the Greek thought till the Aristotelian era.

The second basic structural element of the philosophical genre is a metaphysical persona. This notion is also related to G. Deleuze's philosophy, but there it was used under the name "concept". The reason of renaming this notion is its following description: "...the concept is therefore both absolute and relative: it is relative to its own components, to other concepts, to the plane on which it is defined, and to the problems it is supposed to resolve; but it is absolute through the condensation it carries out, the site it occupies on the plane, and the conditions it assigns to the problem. As a whole it is absolute, but insofar as it is fragmentary it is relative" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, pp. 28). The distinction of absolute and relative in the concept that was noted by G. Deleuze corresponds to the symbolic understanding of the outside world in the ancient culture.

The Greeks attributed special sense and sacral meaning to sensuous things and events of daily and sociopolitical life. Accepting the sense had hermeneutic content, but along with this it was referred to non-critical perception (Wachterhauser, 1986, pp. 243–276). So, the exterior form indicated inner content of things and events, as well as a latent subject of action – a metaphysical persona. This term seems to be more appropriate for describing the Greeks' thinking, as, in contrast to the notion "concept", it has not only theoretical but also aesthetic and spiritualistic meaning. Indeed, the notions of the Greek philosophy are not abstract categories but spiritual aesthetic items that infinitely approach to the divine completeness of being, that do not depend on arbitrary subjective opinion and can be denoted as metaphysical

personae.

The third structural element of the philosophical genre is relation between conceptual and metaphysical personae. The appearance of this notion was based on rethinking Deleuze's term "plane of immanence".

Methodological means, at least in case of Plato's works, act as an individual way of comprehending the truth. In other words, Plato's dialectics in different forms is generalization of Plato's personal efforts as a thinker. By contrast to this, artistic techniques (allegories, parables, stories about mystical revelation) act as means for convincing the reader of the truth of the author's viewpoint.

At the same time, it would be incorrect to talk about an aesthetic aspect of philosophical genres only as a means for popularizing philosophy. For Plato, as well as for his predecessors, the truth is inseparable from the beauty, so the truly beautiful cannot but be good. However, in triad "Truth-Goodness-Beauty" the preference is given to the Beauty. No wonder that in the parable about the cave the true being is comprehended with the visual sense (Plato, 1994). So, the aesthetic aspect plays an important role as a criterion of the truth. It is necessary not only to understand but to see the item with a thought eye, examine all its components sequentially. In its turn, the item itself draws the eye with its perfection. Training a person and making him/her a philosopher is related not only to the choice of a conceptual persona and demonstration of a metaphysical persona that is hidden from senses, but also to a certain sequence of discovering its aspects. Missequencing immediately leads to fragmentary perception and creates obstacles for comprehending the truth. The combination of sequence of logical actions and different artistic techniques determines the nature of a philosophical genre.

Despite being simple, the proposed structure of the philosophical genre discovers the unity of theory and aesthetics in philosophical genres of the pre-Aristotelian era. For example, a conceptual persona is both methodological guidelines, a starting point of cognition and author's position; a metaphysical persona is both a philosophical subject and a subject of narration; a type of relation between these personae is both a method and artistic means of expression. Being applied to different literary forms which the Greek thought was clothed in, the structure allows for more vivid identification of aesthetic ways for demonstrating any philosophical content. For that reason, the proposed scheme is applied for the philosophical poetry, prose, rhetoric and different types of the philosophical dialogue.

As is well-known, a final objective of the theoretical method of cognition and the formalization method is developing a theoretical law. In the context of philosophical knowledge, this requirement appears impractical on the face of it; however, after more careful examination it seems that philosophy is originally aimed to discover the most general and universal objective laws of being, consciousness and cognitive activity. At the same time, the regularities which are formulated within the philosophical knowledge system are universal by their content but conceptual by the form of their expression; that is why they do not become generally accepted. Being a part of the philosophical knowledge at large, the historical and philosophical science cannot formulate universal obligatory laws of developing philosophical thoughts that would be recognized by the whole philosophical community. However, the regularities which were identified by it through conducted research are strictly necessary and are an essential condition for rational comprehension of the philosophical history. In this paper, the role of theoretical regularity that was identified by carrying out a historical and philosophical experiment implements the principle of life symbolization. The principle states that the ancient culture was developed from contemplating the natural being to comprehending the ideal being. It is a process of creating different levels of symbols, where each following level represents more abstract construction than the previous level.

It is possible to mark out the following essential levels, where the process of forming aesthetic and philosophical components of Plato's dialogues takes place: 1) practical level (process of making wine); 2) mythological level (the myth about Dionysus); 3) psychological level (the idea of catharsis); 4) ritual level (bacchanal rituals); 5) dramatic level (Attic tragedy); 6) social level

(rhetorical practices); 7) historical level (Socrates' fate); 8) literary level (dialogical genre); 9) philosophical level (idealism as a theory of salvation). In a more simplified form, the origin of the philosophical dialogue looks like this: it traces its roots from the Attic tragedy that appeared from the Dionysus cult that, in its turn, symbolically expressed death and revival of grapes in the process of making wine. The given schemes allow for drawing a conclusion that the form and content of Plato's dialogues harmoniously supplement each other as they are enrooted in dramatic perception of the reality that is inherent to the Greek mythological consciousness at large. However, a more important conclusion is that the mentioned levels that are stages of developing the dialogical genre aims at gradual idealization (formalization) of structural elements and substitution of sensual and visual content for purely cogitative one. Due to this, it can be stated that the regularity which was discovered during the historical and philosophical experiment has theoretical nature and is a result of applying the formalization method.

As it has already been mentioned, the proposed historical and philosophical research program belongs to a partly well-balanced type of research programs, viz. to a theoretical and methodological type. Due to this, the empirical methodology was not examined in a detailed way during the development of the research program. However, it does not mean that such methodology is completely excluded from it. In the historical and philosophical science, a thought experiment is never purely theoretical, it always uses empirical material. However, these methods do not influence much the process itself. They become highly important in the process of checking a hypothesis created by the thought experiment. Nevertheless, this research do not go beyond the thought experiment, and that is why we'd like to note that in the historical and philosophical cognition, the theoretical methods rest upon descriptive, corporatist and critical approaches of studying empirical material that have also found use in the proposed experimental study on Plato's works.

5. Conclusion

Having examined the basic stages of the proposed version of an experimental program, we need to specify the understanding of the historical and philosophical science it is based on. To a large extent, it is related to theoretical and methodological nature of the research that implies addressing the issue of the discipline self-awareness. Solving this problem, the experimental program of the historical and philosophical science proceeds from autonomous understanding of its nature. It means that the history of philosophy is recognized as a separate discipline that has both scientific and cognitive philosophical means. The synthetic nature allows the history of philosophy to rest, on the one hand, upon historical description as a means of comprehensive study of empirical material and, on the other hand, upon mental activity as a tool for forming complete conceptual perception of the subject under study. The necessity of synthesizing the empirical, theoretical and metatheoretical types of methodology brings up a question before the historical and philosophical cognition about its dependence on philosophical schools. Such dependence would turn the history of philosophy into a part of a certain philosophical system, which would allow to describe it as biased knowledge. At the same time, full rejection of interaction with philosophical school would turn the history of philosophy into a purely descriptive discipline with no philosophical spirit. For that reason, the experimental program follows the principle of the historical and philosophical constructivism stating that interaction between the theoretical philosophy and the historical and philosophical science should be fruitful, i.e. pragmatic. The history of philosophy is able to use cognitive guidelines of a specific philosophical school for discovering new aspects of the process of developing the philosophical thought. Therefore, the program of historical and philosophical research admits the possibility of construction and dynamics of both applied methods and initial preconditions (paradigms). However, this dynamics should not be a statement of relativism of historical and philosophical cognition but a condition of its fruitfulness.

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