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VIRTUALISTICS AS A PHILOSOPHICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL TURN IN HUMAN SCIENCES

Virtualistics as a paradigmatic approach, as it's developed by the Soviet-Russian school of N. A. Nosov (1952–2002) laid the foundation for the ontological understanding of a person's inner space, whatever one might choose to call it : psychological, anthropological, subjective, spiritual, etc. The virtual approach has its own philosophy, methodology, experiment and study object – the reality (objects) – virtuals existing in a person's inner space in a temporal, energistic form. These objects, akin to the virtual particles in physics, are absent at the beginning and the end of the event (interaction). Virtualistics operates on a categorical opposition “constant-virtual” – “generator-generated”, differing from scholasticism in that virtuality is not opposed to substantiality (in the modern mainstream of computer virtuality – corporeity), but rather to constancy – generating reality. The realities, objects-virtuals can be of any nature, including of not psychological (yet the Nosov virtualistics deals mainly with virtual psychological realities). For the most part their nature is complex and integrated, therefore placing them in the area of interdisciplinary studies.

Let's note that the computer virtual reality would not function if the natural virtuality of humans didn't exist. Unfortunately, most studies of the Internet and cyberspace leave a person's inner world out of the equation. Or they switch to the reductionism models: psycho-physiological, humanity- and personality-based, etc. It is clear that attempts to reduce a multidimensional space to one (single) dimension are counterproductive, although technically possible, and often

cause a known scientific interest and provide a pragmatic result. A categorical opposition is relative: a virtual reality might become constant for the virtual reality of the next hierarchical level, etc. A reverse process is also evident: a virtual reality can get reduced to an object of constant reality. There are no theoretical limits to the number of such emanations. The virtuals system has only “resource” limitations and limitations on the physical implementation of certain interactions because of their natural qualities. Such approach to virtuality entails polyontism and polyontological nature – the multiplicity of realities and worlds in which a person exists, with a corresponding structure of virtuals (objects of person's inner world), as confirmed by a series of dedicated experiments.

The work of the Study Group “Virtualistics” of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences (in 1991–2004 – Virtualistics Centre at the Institute of Human Research of RAS) demonstrated that the common categorial net current-potential, essence-phenomenon, abstract-specific, ideal-material, real-virtual, etc. is not adequate to describe the objects of person's inner world. This statement is precisely the essence of a philosophical and anthropological turn in the humanitarian sphere, the sphere of the human sciences.

The subject of the research which gave life to virtualistics, the basis of its origin was chosen to be an error – an “aircraft belly-landing” (similar to such errors as mistaking a person for somebody else, a misspelling, somebody mispronouncing or mishearing something). Followed by an alcoholism clinic, psychosomatic disorders, phobias of opera singers, post-traumatic stress disorder, and so on. Today the list of the titles by the “Virtualistics” Study Group contains over 30 large-scale works: monographs, brochures, manuals, etc. (www.virtualistika.ru).

The very preparation process of these research results may be called “experimental philosophy” (theoretical models and concepts are cross-checked in a special experiment where phenomenology is generated and falsified). Today these results allow us to speak with confidence about the philosophical and anthropological turn in the human sciences.

The fact is that having remained a long time outside the scientific mainstream, virtualistics has formed its own conceptual apparatus, own theoretical models. In particular, it is the concept of a virtual human

(virtus (lat.): a special state of power, valour and courage of a warrior in a battle; or Virtue), whose level of system realisation helps obtain many of the existing theoretical concepts of psychology, medicine, management, anthropology and epistemology as a particular case. This possibility is due to the high degree of this concept's hypercomplex variety: the realities of corporeity, consciousness, identity, will, and the inner man (each of them, in turn, is also multi-dimensional). Knowledge of this concept's theoretical structure and identification of its current structure in a specific individual predetermines the theoretically possible as well as physically realisable states and events in the event-procedural space of the particular person's psyche.

Virtualistics identified, described and introduced into scientific use the phenomenon, the concept and the theoretical model of a virtual event, the virtual, by defining its following attributes. Generability, currency, autonomy and interactivity (1986). Later (1991) the 8 signs of a virtual psychological event were described (see the Dictionary of Virtual Terms, fully available on www.virtualistika.ru). The latter are further divided into consuetal (ordinary) and extraordinary: gratual and ingratural, of positive and negative character respectively. The character, mood of an event is defined by the person experiencing the current state. It can be defined as light (gratual – from Latin “easy”, “bestowed”), or on the contrary, as dead-end, difficult, confused (ingratural). These states are devoid of an object – in other words, they can occur in connection with any kind of activity (professional, physical, psychological, individual, group, etc.; it serves as another confirmation of the fundamental nature of such events / experiences / states). And because of such objectlessness they can be seen as indicative: as indicators of normal / unusual progress of a particular state / experience / event.

Thus, virtualistics believes psyche to be a generated entity, a virtual psychological reality of the first hierarchical level – a protruding capsule for all the other realities (the conscious, the subconscious, the unconscious, the controlled, etc.) and phenomena (attention, perception, memory, etc.) that are studied by monoontic sciences (in effect, all the modern ones). In other words, the structure of psychic reality – the constant structure of its vertices (physically implemented in the specific individual as a consuetal reality) in the hypergraph of a virtual human –

determines the multitude of possible physically realizable events in the space of possible physically realizable states. Once again, we emphasize that the physical here is opposed to the theoretical.

These and other achievements of the virtualistics allow us to speak about the new paradigm revolution in the human sciences.

So, let us take a closer look at some of the schools of virtuality understanding predominating in the modern Russian science and philosophy – and compare them with N.A. Nosov's approach. Generally, in this respect the prevailing part of the Russian scientific and philosophical thought is not very different from the West, with the attempts to understand virtuality prevailed by the traditional paradigm across all schools of thought.

Both in the mainstream scientific and in the everyday thought virtuality is of course primarily associated with computers. In a certain way this is an expression of coarse materialism. Whereas when applied to virtualistics in Nosov's understanding, these are merely “epiphenomena”. Computer virtuality would not have functioned without the functional existence of a natural human virtuality. Man's virtual nature in this area of philosophical and anthropological thought is usually left out of the equation. Yet this nature, the man's inner space, as already briefly noted above, holds all the “wonderful mechanics” of technology's and its virtual reality's magical power. The magical power of substituting the “real reality”, as it is commonly referred to by the Internet theorists, of “virtual-computer cyber-reality” is born out of the phenomenon of “non-distinguishing” described when creating a theoretical model of the error “airplane belly-landing”.

The non-distinguishing phenomenon is based on people not distinguishing between the fact that the generated image of activity is engineered, designed, put together from elements of different realities: an objective reflection of the outside world, and elements that do not have representations in the outside world, the results of own, intrinsic activity of the human psyche. In other words, the process of objective reflection is intervened by the “evil factor”, the polyontism of activity space: an “objective image” consists of elements of different realities but it is seen as an objective reflection of anyone of them. This leads to the situation where an on-board engineer on an airplane checks the flaps

when lowering the landing gear and believes that he has indeed lowered the landing gear (the phenomenon of completed / non-completed of an action: the non-completed action is perceived as completed, and vice versa). The result: belly-landing of the plane.

The modern scientific mainstream does not have a theoretical model for an error of psychological nature (subjective in the mainstream scientific understanding) – when people forget, get confused, etc. The categorical and conceptual tools for description of the external world do not give scope to reveal the objectivity mechanism of a psychological error. An error is generated due to the fundamental properties of the psychic space – polyontism, heterogeneity, generability, hierarchical nature, currency, autonomy, and so forth – that is why a psychological error is objective. Combined together, the above factors lead to a variety of epistemological incidents: verbosity, futile attempts to define virtual reality through blight, unreal reality, invalidity, potentiality, etc. Moreover, to this date in mainstream psychology the problem of errors (belly-landing) has not been solved!

The second intension distinguishable in the main body of research works is not less evident. It is coarse idealism: image of an event will soon replace the event itself. This certainly does not please us, virtualists: an image of bread will replace the bread itself, an image of subway – the subway itself, and an image of the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy will replace the Congress itself.

Another stable scientific and philosophical direction, associated with the name of late Igor Akchurin, is run by a group of colleagues exploring the manifestations of virtuality in physical reality (E. A. Mamchur's sector at the RAS Institute of Philosophy, as well as other researchers in their collaborative network). Right now we won't dwell on this area: the philosophical and anthropological problematics (the problem of an observer, etc.) is not central to this area of thought.

Now we should also mention virtuology and its attempt to create a new scientific field that studies virtual reality. Virtualistics presumes that the world is virtual: consisting of realities that exist in virtual relationships – the generation-generated, (constancies-virtualities). Therefore a person is a virtual reality. Here we must define the latter, which was already partially done above (see the works on www.virtualistika.ru).

The virtuology of man, seeing how it is being developed on the basis of the traditional paradigmatic systems, on the philosophical and methodological level will merely repeat the traditional anthropology... We will touch upon this subject again below, when we review the paradigmatic revolution – an injection of virtual thinking.

And finally, once again about another component which for more than 25 years has remained on the periphery of the prevailing scientific stream. We are talking about Virtualistics in the narrow sense of the term – in the understanding of N. A. Nosov's school (who, by the way, was the one to suggest the term). About the direction that laid the ontological foundation for understanding of man's inner space: the concept of "virtual human" as a theoretical construct of a categorical level of generality offers new opportunities for understanding the man. How did this philosophical and scientific area of thought eventually manage to break free from the autonomous "isolation"?

It is encouraging that during the last World and All-Russian Congresses of Philosophy and Philosophy Days in St. Petersburg there is one continuous trend. There have been more and more "aligned" works from other colleagues outside of our immediate circle of collaboration and socialising. What do we mean by that? Until recently, the body of works of RAS Virtualistics Centre and the Study Group "Virtualistics" of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences has been formed almost entirely by its immediate staff and their closest colleagues. Today at various congresses and readings we encounter previously unknown researchers and scientists who speak one and the same language with us. ("One" in the virtualistics language is a point of section of orthogonal projections of a multitude of realities: an obvious polylogue.) You must agree: it's definitely a notable milestone on the route to establishing a new area of philosophy and science.

We must also highlight the role of international and national forums, and the Philosophy Days in St. Petersburg in particular. The role that their organizers, the governments and administrations of the cities and regions play in shifting the situation and implementing a new paradigmatic approach in the philosophical and scientific consciousness. In the formation of a new paradigm revolution. And it is not just a set of the usual ritual phrases, not the obligatory praise with regard to the orga-

nizers supporting the generation of such spaces. And not some empty statements – here we are talking about an event, the actions already in motion. But in a certain order, with some important highlights.

Perhaps this part of the thesis may seem at first glance, and then only at first, not so scientific. But the philosophy and science are social. They are a social, organizational, cultural, human space – the environment for their formation, development and dissemination. There must be a particular place, conditions and so on where the paradigmatic implementation of a new mindset in the scientific and philosophical consciousness can happen.

And this very context of personal, human interaction that is created by the International and the Russian Philosophical Societies, the space of the international and the Russian congresses (the Second Russian Congress began to run the round table “Philosophical Problems of Virtualistics”) and conferences helped us attract the attention of our colleagues to the Nosov paradigm, to demonstrate its relevance and the route of its development (the works of M. A. Pronin, G. P. Yuriev, Y. V. Chesnov, A. D. Korolev, V. F. Zhdanov, I. I. Silantieva, S. V. Poltayko and others). This context is the very infrastructure required to breed innovation, and it is what the International and the Russian Philosophical Societies stand for.

In conclusion we would like to dwell on a few more key points essential for understanding the paradigmatic revolution proposed by Virtualistics.

Virtualistics as a paradigmatic approach is developing a philosophical anthropology that would be adequate for working with the objects generated in a person’s inner space, devoid of a mode of permanence, “eternity”, existing in the acting, current, energistic, temporal shape – the example was taken on the basis of psychological errors. With respect to this mode, a similarity can be found with the virtual particles in physics which are not present at the beginning or at the end of the interaction of the particles that create them. The study of microcosm – including the special nature of virtual particles – demanded of the physicists a comprehensive re-examination of their philosophical and epistemological systems. Again, our research shows that the categorical grids adequate to the description, understanding of external reality (essence-phenomenon, ideal-material, current-potential, abstract-concrete, etc.) are not

suitable for working with objects of a man’s inner world. That is – with the objects that are generated and dissolved faster than the proverbial “25th frame”, such as the “belly-landing” error and other psychological errors such as misspelling, mishearing, mistaking an object or a person for another one, etc. As well as the objects that trigger addictive conditions: alcoholic binge, kleptomania, gambling addiction, etc.

The problem being that most scientists and researchers of these phenomena still haven’t been able to bridge the paradigm gap with the means and framework of the scientific mainstream.

It might be useful to discuss the structure of philosophical and anthropological turn in the human sciences taking the case of psychology as an example. Taking as the example the structure of professional training “as is” and “as it should be”, to use the language of organizational changes.

Today it is evident that it takes not only the organizational synomia – the consolidation of spaces of natural sciences (talking about the sciences in Russia in particular, placed under the authority of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences), humanities and philosophy (the “titular province” of the Russian Academy of Sciences), but also the paradigm synomia, today made possible within the virtual approach.

The synomia must be supported by the concomitant serious preparation in the field of linguistics. The study of the second-signal system – the language that predetermines a person’s status as such, which by now has almost completely fallen out of the psychologists training program. However, this is a subject for further discussion.

Today, however, we have already seen a qualitative leap: our works, the promotions infrastructure (websites, conferences, readings during the Philosophy Days in St. Petersburg, personal correspondence, etc.) led us to a new breakthrough. The N.A. Nosov Virtualistics School now has a steady feedback of scientific and philosophical thought: a process of wide dissemination of the new philosophical and anthropological view across the body of human sciences.