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UPON EXPERIENCE (SOME VIEWS)

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Abstract

The review was prepared in the framework of the problem of experience discussion at the initial stage of the scientific and pedagogical research related to the didactic conditions of learners' experience. In the modern world it is important to consider experience as a multidimensional, complex phenomenon of a person's mental life from the viewpoint of psychological science; to study experience as a phenomenon of social life; as a phenomenon and as a factor in the economy in the sense of productive activity. For carrying out pedagogical research, it is necessary to foreground the views on experience in the history of science, and this, of course, it should be carried out in a historical and philosophical context. Interpreting experience in the philosophy of the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, the author notes the lesser attention of philosophers to the concept of experience and to the almost unlimited power of experience in a postmodern view of the world. One of the objectives of the discussion is to review how the ideas of experience developed in the prospective that is necessary for the study. The main conclusions about the understanding of experience in philosophy are presented.

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1. Introduction

“Wisdom is the daughter of experience”

Leonardo da Vinci

The word “experience” is one of the most frequently used notions in science. Its conceptual roots go back to the era of Antiquity, when the dispute between nominalists and realists to a large extent began determining the positions of ancient thinkers about objective reality, events, life experience and fixing life’s realities, and, ultimately, experience. Later, the subject-matter, set by the era of Antiquity, constantly deepened. It developed into a confrontation between the empiricism and rationalism of the New Age, evolved in German classical philosophy, in the “philosophy of life”, in Marxism, positivism, neo- and post-positivism, existentialism, hermeneutics and other philosophical trends. In all these trends, attempts were undertaken to establish a connection between experience and knowledge, the connection between the everyday knowledge which people acquire in interaction with the outside world, society, with each other, and strict scientific knowledge, obtained on a methodologically and systematically verified basis.

2. Problem Statement

In science, there was always a clear understanding that human experience is individual, changeable, expresses ideas about everyday life, different beliefs. What a person sensually perceives in the concrete situation of his/her life is peculiarly and sometimes bizarrely intertwined. It is this property of experience that does not allow us to interpret it as something universal, common to everyone. At the same time, it was understood by scientists that experience is not simply the sum of chaotic, disparate sensory impressions, however, that in a certain sense it is integrity. After all, in the final analysis, experience is what sorts everything that happens in a person’s life, shaping it as a person and having a direct impact on his life. In other words, experience is the factor that has a major influence on the process of self-identification of a person, on the formation of his Self.

3. Research Questions

Therefore, pedagogical science is obviously interested in the notion of experience, in evaluating the influence of experience factor on the personality development and formation. Pedagogical science is characterized by permanent attempts to define organizational basic principles of this influence, along with the lines of individual experience acquired by a person based on chaotic sensual impressions of life; to bring a conscious pedagogical influence on the formation of the learner’s experience. To the point, this “is the subject of pedagogical design and is associated with the organization of training activities, the creation of a situation-event, the implementation of a project, etc., in short, all that can lead to the acquisition of relevant experience. ... The teacher is interested in the experience as the goal and result of education, as the expected degree of proficiency, as a set of competences to be achieved during the pedagogical process” (Bolotov & Serikov, 2016). In this way, the question for this paper is how to interpret the notion of experience in pedagogical research.

4. Purpose of the Study

All that has been said is important in determining the methodological foundations for the study of the didactic conditions for students to acquire experience.

With the time, in pedagogical science the concepts about experience began to blur, the concept scope changed, and there appeared some classifications and characteristics of experience that were not inherent in this concept (Bolotov & Serikov, 2016; Gadamer, 1988). It is known that the ideas about pedagogy are closely related to the notion of experience: “Many educational traditions have been and are still being built on the basis of this very mechanism of the transfer of sociocultural experience ...” (Barannikova & Bezrogov, 2013). Apparently, this relationship explains frequent appeal to ideas about experience. Scientific and pedagogical view of experience is different, dictated by the different goals and tasks that pedagogy poses in concrete interpretation. In particular, views on experience as a structural component of content, as the basis for the formation of creativity, as a factor of socialization, etc., on the one hand, actualize various tendencies of pedagogical science and help to solve different practical pedagogical tasks; on the other hand, they need taking into account research in interdisciplinary areas of humanitarian cognition, the disclosure of holistic ideas about experience from the standpoint of interdisciplinarity. For instance, it is important in the modern world to consider experience as a multidimensional, complex phenomenon of a person’s mental life from the point of view of psychological science; to determine the tasks of sociology in relation to experience and society, to study experience as a phenomenon of social life; it is advisable to study experience as a phenomenon and as a factor in the economy, productive activity. We can assume that the study of experience as a phenomenon from various positions will allow us to clarify the views on the experience of pedagogical science and the tasks of its formation by pedagogical means and methods.

5. Research Methods

Given that the key subject of the research topic is the concept of “experience” I would like to recall the ideas about experience in the historical and philosophical aspect, using text analysis, briefly referring to those positions that may be useful for research.

6. Findings

I would like to recall that the dispute about the accessibility / inaccessibility of the world cognition is not metaphysically completed up to this day. Kant (1994) substantiated theoretical aspect of the question, however, for many thinkers the statement that knowledge is limited by experience is not an axiom. In other words, from the idealistic standpoint, the world of essences takes place, but it is not known by science, as this world is closed to experience. It is interesting to recall here the theory of Aug. Comte on the three stages of science development. Aug. Comte names the three stages consistently, as follows one another and / or arises one on the basis of the other: theological, metaphysical, positive. Only the third - the positive - stage is considered by Comte to be a truly scientific, based on observed facts and derived from the facts of the laws (Mill, 2007).

In order to turn to the important ideas of Kant, we only incidentally, with a view to some actualization of known things, recall that before Kant two trends in philosophy were struggling: rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz) and empiricism (Locke, Hume). As is known, rationalism exaggerated the power of reason in cognition, while empiricists limited cognition to experience, which they understood rather narrowly, only as that which was given to a person's feelings from the outside.

Kant, using criticism as a special method of understanding the existing trends in philosophical thought, chose rational kernels from both trends and built his orderly system of views on cognition, the role of reason and experience in cognition. Here it is necessary to emphasize Kant's revolutionary idea of the existence of a person's mind, abilities of thinking, which allow prior experience (a priori) to comprehend the sensations in their synthesis. This is a necessary work of the human mind, connecting the scattered impressions of sensations received by the sense organs. It is this turn in relation to the role of reason that Kant calls "the Copernican revolution in the mode of cognition: ... we will proceed from the assumption that objects should be consistent with our knowledge ..." (Kant, 1994).

Materialistic view of experience was later developed according to this position of Kant, which includes the presence of the content of experience, connected with the practical and cognitive activity of people.

As it is easy to see, experience is considered by philosophers together with knowledge, more precisely, experience often determines the validity of knowledge obtaining, the validity of the method of knowledge obtaining. Obviously, philosophers desired to single out the content of knowledge in experience, in the form of experience. However, both the sensualists (Locke, de Condillac), and the neo-realists (Moore, Perry, Montague, Spaulding, Holt), and the positivists (Mach, Wittgenstein, Carnap) failed to prove that the experience is objective, that somehow the consciousness cognizes objects without perceiving them through the sense organs, that everything that is in the mind of a person is real. Otherwise, this statement translates illusions, fantasies and other "delusions" of human consciousness into the category of real.

For research in pedagogy, which is a humanitarian field, it is important to address the transcendental phenomenology of E. Husserl, noting the following: Husserl believed that along with ordinary (sensory) experience, there is an unusual experience associated with insensible contemplation – transcendental reflection. This means that consciousness comprehends itself before experience, a priori. Certainly, this does not coincide with ideas of Kant, because he rejected all "contemplation of essences", as well as the essences themselves. "Transcendental phenomenology is the science of the transcendental ego and about what is enclosed in it" (about the transcendental experience): self-interpretation of the transcendental ego, showing how it constitutes the transcendental Self; the study of all possible types of existence (given to us as the content of consciousness) (Husserl, 2001). Two positions of Husserl are important to us: 1 - the experience of self-contemplation of the transcendental subject and 2 - the knowledge obtained in this way about oneself is the foundation of culture and cognition; thinking is valuable in that it comprehends its own (internal) experience. Turning to the understanding of experience in the transcendental phenomenology of E. Husserl, certainly, we cannot help mentioning other views in the sphere of experience study.

Let us recall the concept of the experience of Bataille (1997), which he set forth in his well-known book "Inner Experience". It is also necessary to address this scholar, as many postmodernists, in particular, Foucault, Baudrillard, Derrida, expressed their opinions about Bataille and his study of experience. Bataille

proceeds from the idea that the transcendental is carried out a priori, before the experience, therefore Bataille's experience is not transcendental. Changing the terminology, Bataille leaves Husserl's contradictions. Bataille shows that experience exists by itself, is valuable for a person, it is acquired without any justification. Bataille believes that there is nothing outside the experience, as a feeling, at the moment. Bataille expresses one more thought: the inner experience is not objective and cannot be eliminated. Moreover, according to Bataille, there is no way to study the internal experience; it is not cognized principally. Consequently, the judgment expressed by the subject cannot be reliable; his message has no value as reliable information. Therefore, there is no experience with exclusivity; no discourse can be completed (Bataille, 1997). Probably, there is no definitive answer to the question: whether Bataille mocked any seriousness in interpreting inner experience or felt the tragedy of the idea of the absence of any exceptionality (uniqueness) of internal experience and, consequently, the formulation of this inner personal experience in the utterance-message. Rather, this answer exists; however, it is hidden behind derision of ideas claiming to be an original discourse.

Turning to the present, to the interpretation of experience in the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, in my opinion, one cannot help noticing the lesser attention of philosophers to the concept of experience and to the almost unlimited power of experience in a postmodern view of the world. The postmodern denial of truth, pluralism, the rejection of "eternal values" and total discourse, fundamental relativity of knowledge and subject ineradicability from scientific cognition, the individual responsibility of scientists for the results of science - practically all this raises the role of experience in cognition, in the subjective comprehension of the truth "here and now". Proclaimed by Deleuze chaosmos (as you might guess, from the words "chaos" and "space, cosmos") can be interpreted as freedom, breaking ties, unlimited possibilities for creative realization. The philosopher states that there are two principles in the world: the schizoid principle of creative development and the paranoid beginning of a strangling order (Deleuze & Guattari, 2010). This position reflects the importance of personal creative experience for the subject, and from the very beginning of the formation of the subject (Il'in, 1996).

Baudrillard, formulating his apocalyptic approach in the 70s of the 20th century, sees not the freedom, but considerable dangers in the devaluation of "eternal values", in danger for the subject to lose his/her individuality without having some kind of a set of learned values. However, again, we see here the role of experience, which can only contribute to the assimilation of values, the establishment of connections between the sign and the subject, the mastering and recognition of the signs of culture, and the cognition of the world as a kaleidoscope of texts (Baudrillard, 2000), nevertheless invisibly appears.

It is necessary to pay attention to one more - the third - concept of postmodernists; Foucault (Timofeeva, 2004). His concept is to "take care of oneself" or "self-salvation", that is, attempts of an individual to realize himself/herself within total discourse and general alienation. Foucault, on the one hand, accepts Deleuze's idea of total discourses and "eternal values" which suppress freedom of an individual. However, Foucault does not call for the destruction or the denial of traditions, but believes that the consideration of existing knowledge, the total influence of value settings allows the individual by mastering them, that is, by and large, having gained experience, to push away from them, to make them a "point of reference" for creativity and development, not to show obedient recognition of established approaches and opinions, so as not to become an object (in the understanding of Baudrillard). On what else, if not on

personal experience of comprehension of “eternal values”, experience of formation of his/her own principles and meanings of personal existence, does the subject master his/her path in an alien world? History, traditions, experience of humanity in this case appear as a place of application of the subject’s efforts for self-creation in conditions of exploring and overcoming the environment, opening opportunities for freedom and plurality of discourses. Foucault coined the so-called “techniques of Self”, which are completely based on personal experience of cognition, social adaptation and transformation of oneself through overcoming social and cultural attitudes for the sake of self-improvement. A quotation from Foucault comes to my mind, which clearly characterizes the modern world (and, of course, the understanding of personal experience in terms of improving oneself) that techniques of Self allow individuals to perform a certain number of operations on their body, in their soul, thoughts and behavior, and at the same time to produce in oneself some transformation, change and to reach a certain state of perfection, happiness, purity, supernatural power (Foucault, 2007).

As a small example of modern research, carried out in Russia concerning the creative kind of experience, I would like to cite a study by Lechtsier (2002) on the phenomenology of artistic experience. It is curious that the subtitle of the publication is “Experiences about experience”. In his material Lechtsier analyzes the ideas of Kant, Husserl, Heidegger, Foucault and Derrida. Experience, according to the author, is a way of cognition and creating art. Lechtsier expresses the idea that experience is the main criterion of the artistic, or the criterion of art, in other words, art can only be tested by experience, and it does not matter which aspect is judged: the experience of creating a work of art or the experience of perception. The author denotes such an approach as the “noetic principle of the identity of creativity and receptivity”. He includes the entire manifold human experience in the concept of experience. Creation of the artistic is an act of creativity, an act of personal creative experience, perception of art is also an act of creativity, an act of co-creation, because the perception of someone else’s work bears the imprint of the experience of the perceiver. These ideas are known from the works of Bakhtin, Derrida, and Kristeva.

Following Foucault, the author declares that the world is sustained and there is an ability of the creative person to realize himself/herself in the world. Introducing the triad as a special feature of artistic experience, Lechtsier makes us remember Bataille. In the artistic experience, three participants are designated: the artist, the object (part of the objective world) and the language as a means for creativity (as an example, the author uses his own poetic creativity). In the experience, all three participants become different, not previously known, helping each other to reveal themselves. The object and language create the basis for the artistic experience, the artist’s own experience. This is the difference between artistic experience and other types of experience. The triad is sufficient for the realization of the creative act, but the result of creativity will not be completed, even in the comprehension of the artist himself (Lechtsier, 2002).

In the modern view, of course, experience is one of the most important concepts of the theory of cognition. The widely accepted definition of experience is: “Experience is a philosophical category that grasps the unity of knowledge and skill, feeling and will, characterizes the systemic nature of the sociocultural inheritance of the historical existence of man in the world, the transmission of the history of being in this world from generation to generation” (Neorealism, 2000).

The main conclusions about the understanding of experience in philosophy are presented by Lektorskiy (2010):

1. "It is impossible to single out a completely direct and absolutely reliable knowledge, identified with experience, whether this knowledge is understood in the vein of empiricism as elementary sensory units or in the spirit of phenomenology as self-evident phenomena. What consciousness takes for granted is always a product of the activity of the subject, involving the use of certain patterns and standards ..., language, categories of culture, and also the theoretical language in science".

2. "Thinking and experience interact. On the one hand, the results of thinking activity are somehow used in experience and in this process are tested for suitability ... On the other hand, the experience itself is criticized, changes and is rethought on the basis of the progress of thinking".

3. "Different types of experience are singled out: ordinary experience, fixing in ordinary language and in the rules of "common sense" the results of everyday practice; applied in science ... systematic observation; scientific experiment ...".

4. "There is no sharp boundary between experienced and unexperienced sciences. Any experience assumes an unexperienced component. At the same time, even in such unexplored sciences as mathematics, there are conjectures, hypotheses, and so on. There are a number of disciplines, the subject of which is not given in the experience, but which nevertheless are not a priori, but deal with empirically existing texts (history, philology, culturology, philosophy)".

5. "The possibility of separating "inner experience" as an independent one is extremely problematic. If the ordinary ("external") experience presupposes the influence of an external object on the sensory organs of the subject, it is not clear which sense organs the subject experiencing his "inner experience" can use. And who in this case acts as a subject? Apparently, what is represented as the objects of "inner experience", in fact, are elements or links of orientation in the external world (cognitive schemes, discursive or semidiscursive formations)" (Lektorskiy, 2010).

7. Conclusion

It is important to note that this review is determined by the framework of discussion and the research itself, and the scope of the coverage of the problem of experience in philosophy is extremely broad. Attempts to cover this vast issue were undertaken by a number of researchers.

In conclusion, it is worth recalling one of the most striking references to experience in the twentieth century, the work of Gadamer (1988) "Truth and Method". Gadamer talks about the hermeneutic circle, which is formed by experience and understanding. He expresses the idea about the paradox of experience that is closed, because it can be repeated (it creates a scheme belonging to the inner world of man) and that is open, because through experience new things are learned, the experience in the search for confirmation is constantly being updated. The scholar supposes an experienced person to be a fundamentally adogmatic person who, precisely because he has experienced so much and has learned so much, has a special ability to acquire new experience and learn from this experience. The dialectic of experience gets its final conclusion not in some kind of final knowledge, but in that openness to the experience that arises from experience itself (Gadamer, 1988).

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