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COMPARATIVE POTENTIALS OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE PHANTOM OF UNIVERSALISM IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD

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The problem and the solution



- Problem: The phantom of universalism in the globalized world leads to wrong social, political and ethical arrangements !
- Solution: Can comparative potentials of philosophy be the solution?
- The role of comparative work in intellectual activity.

Misunderstandings concerning the meaning and effects of globalization

- The concept of globalization,
- The misleading power of metaphors:
Athenian „agora” vs. „global village” . (Global elites, global mentality ?) Towards unfounded assumptions.
- The false assumption of universalism (the case of UNESCO project of „universal ethics”, understanding of the idea of „human rights”)
- Globalized world remains diverse ! How to face this diversity?

Looking for a solution

- How to understand each other across different times, cultures, traditions and customs? Can comparing philosophical ideas be of help? The status of philosophy in different environments?
- What justifies the same concept – the concept of „philosophy” – in case of such variety of ways of thinking?
- The answer: The same function performed by specific intellectual inventions – despite all differences – determine their identity as philosophy.


What is the function of philosophy?

- The function of philosophy is to secure cohesion of the human symbolic universe (Metaphilosophical functionalism). J.Niżnik, *Arbitrariness of Philosophy. An Essay on Metaphilosophical Functionalism*, The Davies Group Publishers, Aurora, Colorado, 2006)
- The concept of symbolic universe – a truly human environment –(Ernst Cassirer, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann), its characteristics and the threats to its cohesion.

Loosing and regaining coherence of symbolic universe


- Philosophy has been performing its task by offering (or rebuilding) the structure of sense in a given symbolic universe (cultural –social – historical setting).
- How does philosophy reach every–day life and „common” people?
- Through art, religion, literature, oral tradition philosophy forms the very basis of mentality and world view of people in any period of time.
- Variety of cultures, technologies, religions and ethical and esthetical norms means that corresponding philosophies also differs.

How comparative philosophy is possible ?
Metaphilosophical functionalism offers the answer.



- Assumption of the need for cohesion of the symbolic universe in every cultural environment.
- Assumption of the correspondence between symbolic universe and the realm of philosophical thought.
- Identifying the structure of sense in the studied foreign philosophy (dealing with general, theoretical, abstract categories).

How comparative philosophy is possible ?
Metaphilosophical functionalism offers the answer.



- Uncovering the relevance of the identified structure of sense for the foreign culture (religion, custom, way of life, etc.).
- Comparing different structures of sense in different cultural settings (different symbolic universes) .

Conclusions



- Rejection of the idea of universal rationality (Supported, e.g., by the works of such authors as L.Wittgenstein , Adorno and Horkheimer, R.Rorty or P.Winch).
- Admitting different structures of sense.
- Using comparative power of philosophy for the dialogue between people of different cultures and religions.