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THE CATEGORY OF FREEDOM IN THE WRITTEN HERITAGE OF JOHN AMOS COMENIUS AND HRYHORIY SKOVORODA

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The article examines written works of John Amos Comenius and Hryhoriy Skovoroda, the outstanding educators and humanists of the 17th-18th centuries in the context of their interpretation of the concept "freedom". The analysis of the published works of the philosophers reveals multidimensionality of this category. Specifically, freedom is viewed as a universal culture; an individual and social value; an extent of responsibility, et cetera. The research shows that these scholars established dialectical links between freedom, education, culture and humanistic thinking. Culture and erudition of a person develop under the conditions of freedom of the individual and society. Education of a person is a life-long process, it is a basis of virtuous human behaviour, morality and spirituality. John Amos Comenius Comenius and Hryhoriy Skovoroda considered school and university to perform not only educational role, but above all cultural and developmental ones. In the context of pedagogical grounds and principles of the philosophers, training and education should be appropriate to human nature and culture. A school should serve as a "workshop of humanity", which requires the activities to be well organised, the attitude to be humane, fair and impartial. Under these conditions, a school becomes a place of true paradise and pleasure as opposed to humiliation, indifference and torture. The paper underlines that the freedom of society largely determines the level of individual freedom. Freedom is an extent of teacher's responsibility.

Keywords: freedom; Jan Amos Comenius; Hryhoriy Skovoroda; culture; education; personality; humanity; value; responsibility.

Introduction

The essence of the notion "freedom" has always been the subject of research of philosophers, educators, psychologists, sociologists and culture experts. Classical philosophy was dominated by two main approaches to the interpretation of the nature and content of the category: subjective (Immanuel Kant – individual freedom) and objective (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel – the basis of freedom is an Absolute idea – the God). These approaches remain valid today in different interpretations. Instead, post-classical philosophy, existentialism (Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Karl Theodor Jaspers), interprets the concept of "freedom" out of boundaries of psychology and gnoseology. The philosophers consider a human being's existential predestination to freedom as an opportunity to revolt, as an overcoming alienation in the context of "I – You" relations.

Thus, freedom is associated mainly with an individual being and is focused on a subjective system of values. Personalism (Borden Parker Bowne, Edgar Sheffield Brightman, Emmanuel Mounier, Josiah Royce, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher and others) considers communication abilities as the core of freedom of an individual. A human remains earthly and divine, the spiritual world of the Creator prompts him/her to freedom and dynamics of individual existence. Voluntarism (Eduard Hartmann, Pyotr Lavrov, Mykhail Mykhaylovskiy, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Arthur Schopenhauer) considers the concept of "individual freedom" mainly in the context of the will to power.

It is not by accident that the category of freedom was the core concept in the heritage of John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), a brilliant Czech philosopher and educator of the seventeenth century, who experienced infringement of freedom and troubles this can cause to a creative personality. The scholar proved that a human as the image of God was created for happiness and freedom. A man, according to the scholar, is a universe in miniature. This wondrous microcosm of endless possibilities may be reached under the conditions of internal and external freedom.

A bit later the concept of freedom became the key point in the works of Ukrainian genius Hryhoriy Skovoroda (1722-1794).

Thus, *the aim of the article* is to analyse the category of freedom in the written heritage of Comenius and Skovoroda in the context of modern realities of education.

Methods of research

The historical and comparative method made it possible to explore the features of the epoch, the socio-economic, political, cultural and educational development of the countries where Comenius and Skovoroda lived and worked. The application of this method allows systematising the philosophers' scientific research on the essence of the concept "freedom", to distinguish common and different features in their research and also to make certain prognostic conclusions about theoretical and practical aspects of realising the outlined definition in terms of modern development of a personality and society.

The bibliographical method was applied in studying library catalogues, written sources, reference books, directly and indirectly related to the life and works of Comenius and Skovoroda.

The historical and logical method was used to analyse the manifestation of freedom in the creative work of famous European enlighteners; the method made it possible to trace the logic in justification of the concept "freedom" on the principles of Christianity. This method also contributed to the study of the issue in dynamics and temporal sequence.

The content analysis method aimed at the analysis and synthesis of the content of the philosophical, historical, educational literature published over the past three centuries in the context of the outlined problem.

Summary of previous research

The written heritage of Comenius has been studied by a number of Ukrainian scholars: Bida, 2006; Vasianovych, 2015; Vitvytska, 1992; Osadcha, 1992; Evtukh, 1992; Zamashkina, 2000; Konforovych, 1970; Levkivskiy, 2006; Martsenyuk, 1994; Mityurov, 1970; Strumanskiy, 1992; Fitsula, 2001; Shved, 1992; Shevchuk, 1970; and foreign scholars: Alt, 1959; Ananiev, 1971; Demkov, 1912; Dzhibladze, 1982; Dzhurinsky, 1981; Hroncová, 2015; Kapterev, 1915; Kozhik, 1980; M. Konstantinov, 1982; Krasnovskiy, 1940; Kratofil, 1991; Lordkipanidze, 1970; Okon, 1990; Piskunov, 1971; Smolianskiy, 1987.

The contribution of Skovoroda to the development of philosophical and pedagogical science and in particular of the category of freedom has been widely investigated by Bahaliy, 1972; Vasianovych, 2015; Kashuba, 2013; Kremen, 2010; Mahnovych, 1972; Olshevskiy, 1971; Pilchuk, 1971; Polishchuk, 1978; Ushkalov, 2004; Chizhevskiy, 2003; Shynkaruk, 1995.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of research works by Comenius and Skovoroda made it possible to conclude that these outstanding scholars interpreted the concept of freedom both similarly and somehow differently.

Freedom as universal culture

Comenius begins his famous work "General Consultation on the Reform of Human Affairs", ("Pampedia" Chapter), with the definition of the Greek word "pampedia" where "pedi" means training and education to make people civilised and "pam" characterises a universality. It means comprehensive learning of everything and by everyone. The thinker stresses that everyone should become educated without exceptions. Skovoroda expresses this idea as follows: "The heart is full when it's enlightened" (Skovoroda, 1983, p. 174). Everyone should get enlightened, not for the sake of education but to adapt to human cultural values. Moreover, culture and erudition of a person can become productive forces under the conditions of free education, the freedom of an individual and society. In this sense, freedom is the universal culture. Comenius (1982c) states that the humaneness should be developed not in several or many people, but in everyone, young and old, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, men and women, – in short, everyone who was born a human being, so eventually, the whole human race will come to culture, regardless of age, status, sex and nationality (p. 283).

Developing this idea, the author argues that education is a lifelong process, a person should be wise, civilised, capable of performing charitable and responsible actions and deeds. Comenius (1982c) points out that every person who receives education can acquire appropriate level of proficiency in all the areas that contribute to the perfection of human nature in order to find the truth and see unrighteousness; to love good and hate evil; to do what is necessary and restrain from doing what needs to be avoided; to discuss everything with everyone, never remaining silent when it is crucial to speak; and finally, to treat people and God wisely, and therefore never abandon one's goal and happiness (p. 283).

It is obvious that Comenius was thinking dialectically: he proved a close relationship between freedom, culture and education, their mutual influence. The scholar considered schools from early stages to university to perform not only educational role, but above all cultural and developmental ones.

This opinion is shared by Skovoroda, who wrote that God creates a spirit of freedom in a human being. Inner freedom is a flower of human life. No title, if it denies the manifestation of freedom, can bring

happiness to a person. The thinker tried to change a routine system of education, to humanise it in order to inspire his students, to develop in them true human cultural values. Instead, his contemporaries – educational functionaries and religious officials practically forbade him to engage in educational activities. Skovoroda made a choice to become a free, "vagabond philosopher" (Bahaliy, 1972, p. 74). He felt freedom in his native land, in secluded woods, among his friends and followers. In one of the songs he wrote:

I shall not enter a rich town – among the fields I shall live,
And shall grow older in the places where time runs slowly.
Oh, the oak grove! Oh, the green! My holy mother!
Merriment for me only the true silence here reveals.
Oh, the wood! Oh, the Freedom! I started to wise up in here.
In thee, my nature, I wish to finish my path
(Skovoroda, 1983, p. 25; S. Sydoriv, Trans.).

Nature was a place where Skovoroda freely created and enlighted his followers. It is appropriate to mention, that the idea of cultural development of European universities was supported by Hegel, 1816; von Humboldt, 1809; Kant, 1786; Karasin, 1804; Lomonosov, 1755; Maksymovych, 1834; Fichte, 1810; and others is extremely relevant nowadays. In Ukraine this idea was introduced by Vernadsky, 1919; Grinchenko, 1906; Hrushevsky, 1917; Ziaziun, 1992; Mishukov, 2014; Ogiyenko, 1917; Franko, 1887; and others. Ukrainian Academician Georgiy Filipchuk (2014) has been conducting a consistent and thorough research in this direction. He points out that cultural development is universal in all dimensions of human existence, and the paradigm – "culture – education – human being – society – world" is a methodological basis for global and national progress (p. 9).

Freedom as individual and social value

Reflecting on the problem of freedom, Skovoroda defined it as the greatest value and the phenomenon that fills human life with meaning. He wrote:

What is freedom? What good is there?
They say it is golden-like
No, all gold of the world
Is but a dust compared to it.
(Skovoroda, 1983, p. 66; S. Sydoriv, Trans.)

Skovoroda perceived a dialectical combination of individual and social freedom as a value in the ratio: the more freedom a person possesses – the more it can be done for the development of society, and vice versa, the freer and more democratic the society is – the more opportunities it creates for free development of a personality.

Reflecting on this complex question, Comenius proved that individual freedom of a personality means free will, i.e. the ability to choose between good and evil. The scholar wrote in his autobiography that the absence of social freedom was a great obstacle to his activity aimed at changing the old scholastic system. His method was aimed at shifting from cruel treatment at school to games and fun. Young people, even nobles, were treated as slaves, teachers built their credibility by a gloomy face, rude words, even beating, they preferred to be feared more than to be loved. The philosopher claimed that this was a wrong way of education (Comenius, 1982a, p. 64). The above shows that the absence of social freedom devalues individual freedom and undermines the beliefs of true humanism.

Freedom and humanism

Comenius was convinced that universal freedom of humanity is manifested in the equality and triumph of the spirit that is based on humanism. Considering a human being the God's best creation, the thinker noted that the human essence was lost; people were condemned to severe sins before God, themselves and other people:

"Instead of mutual love and purity, reign hatred, enmity, war, and murder. Instead of justice, we find unfairness, roguery, oppression, theft, and rapine; instead of purity, uncleanliness and audacity of thought, word, and deed; instead of simplicity and truth, lying, deception, and knavery. Instead of modesty, pride and haughtiness between man and man. " (Comenius, 1896, p. 165)

Hence, humanity should come to freedom and humanism by means of science, education and culture. So naturally Comenius calls schools as "workshop of humanity". It is worth mentioning that this name has a variety of meanings. First of all, it means education which results in developing the best qualities in a person. In another sense, this concept provides for humane relationship between teachers and students in an educational process. In the case of consistent adherence to these requirements, a school will become a true paradise and pleasure, not a place of abuse, indifference and torture.

The analysis of Skovoroda's works shows that he also was a true defender of humanity directing his creativity towards divine perfection and spirituality in a human being. Kremen (2010) admitted that Skovoroda, opposing the cult of reason, went back to the biblical understanding of the heart, wisdom and value of thought. The scientist believes that effective humanism, being related to Ukrainian humanism of the Baroque, comprises a deep understanding of a human being through "vision of the heart", "God in oneself" (Kremen, 2010, p. 9). Thus, the foundations of a new world outlook – humanocentrism were established. H. Skovoroda and P. Yurkevych, the representatives of this philosophical thought established Ukrainian philosophical thinking on the level of world culture" (Kremen, p. 9).

Freedom as a measure of responsibility

Another important idea expressed in the works of the philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Comenius and Skovoroda is about the freedom and responsibility of a teacher.

Comenius considered the issue of responsibility not in a particular work, but in any publication, except, of course, those devoted to linguistics. Besides, we can state that his philosophical and pedagogical activity begins with the work in which a leading role is given to the responsibility of a teacher. In the work "The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart" (1982), the author was concerned about obtaining the occupation that would wholly capture his heart and bring satisfection with the chosen path. The profession of a teacher is the very one.

However, Comenius noted that not every educator has the level of responsibility required for teaching. Many of those who teach, can speak to the audience nicely and artistically about goodness, justice, dignity, they look like angels, whereas outside the classroom, in everyday life they are intolerant, rude, envious and hypocritical (Comenius, 1982d, p. 124).

According to the philosopher, not the laws and the rules written on paper but the conscience should point out how to treat students the way teachers wish to be treated themselves (Comenius, 1982d, p. 178). The external responsibility of a teacher in the contrary to his/her own conscience and calling leads the world to disorder, hatred, anger, aggression, murder, and, as a result, destroys freedom. Under such conditions, a person loses one's freedom and spirituality. The author of "The Great Didactic" emphasised not only an individual but also a collective responsibility, which consequently resulted from the developed and implemented by Comenius collective learning. It was dialectically linked to the personal responsibility of a teacher. A responsible teacher, who cares about his own credibility and prestige, about how to educate students to be active and conscious citizens, first should be highly educated and trained himself. An ignorant teacher is a "shadow without a body, a cloud without rain, a spring without water, a lamp without light, thus, an empty space" (Comenius, 1982b, p. 125).

Skovoroda was of the same opinion. The philosopher and teacher believed that a responsible person would not perform work out of his calling. Moreover, the thinker considered people without a vocation to have a dead soul. "There is hardly a soul being so mean to be ready to take the highest position without hesitation and doubt. This ignorance of the kingdom of God has overshadowed all hearts. No doubt, they are sure that our happiness is tied to a certain title or position, and everything else is given so easily. Without that, a title is not a title unless I am called to it by the Kingdom of Heaven. It is not a calling unless I am born to it. God's Kingdom is everywhere, and happiness resides in any state if you enter it directed by your Creator, who brought you into this world for that; and a hundred times blessed a shepherd who by nature and vocation herds sheep or pigs than a priest who has malice against God" (Skovoroda, 1995, p. 309). Thus, according to Skovoroda, a man is free in his choice; however the choice should be made according to his nature. On this path a person becomes free, receiving and giving the others a true happiness.

Conclusions

An effective teacher's professional activity is possible in a civil society – the society of freedom. It presupposes the relationship between action, freedom and culture. Hegel (1990) noted that the idea of understanding freedom as doing anything that one wants shows the complete lack of a culture of thought, of understanding that "free will is in itself and for itself" (p. 80).

Freedom in pedagogical activity leads to creativity, self-disclosure of teachers and students' personalities, understanding the meaning of life, looking for new ideas. A teacher manifests it in the implementation of educational innovations and in the constant search for the educational ideal in professional activities aimed at humanistic, spiritual and moral education of youth (Budnyk, p. 11).

The problem of forming a "global competence" is actualized in the context of "global education", which involves mastering the system of knowledge about international issues as well as socio-cultural and academic mobility of a modern professional, and educating responsible citizens of the country and the world (Anoshkova, p. 5). This is possible only in a democratic society where a person feels free.

The analysis of the category of "freedom" in the works of Comenius and Skovoroda leads to the following conclusions:

1. The thinkers of the 17-18th centuries defined the nature and content of the category of "freedom" on the basis of Christian principles.

2. Comenius and Skovoroda understood the sense of freedom in obtaining education and culture as a universal value. The scholars promoted the relationship between the concepts freedom, humanism and responsibility of a teacher in professional activities.

3. Teachers are able to realise their creativity and students' potential in the conditions of individual and social freedom.

In our future research we intend to concentrate on:

– noological dimensions of freedom as seen by Comenius and Skovoroda and their realisation in modern educational space;

– the analysis of freedom and creativity in a pedagogical heritage of Comenius and Skovoroda as well as establishing the conditions for students' socialisation.

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