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Miracle as a Message: Cosmological, Anthropological and Educational Implications

The purpose of this article is to explain in religious, secular, and post-secular contexts the functional potential of conceptualizing the miracle as a text or message with a motivational effect. **Theoretical basis.** Max Weber, Ernst Tugendhat, Alexander Geppert and Till Kössler analysed the processes of enchantment and disenchantment of the world on a philosophical basis. The representatives of the Frankfurt school (Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin) and their followers describe the cultural processes of post-secularism (Jürgen Habermas, Peter Sloterdijk) in detail. The logic of cultural and social representation of amazing events and their descriptions can be realized by combining hermeneutic analysis with a functionalist approach based on the model of Niklas Luhmann and the discursive ethics of Karl-Otto Apel. **Originality.** Desired cultural, social and political situations in society often arise unexpectedly and suddenly, which provokes to characterize them as a miracle. However, at the basis of the emergence of such situations are the rules of social communication, in particular those that provide for asymmetric communication with questions that await answers. A miracle appears at the moment of transformation of asymmetric communication into a symmetrical one: each specific miracle-phenomenon needs its own metaphorical understanding and interpretation as a message. **Conclusions.** The article proposes an analysis of miracle phenomenon in its cosmological, anthropological and educational implications. Some tendencies fixed by communicative turn of the contemporary philosophy are also contributed to considering the miracle in its objective and subjective representations. The semantics of the miracle is analysed according to the relevant problem fields. The functionality of miracle is examined on its ability to show orientation for the contemporary societies with their tendency to post-secularity. The fusion of Pre-modernity and Late Modernity is taking into account when the semantics of miracle is described accordingly to their communication functionality. The enchanting and disenchanting dialectic is explained on semantics of miracle as a world and cosmic events.

Keywords: miracle; cosmology; religion; anthropology; semantics; communication; culture; post-secularity; education

Introduction

The phenomenon of the miracle as a supernatural one belongs to the objects that emerge on the boundaries of the well-known world, its hidden side and universe. However, the semantics of miracle through their connections with the wonder and the miraculous are showing the ability of crossing these boundaries. It is possible because the miracle is not only observed but also experienced and perceived. The scale of the subjective appraisals of miracle has therefore a wide range: true, truthful, faithful, possible or impossible.

The historical forms of miracle representations are well-known and systematized (Geppert & Kössler, 2011, pp. 49-68). Since the Pre-modernity the phenomenon of the miracle has been the prerogative of theologians. They were occupied by developing of theory of miracles and organizing of their practical staging. In the Ukrainian philosophical tradition, since the time of H. Skovoroda, the miracle has been described as a phenomenon and experience in the ethico-spiritual context (Popovych, 2008, p. 207). This article can be regarded with some restrictions as continuation of this tradition pursuing the aim to clarify the communicative potential of the miracle phenomenon through the dialectics of its enchanting and disenchanting. It is a theoretical paradox that, with references to Max Weber, the tendency of enchantment is established espe-

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cially in post-industrial developed societies returning to post-secularism (Geppert & Kössler, 2011, p. 10). The process of the enchanting of the world is generally considered as consequence of the mythological worldview. Mysticism, with its anthropological roots, has always used the practice of creating miracles by manipulating the appearance and hidden side of things (Tugendhat, 2007, pp. 180-181). Social phantasies are also connected with hopes for the improvement of reality in line with the imperative of rectification. But not only the irrational explanations of unknown or unexpected phenomena are operating with the miracle concept in the option of enchanting. The disenchanting ones can be also converted in the field of mythology. Metaphors of the economic, social, political or educational miracles and wonders unveil this dialectic. This kind of attitudinal change is analysed in detail by representatives of Frankfurter School (Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin) and their followers describing the cultural processes of the post-secularism (Jürgen Habermas, Peter Sloterdijk). The phenomenological conceptualization of the miracle is represented also in cosmological research field, especially in the philosophy of cosmism in its different directions.

The *methodology* strategy corresponding to this purpose is developed according to the logic of the cultural and social representation of the miracle events and their descriptions. This is possible only by combining hermeneutical analysis with a functionalist approach based on the model of Niklas Luhmann and the discursive ethics of Karl-Otto Apel. Therefore this article continues proofing of the methodological strategy which was drawn in our article "Cosmological and Cultural-Anthropological Turns in the Christian Philosophical Theology: Educational Implications in the Post-Secular Contexts" (Kultaieva, Radionova, & Panchenko, 2021). The communicative turn in cosmology, as well as in theology and political and educational sciences, opens up the prospect of uncovering some of the hidden messages sent by the events that are perceived or classified as miracles.

Consideration of the miracle as a communicative act requires argumentative support, which itself seeks support in a phenomenological reflection that makes clear the different type of messages that are translated from the miracle as a real object and its perception or construction. It might be mentioned that in the late Modernity the concept of the miracle is misused often in the vernacular communications as an expression of admiration or amazement. But the article deals with those conceptualizations of miracle that are autonomous from everyday life with its metaphors and slang of mass culture.

Purpose

The purpose of this article is to explain in religious, secular and post-secular contexts the functional potential of conceptualization of miracle as a text or message with motivating effect. Taking into consideration all these remarks, this article shows the miracle from its communicative side, namely as an active and passive subject of symmetrical and asymmetrical speech acts occurring in the fragmental social world.

Statement of basic materials

Miracle's functionality in religion: certification of the sacral truth or actuality of Hegel's explorations

The systematic consideration of the functionality of miracles in religion originates from German idealism – from its attempt to give a rational explanation of the miraculous phenomena in the bibli-

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cal stories. The Kantian approach to regard the religion from the position of reason was continued by Hegel. He emphasized the positive side of the religion narratives. Therefore, by Hegel, biblical miracles can be interpreted from the standpoint of reason (Vernunft) and understanding (Verstand). The mind fixes the sensual perception of the wonder as an unusual event as an evidence of religious truth, especially of God's existing. The paradox of this position lies in the ambiguity that arises after attempts to clarify it in a natural way. In this case, only the external side is accepted, which provokes the subjective interpretation of miracles and their messages. Therefore, Hegel (1981) turns to the search for the function of religious miracles in reasoning, since reason can reveal hidden information about sacral events and its signs addressed to people (p. 484).

The great problem of the Modernity with the advanced secularization is the certification of the truth in religion connected with practical side of salvation: saving from natural and anthropogenic disasters or wondering of God's creations (Fuchs, 2022). These metaphysical reactions have a very vivid range, including "the ontological shock" clarified according to Hegel's scheme. This term, used by Axel Honneth (1995), aims to show the upper level of the extraordinary events by Jean-Paul Sartre (p. 163). Hegel makes also distinctions between the widespread profane miracles and those that occur seldom or have a recognized iteration. According to Hegel, only those miracles that are attested as containing true messages related to a true story can be considered both the truth of religion and a true miracle. This can be illustrated by the growth of the cult of the Virgin Mary or other saints as representatives of the Savior (Zander, 2011, p. 155). As an argument used by Hegel is an anthropological statement that the animals have no religion and only human needs it because religion is imbedded in thinking. That's why human heart and feeling are connected with thinking, which makes possible a spiritual life with all its attributes (Hegel, 1981, p. 486). The phenomenon of myroblyte icons seems to confirm Hegel's assumption about the crossing of philosophy and theology, which attests to the truth of this form of miracle. Anyway, regarded as a message, this fact taking place both in the West and East Europe shows a possibility of ideological instrumenting of miracles (Imorde, 2011, pp. 129-130). To determine the difference between these forms of miracle representations, it is necessary to analyse in more detail the semantics of miracle in contemporary theological and cosmological discourses, since the theological and cosmological heaven can speak different languages using the same signs in communication through miracle as a medium.

*The semantics of miracle in theological and cosmological discourses:
provoking post-secular messages*

The return to some of the problems dealing with miracles semantics in the post-secular cosmological, anthropological and educational discourses is related to many reasons. The main one reflects the complications caused by the acceleration of knowledge production in the post-industrial societies, where the possibilities of the digital technologies are perceived as a hand-made miracle with the divine ontological characteristics such as omnipresence and ubiquity (Geppert & Kössler, 2011, p. 12).

The theologians seem to be more prepared for this return of the miracles on the scene of theoretical discourses and practical debates. Belief in miracles belongs to the anthropological roots of religion and mysticism and can be seen as the most constant characteristics of human being (Tugendhat, 2007, p. 193). The achievements of the neurobiology can be regarded as a confirmation of theological statements about the natural predispositions to religious experience and human ability to recognize the miracle as transcend and natural events that convey messages

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to their observer with different capacities of utterance and understanding. These discoveries return into contemporary linguistic discourses the hypothesis of Jerry Fodor (1983) of modularity of mind. The discovery of the religious centre in the human brain and some simile structures by animals can be used as an acknowledgment of the old theological idea of the all-unity of being. But there are two possibilities for the interpretations of this fact. The first of them is the analogy with the biological computer, the second – widening the horizon of consideration of the essential connection between God and man, which is commonly called spirituality (Lukas, 2021). The second possibility provides for revision of fundamental anthropological ideas from the standpoint resonance theory of human attitude to the world. The philosophical rethinking of the sociological resonance theory of Hartmut Rosa (2019) makes it possible to open conceptual closed schemes of the spirituality and therefore to explain the place of the human in the cosmos on the basis of inter-subjectivity (pp. 7-8). The static place of the human in the cosmos must be replaced by a dynamic connection between human nature and cosmic space, thereby the phenomenon of miracle would be turned into the practical aspect with the resonance effect.

The origin of miracle has different interpretative schemes in theology and in the secular versions of the cosmology. Some authors propose to distinct between the transcendence wonder and nature wonders as *miracula* and *mirabilia* (Geppert & Kössler, 2011, p. 68). P. Sloterdijk (2009) propose to use as generic term for all artistic person "*homo mirabile*" as "*life Artificum*" with wondering resonance in its environment (p. 512). Therefore this distinction has some theoretical problems. In this case, the cosmic and natural phenomena are regarded separately repeating the religious division of the heaven and earth. Accordingly to this division the cosmic miracle have divine origin and have superiority upon the unknown natural events. God's appearance as divine action needs an observer and an interpreter to be notable. The same is validly for natural miracle. Both the cosmic and natural events are impossible without human ability to accept the unknown events as a message that must be deciphered. It should also be noted that the miracle as a supernatural event can be perceived in the modus of an existential encounter or God's speech addressed to man. Among the cultural forms with the most high resonance are visual art and theatre, both with exponential symbolic addition.

The cosmic or god's language using in this kind of communication can be described as "*cosmovision*" (Weiler, 2011, p. 97). This original "*cosmovisual*" methodological approach at its categories can be used as instruments for receiving messages from miracle appearance with great resonance. Birgit Weiler demonstrates this belief in pre-modern contexts that bear some resemblance to post-secular constellations. The conceptual pair cosmology and *cosmovision* can be regarded both as a conceptual opposition and as a complementarity. This splitting or, in Hegel's term, *Entzweiung*, allows to bring new semantics and metaphors of miracles with a magnetic effect on people into the cosmological discourse. "*Cosmovision*," according to Weiler (2011), "is experience condensed in language" (p. 97). The holistic intentionality of the *Cosmovision* makes possible to perceive the appearance of miracles as the ended communication or closed speech act with exhaust meaning for awaking cognition (Luhmann, 1998, p. 44, p. 46).

Miracles, both in theology and cosmology, are generally explained with referring to collective memory or collective experience gained regarding these phenomena. In spite of that there are many notes made about clairvoyants and visionaries in historical documents. The abilities of these persons in foreseeing are often classified as embodied miracle because they exceed the potential of the normal human constitution. Generally they deal with *cosmovisions* and their interpretations.

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The semantics of cosmovision can be both rational and affective designed. The scientific discoveries are often described as miracles with secret messages. Their content of miracle reports is generally unclear not only in the popular reports, but also in special publications. Discourses about miracles in theology are semantically more rigid than in scientific cosmology. The voice of prophet is always present in the reports of miracle, which as a rule are made by theologians. The practices of cosmovision share many similarities with forecasting, especially in the form of prediction. Semantics of miracle can make such futurological practices more convincing but less understandable.

The messages received from miracle as a medium can also be transformed into performance or theatre. In search of the origin of such transformations with accentuated semantics of miracle, P. Sloterdijk focused his attention on theopoetics both in theology and in its secular version in literature. The theological and cosmological narratives in literature, according to Sloterdijk, explore the story of heaven both in the mythology, religion and in secular contexts. The analysis of miracle in those options gives opportunity to define the heaven as a stage where the drama of ascension and decline takes place. Semantics of heaven as a metaphysical place, where miracles can be produced and performed, is also complemented by the semantics of speaking and exaggerating (Sloterdijk, 2020, p. 220).

The miracle as the theatre is the best described in the old Greek literature. Sloterdijk had used the antic tragedies as an empirical material to show the world of Gods in action. Gods as producers of miracles show abilities to change their roles during the whole performance. Gods can be onlookers of tragedies taking place in heaven reality. But they can appear unexpected on the scene as actors playing their role. It is possible because they are speaking Gods. "The Olympians," Sloterdijk (2020) says, "could be described as an oligarchic society" or as "anti-gravity beings" who observe and correct everything that happens in the field of gravity, sending their messages in the form of miracles (p. 12). God's appearance in theatre modus is possible only in the frames of the mythological worldview with its way of thinking and acting. Miracles belong to this reality as cornerstones of the cosmocentric structure of the world.

Nobody can see directly the God at work. Anyway Greek's mythology might give some practical advice on how to imitate a miracle at different stages of its creation. Reducing the Gods to craftsmen making miracles denies their exclusive position in Cosmos and relegates them to the level of magic trick artists. The semantics of heaven has connotation both with the place where miracles are created – God's workshop, and with the place for sending messages – God's office. In the Pre-modernity, according to Sloterdijk (2020), this distinction was a "symbol of immunity", because the Gods, as creators of miracles, have the power to decide the glory of their creations by sending messages to all people in the form of their revelation and warnings of disasters (p. 7).

During secularity the semantics of heaven and miracles have lost their metaphysical foundation and with it – the support from priests. The consequence of that was quite unexpected: the heaven lost its voice with position as moderator on Gods meetings and interpreter of miracles messages. In spite of this, the silent heaven found its place in communication in the field of everyday life and mass culture. The ideological situation of the post-secularity tries to combine speaking and silence of heaven. The reification of heaven occurred through secular invasion in its meaning. Heaven was reduced to cosmic space used for human needs. Its rudimentary majesty is preserved in speech actions with high expressive potential. But the praise of this disappointment of heaven has lost its symbolic meaning.

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In the contemporary cosmological discourses, heaven is also reduced to space, and miracles coming from here are just the matter of natural sciences reporting in scientific or popular terms on reports in scientists' publications or their public lectures. The turn to the post-secularity can be qualified as attempt of making hybrids from mentalities of the Middle Age and Late Modernity with their reading of miracles messages.

Anthropological design of miracles and its educational implications

In the post-industrial societies, the artificial miracles become their legacy as the expression of human creativity and art. Miracles with all their messages are reinterpreted from the perspective of wishful future and from the technophobic point of view. The wishful futuristic miracles are not always handmade products because the human evolution can be unexpected and continue with disasters. The miracle of optimized human (emendation) opens the era of post-humanism. The later shows the ambiguity in itself because the evolution in this direction might be regarded both as a project of the Gods and as a man-made miracle that sends an appeal to people who must necessarily be changed according to this model. Anywhere this model may have an objective or subjective side.

The objective side is a profane substitution of God by making miracles with simulations of his messages to people. Thereby it must be mentioned that explaining of such messages connected with miracles is now the matter of consumers and vendors, to whom producers delegate their priority right. Turning to the subjective side of the analysed model it must be said that here the attention is concentrated on such gifts of human nature that belong to the sphere of culture. Therefore the cultural, social, political and educational anthropologies must be involved into research field of the artificial miracle creation that might be the first stage of the secular and post-secular miracle appearances with their further translating into language of the mass culture for consumer communicative society.

The heuristic metaphors of economic, social and political miracles, which are described in the media as a great achievement, are often revealed at a level of reality far from what is called the object of wonder. The competition between homo faber, homo sacer and homo creator continues with the increasing intensity also in the postindustrial contexts. Giorgio Agamben (1998) sees the possibility of such competition in "politization of life" and "politization of death" (p. 131, p. 162). The ambivalence of the sacrality in Agamben's theory might be used for making distinctions between the greatest miracles on the Earth – life and death. But the experimental way of his thinking shows also an attitude to name as miracle every product of innovation. The immortality is thereby substituted through repairing. Mechanical thinking seems to return to anthropological oriented philosophical discourses. The prototype of artificial intelligence and a new human in the post-industrial society could be considered the well-known science fiction work of Mary Shelly "Frankenstein, or Modern Prometheus". The iconic value of this figure is associated with showing the hidden dangers of technologies that reproduce the process of human creation in an unnatural way. The handmade monster is generally not considered as miracle in the context of the mass culture because its consumers expect only pleasant impression from miracles.

Thus, the miracle with all its messages is reduced to a self-affirming technique of mass culture in the post-industrial societies. The natural miracle of childbirth is replaced in this culture by the creation of human beings through biotechnology and the study of cultural, pedagogical and psychological resources. Yuval Harari (2017) analysing this tendency makes forecasting for fur-

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ther development of pedagogical technologies as miracle producing techniques with the ability to "change the biochemistry of students" (p. 59). The phenomenon of the wonder child and people with paranormal abilities is often regarded from the standpoint of utility, which is often found in shows and various performances.

The pedagogical miracles are often stylized as a suddenly effect of sleeping beauty in the well-known fable. Pedagogical formative activities and self-educational successes therefore remain hidden, and teaching professions are reduced to serving the individual. The miracle flower and the gardener are the best metaphors describing the pedagogical relationship in the postindustrial culture. The miracle of spontaneous transformation with "aha-effect" in the post-passivity is in this context more significant than observation and pedagogical correction of students' development. Schools are also often elevated to a sacred place by the metaphor of "temple of knowledge" and "temple of science", the later – in the case of secondary schools and universities. It should be noted that the widespread understanding of educational institutions as a fabric of knowledge production and spirituality rooted in industrial society is being replaced by laboratories for creating reserves of workers in post-industrialism.

In the educational spaces the phenomenon of miracle occurs in different representations. First of all, we should mention the objectification of some innovative pedagogical ideas that probably could radically change educational practices or the role reality in educational institutions. The ideas with certificated "miracle potential" promise the appearance of a miracle in the future, forgetting the actual educational tasks. The pedagogical theories of changing human nature have always been a part of utopian projects in spite of their transformation in the period from the New Age (Francis Bacon), the Enlightenment (Jean-Jacque Rousseau) and the Late Modernity with its anthropotechnical turn (Sloterdijk, 2009, pp. 9-10). The main directions of those transformations develop as a rule in accordance with strategies of economic modernization. The social modernization as a miracle is reflected in pedagogical wonders on the collective or individual level with different visions of educational methods but with post-secular inspiration (Kultaieva, 2019, pp. 226-227).

The artificial intelligence, its possibilities and real achievements can be considered as challenges for pedagogical sciences. The same can be said about the perspective of education in the variants of transhumanism in order to redesign a person on a scientific basis (Midgley, 1992, pp. 14-17). The techno idyll of different versions of trans-humanism can be regarded as a message to address the possibilities of solving some problems related to human bodily and spiritual health. Thereby the popularity of alternative ways of accumulating and expanding non-scientific knowledge as one of the signs of post-secularity is associated with the growing hope for a miracle in all spheres of postindustrial society.

Originality

The phenomenon of miracle has many faces that are determined by cultural, social and political situations. The messages about miracles that are sent out can be both expected and sudden. But still, in both cases, there is often a communicative act in the form of initiating asymmetric communication with questions waiting to be answered. The transformation of asymmetric communication into symmetric one depends on the intensity of the process of cognition of each specific miracle phenomenon with its metaphorical messages.

Conclusions

Both talking about heaven and talking about nature requires perception and interpretation in specific social and cultural contexts. The manipulation with miracle messages can be used in political ideologies in religions as a tool to strengthen their influence and solve their particular tasks. The self-made wonders in the social life, culture and education are usually not related to mysterious self-representation and might be regarded as human achievement with a resonance effect. Falsifications of such achievements can provoke a lot of negative changes in the social conscience, because in this case the illusions become superior to social realities. The utopian thinking developed on this basis can be transformed into the direction of criminal utopia with all the consequences of the negative freedom culture.

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Диво як послання: космологічне, антропологічне та освітнє значення

Мета. У цій статті передбачено пояснити в релігійному, секулярному та постсекулярному контекстах функціональний потенціал концептуалізації дива як тексту або повідомлення з мотивувальним ефектом. **Теоретичний базис.** Процеси зачаклування та розчаклування світу на філософському ґрунті аналізували Макс Вебер, Ернст Тugendхат, Александр Гепперт і Тіль Кеслер. Діалектичний підхід до аналізу дива та метафори економічних, соціальних, політичних чи освітніх див детально аналізують представники франкфуртської школи (Теодор Адорно, Макс Горкгаймер, Вальтер Беньямін) та їхні послідовники Юрген Габермас і Петер Слотердаjk, описуючи культурні процеси постсекуляризму. Логіку культурної та соціальної репрезентації дивовижних подій та їхніх описів можна здійснити шляхом поєднання герменевтичного аналізу з функціоналістичним підходом за моделлю Нікласа Лумана та дискурсивною етикою Карла-Отто Апеля. **Наукова новизна.** Бажані в суспільстві культурні, соціальні та політичні ситуації нерідко виникають неочікувано, раптово, що провокує характеризувати їх як диво. Утім, в основі появи таких ситуацій лежать правила здійснення соціальної комунікації, зокрема ті, які передбачають асиметричне спілкування із запитаннями, що потребують відповіді. Диво постає в момент перетворення асиметричної комунікації на симетричну: кожне конкретне диво-явище потребує свого метафоричного осмислення й інтерпретації як послан-

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ня. **Висновки.** У статті запропоновано аналіз феномену дива в космологічному, антропологічному та освітньому аспектах. До розгляду дива в його об'єктивних і суб'єктивних репрезентаціях внесено й деякі тенденції, які були закріплені комунікативним поворотом сучасної філософії. Семантику дива проаналізовано за відповідними проблемними полями. Функціональність дива досліджено на його здатності показувати орієнтацію для сучасних суспільств з їх тенденцією до постсекулярності. Злиття домодерності та пізньої модерності враховано для описання семантики дива відповідно до їхньої комунікаційної функціональності. На основі семантики дива як світових і космічних подій пояснено діалектику зачаклування та розчаклування.

Ключові слова: диво; космологія; релігія; антропологія; семантика; комунікація; культура; постсекуляризм; освіта

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