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INTERSUBJECTIVITY BY J. HABERMAS AND SOLIDARITY BY R. RORTY FROM THE COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE OF THE POSTMETAPHYSICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The relevance of studying such constitutional phenomena of social existence as language and communication is determined by the rapid development of information and communications technologies on the background of the total destruction of well-established core spiritual values in the society. Consequently, the adoption of consumption values, generation gap issues, and communication domain deformation are induced by its virtualization. It is becoming increasingly difficult to reach agreement among people, social groups and nations in these conditions. Thus, the matters of intersubjectivity and solidarity, which appeared to be crucial in the post-metaphysical intellectual discourse of the late 20th century when people faced with the globalization of the communicative space, are gaining momentum. The research attempts to specify similarities and differences in the postmetaphysical practices applied by J. Habermas and R. Rorty. The former is associated with the Continental philosophy, Frankfurt school and critical theory, while the latter is associated with the analytical philosophy and pragmatism. Both believed they belonged to postmetaphysics and denied the traditional philosophical concepts of the nature of communication and knowledge. They were united by the aspiration to find effective “instruments” to achieve mutual understanding and consensus in the global communicative realm. Yet, the thinkers differed in their attitudes to solving this problem and it is these differentiating methodological features that are within the focus of this work. Considering the topical humanitarian orientation on the problematic aspects of the language and communication development in the dynamic conditions of information society, the address to the postmetaphysical practices of the above prominent philosophers of the late 20th century will allow enriching modern communication theory, communication ethics and other related philosophical areas with new methodological tools. The findings of the comparative analysis confirm the need to synthesize the achievements of diverse philosophical schools on the way from the metaphysical grounds of the Modern Age to non-classical postmetaphysical thought and to the development of the epistemological instruments for this transition in the conditions of highly changeable social situation.

Key words: intersubjectivity, communication, rationality, solidarity, projective vocabulary.

Formulation of the problem

In the Modern European philosophy a person is understood as a sovereign “subject” of knowledge and activity, which inevitably raises the issues of the degree to which these sovereign subjects are self-sufficient, how they communicate with each other, whether there are any generally accepted conditions for mutual understanding among them. These matters are relevant for cultural, language and social studies, as well as psychology. However, they are still within the scope of the philosophical domain, because it was in the Modern European philosophical paradigm that the problem of intersubjectivity was first formulated

and given the ways of its solution, thus significantly influencing further development of humanitarian knowledge including philosophy itself.

It is common knowledge that classical philosophy recognizes only two types of being: being-in-itself that is passive and purposeless being of objects, and being-for-itself that is the being of transcendental consciousness. A mode of the latter is also being-for-others, which, according to J. Lacan, is one of the failing attempts of the self-consciousness to go beyond its limits. J. Lacan believes that these attempts always result in the subject’s alienation from themselves, when their seeking to constitute their substance via the Other leads the subject to being seized by the Other (Lacan, Sheridan, & Bowie, 2020). Postclassical philosophy suggests the synthesis of Self-being and Other-being, lifting the contradictions between the being-for-itself (where the Other is merely a thing) and being-for-others (where the Other interferes in the area of individual experience and alienates them from their own individual nature). Accordingly, the concept

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of *being-with-others*, free from compromising one's own being, becomes popular in postmodern philosophical practices when analysing the issue of intersubjectivity. In philosophy, intersubjectivity is defined as the commonality of mental structures, thinking, experience and cognition outcomes for different subjects, which ensures the possibility of mutual understanding and personal sociocultural identification (Brinck, 2017). The issue of intersubjectivity emerges in Modern Age philosophy based on the egocentric theoretical-cognitive attitude articulated by Descartes. The Cartesian methodological solipsism led to the appearance of a) the ontological problem of intersubjectivity, meaning the problem of existence of other consciousness; b) gnoseological problem of subjectivity, or the problem of learning the content of the "other consciousness", "other Self".

The Cartesian egocentric position can be implicitly traced in the philosophical ideas of Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, and Kant. David Hume was the first to explore the problems of the egocentric paradigm. He virtually raised the issue of the impossibility to prove the existence of the outer world, "other Self", based on his own "self". However, Hume stayed within the boundaries of the egocentric paradigm, whereas the first thinker who overcame the Cartesian egocentrism in the Modern Age was G. W. F. Hegel, since it was he who proved the essential significance of the intersubjective factor in the process of establishing consciousness and in the cognitive activities. Nonetheless, G. W. F. Hegel focused on the spiritual and moral area, neglecting social and linguistic factors of intersubjective relations.

In the philosophy of the 20th century there was a transformation of the intersubjectivity problem: postmodernism criticized not only egocentrism but also the meaning of the cultural and historical traditions in shaping intersubjective relations. There are still heated debates among the representatives of "traditionalism" and postmodernists regarding the role of the sociocultural factors in the intersubjective relations, in particular, the meaning of language and individual speech patterns in reaching mutual understanding among subjects of communication. Both hermeneutics and postmodernism deny the egocentric attitude, however, they offer different understanding of intersubjectivity. H. G. Gadamer's hermeneutics features "traditionalism", which ties the phenomenon of "pre-understanding" with a certain cultural-historical tradition. Postmodernists, including J. Derrida, R. Rorty and J. Habermas are

against the key role of the tradition and criticize it for "repressive" manifestations.

Habermas and Rorty represent different philosophical traditions, but both considered themselves postmetaphysicists, denying traditional philosophical understanding of the nature of communication and knowledge. The postmetaphysical discourse is still insufficiently studied, because there are still such unsettled issues as the impact of egocentric and intersubjective factors on shaping individual consciousness, the ethic-cultural intersubjectivity, language temporality and many other issues. One of these underexplored issues in the common points and differential modes in J. Habermas's theory of communicative action and R. Rorty's solidarity concept.

Analysis of recent research and publications

The works by J. Habermas and R. Rorty have been within the focus of philosophical debates for a number of decades now. For instance, it is common knowledge that the release of the Habermas's fundamental study "The Theory of Communicative Action" in 1981 spurred a wave of discussions in the Western philosophy regarding its content and meaning. The results of this theory critical analysis are provided, among others, in the collected works "Communicative Action. Essays on Jürgen Habermas's The Theory of Communicative Action", edited by Axel Honneth & Hans Joas (1991). The findings of the debates on cultural relativism and the prospects of neo-pragmatism held among Habermas, Rorty, and Kolakowski in Warsaw in May 1995 at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences were summarized by Niznik J. and Sanders J. T. in the dedicated research collection (Niznik & Sanders, 1996). It made a considerable resonance in the intellectual circles related to the problems of the postmodernist culture establishment. In his program work "Bereft of Reason", American philosopher and sociologist Eugene Halton addressed the difference between the positions of Habermas and Rorty. In his opinion, both philosophers, somewhat in the contrary manner, put the language into the centre of social life, as well as make it the key instrument of human science and faith. Nevertheless, despite common enthusiasm regarding the human postmodernist liberation from the illusions of the charms of religious or metaphysical imagery, in this excessive passion for conventional language theories, Halton sees the consequences of the vicious intellectualism of the 20th century (Halton, 1997).

Habermas's critique of Rorty's neopragmatism and the latter's response to it are subject to scrutiny by K.-M. Kim from South Korea. He emphasizes that both thinkers are unanimous in rejecting the conventional "image" of cultural change, where intellectuals have the "final word" in the so-called cultural issues, while cultural changes are the result of a "dialogue" between them and people outside the field. However, both Habermas and Rorty, according to Kim, still have fundamentally different ideas about the role and function of the language, about the truth and rationality in this dialogue (Kim, 2014).

Another researcher of the Habermas and Rorty's philosophical heritage, the Professor of Law at the Copernicus University in Poland M. Kilanowski (2021) examines the ideas of these thinkers in comparison with those offered by J. Dewey, since he had a significant influence on both of them. The scholar argues that the analysis of the reasons for the opposition between Rorty and Habermas can provide an answer to the question of what kind of politics we need today (Kilanowski, 2021). Further developing M. Kilanowski's thoughts, the American philosopher R. Friedman questions the "postmetaphysical" position adopted by both Rorty and Habermas (Friedman, 2022). Analyzing the discussions of the two philosophers under consideration, P. Soria from the Complutense University of Madrid, tries to identify the similarities and differences in their understanding of the relationship between Truth and Justification. He proves that these relations depend on the ontological and epistemological assumptions concerning each of these concepts, and not on the conditions of speech articulated by Habermas (Soria, 2017).

Claudio Cormick from Universidad CAECE analyzes the differences in the positions of the philosophers based on Habermas's work entitled "Richard Rorty's Pragmatic Turn", first published in 2005. Cormick sees the preconditions for these differences in different reference points: Habermas's focus on the "ideal speech situation" and Rorty's on the subject's ability to justify their beliefs to a competent audience (Cormick, 2020).

The purpose of the article: to carry out comparative analysis of the individual components of the theory of communicative action by J. Habermas and the concept of solidarity by R. Rorty within the context of the evolution of the global communication landscape.

Presentation of the main material

Habermas's theory of communicative action is based not on conventional twentieth-century subject-object opposition, but on an alternative subject-subject paradigmatic structure. Communication in Habermas's theory is not merely a dialog or information exchange, but rather mutually directed relations between agents who claim their significance in the given situation and seek a compromise solution that would be acceptable to all parties. Most contemporary researchers agree that Habermas's theory of communicative action is among the most profound and comprehensive analyses of the communication domain, and its findings are still widely used not only in philosophical but also in psycho-social, cultural, and political discourses. One of the key concepts in the theory of communicative action is that of rationality. Habermas offers to abandon understanding of rational action only in terms of the game theory, where it is implemented in the strategy of achieving a certain goal. In his opinion, it is advisable to apply a broader "phenomenological" understanding, where the main issue is not related to the methods of influencing the world, but to its intersubjectivity – orientation on mutual understanding and agreement with other subjects of the community and shared knowledge of the world. In fact, Habermas uses the term "intersubjectivity" to refer to a community of subjects who speak the language and are capable of social action. This unity arises from the understanding of identical meanings and recognizing of universal claims. It is intersubjectivity that becomes the necessary ground for communicative action.

Therefore, communicative practices allow us to understand the world as objective in the way that it is "the same world for a certain community of subjects capable of using language and acting" or, in other words, as a "Lifeworld" (Habermas, 2015).

Rationality, according to Habermas, should be primarily related to "how language-speaking and acting subjects acquire and use knowledge" [Ibid.], and not only to the fact of knowledge. To justify his opinion, Habermas suggests distinguishing between cognitive-instrumental and communicative rationality. In both cases, propositional knowledge is used, but in the latter, the point is in the communicative understanding, which unites without coercion and is oriented to reaching agreement. Through communication, participants "overcome their initially subjective perceptions and, owing to the shared motivated beliefs, become convinced of the

unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their life ties [Ibid].

The American philosopher Richard Rorty provides a well-grounded critique of the Cartesian paradigm egocentric attitude and proves that the metaphysical search for the foundations of cognition is doomed to fail. “Since Descartes introduced methodological solipsism as a feature of rigorous and professional philosophical thinking, philosophers have been seeking to substantiate the initial foundations of cognition, morality, aesthetic taste, and everything that matters for the inner life of an individual. It is only since the time of Hegel that philosophers have begun to tend to the idea that an individual, isolated from society, is just an ordinary animal”, the philosopher argues in his work “Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature” (Rorty, 2009).

Investigating the nature of the cognitive activity, Rorty indicates that philosophy should avoid viewing cognition as a process of reflecting reality in the mind of the subject, as this conceptual framework presents an oversimplified image of cognition. It is essential to stop considering the language as a tool to express mental or physical phenomena, the philosopher argues. In his work entitled “Contingency, Irony and Solidarity”, Rorty proves that “our language and our culture are contingent, as was the emergence of, for example, orchids or anthropoids through thousands of mutations (and the extinction of millions of other species). We cannot go beyond the historically established “vocabularies” and take a “metaposition” that would provide common grounds for them (Rorty, 2012).

Rorty interprets the concept of a “vocabulary” as an integral sign and semantic continuum into which an individual or a social group is immersed and which it operates. The vocabulary seems to outline the range of familiar lexical units that we extensively use, normally without delving into their analysis. A special role in our vocabularies is played by metaphors, which, according to Rorty, contain group-specific meanings and ideas. Accordingly, the ability to solidarize, as Rorty argues, is the ability to go beyond one’s vocabulary, an attempt to communicate with others and to perceive other vocabularies. Rorty also offers an alternative understanding of moral progress not as “the gradual overcoming of egoism by means of reason”, but as strengthening of our ability to sympathize and trust others. Thus, “my moral development becomes possible through the Other, or rather, through my perception of myself via the Other” (Ibid).

Rorty suggests a similar position to Habermas with regard to the sense of solidarity, which we should not discover somewhere in the depths of our own selves, but shape by justifying for ourselves the commonality with others based on certain features. Moreover, Habermas also considers solidarity a necessary precondition for a successful communicative act, defining it as the willingness to accept the point of view of others (Habermas, 1995). Habermas concludes that the intention to communicate and to accept the world as commonly shared is inaccessible to everyday thinking, which is primarily focused on its own benefits. A communicative act requires an emphasis on mutual understanding, which acts as a coordinating mechanism for communicative action. In other words, the rationality in intersubjectivity is formed through communication, provided that individuals turn to critical reflection and are aim at reaching agreement (Habermas, 1992).

Rorty, similarly to Habermas, argues that not all individuals are capable of solidarity, not everyone seeks to unite with others, but the reason for this lies not in everyday thinking but in the pursuit of autonomy. One of the issues where Habermas and Rorty’s positions differ concerns the universal component that enables communication between different groups with different vocabularies that exist in diverse Lifeworlds. For Rorty, the unique identity of each culture means that it cannot be translated into the language of the intercultural context. Habermas, on the other hand, overcomes this “barrier” by referring to the Kantian categorical imperative and the model of the ideal communicative situation, which creates the foundation for achieving mutual understanding among people with different approaches to understanding reality. Taking into account the main arguments of postmetaphysical thinking, he justifies the conditions of rational knowledge in communicative interaction.

The best argument of the solidarity supporters, to whom Rorty rightly includes himself, is that the traditional Western metaphysical and epistemological way of communication is no longer relevant. Rorty believes that effective communication involves the ability of an individual to learn a new language that was previously foreign to them. The philosopher associates the absence of suffering and liberation from hard labor with the possibility to learn new languages, since it is “free communication that enables ... <the individual> to expand the meaning of the possible and important”. Rorty constantly refers to the vocabularies used

by novelists, poets, and peripheral marginal philosophers to show the crucial role of private, individual speech in the development of the public field of communication: “poetic, artistic, scientific, or political progress is the result of the coincidence of the partial obsession and the public demand” (Rorty, 2012).

Rorty argues that cognition is possible only from the perspective of an engaged subject involved in a particular sociocultural context. It is always situational, specifically and historically determined, and, ultimately, it is always collective. “Our identification of ourselves with our society, i. e. with the social environment, tradition, collective intellectual heritage, acquires a new meaning when we consider this environment as the one shaped rather than found, as one of the many man-made environments. Eventually, what matters, as pragmatists rightly believe, is our loyalty to other people who stand together against dark powers, and not an illusory hope of understanding things properly” (Rorty, 1980). Rorty is considered one of the major figures of the pragmatic tradition, with his works being a source of understanding the ethical and political nature of business practices in global markets for many contemporary scholars (Dieleman, 2017). He is an example of a novel type of thinker, an “ironic liberal” who is actively involved in social discussions, in particular, regarding solidarity under the liberal system. The worst thing is to be cruel. To be a liberal is to share this conviction” (Rorty, 2012). The intellectual life of the United States has not seen a philosopher of this caliber since J. Dewey. In general, Rorty’s antimetaphysical position was a kind of the cosmopolitan fusion of the ideas of American pragmatism, analytic philosophy and the European nihilism (in promoting the slogan of the “death of epistemology” Rorty had no equals among the scholars of the second half of the twentieth century). Similarly to J. Derrida, Rorty avoids creating a systematic worldview, referring consistency and determination to the characteristics of metaphysical thinking. His explanation of dualistic worldviews is directly related to specific historical customs of word usage.

Conclusions

This study compared the concepts belonging to different philosophical discourses, but there

are some common features in the analysis of intersubjectivity and solidarity that will help to bridge the gap in understanding between the Continental and analytic traditions.

Firstly, both authors emphasize the social rather than the subjective aspect. Secondly, both intersubjectivity and the pursuit of solidarity imply going beyond their limited vocabulary, using Rorty’s terminology. Thirdly, the functioning of these intentions is possible only in conditions that exclude any coercion, whether from any systemic structures or from individual attitudes and motivations. Fourthly, Rorty himself includes Habermas in the same “camp” as himself, calling him one of those who make a significant contribution to “the common social effort to make our practices and institutions fairer and less violent” [Ibid].

For both Habermas and Rorty, the foundations of society and social theory, as well as the engine of social modernization, is free communication, which implies the plurality of worldviews (vocabularies). For Habermas, the technology of social modernization is the rationalization of culture, the “pulling up” classical rationality to communicative rationality, and the shift in emphasis from subjectivity to intersubjectivity, while for Rorty it is the poeticization of culture, the use of irony as a tactic and strategy of private and public existence. In addition, the fundamental difference between Habermas’ and Rorty’s views on intersubjectivity and solidarity lies in the potential possibility of achieving their highest stage of development. And if the theory of communicative action provides for such a possibility, owing to the universal rationality that actually allows for the consolidation of different discourses. For Rorty, however, general cultural solidarity cannot be achieved due to the “accidental” nature of language, discourse, and culture in general, and also due to the absence of any common components in them. In the future, Habermas’s theory of communicative action can be supplemented with certain elements of Rorty’s theory, in particular, the concept of the projective vocabulary. This will allow us to consider a communicative action as going beyond one’s subjectivity: in more detail, as a process of going beyond one’s limited vocabulary.

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**«ІНТЕРСУБ'ЄКТИВНІСТЬ» Ю. ГАБЕРМАСА І «СОЛІДАРНІСТЬ» Р. РОРТІ
У ПОРІВНЯЛЬНІЙ ПЕРСПЕКТИВІ ПОСТМЕТАФІЗИЧНОГО ДИСКУРСУ**

Анотація

Актуальність вивчення таких конституційних явищ суспільного буття, як мова та комунікація, зумовлена бурхливим розвитком інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій на тлі тотального руйнування усталених основ-

них духовних цінностей у суспільстві. Отже, прийняття значень споживання, проблеми розриву між поколіннями та деформація домену зв'язку викликані віртуалізацією. У цих умовах стає все важче досягти згоди між людьми, соціальними групами та націями. Таким чином, питання інтерсуб'єктивності та солідарності, які виявилися ключовими в постметафізичному інтелектуальному дискурсі кінця ХХ століття, коли люди зіткнулися з глобалізацією комунікативного простору, набирають обертів. Дослідження намагається конкретизувати подібності та відмінності у постметафізичних практиках Ю. Габермаса та Р. Рорті. Перший асоціюється з континентальною філософією, Франкфуртською школою та критичною теорією, тоді як другий асоціюється з аналітичною філософією та прагматизмом. Обидва вважали себе приналежними до постметафізики та заперечували традиційні філософські концепції природи спілкування та знання. Їх об'єднало прагнення знайти ефективні «інструменти» для досягнення взаєморозуміння та консенсусу у глобальному комунікативному просторі. Проте ставлення мислителів до вирішення цієї проблеми різнилося, і саме ці диференційні методологічні особливості знаходяться в центрі уваги даної роботи. Враховуючи актуальну гуманітарну спрямованість проблемних аспектів розвитку мови та комунікації у динамічних умовах інформаційного суспільства, звернення до постметафізичних практик вищезазначених видатних філософів кінця ХХ століття дозволить збагатити сучасну теорію комунікації, етику спілкування та ін. суміжні філософські напрями з новим методологічним інструментарієм. Результати порівняльного аналізу підтверджують необхідність синтезу здобутків різноманітних філософських шкіл на шляху від метафізичних засад Нового часу до неklasичної постметафізичної думки та розробки епістемологічного інструментарію для цього переходу в умовах високої потрясіння.

Ключові слова: інтерсуб'єктивність, комунікація, раціональність, солідарність, проєктивна лексика.

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