SOLIPSISM

СОЛИПСИЗМ

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S u m m a r y

This article is devoted to the study of the evolution of solipsism (a type of subjective idealism) as a philosophical current that became widespread in the XVII – XIX centuries. Solipsism of Johann Fichte and Max Stirner is considered as the main concepts. We study the concept of «solipsism» in two aspects: philosophical and sociological. Philosophical knowledge gives us an idea of the general principles of the studied teaching. Sociological knowledge allows you to penetrate deeper into the essence of this teaching. The methodological apparatus of the research includes the following methods: analysis and synthesis of data, generalization, abstraction, comparison, analysis of documents, the method of ideal types, as well as the method of generalizing characteristics.

Аннотация

Настоящая статья посвящена изучению эволюции солипсизма (разновидности субъективного идеализма) как философского течения, получившего распространение в XVII – XIX вв. В качестве основных концепция рассматривается солипсизм Иоганна Фихте и Макса Штирнера. Мы изучаем понятие «солипсизм» в двух аспектах: в философском и в социологическом.

Философское знание дает нам представление об общих принципах изучаемого учения. Социологическое знание позволяет глубже проникнуть в суть данного учения. В методологический аппарат исследования входят следующие методы: анализ и синтез данных, обобщение, абстрагирование, сравнение, анализ документов, метод идеальных типов, а также метод обобщения характеристик.

Key words: solipsism, subjective idealism, German idealism, skepticism, criticism, self, ontological category.

Ключевые слова: солипсизм, субъективный идеализм, немецкий идеализм, скептицизм, критицизм, самость, онтологическая категория.

The relevance of the topic lies in the need for a private study of the concept of «solipsism». The evolution of solipsism in the XVII – XIX centuries is of particular interest in research discourse. Today, the study of solipsism in the framework of social philosophy and sociology is relevant.

The practical significance of the study is due to the possibility of using the materials of the article in the further study of solipsism. In addition, the materials of the work can be used in a higher educational institution in the classroom on «Philosophy» and «Sociology».

The purpose of the research is a comprehensive analysis of the concept of «solipsism» in the history of philosophy from the standpoint of classical and postclassical philosophical doctrines.

Solipsism (from Latin solus – the only one and ipse – self) is a type of *subjective idealism*, its extreme form, which recognizes the existence of one social reality – the thinking subject. The varieties of ideas and forms in solipsism are the sense-forms of personality. According to the classical (orthodox) current of the XVIII century, only the *«I»* is primary, while neither matter nor ideas exist outside human consciousness. In this key, man learns the world through the analysis of his inner world [4].

Such a position is due to the fact that solipsism does not set out to find answers to the two main questions of philosophy. *«Self»* or *«selfhood»* is considered in many

concepts to be the only true Eidos. «Self» in solipsism can be called an analogue of *H. Hegel's Absolute Idea.*

The origins of solipsism can be traced to the works of Zeno, Anaxagoras, Augustine the Blessed, R. Descartes and J. Smibert. Some features of solipsism can also be found in the early writings of C. Brunet and J. Berkeley, who argued that certain things *exist as ideas* in the divine mind [1].

For the first time this philosophical position made itself felt in the judgments of the ancient Greek Gorgias of Leontini (483-375 BC), who formulated the following doctrines of solipsism:

1. *Nothing exists.*

2. Even if something exists, it is *not known* for certain.

3. Even if something may be known about it, this knowledge cannot be passed on to others.

4. Even if this knowledge can be passed on to others, *it will not be possible to understand it* [1].

The ancient arguments sound rather pessimistic, but they explain practically nothing. However, the rationale behind solipsism is fairly straightforward to understand.

Only *«I»* exist in the world, and the rest are an *illusion*. If in the perception of the world we are bound by our subjective sensations, then we can assume that no objective reality exists in principle.

Another tradition in solipsism is the creation of the world through the mind. Such a world exists only within the mind.

Other not so radical followers of solipsism sometimes became the heroes of curious stories. So, in *criticism* of this line of thought, the philosopher Bertrand Russell referred to his friend, who complained that she had become a follower of solipsism and could not find other solipsists in any way [4].

This logic is simply absurd, because the absence of other solipsists is explained by the absence in the world of anyone at all but you. Therefore, those who have

embarked on this path will have a rather lonely journey – you will not form a circle of followers of solipsism from the phantoms of your own *consciousness*.

Such a worldview can be attributed to the manifestation of radical solipsism.

Through these ideas, sensations arise in the self which form the beliefs and moral views of man and society. Solipsism was first justified as an independent doctrine by Johann Fichte, who elevated the self-consciousness of humanity and the collective self to the absolute. In the *«Doctrine of Science»* philosopher substantiated the contradiction between *the law of the form of visibility* (*«Sichtbarkeit»*) and the fact that it sees itself in *its fullness* [5, p. 553].

Later, the «Doctrine of Science» was repeatedly criticized by supporters of Marxism and critical realism, despite the fact that solipsism greatly influenced the development of empiriocriticism [2].

H. Marcel and M. Stirner actively resorted to some of the concepts and categories of solipsism. In his study The One and His Own, Stirner wrote: «For Me there is nothing above Me» [6, p. 10].

This reflection in the discourse of German Idealism influenced the development of such schools of solipsism as: *gnoseological solipsism*, *metaphysical solipsism* (*perspective realism*), *methodological solipsism* (a new form of *Cartesian skepticism*) and *ethical solipsism* (or *«ethical egoism»*) [1; 4].

Solipsists of the second half of the XIX century and followers of M. Stirner regarded social reality as the totality of *all products of mentality*, and their pro-social behavior as a valid part of others whose spirit is reflected in their «I».

The refutation of solipsism is a rare example of a philosophical problem, the acuteness of which can lead a philosopher out of blissful contemplative peace and, perhaps, even make him grab the poker as the last argument.

The epistemological solipsists of the first half of the XX century believed that the basic ontological categories (*being, space, time*) *do not exist* because they are subordinated to the «I» and, in fact, are illusions of social reality (in solipsism), that is, distorted perceptions of others' consciousnesses (ideas). We see the same in the unconscious philosophy of Freud, Adler and Jung [8].

So, solipsism has never been popular. It was criticized throughout the whole period of its existence. The main critics of solipsism were Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche [3; 7].

Schopenhauer believed that the inseparability of subject and object from each other was nonsense; the philosopher considered psychological motives to be learned empirically – through the products of human activity. The limit of the spirit, the *thing-in-itself* (*«Ding an sich»*), according to Schopenhauer, does not necessarily affect sensual cognition [7].

Nietzsche was more categorical about the future of *subjective idealism*. According to the philosopher, cognition of the external world is conditioned not only by sensual but also by logical necessity, and the fusion of the world of things-in-itself and the world of phenomena is only an attempt to reinforce solipsism through *a return to the philosophical tradition of skepticism*, but with a core in the form of an absolute «I» [3].

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