

UDC 140+165.0(091)

THE IDEAS OF N. BERDIYAEV'S GNOSEOLOGY IN THE CONTENT OF CONTEMPORARY TENDENCIES

Victor Petrushenko

*Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Department of Philosophy,
Stepan Bendera str., 12, 79013, Lviv, Ukraine*

Oksana Petrushenko

*Lviv Medical Institute,
Department of Humanitarian and Social-Economics Sciences
V. Polishchuk str., 76, 79018, Lviv, Ukraine*

The article considers the epistemological concept of the well-known Russian religious philosopher of the Silver Age epoch Berdyaev. Although in most publications devoted to N. Berdyaev, his epistemological ideas are not considered, the authors of the article substantiate the existence of an original gnoseological concept. Its essential feature is that it includes the ideas of ontology, anthropology, metaphysics, theology and philosophy of history. The philosopher criticized cognition, which seeks to adapt man to the phenomena of this world. N. Berdyaev justifies the position according to which cognition should be understood as event in the being that finally leads to the transfiguration of the world. The methods of phenomenology and hermeneutics are used in the article. Further perspectives of research are connected with the deepening of ideas about cognition and ways of achieving the truth.

Key words: cognition, being, primary reality, truth, eschatology.

On the March 23, 2018 it was marked the 70th anniversary of the death of N. Berdyaev. According to many researchers, this is one of the most widely read and respected thinkers of the XX century [11, p. 223], who was the vivid publicist, the dynamic and original thinker [13, p. 249–250]. The polemic and aphoristic style of his works gave rise to the impression of disconnectedness, the lack of consistent intellectual treatments in them. This conclusion also arose because some of his provisions were clarified and changed during his creative development. Therefore, it is not so easy to extract a conception from the works of a philosopher: here we are doomed to pass some problems through all his works and through other topics and problems.

The attitude of N. Berdyaev to epistemology is rather ambiguous: on the one hand, his phrase sounds like a verdict: "Epistemologists" are parasites of science" [8, p. 72], but in another place it is stated: "Without epistemology there can be no philosophy and it never was" [7, p. 29]. He calls himself a religious philosopher, a personalist, an existentialist, but by no means an epistemologist [5, p. 97, 99, 295–296, 298], although much attention he paid to cognition issues [7, p. 35–36; 8, p. 72, 101, 130–131; 10, p. 231, 253, 257, 289]. We will not find in his works the development of traditional themes and problems of epistemology. Some very important notions, that were used by N. Berdyaev in his works, he didn't explicate, and therefore it remains only to guess what was their content. Nevertheless, N. Berdyaev has a completely independent, original epistemological conception, although it is in some places a controversial and contradictory one. The philosopher does not analyze in detail the structure and constituent elements of cog-

niton, but outlines the essential power of the very phenomenon of cognition on the background of the phenomena of the world, being, life and history.

N. Berdyaev as a philosopher of the beginning of the XX century constantly and seriously worried about the situation that philosophy steadily lost its role and its status, as if relegating itself to science [8, p. 12–14, 262–267; 2, p. 21]. It seemed absolutely impossible for him to hand over the questions of the fate of the world and man to science, which, with very limited methods, first of all solved the pragmatic tasks of social life. He resolutely opposed to each other two possible directions of cognition: (1) cognition as an *adaptation* to this world and (2) cognition as a *breakthrough to truth and sense* [4, p. 201]. And cognition as an adaptation to the world (and this is a real scientific knowledge) was unacceptable for him, since it refused to solve the ultimate, fundamental task – cognition as a transfiguration of the world [8, p. 351]. According to N. Berdyaev's deep conviction, cognizes a human or, more precisely, a spirit implanted in a human, his energy of activity: "A man can't be eliminated from cognition. He should not be eliminated, but must be raised from a physical and mental man to the spiritual person" [2, p. 28]. And further: "In the cognition of the spirit, which is philosophy, there must be an inner kinship of the cognizing person with his object, there must be recognition of the reality of the spirit, there must be creative spiritual experience" [2, p. 28]. In his opinion, *the fundamental questions of life* should be asked and solved in the cognition: the destinies of the world and of man, the mission of man in the world, the sense of the world, of being and of man: "The main idea of my life is the idea of a man, his shape, his creative freedom and creative purpose" [10, p. 315]. But science does not solve these problems. Does the religion with theology solve them? – N. Berdyaev believes that they also do not decide, because Christianity in its original essence has not yet been established in the world: "Historical Christianity did not yet fulfill the love testament in human life and too often falls on the old testament of the victim" [8, p. 181]. But the true beginnings of Christianity are *love and freedom* brought to the world by Christ, the eternal humanity, present not only in the project, but also in the essence of God, the Christian eschatology that assumes the advent of the era of the Third Testament – the era of the Holy Spirit. The emphasis of these moments in Christianity, according to N. Berdyaev, is the cornerstones of *the new Christianity* (or the new Christian consciousness).

Why, in N. Berdyaev's opinion, in the most important issues of cognition, science, the newest trends of Western philosophy, projects of social philosophy and social movements turn out to be helpless? The philosopher's answer is connected with his idea of *objectification*. It is a matter of some fundamental ontological fact: people's consciousness is rigidly tied to objectified forms of reality's manifestations. Philosophy, which tries to find ways to harmonize our spiritual aspirations with the imperatives of the surrounding physical reality, N. Berdyaev calls the *philosophy of adaptation*, and not the philosophy of freedom, that is, not free philosophy, but by the philosophy of thought submitting to reality. But just what we call reality, for N. Berdyaev, is the result of the objectification of the spirit, of thinking, of consciousness. This objectification *turns reality into something that has fallen away from the world of freedom and creative flight*, something that has become heavy, petrified, forced. The idea of objectification can be explained by turning to the processes of thinking: we solve questions related to objects, things, but do not immerse ourselves in this unique ability of the spirit to own everything and at the same time go beyond everything.

To what extent are justified N. Berdyaev's judgments about objectification? – We think that these judgments have real grounds: indeed, when we are talking about the life of consciousness, it turns out that *consciousness is always outside the object content to which it is directed*. As soon as we try to fix consciousness in some of its own manifestations, we immediately find ourselves outside of both –this content and the state of consciousness, with which it was connected with such content. This peculiarity of consciousness was especially clearly and expressively outlined by M. Mamardashvili and A. Pyatigorsky in joint work, where they presented consciousness as a text

that is created in the process of its reading [12, p. 283–284]. What quality can claim to represent consciousness? – According to N. Berdyaev – only *freedom*. That is, *the more freedom, the greater (intensively) the consciousness becomes*. But then again there may be a question about what and how can cognize consciousness, which for N. Berdyaev is freedom, and then – creativity? Having posed this question, we find ourselves within the whole architectonics of N. Berdyaev's conception of epistemology: not only epistemological but also metaphysical, ontological, anthropological, personalistic, sociophilosophical, historiosophical, ethical and aesthetic ideas of philosopher are devoted to the unfolding of all possible manifestations and consequences of the cognitive activity of consciousness (spirit), because *all these spheres do not complement epistemology, but are its organic, immanent constituents and the conditions for the possibility of its implementation*.

First of all, according to N. Berdyaev, it is necessary to change fundamentally the basis of epistemology, creating and understanding *ontological epistemology* [8, p. 101, 130], where the phenomenon of cognition appears as an event within being, as a phenomenon of being: “Cognition is an event within the being and in it the mystery of being is revealed” [1, p. 368]. But what is being in the understanding of N. Berdyaev? N. Berdyaev argues that being can't be rationalized: being is something that is given to us from the beginning, beyond all judgments and justifications: “The idea of being is the primary intuition and not the result of discursive thinking <...>” [8, p. 133]. He states: “The first reality, the first life is creative will, creative passion, creative fire” [4, p. 219–220].

In all the works, starting with the “Philosophy of Freedom” and “Sense of Creativity”, highly appreciating the insights of German mystics, N. Berdyaev very deeply and seriously was imbued with the idea that the notion of the Abyss is preceded to God. This concept, used by N. Berdyaev in his German expression as *Ungrund* [4, p. 216–218, 222], is connected with *the apophatic understanding of God* and, moreover, as it was before God in the so-called “*theogonic process*”. Abyss is more primordial than God, N. Berdyaev asserts, and hence it follows that *freedom is more primary than being*. In relation to cognition, this means that the *act of will, the act of freedom precedes discursive cognition and reflection*: “Without nonentity, there would be no personal existence, no freedom” [4, p. 222]. It also means that cognition is based, first and foremost, not on conceptual thinking, but on a more initial immersion in being, *on immediate spiritual experience – on intuition, and intuition – on faith* [8, p. 273; 9, p. 234–235]. Hence follows one of the most important accents of epistemology of Berdyaev: *justified knowledge and cognition, the cognition of truth presupposes religious dogmatic principles, given in revelation*. In the final analysis, mysticism and mystical experience seem to N. Berdyaev to be the most justified forms of the direct entry of the cognizing person into the essential foundations of being. But the results that we can obtain through mysticism, intuition, inner life experience *can only be expressed by meanings and symbols* (this idea is present and repeated almost in all works of the philosopher [3, p. 50]).

From these statements follows N. Berdyaev's understanding of the very *essence of cognition*. In a number of works, the philosopher specifically and resolutely insists that cognition should in no case be understood as reflection or as an adaptation (orientation in the world): “Cognition can't mean duplication of reality. Such duplication would be meaningless and unnecessary. Cognition adds something to reality, through it, there is a growing sense in the world. Cognition has a creative and organizing character; in it a person takes possession of chaos and darkness” [4, p. 183; 9, p. 259].

In our opinion, N. Berdyaev's assertions that there exist *two waves or two fronts of cognition* are important and interesting for modern epistemology. Man was originally rooted into the world and originally reality is given to him directly, through feelings, intuition, so to say pre-reflective perceptions: “It's a prejudice to think that cognition is always rational and that irrational is not cognition. We cognize through senses much more than through the intellect” [10, p. 235]. The initial principles and “ends” of the world and knowledge are “hidden in intuition” [8, p. 273]. In the prima-

ry life experience, which is formed before the manifestations of logical-reflexive procedures, those configurations of perception of reality are postponed and later they play the role of basic cognitive structures. And in the future, no matter what level of sophistication the human thought acts reach, this primary wave of direct entry into the world accompanies all cognition.

Putting his epistemology on ontological foundations, Berdyaev further detailed the components of the cognition process in accordance with his ontological ideas. The first essence and basis of the universe is the spirit (the philosopher devotes his clarification to a special work [1, p. 363–462]), but the world is a *mono-pluralistic reality*, in the accomplishment of which many *personalistic* figures participate, who only in their interaction form what we call reality. N. Berdyaev insists that Christ as the Eternal Logos of God should be understood initially not only in the divine, but also in the human dimension, therefore the project of the world from God is initially oriented anthropologically. Man is embedded in the essence of the Holy Trinity, and not only man needs God, but God needs man too. Man – the epicenter of the whole world drama [4, p. 285–286].

In human being cognition is manifested not only through the characteristics of man, but also through his *social qualities*: “<...> Society is in man, and sociality is one of the sides of human nature” [4, p. 267]. The path to truth and the affirmation of truth are of a conciliar nature, since any knowledge acquires its human significance and justification only in the system of social communication: “It must be recognized that for a particular theory of cognition cognition is associated with the social relations of people, it inevitably is the sociology of cognition” [10, p. 265]. But sociality is the pragmatic one the adequate philosophy of sociality is positivism, which is infected with ineradicable diseases of modern philosophy – phenomenism, rationalism, pragmatism. And yet, cognition has no other variant of embodiment than in the movement of social history, so N. Berdyaev insists that *the tasks of cognition can be solved only by the whole history of mankind*. Hence follows the next, very important element of his epistemological concept – *eschatology*: “I came to a special kind of eschatological epistemology” [5, p. 301].

N. Berdyaev stressed his adherence to the eschatological understanding of history and repeatedly proclaimed: according to his firm conviction either history does not have any sense, and then one can have any opinions about it, or it has certain sense, and then it unequivocally has a goal, its *supertask and completion*: “<...> The history of the world and the history of mankind make sense only if it ends” [4, p. 274]. History, according to Berdyaev, must fulfill its main task – the correction of that initial deviation of man from God and Truth, which is associated with the fall: “<...> Is it possible to overcome this objective world, not the disparagement of the “earthly”, but its liberation and transformation, its transition to another kind of being. This question is an eschatological one” [4, p. 271]. A human can't do this alone, because the fall and objectification distorted the essence not only of man, but of the entire universe. As a result, it turns out that *the way out to the direct perception of the truth lies on the paths of the historical process and its completion*, as a result of which objectification, a split of essence and phenomena, regulating influence of sociality, etc., will disappear: “The end is the end of objectification, the transition to the subjectivity of the kingdom of freedom” [5, p. 301]. And this means reaching out to Truth and Sense.

But N. Berdyaev's eschatology is also very specific and in some ways very original, because it is associated with his understanding of the essence of Christianity in general, and also, in particular, with understanding of Christology and Trinitology: “The Divine Mystery does not end in Binary, it assumes the Trinity <...>. Therefore, the basis of Christianity in the Christological dogma about the divine-human nature of Christ and in the Trinitarian dogma about the Holy Trinity” [6, p. 135]. According to the philosopher's convictions *it is necessary a “new Christianity”*, a new Christian consciousness, that should fully implement the meaning and ontological potential of the Holy Trinity – next to the era of God the Father and the epoch of God the Son, *the epoch of the Holy Spirit* should come: “A complete religion, including the fullness of revelation, is the religion of the Holy Trinity. The Third Testament will be only the fulfill-

ment of the Christ's Testament" [8, c. 185]. It is the reign of the Holy Spirit that should lead to the transformation of human and world corporeality, so that it appears *enlightened and sanctified*. Only such a transformation will mean the final overcoming of the gravity of matter, overcoming the loss by the spirit of his true orientation and of break with God: "Only at the top points of cognition of the apophatic <...> is the overcoming of man's created character and deification" [10, p. 261]. And in this transfigured state of the world and man, *the goals of cognition will finally be implemented*: "Salvation of the world is the elimination of the opposition between Christ and the world – the two children of God, the penetration of Christ into all the cells of the world, the free acceptance of Christ by all parts of the world. The council consolidation of Christ and the world, the Logos and the world soul is accomplished by the Holy Spirit" [8, p. 184]. Thus, we can state: *the epistemological concept of Berdyaev is so specific that as a result of its unfolding, it organically combines with ontology, anthropology, metaphysics and eschatology*.

In conclusion of this consideration, we would like to make a projection of this original understanding of cognition on its modern interpretations and assessments. In his later works Berdyaev, reflecting on the tendencies in the development of the social processes of his time, noted: "Humanism can't withstand the processes of the technization of life, the invasion of the masses, democratization, etc. <...> The world goes not to organic, vegetative unity, but to organized, technical unity" [6, p. 358]. In the philosopher's view, it is possible to oppose to this process only *cultivating of a new spirituality on the basis of a new religious consciousness*. The acquaintance with the modern scientific literature devoted to the questions of cognition testifies in general to the fairness of the philosopher's words: yes, the processes of technology covered not only production, social life, but cognition. In modern studies from the field of epistemology it is spoken not at all about spirituality, creativity, or about the special role of cognition, but mainly and primarily about texts, symbolic structures, and combinatorics. These trends, indeed, can hardly be resisted, but it seems to us that the duty of philosophy still is preservation of the idea and sense of the man's mystery, the impossibility of the reduction of him to the role of agent of some impersonal technogenic process, the assertion of his right to be higher, more complex and in some sense more real than all artificial technical inventions: "The machine entered this world victoriously and disturbed the everlasting harmony of organic life. Since this revolutionary event everything has changed in human life, all has been broken in it. The rhythm of the organic flesh in the life of the world has been disturbed. Life was cut off from its organic roots. The organic flesh is being substituted by the machine; organic development finds its end in the mechanism" [14, p. 7–8]. And the epistemological concept of N. Berdyaev is a valuable acquisition of philosophy in the implementation of this case.

References

1. Бердяев Н. Дух и реальность. Основы богочеловеческой духовности. Философия свободного духа / Н. Бердяев. М.: Республика, 1994. 480 с. С. 363–462. (Мыслители XX в.).
2. Бердяев Н. О назначении человека. Опыт парадоксальной этики. О назначении человека / Н. Бердяев. М.: ТЕРРА – Книжный клуб; Республика, 1998. 384 с. С. 19–252. (Библиотека философской мысли).
3. Бердяев Н. О рабстве и свободе человека. Царство Духа и царство Кесаря / Н. Бердяев. Сост. и предисл. П. Алексеева; подгот. текста и прим. Р. Медведевой. М.: Республика, 1995. 383 с. С. 3–162. (Мыслители XX века).
4. Бердяев Н. Опыт эсхатологической метафизики. Творчество и объективация. Царство Духа и царство Кесаря / Н. Бердяев. Сост. и предисл. П. Алексеева. Подгот. текста и прим. Р. Медведевой. М.: Республика, 1995. 383 с. С. 163–286. (Мыслители XX в.).
5. Бердяев Н. Самопознание. Опыт философской автобиографии. Сост., предисл., подгот. текста, коммент. и указ. имен А. Вадимов. М.: Книга, 1998. 448 с.

6. Бердяев Н. Судьба человека в современном мире. К пониманию нашей эпохи. Философия свободного духа / Н. Бердяев. М.: Республика, 1994. 480 с. С. 316–362. (Мыслители XX в.).
7. Бердяев Н. Философия свободного духа. Проблематика и апология христианства. Философия свободного духа / Н. Бердяев. М.: Республика, 1994. 480 с. С. 13–228. (Мыслители XX в.).
8. Бердяев Н. Философия свободы. Смысл творчества. Вст. ст, сост, подг. текста, примеч. Л. Полякова. М.: Изд-во «Правда», 1989. 608 с.
9. Бердяев Н. Экзистенциальная диалектика божественного и человеческого. О назначении человека / Н. Бердяев. М.: ТЕРРА – Книжный клуб; Республика, 1998. 384 с. С. 253–357. (Библиотека философской мысли).
10. Бердяев Н. Я и мир объектов. Опыт философии одиночества и общения. Философия свободного духа / Н. Бердяев. М.: Республика, 1994. 480 с. 229–316. (Мыслители XX в.).
11. Вригт Г. фон. Три мыслителя. Эссе. Пер. со швед. Г. Коваленко; пер. с англ. И. Волковой. СПб.: Изд-во «Русско-Балтийский информационный центр «БЛИЦ»», 2000. 256 с. С. 223.
12. Мамардашвили М., Пятигорский А. Символ и сознание: Метафизические рассуждения о сознании, символике и языке. М.: Прогресс; Традиция, Фонд Мераба Мамардашвили, 2009. 288 с. С. 283–284.
13. Мотрошилова Н. Мыслители России и философия Запада (В. Соловьев, Н. Бердяев, С. Франк, Л. Шестов). М.: Республика; Культурная революция, 2006. 477 с. С. 249–252.
14. Sergeev Mikhail. Post-Modern themes in the philosophy of Nicholas Berdyaev. Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe. Vol. 4. Issue 5–10. 1994. Article 4. P. 1–10.

ГНОСЕОЛОГІЧНІ ІДЕЇ М. БЕРДЯЄВА В КОНТЕКСТІ СУЧАСНИХ ТЕНДЕНЦІЙ

Віктор Петрушенко

*Національний університет «Львівська політехніка»,
кафедра філософії
вул. Степана Бандери, 12, 79013, м. Львів, Україна*

Оксана Петрушенко

*Львівський медичний інститут,
кафедра гуманітарних та соціально-економічних наук
вул. В. Поліщука, 76, 79018, м. Львів, Україна*

У статті розглядається гносеологічна концепція відомого російського релігійного філософа доби Срібного віку М. Бердяєва. Хоча в більшості публікацій, присвячених М. Бердяєву, його гносеологічні ідеї не розглядаються, автори статті доводять наявність в його працях оригінальної гносеологічної концепції. Її суттєвою особливістю є те, що її зміст містить ідеї онтології, антропології, метафізики, теології та філософії історії. Філософ піддає критиці пізнання, що прагне пристосовувати людину до явищ цього світу. М. Бердяєв обґрунтовує позицію, згідно з якою пізнання варто розуміти як подію всередині буття, що в кінцевому підсумку приводить до преображення світу. У статті використовуються методи феноменології та герменевтики. Подальші перспективи дослідження пов'язані з поглибленням уявлень про пізнання та шляхи досягнення істини.

Ключові слова: пізнання, буття, першореальність, істина, есхатологія.