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Е.О. Труфанова

СУБЪЕКТ И ПОЗНАНИЕ В МИРЕ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ КОНСТРУКЦИЙ

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Рецензенты:
доктор философских наук *Б.И. Пружинин,*
доктор философских наук *Н.М. Смирнова*

Труфанова Е.О.

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В книге представлен критический анализ социального конструкционизма – направления, широко распространенного в современных социогуманитарных исследованиях за рубежом, но сравнительно редко упоминаемого в отечественной научной литературе. Кратко рассматривается история и основные положения данного направления. Главное внимание уделяется анализу субъекта и научного познания через призму критики социально-конструкционистского подхода. Исследуются такие проблемы, как социальная конструкция, *Я*, личностная идентичность, нарратив, дискурс, «ситуационное знание», научная объективность и др. Дается критика релятивизма и антиреализма и обосновывается перспективность позиции реализма не только для эпистемологии и философии науки, но и для решения проблем взаимопонимания между людьми и сообществами.

Книга адресована специалистам в области философии, психологии и других наук о человеке и обществе, а также всем, кто интересуется проблемами современных научных и философских дискуссий о познании и его субъекте.

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Summary

The book "***The Subject and Cognition in the World of Social Constructions"*** is devoted to the critical research of the social constructionist approach to the problem of the subject and the problem of reality cognition. The author shows the weak points of social constructionism and defends the idea of necessity of maintaining the realist approach to the subject and to scientific knowledge.

The first chapter "Social constructions and social constructionism" is dedicated to the definition of the concept of social construction and to the analysis of the main theses of social constructionist approach in the present social sciences and humanities. Social construction is defined as a product of a certain culture or society that exists solely due to the fact that the members of this society or social group consider it real and/or agree to act toward it according to the special socially constructed rules. To be a social construction is to exist in such a way as it is prescribed or described by certain social agreements between people belonging to a certain society or culture. The author proposes three main types of social constructions: 1) social institutions; 2) abstract concepts devised by human minds; 3) social meanings ascribed to the real world objects and phenomena. The author argues that the principle problems connected with the opposition of the reality and social construction take root in the confusion between these types. The author then gives a description of the social constructionism as a special approach in social sciences and humanities and shows that it can be considered as a part of constructivist approach in epistemology but is different from Kantian constructivism, radical epistemological construc-

tivism (E. von Glasersfeld, F. Varela, H. Maturana et al.) and from social constructivism (P. Berger, T. Luckmann). The origins and genesis of social constructionism are analyzed and the main theses of social constructionism are formulated. It is demonstrated that social constructionism is an heir of the postmodernist and poststructuralist European philosophy, sociocultural approach in psychology, neo- and postmarxist philosophy mixed with the Northern American political rights movements culture and pragmatism. It is shown that the social constructionist "movement" (as it was called by one of its founders – K.Gergen) starts in social psychology and enters afterwards a wider field of both sciences and humanities, discussing epistemological questions.

The second chapter "The subject as a social construction" provides the research on the idea of the subject seen as social construction. The concept of the Self is analyzed, taking into account those philosophical approaches that regard the classical concept of the Self as a wrong one and propose the idea that the Self is an illusion or that the Self exists only as a social construction and thus lacks "reality". A variety of approaches are considered in the chapter – the empiricist (D. Hume, E. Mach), the Marxist (K. Marx, E. Ilyenkov), the postmodernist (M. Foucault, R. Barthes), the Buddhist approaches – and compared with the social constructionist approach. Main traits of social constructionist approach to the Self are analyzed – the ideas of narrative and grammatical selves (R. Harré, T.R. Sarbin et al.), of the dialogical self (J. Shotter, H. Hermans, M. Bakhtin), of the multiple identities replacing the singular Self (K. Gergen et al.). It is demonstrated that the Self cannot be seen just as an illusion or a linguistic construction, because there are certain phenomena in human experience that are common to all humans regardless of their language or culture, and these phenomena include the ideas of agency, of the centeredness of one's experience, of the

feeling of belonging of all the experienced situations to one being etc. The chapter concludes with the consideration of the personal identity as a concept that can take away the contradictions between the classical concept of the Self and social constructionist approach. It is shown that we can regard the subject as accumulating not only its inner states but also the social relations it is involved in that are expressed in different identifications that are united in the personal identity. The social constructionist contribution to the research of the personal identity is thus seen as an important one.

The third chapter "Elusive reality and social constructions" is dedicated to the research of the scientific knowledge and especially to the discussions between scientific realism and anti-realism. It is shown that social constructionism is one of the main proponents of the anti-realist side in the discussions of the late XXth century called "science wars". It is demonstrated that social constructionist view of science as of the agent of political authorities and of the ideals of truth and objectivity as of the instruments of the "totalitarian discourse" lead to epistemological relativism. The concepts of political correctness, inclusive language and "situated knowledge" are analyzed on the example of feminist epistemology and feminist philosophy of science that is regarded as one of the social constructionism varieties. It is shown that while social constructionism calls for the equality of "voices" of different social groups in the description of the reality, it might lead to the depreciation of the idea of "knowledge" – it will be substituted with different opinions of different social groups taken in local sociocultural contexts. It is also demonstrated that scientific objects should not be seen only as social constructions because they refer to a certain real objects or phenomena in the world: we can construct socially the experiments or the descriptions of the objects, but not the phenomena themselves. It is demonstrated that when something is socially con-

structed it doesn't mean that it cannot be real: if something is socially constructed it doesn't mean that we can transform it at will any time (as many social constructionists claim), there always comes a time when, as Bruno Latour puts it, "things strike back", that is – reality reminds us that we cannot *reconstruct* or *deconstruct* anything we want to, there is a world out there that is independent from our mind or from the social meanings that we ascribe to it. Finally it is shown that realism is important not only for the development of science or for the cognition, but also for the mutual understanding between persons and cultures, because the dialogue can begin only when both parties can agree that something is real for both of them. Thus realism becomes vital for human co-existence.

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