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O. M. KORKH^{1*}, V. V. KHMIL^{2*}^{1*}University of Customs and Finance (Dnipro, Ukraine), e-mail korh54@gmail.com, ORCID 0000-0001-7175-5011^{2*}Ukrainian State University of Science and Technologies (Dnipro, Ukraine), e-mail broun79@gmail.com, ORCID 0000-0003-4710-6681**The Idea of the "Self-Made Man" and the Philosophy of Postmodernism**

Purpose. This study explores the underestimated potential of postmodern philosophy to understand a modern human and their priorities, particularly through the interpretation of the idea of the "self-made man" (an individual who creates oneself). Through a comparative analysis, the paper examines the conceptualization of human formation as a self-made man in the Enlightenment era and postmodernity context. **Theoretical basis.** The study is based on analytical and generalizing methods, as well as the works of M. Foucault, J. Baudrillard, J.-F. Lyotard, U. Eco, etc. **Originality.** Despite the claims regarding narrow opportunities for individual self-determination in postmodernity, the ideal of the "self-made man" remains an integral component of philosophical reflection. It is demonstrated that the postmodern delegitimation of Enlightenment metanarratives entails the rejection of metaphysical discourse. Within this framework, metanarratives gradually lose their appeal, while individuals are increasingly compelled to rely on themselves and independently determine their priorities. People act regardless of their social status, define the goals and sense of their existence, and choose the means of achieving them. The process of becoming a person unfolds in social transformations, the growing complexity of democratic institutions, and the emancipation of individuals seeking to make their lives more meaningful. **Conclusions.** The search for human emancipation encompasses several stages of social and mental development through self-determination and self-realization, where new attempts to reveal human creative potential emerge. Despite the diversity of approaches, postmodern philosophy demonstrates that the idea capable of uniting humanity lies in the aspiration toward a full existence of the individual as a self-sufficient being. Such understanding of personality, experience, and uniqueness creates more favorable conditions for the formation and realization of one's own concept of the "self-made man".

Keywords: individual; personality; self-made man; self-realization; self-affirmation; self-determination; modernity; postmodernity; metanarratives

Introduction

A prominent trend in the contemporary world is the growing appeal of a new type of individual – the "self-made man", a person who has created oneself and achieved success through one's own efforts. Human self-realization may take place both individually and collectively. The attention is typically focused on social conditions and freedom allowed by society that provide the foundation for individuals to realize their potential through personal motivation and creative-intellectual effort. The increasing number of popular-science publications devoted to success stories of outstanding figures, not politicians, as well as various celebrities evidence the dissemination of this approach. There is also a growing demand for coaching services and motivational speakers who claim to reveal the secrets of personal success. At the same time, the number of studies in social psychology, pedagogy, cultural studies, and philosophy addressing this issue continues to expand, thereby contributing to the popularization of the "self-made man's" ideal. This development appears quite natural, given that the problem of personal self-realization concerns ordinary individuals seeking to define their own life strategies through personal effort and individual responsibility. Intentions for the "self-made man" can be traced in the era of Antiquity – in Socrates' injunction to 'know thyself'; in the religious worldview of the Middle Ages, where human worth was grounded in spiritual service to God, although human creativity remained constrained by divine freedom; in the Renaissance, which elevated human self-determination to the level of unique creative expression; and in the

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Modern Age, where the individual was conceived as a creative agent striving to attain scientific truth. Within the framework of Enlightenment ideals, humans were embedded in a scientific vision of progress that frequently overlooked the spiritual dimensions of life and the individual's aspiration to freedom. Kant's message for every person to make use of their 'own reason' was directed toward the moral autonomy of the individual. Although this idea is immediately expressed in legal and political institutions and in the rationalization of social life, it simultaneously laid a solid foundation for the philosophical understanding of personal self-expression and self-determination. In this sense, Kant's philosophy effectively legitimized one of the key features of modernity – the ideal of human emancipation and the aspiration to freedom (Korkh & Khmil, 2024). However, to what extent, has this orientation remained characteristic of postmodern society? Has it become merely a 'value remnant', destined to disappear amid ongoing social transformations and the gradual erosion of individual freedom, as suggested by a number of studies at the turn of the twenty-first century? The answer appears to be negative, particularly if one considers the work of the renowned psychologist A. Maslow (1968), who regarded self-actualization as the highest human need: "Self-actualization means the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, potentialities. Such people seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the best that they are capable of doing" (p. 92).

Indeed, in the view of many scholars, postmodern philosophy represents a form of decadence within European culture – a "state of the exhaustion of humanism/modernism, disillusioned with itself after being deprived of its foundations through the abandonment of Christianity" (Lukasik, 2023, p. 32). Or is it opposite – "in the age of global capitalism and the new social media, corporate success on a grand scale has once more become concretized and personalized in "self-made" individuals such as Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, or Mark Zuckerberg" (Paul, 2014, p. 405), who are really generated by new conditions?

Despite the abundance of literature related to the "self-made man" phenomenon, a lot of studies focus primarily on psychological and personal characteristics of individuals who have achieved success through their own efforts (Leckelt et al., 2022). Recently, an increasing number of publications have adopted a linguocultural perspective on this issue (Smalko & Panchenko, 2020), while others have explored its gender dimension (Lillie & Tisch, 2026) or the psychological determinants of human activity (Kalmykova et al., 2025). Particular attention should be paid to studies on the idea of the "self-made man" in the context of neoliberalism and meritocracy (De Keere, 2014). Equally noteworthy are postmodern approaches to education based on models of discursive thinking that emphasize human self-realization (Bazaluk, 2023). A number of scholars have identified a gradual transformation of the traditional modern form of individualism into a so-called 'expressive' individualism, oriented primarily toward the possibilities of self-expression and self-realization typical of the postmodern individual (Paul, 2014). Such developments demonstrate that the digital age provides individuals with greater opportunities, generates new ways of life, and creates new forms of social practice conducive to self-affirmation (Shabanova, 2023). Given these divergent and often contradictory interpretations in postmodern philosophy, the question of new conditions and possibilities for human self-realization becomes quite significant in contemporary philosophical discourse.

Purpose

The purpose of this article is to identify and examine the underestimated potential of postmodern philosophy for understanding the individual in their orientation toward the ideal of

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the "self-made man", a person who has created oneself. The task is to conduct a comparative analysis of the place of the individual and the scope of human possibilities in the Enlightenment era and in the pluralistic models of postmodernity, which generate new conditions for human self-realization.

Statement of basic materials

This task, aimed at assessing the possibilities of personal self-determination, is conditioned not only by worldview-related considerations but also by the ambiguity surrounding the social dimension, which has become an object of philosophical analysis and has provoked negative assessments not only among explicit critics but also among the 'pillars' of postmodern philosophy. There are a number of articles which often argue that postmodernism does not introduce new cultural meanings, leaving behind a range of unsolved human problems that require further reflection.

Postmodern thought criticized the strategy of modernity by drawing attention to the subordination of the human to social institutions, but not to the transformation of the conditions of human emancipation. This tension led European theoretical thought to a state of uncertainty, since the problem of the sense of human existence, self-realization, and humanity itself remained largely unresolved. This situation was caused by the intensified rationalization of social life, in which reason became an instrument of domination and power. This tendency was already embedded in the intentions of the Enlightenment, and humanity does not hurry to liberate itself from it.

In fact, insufficient critical reflection on the dominant methodology inevitably led to anthropological decline and to the narrowing of the spiritual dimension of human existence. Michel Foucault (1975) identifies dangerous tendencies in the development of modern society in his "Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison". He argues that, since the Enlightenment, most people have inherited not only the ideal of personal freedom but also a new model of power that deprives the individual of both freedom and personal autonomy.

The French philosopher notes that the 'normalization' of the individual by government authorities produces, on the one hand, the depersonalized homogeneity of mass humanity and, on the other hand, individualizes humans through a spectrum of differences in order to increase the efficiency of systems of governance: "In fact, the function of disciplinary power is not to take or to extract, but to perform its major function – to 'train'; no doubt in order to take more, not by uniting forces in order to reduce them, but rather by seeking ways to strengthen and use them" (Foucault, 1975, p. 173).

According to M. Foucault, this model of state formation resembles a penitentiary system that extends across the entire field of social relations. The author examines a situation in which the individual is displaced from political and cultural activity, necessary for personal self-affirmation. It is about various forms of subjugation by state institutions, affecting not only individuals but also broad social strata. These forms of domination are systematically extended not merely to criminals but also to law-abiding individuals who are useful to the state. As a result of the unification of individuals, society is gradually transformed into a vast, rationally organized mechanism in operation, where power over the man becomes increasingly subtle and all-encompassing. Human life itself turns into a continuous 'examination', on the one hand, it reduces individual characteristics to a common denominator, but, on the other hand, it makes human life an object of constant attention and correction.

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Within the modernist paradigm, reason functions as the criterion of morality and humanism. A comprehensive strategy is elaborated according to which human nature can be corrected and improved through the use of social technologies developed by the state over centuries. Thus, by regulating human behavior, power penetrates all spheres of social life and becomes the principal instrument of coercion, as well as a safeguard against any deviation from the ideologically prescribed 'norm'. M. Foucault's attitude toward the normative society that emerged from the Enlightenment ideal is quite cautious, especially with regard to doctrines that affirm the normative character of the future.

As the English thinker John Gray observed, and it is difficult to disagree with him, the Enlightenment contains two future-oriented projects. The first functions as an instrument of total control that 'remakes' humanity through scientific knowledge and state power; the second, alternative project serves as the foundation of liberal-democratic society, in which reason becomes the defender of individual rights and freedoms (Gray, 2007).

To make such conclusion, it is sufficient to recall the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which established the basic principles of life in democratic countries, the protection of the individual from pressure by state institutions, the resistance to social inequality, and the formation of a new image of the human and a new way of life giving individuals the sense that the world is worth living in creatively. However, the ideal of a rational social order envisioned by the Enlightenment thinkers brought the majority of population to a loss of goals and meanings, as well as to the erosion of a sense of justice concerning self-determination and meaningful choice. The ideal behind such choice had once been the individual, non-alienated labor of earlier epochs. The ideas of human dehumanization embedded in bureaucratic 'reason', aimed at the supposed 'improvement' of human nature, increasingly began to remind society of its possible future.

The construct created by the Enlightenment laid the ideological foundations for socio-legal institutions, confining the human within the framework of the old system and limiting self-development in contrast to the Renaissance era. The individual is becoming increasingly alienated from oneself, instead of getting into the sphere of apophatic withdrawal, the individual began to discern a definite aim – to transform social conditions of one's existence and, at the same time, to transform oneself.

This contradiction is reflected in the intensification of individualistic tendencies, which will undermine existing forms of subordination and simultaneously weakening the ties between social strata and social institutions. These processes led to disorder and to the further uncertainty of human existence in late modernity. By contrast, postmodern thought encouraged the idea of liberation in visions of the future, as the Belgian sociologist K. De Keere (2014) observes: "as long as one critically reflects on one's own shortcomings and weaknesses and musters sufficient willpower, everyone is capable of achieving efficiency and professional success – values embedded in the ideal of the person who makes oneself" (p. 311). It means the rise of "expressive individualism", which provides the individual with stronger motivation for self-development in the sphere that most closely corresponds to one's abilities.

Like M. Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard is deeply distrustful of the Enlightenment's value orientations, which radically restrict the individual's vision of the future. Both philosophers are highly critical of J. Habermas's position concerning the justification of universal moral norms that could be accepted discursively by everyone. This position contains elements of "universal consensus" (Habermas, 1968), understood as an attempt to improve the Enlightenment project

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through the internal legitimation of knowledge by reducing it to intersubjective dialogue. Narrative consciousness that will become the principal object of criticism for the French philosopher F. Lyotard was concealed with the acceptance of broad social discourse.

The ideological foundation of modernity is addressed in F. Lyotard's seminal work "The postmodern condition" (1979), where he argues that the modernist worldview, as well as the doctrine of the emancipation of the subject, is closely connected with the problem of personal self-determination. Lyotard's analysis focuses on the narrative nature of knowledge in the Enlightenment era, embodied in specific linguistic practices of 'metanarratives' in human consciousness along with the remnants of mythological and religious beliefs.

Lyotard (1984) observes that "Narrative knowledge, on the other hand, admits of a plurality of language games (...) and does not submit to the instance of evidence. It is legitimized by the simple fact that it is told. (...) Scientific knowledge requires the validity of statements and their verification" (p. 41).

Lyotard criticized narrative consciousness and its principle of legitimation, which continues to influence contemporary social consciousness. The philosopher argues that modernity itself contains the incapacity of Reason to grasp the humane foundations of social order and the specific conditions of human life that were characteristic of the Enlightenment. This situation continually leads the individual to experience life as incomplete, since conventional socialization took place outside the spiritual influence of religion and myth. In other words, the modern era offered particular routes to success in the patterns inherited from previous epochs, with a clearly directed trajectory of achievement and a life path predetermined for the individual, rather than oriented toward autonomous action and creativity.

The rational foundations of existence and hopes for making a perfect society, in which social bonds would be legitimized on justice, failed to achieve their aim. This happened because the concept of human happiness came into conflict with the dreams and personal desires of the individual, who sought refuge beyond the pragmatics of the state. It was human uncertainty regarding the future, repeatedly expressed by Friedrich Nietzsche, that became the real basis for distrust toward Enlightenment social optimism.

Traditional structures of consciousness acquire the status of dominant regulative principles, functioning as a basic model of the future and relying on the existence of "universally valid truths" and the proper organization of productive, cultural, religious, and legal spheres. The attributive feature of metanarratives is in their refusal to raise doubts about their truth. In fact, however, they legitimize relations of domination over the individual: a predetermined style of thought and expected behavior, dictated by legislative, moral, and legal practices, brought to dehumanization.

In fact, narrative forms no longer possess a universal character, since, as a rule, they always legitimize someone's strictly particular will. Conceptions of the general foundations of being and of 'proper' social action, interpreted by particular social groups "in accordance with their own truth", no longer exert significant influence on human behavior, except under totalitarian regimes.

The crisis of metanarratives emerges with the rise of liberal forms of life, human emancipation, and new humanistic ideals. It is reflected in postmodern thought, which introduces doubt and distrust toward universal norms and values that claim to express the truth of being. Yet the critical perspectives of the new epoch are grounded in paradox, hermeneutic disorder, and interpretive plurality, all of which fundamentally contradict the systematic thinking of modernity.

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However, from a postmodern perspective, any form of 'centrism' is dangerous, since it assumes the right to determine truth and justice, to judge what counts as the norm and what constitutes a deviation from it, and to standardize individuals in the name of their perfection as a universal good – a project that ultimately proves unproductive. In any case, humanity pays a very high price for its attraction to the One.

One of the tasks of postmodern thought was to search for new truths free from metanarratives legitimized by trust. It should be noted that the attempt to discover new ideas for a liberal and humane world, ideas closely related to the existential dimension of life, also opened the way to the temptation of self-affirmation.

The diverse thematic field of postmodern thought encourages the individual to advance career, opens a space for freedom and independence, and continually confronts the individual with challenges and the search for alternative solutions. Human life increasingly becomes one's own individual project, one that dismantles old standards and creates conditions of uncertainty that serve as a powerful stimulus for creativity and self-affirmation. Self-realization becomes a matter of personal choice. The individual is free to choose values, career, lifestyle, and identity from a variety of existing alternatives.

On the other hand, the trust in classical philosophy concerning glorification of the human through reason, purposiveness, search for essence and integrity led thinkers to the conclusion that truth has a monological form, and that it has already been discovered and communicated to humanity as the necessary foundation of social progress. U. Eco (2006) develops his thought by reminding us that we should fear eternal truths and those prophets who are ready to die for them: "they usually cause many others to die with them, often before them, and sometimes instead of them... the only truth is to learn how to free ourselves from the insane passion for truth" (p. 532).

For this reason, individuals in the Enlightenment era who disagreed with the dominant ideology and its social ideal were subjected to re-education through repressive measures. As a result of such destructive pressure on the individual, social activity disappears, and the person increasingly perceives oneself as a 'cog' in the bureaucratic system. This spirit of rationalization is not only in state institutions but also in every pore of society: registration of marriages, leisure, organization of holidays, etc. Everything is administered by state officials ignoring the norms of civic life. As a consequence, the individual's personal status disappears, the inner world is narrowed and the capacity for independent decision-making and responsibility for one's actions are weakened.

It is evident that postmodern inquiry is oriented toward the search for the unstructured and irrational: antinomies, anomalous practices, and the hidden meanings of culture that are beyond narrative consciousness and contradict the truths of modernity. The postmodern vision of the world is oriented not toward the search for the universal, but toward the singular and particular, which dismantle normative stereotypes and expand the horizons of worldview.

In humanities, there are no universal laws for understanding socio-cultural formations: all such formations are mutable, based on a relativistic interpretation of human essence and one's place in the state order. This new type of thinking not only dismantles norms but is also aimed at searching for new ideals of justice as the only way to avoid violence rooted in the ideological foundations of modernity. This search relies on the ideals of liberalism and humanism, which should be embodied in social institutions that promote the genuine development of the individual toward self-realization.

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At the same time, it should be noted that postmodernism places a taboo on its own 'truth', as any of its ideas may eventually become a metanarrative, undermining trust in its own truthfulness. Ultimately, this new orientation lays deep foundations for creative human interaction and opens a discursive form of intellectual activity grounded in the individual's right to acknowledge one's spiritual life.

Who could disagree with the claim that "postmodernism means the triumph of individuality" (Farhan, 2019, p. 4), since this movement indeed establishes new orientations of human existence? It considers the individual not merely as an element of economic and political processes but as a person capable of self-realization and creating new meanings of the future.

Does this criticism mean "farewell to reason", leading to the "groundlessness of being", general decadence, or even the "death of the subject"? Hardly! The Ukrainian philosopher Ihor Bychko seems to have come closer to understand this situation when he argued that postmodernism is not a 'farewell to reason', but rather a 'farewell' to unitary, or 'metaphysical', reason. Oriented toward the plurality of the world, postmodernism does not seek a new Universe, it opposes the privileging of any particular direction of thought and turns philosophy toward the deconstruction of any form of 'centrism', creating a 'space of freedom' (Bychko, 2000, pp. 72-73).

The French philosopher J. Baudrillard does not remain outside the problem of destructiveness. He goes even further, declaring himself a nihilist, because "the revolution of postmodernity is an immense process of the destruction of meanings, compared to the earlier destruction of the visible" (Baudrillard, 2004, p. 225). Baudrillard understands that these meanings had already been weakened in Enlightenment humanism through its focus on the abstract person, whose origins lie in the Cartesian-Kantian idea, deprived of nationality, homeland, apart from the metaphor of its "Europeanness". All of this ignores human uniqueness, as well as the individual's own needs and desires.

This is extremely dangerous, given the deceptive character of such truths, to rely on normative demands for 'justice' which rarely satisfies anyone, generating a nihilistic attitude to metaphysical concepts. Accordingly, each step toward the 'denarrativization' of social consciousness appears to make concepts more adequate. Postmodern nihilism does not begin with the metaphysical radicalism of earlier epochs. As Baudrillard (2004) states, "nihilism today is the nihilism of transparency, and to some extent, it is more radical and decisive than its previous historical forms" (p. 223). It is within this atmosphere of transparency surrounding social institutions and theoretical frameworks that postmodernism seeks to understand the individual. The pluralism of postmodern thought has paradoxes, antinomies, and unstructured knowledge that blur meanings and hinder the search for any preconditions for integrating humanity. It may be impossible to avoid the destruction of identity, elements of the deconstruction of the self, and the relativization of moral norms. However, with regard to humanistic intentions, a new possibility emerges – the freedom of thought and human self-determination, even under the unpredictable and difficult conditions of history.

The above is largely reflected in the postmodernist conception of the subject as a fundamentally decentered being, lacking any essential core of identity. Such subject should be understood as a process of continuous deconstruction rather than as a fixed and immutable identity (Gajbhiye, n.d.). Moreover, the subject resists the pressures of 'discipline', standardization, and other forms of rationalization. Through such resistance the human remains a person and, indeed, a subject. Therefore, postmodernism rejects the interpretation of the subject as a constant derivative of a larger whole, an interpretation that dominated western thought for

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several centuries. At the same time, this new understanding of the human does not provide a final answer to the problem of self-determination. On the contrary, it creates new possibilities for self-realization, enhancing self-esteem.

Reflecting on these arguments, one is tempted to conclude that postmodern 'anti-humanism' is not particularly conducive to the realization of human dignity or to the recognition of the person as the highest value. J. Baudrillard characterizes this condition as a turbulent and uncontrolled liberation of the individual from excessive political and legal regulation. One of its consequences is the devaluation of established values, including the values of humanism itself.

Such situation creates conditions similar to those in which the laws of microphysics do not work at the level of macrophysics. No value, including the value of human dignity, can any longer be assessed according to the scale of values inherited from modernity, generating even greater tension in our understanding of the human: "beautiful and ugly, true and false, or good and evil, as it is simultaneously to calculate a particle's speed and position. Good is no longer the opposite of evil, nothing can now be plotted on a graph or analysed..." (Baudrillard, 1993, pp. 5-6).

This situation is not only alarming, but it creates conditions of genuine social anomie, disorientation, and anxiety. It also creates the need for 'personal resistance', choice, and action, since the human is not only a participant in the world but also the 'outcome' of one's own project. The choice of any model through which an individual seeks self-determination may not always correspond to the moral imperative of Christian values. Consequently, human dignity is constituted through such 'resistance', choice, and action, including the capacity for self-creation. From this perspective, the human ceases to be an object of power and becomes a subject of freedom.

The positive aspect of this situation is that the political and social revolution, which served as a prototype for all subsequent revolutions, granted individuals the right to freedom and autonomous will and, "an implacable logic ... to ask himself where his own will lies, what he wants in his heart of hearts, and what he is entitled to expect from himself" (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 24). Indeed, through difficult questions, conscious efforts toward self-determination begin.

In this regard, the rejection of the illusion of a universal history in favor of a pluralistic understanding of the histories of cultures becomes particularly significant. These cultures possess no single center of development or common trajectory. In its reflections on globalization, postmodern thought draws attention to national sovereignty, cultural specifics, and the existence of mental and symbolic differences shaped by mythology, religion, and tradition.

It is commonly assumed that numerous and diverse communities emerge at the intersections of different cultural practices. These communities are united mainly by local interests and values and generate corresponding 'micro-narratives', which provide them with a degree of local coherence and integrity in everyday life of their social worlds.

New circumstances have transformed the understanding of the universal history of humanity by revealing different types of worldviews and ways of life. This has created the basis for perceiving the 'other' not as something strange, but as an object of analysis and comparison. Postmodernity has focused attention on human qualities and feelings shaped by the interaction of multiple cultures, generating new impulses for overcoming cultural taboos. As a result, the individual may get a significant degree of 'sovereignty' in self-determination and self-realization.

Today, the person is shaped by new intercultural syntheses, new social and historical contexts, multilingual encounters with others, and communication through social networks. In most countries, new generations are emerging with high-quality education, creative thinking, and

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ambitions that challenge hierarchical social structures and influence the transformation of social roles. Diverse forms of human existence give rise to non-standard thinking, which becomes a source of inspiration and intuition in every sphere of human activity.

In this process, the individual finds oneself through a transcendent dimension, by going beyond the limits of 'I'. External criteria of success include career advancement, awards, and diplomas, whereas the internal criterion of success is a deeper existential sense of happiness, harmony with the world, dignity, well-being, and psychological comfort. Such rapid processes blur the earlier definition of identity, which had previously been regarded as relatively stable over time. The individual now acquires new qualities while losing one's original integrity in terms of performance.

External recognition is dictated by consumer culture, in which goods and services become not only means of satisfying needs but signs of identity and 'status': a district where one lives, education received, profession pursued, shopping centers where one buys clothes, appearance, and the number of followers on one's social media accounts.

The postmodern approach ruins unified norms of life-purpose and thus creates conditions for human self-realization in virtually unlimited diversity in the choice of the self. Certainly, the actual practice of multiculturalism is far from ideal. But cultural heterogeneity should not be feared, since, in Eco's (2006) words, the beauty of the Universe is revealed to us not only as unity in diversity, but also as diversity in unity. Each person can read this variegated plurality in one's own way.

Thus, postmodernists reject the idea of a single integrative concept of humanity as the metanarrative foundation of being, an idea debunked in the works of J. Lyotard, J. Baudrillard, M. Foucault, and others. However, the idea that can unite humanity is the idea of human freedom, full-fledged existence, and movement toward self-determination in both theoretical and ontological contexts. Communication, spiritual values, and a high level of self-esteem are the means that can implement the idea of a free person.

There is no other way: innovation always arises from difference and diversity, through which life itself comes to appear as a 'great text', while the individual, free from bureaucratic regulation, becomes a source of generating interpretations. In and through these interpretations, humanity anticipates and creates a new often more effective society that offers broader opportunities for human self-realization.

Originality

The study demonstrates that the understanding of the human in postmodernism is consistent with the ideal of the "self-made man", the person who creates oneself. It is proved that the antithesis of personal self-realization is Enlightenment humanism, which was created around the image of a pan-European model of the "universal human". This concept is based on the idea of an "unchanging human nature", in which the individual is reduced to a function of reason, while emotional, volitional, and spiritual qualities are underestimated.

The search for the paths of human emancipation encompasses several stages of social and mental formation through self-awareness, grounded in inner motivation at the level of worldview, sensibility, and markers of identity. This process covers a long historical period preceding the modern era. The next stage of self-awareness is self-determination, understood as the external manifestation of a person's choice of life path and the ability to formulate one's own goals. However, such goals may remain unrealized due to existing social and state-imposed restrictions.

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Nevertheless, self-determination contains the capacity of the human for self-realization – individual ability to reveal one's unique creative potential and embody it, when selecting a worldview orientation. The human acts independently, regardless of social status, defines the aims and sense of one's own life, and determines the means of achieving them. Such a way of life corresponds most fully to postmodern philosophical inquiry under conditions of ideological plurality and freedom understood as the absence of coercion.

This analysis makes it possible to identify new ways of human self-realization. The article argues that, despite its worldview pluralism, postmodern philosophy reveals the aspiration toward full-fledged human existence and self-determination, in both theoretical and ontological contexts, as an idea capable of uniting humanity. From the point of this analysis, further research is required into the spiritual, moral, and ontological projects of the human in conditions of decentralization of human existence.

Conclusions

An analysis of contemporary studies shows that the ideal of the self-creating individual remains a persistent feature of the cultural landscape of postmodern society. This ideal remains not only an interesting historical and cultural phenomenon but also a socially and psychologically significant motivator of personal activity. However, it acquired particular significance within the rationalist thought of the Enlightenment, especially in the analysis of the 'abstract' human detached from any national culture and interpreted within a naturalistic paradigm grounded in the omnipotence of Reason.

The philosophical search for an "unchanging human nature" that accompanied the Enlightenment project led to the emergence of new social technologies aimed at the improvement and re-education of the individual in accordance with repressive practices employed by the ideology of state power. This study argues that such approach failed to take into account the multidimensionality of the human, particularly spiritual and emotional qualities rooted in the transcendent and irrational dimensions of human existence. These dimensions opened a new space for reconsidering the rationalization of the person.

At the same time, the postmodern criticism of the Enlightenment does not invent a new Universe or new "unities of the whole" as foundations for personal self-determination. It believes that the deconstruction of metanarratives creates new preconditions for authenticity and freedom.

Postmodern inquiry generates valuable imperatives for the independent manifestation and preservation of personal diversity in understanding of freedom and meanings of existence. This new mode of thinking is grounded in diverse cultural forms, multiple discourses, and different ways of reflecting on the future in a transcendent dimension. In this way, it lays the groundwork for a plurality of worldviews and models for understanding the place of the human, creating a foundation for self-realization.

Such understanding of the individual is more tolerant towards personal experience as a source of one's own judgments and decisions. It creates more favorable conditions for personal self-determination and for achieving success in the realization of one's own concept of the "self-made man".

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Ідея "Self-made man" та філософія постмодерну

Мета. Дослідження спрямоване на недооцінений потенціал постмодерністського напрямку філософії стосовно розуміння сучасної людини та її пріоритетів, тобто тлумачення ідеї "Self-made man" (людини, яка створила себе сама). В контексті порівняльного аналізу осмислити тлумачення процесу формування людини як "Self-made man" в епоху Просвітництва та в ситуації постмодерну. **Теоретичний базис.** Відправними точками аналізу стали аналітичні та узагальнюючі методи досліджень М. Фуко, Ж. Бодріара, Ж.-Ф. Ліотара, У. Еко тощо. **Наукова новизна.** Попри всі розмови про звуження можливостей самовизначення людини в постмодерні, ідеал "Self-Made-Man" залишається невід'ємною складовою філософської рефлексії. Встановлено, що постмодерністська делегітимація просвітницьких метанарративів, скасовує метафізичний дискурс. В такому контексті метанаративи поступово втрачають свою привабливість, а людина все більше вимушена покладатися на саму себе й сама визначати свої пріоритети. Людина діє незалежно від соціального статусу, сама визначає мету і смисли свого існування та засоби їх досягнення. Процес становлення людини відтворюється в процесі соціальних трансформацій, ускладнення демократичних організацій, емансипації людини, яка прагне зробити своє життя більш значущим. **Висновки.** Пошук шляхів

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емансипації людини охоплює декілька етапів її соціального та ментального становлення через самовизначення та самореалізацію, в яких закладені нові спроби розкрити її творчий потенціал. Стверджується, що постмодерністський напрямок філософії, незважаючи на різноманітність підходів свідчить, що ідея, котра змогла об'єднати людство міститься у прагненні до повноцінного існування людини як самодостатньої. Вочевидь, що таке розуміння особистості, її досвіду та унікальності, створює більш сприятливі умови для формування та реалізації її власного концепту "Self-Made-Man".

Ключові слова: людина; особистість; Self-made-man; самореалізація; самоствердження; самовизначення; модерн; постмодерн; метанарративи

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