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THE PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE OF EDUCATION IN THE WORKS OF VASYL KREMEN

The process of development of Ukrainian philosophy of education is connected with fundamental transformation of academic life after the collapse of the Soviet Union and renovation of Ukrainian independence in 1991. The dramatic changes of political, economical and social systems of our society were especially visible in humanities and social sciences, because in Soviet time these areas survived under the ideological dictatorship of communist doctrine with its numerous restrictions for the freedom of conducting research, avoidance of critical thinking and access to contemporary Western academic literature, open censorship, strict control over the content of works of Ukrainian philosophers, severe critique of “bourgeois Ukrainian nationalism” and artificial support of Soviet interpretation of internationalism (mainly in form of russification¹).

According to Viktor Andrushchenko² together with the theory of “developed socialism” Ukrainian philosophers committed a kind of “philosophical suicide” in a form of splitting into 1) official Marxist-Leninist philosophy under the leadership of Communist party and 2) research one, which tried to catch the true sense of Marxism and often investigate the philosophy outside of official doctrine. The centre of this second research dimension of Ukrainian philosophy was Institute of Philosophy of Academy of Sciences of

Ukraine³, which was established in 1946 and became especially visible in Ukrainian cultural environment in 60-80s years of the 20th century, especially in the area of logics and methodology of science, interpretation of Hegelian philosophy and conduction of sociological researches. The key representatives of these particular philosophical school were Pavlo Kopnin (1922–1971), Volodymir Shynkaruk (1928–2001), Serhiy Krymsky (1930–2010), Myroslav Popovych (b. 1930).

After 1991 Ukrainian philosophy faced few important challenges: 1) the necessity to overcome negative consequences of total dominance of Marxism-Leninism, which was supported by official ideology and communist propaganda; 2) identification and development the particular features of Ukrainian national philosophy with the special stress on state building processes and maintaining continuation of Ukrainian intellectual tradition; 3) demand for integration into European and global philosophical context after few decades of factual isolation and representation of Ukrainian philosophical tradition in the European and global context. These challenges are also applicable to system of university education, one of main social institutions, which is responsible for providing adequate support for future development of Ukrainian society and the creation of future national elite⁴. In this situation the fact of establish-

1. For example, see the famous work of Ivan Dzuba: Іван Дзюба, *Інтернаціоналізм чи русифікація?* (1965), <http://litopys.org.ua/idzuba/dz.htm>

2. Віктор Андрущенко, “Філософське самовбивство” останніх радянських гуманітаріїв, [в:] “Філософія освіти / Philosophy of Education”, Київ 2012, № 1-2, с. 7-15, <http://www.philosopheducation.com>

3. Інститут філософії імені Г.С. Сковороди НАН України, <http://www.filosof.com.ua/about.htm>

4. Сергій Курбатов, *Освіта як інструмент рекрутування еліти* [в:] “Людинознавчі студії”. Збірник наукових праць ДДПУ ім Івана Франка 2010, вип.22, с. 65-76.

ing of Academy of Educational Sciences (since 2010 National Academy of Educational Sciences⁵) in 1992 was a kind of response to these challenges. The main goal of this academic organization was to provide theoretical and methodological support for the development of Ukrainian system of primary, secondary and higher education.

The structural unit of NAES of Ukraine, Institute of Higher Education⁶, which was organized in 1999, became a kind of centre for creation the discourses of Ukrainian philosophy of education and their integration in contemporary European and global contexts. The problems of philosophy of education became the object of numerous dissertations and other researches, conducted at this institute. The active discussions about philosophy of education in Ukraine was fostering with the establishing in 2005 the special journal "Philosophy of Education"⁷, which became a leading Ukrainian academic resource in this area very soon. This journal provides a kind of creative platform for prominent and young researchers from different regions of Ukraine, who are interested in the problems of philosophical interpretation of the situation in university education. Through publications, workshops, round tables it provides possibilities for implementation of Western approaches in this area in Ukraine. Also, it contributes a lot in the process of translation and popularizing among Ukrainian audience prominent contemporary thinkers, for example, Jurgen Habermas, Piotr Sztompka, Wolfgang Welsch, Peter McLaren, William McBride, Ervin Laszlo.

The world history proves that personal factor sometime plays extremely important role during historical development of human being. To my mind, the research interests of one of the most important policy makers in Ukrainian education and prominent Ukrainian philosopher Vasyl Kremen (b. 1947)⁸, who is a holder of key managerial positions in Ukrainian education since 1979 (with the break

in 1986-1992)⁹ played important role in legitimization and popularization of philosophy of education as an important area among Ukrainian humanities and social sciences. After election as a president of Academy of Educational Sciences in 1997 Vasyl Kremen works predominately in the area of philosophy of education, which could be regarded as one of the main academic areas in his current researches. In 1998 Vasyl Kremen published an article about possibilities of philosophical interpretation of the scientific heritage of great theorist and practitioner of Ukrainian education Vasyl Sukhomlynsky (1918-1970)¹⁰, where he mentioned necessity of individual approach in educational practices as far as unity of moral and aesthetic dimensions of educational process and showed essential possibilities for philosophical interpretation of the classical heritage of Ukrainian pedagogy.

Being a minister of education and science of Ukraine during the period December, 30, 1999 – February, 3, 2005 Vasyl Kremen used philosophy of education as a kind of methodological background for reformation of education in our country¹¹. Such approach opened the space for observation of the situation in Ukrainian education at macro level and helped to identify the optimal ways of radical transformation in this area using European and world experience. As a result during this period twelve years system of secondary education with twelve grade evaluation scale were implemented, educational studies made shift from soviet style authoritarian approaches to the pedagogy of tolerance, computers and informational technologies became an essential part of educational process, distance education was regarded as an important dimension of educational activities.

Also impressive transformation were conducted for joining Bologna process (May, 2005) and implementation of Western educational standards in Ukrainian system of education. The number of

5. Національна академія педагогічних наук України, <http://naps.gov.ua/en/about/today/>

6. Institute of Higher Education NAES of Ukraine, <http://ihed.org.ua/en/>

7. "Філософія освіти / Philosophy of Education" ISSN 2309-1606, <http://www.philosopheducation.com/index.php/en/>

8. Vasyl Kremen: <http://naps.gov.ua/en/structure/leadership/president/>

9. Василь Григорович Кремень – філософ, учений, освітянин, державний діяч. Біобібліографічний покажчик, Знання, Київ 2012, с. 18.

10. Vasyl Sukhomlynsky: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vasyl_Sukhomlynsky

11. See, for example, Василь Кремень, *Сучасна філософія освіти як визначальний фактор авторитету соціальної держави*, [в:] "Теорія і практика управління соціальними системами" 2004, № 2, с. 3-10.

students, who studied in Ukrainian increased from 62% in 1999 to 75% in 2005 and the foreign language became the mandatory school subject since the second form¹². A kind of theoretical summarizing of the unique experience of Vasyl Kremen at high position in the system of state management is his book “Education and Science in Ukraine – Innovative Aspects: Strategy, Realization, Results” (2005)¹³, where he analyzed the main transformations of Ukrainian education in the context of globalization, argued necessity of European and global integration of it, stressed the importance of successful internationalization and academic mobility.

Further important philosophical ideas of Vasyl Kremen regarding development of Ukrainian education we could find in paper “Education in the Context of the Present Social and Cultural Changes” (2008)¹⁴, where he identified the main challenges for Ukrainian society and Ukrainian system of education as a kind of harmonization of traditional and innovative approaches in temporal perspective and national and global approaches in spatial perspective. These challenges are transforming the role of knowledge, which become a kind of background of everyday life and behavior and provide a solid base for decision making processes. According to Vasyl Kremen innovative and global character of contemporary civilization gives us opportunities to re-open and truly implement traditional humanistic approaches to education and to help each student in his or her self understanding, self realization and professional development. The main ideas of this approach are articulated in two key principles of educational studies – human-centric and child-centric. Only following these principles we could find realistic solutions of contemporary problems and challenges. Child-centric principle is applicable to primary and

secondary education and human-centric principle has a universal character.

Vasyl Kremen expanded his vision of necessity of human-centric background of education in his book “Philosophy of Human-Centric Approach in the Strategies of Educational Space” (2009)¹⁵. Combining historical approach to the European civilization with the explanations of contemporary educational and other challenges he argued the crucial importance of humanistic values for the understanding contemporary socialization of person and providing adequate responses for his or her educational demands and expectations. Also Vasyl Kremen showed the intrinsic nature of these humanistic values for Ukrainian system of education during the long period of its historical development, which could be regarded as an evidence of European nature of our cultural and social tradition. This book is translated in Polish¹⁶ and Russian¹⁷ languages. For Vasyl Kremen human-centric philosophy is “not only a regular philosophical or anthropological teaching, but a new type of meta philosophy and understanding of human worldview”¹⁸. This approach could provide a researcher with a large-scale framework for understanding the development of education and analysis of its main challenges and social demands in the context of contemporary global civilization.

In my own researches I stressed the possibility to apply the human-centric principle in the interpretation of Vasyl Kremen for development of successful strategies for internationalization of contemporary university¹⁹. This principle helps to eliminate a kind of asymmetry in relations between Ukrainian researchers and their Western colleagues. Such asymmetry arises first of all because of inequality of the partners in their access for financial and other forms of support of the relevant activities. Also human-centric approach provides a good background for trust in

12. Президент – Національна академія педагогічних наук України: <http://naps.gov.ua/ua/structure/leadership/president/>

13. Василь Кремень, *Освіта і наука в Україні – Інноваційні аспекти. Стратегія. Реалізація. Результати*, Грамота, Київ 2005, 448 с.

14. Василь Кремень, *Освіта в контексті сучасних соціокультурних змін*, [в:] “Філософія освіти / Philosophy of Education” 2008, № 1-2, с. 15-21, <http://www.philosopheducation.com>

15. Василь Кремень, *Філософія людиноцентризму в стратегіях освітнього простору*, Педагогічна думка, Київ 2009, 520 с.

16. Wasyl G. Kremien, *Filozofia antropocentryzmu w edukacyjnej przestrzeni*. Instytut Pedagogiki Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej, 2011, 395 s.

17. В.Г. Кремень, *Філософія човекоцентризму в стратегіях образовательного пространства*, Российская академия образования, Москва 2013, 184 с.

18. Василь Кремень, *Філософія людиноцентризму в стратегіях освітнього простору*, Педагогічна думка, Київ 2009, с. 15.

19. See, for example, Сергій Курбатов, *Людиноцентристська парадигма як інструмент ефективної інтернаціоналізації в галузі освіти*, [в:] “Філософія освіти / Philosophy of Education” 2010, № 1-2, с. 115-122, <http://www.philosopheducation.com>

mutual communication and cooperation. The principal value of human being creates an adequate philosophy of international relations in educational area at both personal and institutional levels. It gives the possibility to find joint solutions at the fundamental and the most valuable level of humanity.

Human-centric approach needs to be based at a certain particular concept of person, which reflects current social and cultural realities. For Vasyl Kremen this is innovative type of person, whose particular feature is openness to new knowledge, ideas, approaches. He argued that “only a person with innovative thinking, who represents the innovative type of culture and is ready for innovative professional activities, could be competitive in modern world and could create mobile society and mobile nation”²⁰. He or she need to have possibility to study throughout all the life and benefits personally and professionally from such life long learning processes. In the framework of innovative civilization only this type of person could give adequate responses to numerous economical, social, cultural, existential and other challenges and problem and to maintain the incredible high level of its technical and technological development. At the same time, such person takes care of his or her cultural background with its particular national variations and is ready to contribute unique ethnical peculiarities and approaches in the huge multicultural process of globalization.

How to transform the Ukrainian system of education according to innovative demands of contemporary civilization? The investigation of these question was one of the main goal of collective monograph “Phenomenon of Innovations: Education, Society, Culture” (2008), edited by Vasyl Kremen²¹. Later he clarifies his own vision of the problem of innovative transformation in the paper “Innovative Man as the Goal of Contemporary Education”²². “Contemporary innovative education is based on transition from re-productive toward productive, creative type of think-

ing... The man of the XXI century is a learning person, whose access to new knowledge is a basic feature of the way of life. The task of education is to create such type of person, but society and state need to support the optimal conditions for life-long learning processes”- mentioned Vasyl Kremen²³. Especially important such type of person is for elite segment of Ukrainian society, for people, who are responsible for decision-making processes at national and regional levels²⁴.

Innovative education is not restricted by the knowledge from external world. It is also internal looking for inner truth and unique personal attitudes and interpretations. The cultivation of self since Ancient Greek time with their famous maxim “γνῶθι σεαυτόν”, “know thyself”, is a mainstream of philosophical reflections of reality. This principle continues to play a crucial role during the time of external expansion of human activities, domination of material values and mass culture. Human-centric approach underlines this unique openness for external and internal world in the eternal process of learning. This is a kind of philosophical background for contemporary educational practices, as far as optimal strategy of achieving success in professional and personal development.

Complexity of the system of education in contemporary world encourages the researchers to find systematic approach for its philosophical interpretation. For Vasyl Kremen such systematic interdisciplinary character could be provided by synergetics in the framework of its explanation of the formation and self-organization of different patterns in open systems. As he mentioned in the paper “Synergetic Model of Educational Development as a Response on Contemporary Challenges”: “Today synergetics is a kind of overall paradigm for understanding of numerous areas of human activities... Without any doubts, synergy model of creativity explains the paradigm of contemporary educational and pedagogical processes”²⁵.

20. Василь Кремень, *Освіта в контексті сучасних соціокультурних змін*, “Філософія освіти /Philosophy of Education” 2008, № 1-2, с. 16, <http://www.philosopheducation.com>

21. *Феномен інновацій: освіта, суспільство, культура* / За редакцією Василя Кременя, Педагогічна думка, Київ 2008, 472 с.

22. Василь Кремень, *Інноваційна людина як мета сучасної освіти*, “Філософія освіти /Philosophy of Education” 2013, №. 1(12), с. 7-22, <http://www.philosopheducation.com>

23. Василь Кремень, *Ibid.*, с. 19-20.

24. *Еліта: витоки, сутність, перспектива* / За редакцією Василя Кременя. Знання, Київ 2011, 527 с.

25. Василь Кремень, *Синергетична модель розвитку освіти як відповідь на виклики сьогодення* [в:] “Рідна школа” 2010, № 6, с. 4.

Orientation not only on already existing processes, but also on the situation of becoming and development; postulating of unstable, non-linear and self-organized character of open system; identification of points of bifurcation – these principles of synergetics are crucial for understanding of the development of education in the context of modern innovative and global civilization. That is why: “the principles of synergetics provide us with non-standard approach to teaching, support high quality of knowledge and the relevant professional becoming and professional adaptation of future specialist through different learning subjects in their interdisciplinary unity”²⁶.

So, we could conclude that the philosophical discourse of education in the works of Vasyl Kremen is created as a kind of unity of traditional practices of

understanding of reality and new approaches, which are affiliated with innovative character of contemporary global civilization. Following humanistic tradition, which is inherited in the human-centric principle, he elaborated the wide framework for support the development of the innovative type of person in the context of synergy of different forms of teaching and learning activities. The author’s style of thinking of Vasyl Kremen is relevant to the Ukrainian philosophical tradition and at the same time, reflects contemporary achievements of world and European philosophy. According to Google Scholar²⁷ H-Index of his works is 26 and i10-Index is 60, which is an excellent evidence of true interest to his ideas among Ukrainian and foreign colleagues and importance of philosophy of education for transformation of our system of education.



26. Василь Кремень, *Педагогічна синергетика: понятійно-категоріальний синтез*, [в:] “Теорія і практика управління соціальними системами” 2013, № 3, с. 16.

27. Кремень Василь Григорович: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=zrnMlfUAAAAJ&hl=uk&oi=ao>