

## Radical turn in the understanding of ideology and the development of “neutral” approach <sup>1</sup>

Bursevich V.V.

Social and political analysis of ideology is impossible without a preliminary investigation of the very meaning of the concept “ideology”. Reconstruction of classical and contemporary theories of ideology shows two dominant trends or approaches to the defining of this concept – “critical” and “neutral” ones. The basis of “critical” approach is an understanding of ideology as the means of support and legitimation of domination. This idea is reflected in the following presumptions of this approach: epistemological realism, the definition of ideology as “false consciousness”; opposition of ideology and science; instrumentalist understanding of ideology and emphasis on its function of distortion; the linking of ideology with group interests. In spite of the high level of popularity among the investigators “critical” approach has a lot of methodological limitations. By this reason we can find another one - parallel to “critical” - approach to ideology analysis in philosophical tradition. The aim of this “neutral” approach, by the words of P. Ricoeur, is “to think about ideology and utopia in terms of their most positive, constructive and – if we may use the term – healthy or wholesome modalities together” [Ricoeur P. From text to action: essays in hermeneutics. – Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1991. – P. 322]. The great number of lacunas and contradictions inside “critical” approach leads to the increasing of researchers attention to positive understanding of ideology. This alternative approach is not so popular as “critical” one, nevertheless it has a great heuristic potential.

In fact, “neutral” approach even precedes the “critical” one, because even A. D. de Tracy has understood ideology neutrally as the science about the genesis and development of ideas. But the first one, who elaborated deeply a neutral notion of ideology, was K. Mannheim. The thinker was the author of the concept “total ideology”: in accordance with it any consciousness is enrooted in social situation, and as a result has ideological nature. The critique of particular ideologies leads to the realization of ideological involvement of any point of view. Mannheim noted an impossibility to overcome ideological character of reality comprehension and marked an important role of ideology in social life that is not only limited by the defense of group interests.

In philosophical tradition the idea of determination of perception, cognition and knowledge by the system of unconscious dispositions connected with the historical and social conditions could be found, for example, in W. Dilthey's notion “lifeworld”, in C. G. Jung conception of “collective unconsciousness”, in M. Foucault's notion of “episteme”. In general, today the issue of influence of historical and practical horizon on the perception of the world is in the avant-garde of philosophical investigation. There is a special paradigm of social researches that has a title “social constructivism”, within the frame of which the society is understood as the result of symbolical constructing. And as far as the created pictures of social reality need to be proved, the question of ideology as legitimation instrument is very often considered in details in the conceptions of social constructivism.

It is interesting that the apologists of “neutral” approach to ideology are mostly anthropologists and culturologists, for whom the issue of ideology is only additional to the main topics of culture studies. In particular, an american anthropologist K. Geertz (“The Interpretation of Culture”, 1973) notes that the failure of contemporary social science to study ideology is linked with common understanding of it as the set of ideas, when its connection with the mechanisms of culture functioning are not taken into account. The emphasis on the link “power-ideology” in “critical” approach leads to the missing of more positive functions of ideology. In Geertz opinion, the role of ideology can only be grasped within the comprehending of it as the system of symbolical production.

Next famous social anthropologist, L. Dumont («*Homo aequalis: genèse et épanouissement de l'idéologie économique*», 1977), offers a wide notion of ideology either. His investigation contains the analysis and comparison of the fundamental, transsubjective ideas that service as the foundation of western and eastern civilizations. These ideas he calls ideologies making the opposition between modern and traditional ideologies. The main peculiarity of such notion of ideology is a refusal to oppose ideology and science. As Dumont notes, for his investigation absolutely doesn't matter whether these ideas are right or wrong, because correspondence to the truth is not their main quality, much more important is that these ideas are common for group, and that the membership in some particular society depends on the believing them. So “neutral” approach offers a positive vision of ideology as the special form of symbolization and developing of the collective representations. In the heart of the approach is social constructivism idea of society as symbolically performed reality, as a result we see the overcoming of negative estimation of ideology as the system of illusion. The cultural production role of ideology is marked instead of the functions of distortion and manipulation, and the unconscious character of ideological norms and their meaning for the identity development are emphasized.

“Neutral” approach attracts new followers from day to day (P. Ricoeur, F.P.A. Demeterio, E. Chiapello, M. Augoustinos, D. Langdrige and etc.), and not only among politicians in the transmitted countries, where “neutral” notion of ideology is used as the instrument of society integration. As M. Augoustinos writes: Ideology is no more equal to false consciousness, mystifications, distorted or unreal ideas. More likely ideology refers to any believes, representations, discourses and practices that serve for legitimation and maintenance of current social and power relations not taking into account their truthfulness [Augoustinos, M. Ideology, False Consciousness and Psychology / M. Augoustinos // Theory & Psychology. – 1999. – 9. – P. 99–100].

Today “neutral” investigations of ideology are closely connected with the exploration of the nation development, state genesis and civilization transformation. Moreover ideology becomes the key point of investigation the identity development, starting from classical treatises (J. Lacan, P. Sloterdijk, M. Foucault) to modern monographs on national and citizenship identity (B. Anderson, R. Brubaker, I. Neumann, E. Laclau and C. Mouffe), gender identity (D. Haraway, D. Smith, J. Butler) and cultural identity (S. Benhabib, H. Bhabha, E. Said). All these

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investigations are possible only on the basis of positive vision of ideology and its constructive role in society and culture.