

UDC 304.2

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## **TRANSVERSAL THINKING IN THE CONTEXT OF INTELLECTUAL STRATEGIES**

*The paper deals with the problem of transversal reason as the concept of W. Welsch's theory, which opens new horizons for intellectual strategies building. The central idea of the paper is transition and transitional states between different types of rationality. The author underlines that transitions, terminals, differences, relations form the environment of the complex thinking as a transversal one. It is actually the detection of transitions. The concepts of transversal reason have considerable heuristic potential in the present conditions of different positions existence.*

**Keywords:** transversality; transversal reason; transition; rationality; modern intellectual strategy.

The modernity is characterized by the becoming of a new way of civilizational development, which is called the “informationalism” by M.Castells [1;2;3]. The special form of social organization emerges. Its main parameter is ‘the network logic’ of its basic structure, which determines and transforms all spheres of social life according to new social morphology. The network society as the complex, dynamic open system, which consists of intertwining “space of flows” and which is in the special “terminal” state of becoming, self-organization, self-reference and increasing reflection, which can be called “timeless time”, is formed [4]. While investigating the current stage in the history of modernity, Z.Bauman uses the metaphor «liquid modernity» [5]. It helps to understand and to express the character of the present as the transitional one with its instability, the intensification of the processes of differentiation and disintegration of the resistant structures, the constitution of difference and “germination” of connections between them like “rhizome”.

The reality of global information and communication networks is extremely complicated. The complexity as entanglement is in the bases of all global, national or local processes, which are characterized by high dynamics of changes, producing of differences and entanglements between them. The complexity of stages transforms into the complexity of self-complicating processes, endless nodes and transitions (“from complexity to perplexity”). How can thinking be possible in the situation of permanent processuality, escaping not only from the analysis, but also from fixation of conceptual-categorical forms and rationalities in disciplinary orders? How can understanding be possible in situation of production

of differences, their mixing, formation of heterogeneous complexes at all levels of social being?

Contemporary world needs new thinking, which is relevant in the world of plurality in conditions of endless fragmentations, entanglements and conflicting differences on the background of global threats to being. The new horizons for intelligent strategies building are opened in the concepts of complex thinking of Edgar Morin, global thinking of Ervin Laszlo, transversal reason of Wolfgang Welsch, nomadic thinking of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari etc. The central theme of these concepts is the theme of transitions, transitional states between different types of rationality, the theme of transsectoral, transdisciplinary and transparadigmatic thinking as transitional. In this connection it is interesting to see the use of the notion of transversal reason in philosophical studies of postmodern by German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch.

The very notion of transversality was mainly used by mathematicians for a long time. For the first time it was used by Jean-Paul Sartre in the philosophical context. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari used it as the philosophical notion [6]. Applying to the theory of reason and the systematic extension into an edifice of thought, this notion was used by Wolfgang Welsch in two steps. The first project of the concept of 'transversal reason' was presented in Chapter 11 of his book *Our Postmodern modern (Unsere postmoderne Moderne)*, [7]. The systematic elaboration of the concept was done in his work *Reason. Modern critique of reason and concept of transversal reason (Vernunft. Die zeitgenössische Vernunftkritik und das Konzept der transversalen Vernunft)* [8]. What are the main ideas of Welsch's theory of transversal reason and how can they be related to holistic understanding of our plural reality, which is possible only on the basis of really universal philosophy?

At the XX Congress of Philosophy in Boston, Welsch, raising the issue of transversal reason, poses the problem: if philosophy in its structure tends to universality, and by its conditions is closely tied to the culture, then how can we resolve this tension? He proposed to discuss three models [9]. The first model is naïve, traditionally widespread model, where the culturally specific character is simply ignored. What is in fact particular is declared to be universal. This approach leads to philosophical cultural imperialism. Postmodern criticism clearly and rightly rejected it. The minimum condition to avoid the straight totalitarian universalism is to study the implicit cultural taints of philosophy. The worst strategy within this model is recognizing the national character of universality without questioning it.

The second model is the reflexive model of the Enlightenment and modernism. It is well aware of cultural specificity and investigates it. It provides the possibility of criticism of the imperialism of the first model. The claims to universality are present in this model, but they are made not in the form of declarations and deception, but in the form of suggestions and recommendations.

But how does this model, which is characteristic for the Enlightenment and widespread in contemporary world, provide the exchange between philosophers?

Does its realization lead to overcoming cultural specificity; does it lead to a new and better kind of universality? Unfortunately, to Welsch mind, the realization of this model does not lead to the creation of a theory capable of truly claim to universality. This position is limited only by justifying a variety of approaches with their insuperable contradictions and tolerant attitude towards them. Moreover, it is considered, that the diversity of different theories must be respected, but the claim for an ultimate theory should be rejected: “countless alternative theories would be tied for first place”. “This is how Quine put the matter, and, as you know, with respect to intercultural questions he even extended this principle of the underdetermination of theory (to which the phrases quoted refer) to the principle of indeterminacy of translation”[9].

Despite the external appeal ("keeping a conversation going" by R.Rorty), this position is philosophically dissatisfying, because it only creates conditions for respect between different positions and at the same time blocks the way for strict argumentation aimed not only at improving the single position, but at the developing of the discourse and theory in whole. So the second model is dissatisfactory, because it does not show the way of getting beyond the frames of cultural specificity and consequently blocks any pursuit of the universality, which is peculiar to philosophy. Must the search of the universality be exhausted or is there a way to move back to this aim, but in a different way and in different conditions? Welsch proposes two arguments in favor of such possibility – the cultural and the philosophical.

The second model is based on the assumption of the existence of clearly delineated cultures. But nowadays this assumption tends to be less and less logical. Contemporary cultures in the process of globalization are deeply transformed. Such transformation is characterized by mixing and interpenetration. It is proved by the facts, which are beyond cultural barriers: the same basic problems and states of consciousness appear in cultures, which considered to be fundamentally different (human rights debates, feminist, ecological movements). Nowadays the cultures tend to be more and more transcultural.

The philosophical argument for the possibility of achieving of the universality by philosophy is that now the philosophers are not national harbingers, but global players. “Cultural specificity is no longer our problem - at least not in the way it may have been before. The *cultural* territory of philosophy is no longer this or that country (one's so-called homeland), but the globe. The situation of philosophy today is neither national nor international but transnational or global” [9]. All said above helps to consider universality in a new way in perspective of the transversal reason. According to Welsch, reason in contrast to rationality – is not the ability to provide the first principles and establishing some primary order. Rather, it permeates some field of consciousness and forms of rationality. It is not considered as something static and principle-oriented. On the contrary, it is dynamic and its activities take place in transitions. In this context Welsch speaks about the transversal reason.

If any ability deserves to be called the “reason”, and if the term “reason” makes any sense, then it is the ability to identify and effectively overcome one-sidedness, of whatever kind, that is to be conceived of as reason. Of course, reason is not just something lacking any cultural taint from the beginning. Reason is the ability of gradual overcoming cultural specificity and impregnation. In this sense, the fulfillment of any universalistic tasks of philosophy depends on the realization of this potential and on the abilities of reason. Can we speak about the congruence of transcultural and transversal perspectives in the context of said above? The transcultural scenario certainly opens a new diversity. Different components of transcultural web-space wove or connected together different people and groups. “But due to their common components the different networks also exhibit a certain amount of overlap. Through this they allow for transversal connections” [9].

This circumstance forms the ontological need for transversal reason which is able to traverse the various transcultural complexes, explore the differences in meaning of the same components, as well as to demonstrate the commonness in apparently different positions and to develop connections and propositions intelligible to all of them. As noted by Welsch, if we practice reason in such a way, without claims to absolute truth and less principle-oriented, but more heuristic and in intermediary manner, then, “given today's transcultural constitution, there is a good chance of achieving propositions and theories which can be relevant and acceptable for various philosophical schools, or “philosophical empires” (9).

What are the relationship between the transversal and the ordinary reason? It is clear, that the transversal reason is not something absolutely new. It's only the accentuation of one of the elements, related to reason, the element of transition. However, transversal reason expresses the innermost trait of reason altogether. Every historical form of reason was obliged not just to declare unity with earlier forms, but express itself in a number of previous forms and preliminary interpretations. This task was solved at all times to the present days. It was always relevant, passing between different points of view and connecting them in a whole organization which was to retain difference, although transferring them into another form. In other words, transversal reason always acted transversally.

If we turn to the internal efficiency of the reason, we will always face the art of transversality and transition – between conceptions, thoughts, and phases of reflection. Such transitions are the medium of all operations of reason and form its most elementary potency. Welsch underlines: “reason is elementarily determined by transversality. In this sense, transversal reason seems to me articulate the fundamental mode of reason altogether” [10]. According to Welsch, the theoretical implications of reason became fundamentally inverted, i.e. multidirectional and ordered in different rationalities under the influence of modern culture conditions.

These constitutive entanglements of rationality types are detected at the level of analysis of the genesis of individual paradigms, which are always formed in opposition to one another. From the very beginning paradigms exist in the conditions of their change, reinterpretation and criticism. Certain conceptual constructions have interconceptual constitution. These interconceptual

relationships provide an opportunity for interrational relationships of the transsectorial, transdisciplinary and transdiscursive type. The substantial entanglements are determined by the fact that every concept is based on the historically-cultural background, which belongs not only to it but also to many other concepts. This basis always has common influence on them, for example, in the form of borrowings or in the form of specific interpretations. In addition, certain types of rationality often can be correctly understood only in the framework of their common context.

Thus, individual rationalities, in spite of their autonomy, are characterized by numerous entanglements with other rationalities. It means that there are not only many types of rationality, but also a wide range of transitions between them, which, in turn, has a high degree of differentiation. Transitions, terminals, differences, relations form the environment of the complex thinking as a transversal one. It avoids the decrees, explicating, articulating, identifying gaps in the profile of rationality and thus contributing to its further development. Due to its transitivity the complex thinking is a mediator in resolving conflicts of rationality, which could be resolved only through reflection over the limits, boundaries and interweaves.

The polemics with various forms of rationality requires such type of mind that could deal with difference and identity, without giving a preference to any party from the start. Transitional mind is exactly like that. It begins with a situation of distinction, but then emphasizes the possibility of transitions. Thus it is freed from the systemic one-sidedness. The complex thinking as a transversal one is actually the detection of transitions. «Detection» means that concluding the transitions from the system as a whole deductively is impossible. They should be opened. At this level, there is a high value of feelings, intuition, and everything that was underlain in transition as transgressive act. A unity is implemented as a result, but only through the ability to transitions in a form that is fundamentally based on the diversity.

The recognition of implicit entanglements and explicit transitions - as it is considered in the concepts of transitional mind and complex thinking - helps to avoid despotism and repression of thought, and anarchy, because thinking in the mode of transversality overcomes the positions of absolute heterogeneity and incommensurability. In this case it can not be regarded as an antidote to the heterogeneity, but only as an intermediary between the explication of the heterogeneity and the transition between difference and identity. The concepts of complex thinking and transversal mind have considerable heuristic potential in the present conditions of different positions existence. Our plural reality requires the implementation of the transitions between the different systems of meanings and constellations of rationality. And this ability is carried out in a complex way of thinking. It provides necessary for after-postmodern forms of life: overcoming the closed limits, the transition from one system to another, the simultaneous consideration of multidirectional efforts, the ability to look across the paradigmatic walls.

Currently, the recognition of plurality and variability, the awareness of the boundaries and the need for transitivity is a natural requirement to the relevant thinking. Any absolutizing is contraindicated. It is important to move forward to ensure not just accepting a difference and treating it tolerant, but also respecting its own value, which means its support and protection. But every time we also need to focus on two aspects, which characterize the complex thinking: understanding the differences and the ability to transitions. In his development of transversality Welsch non-explicitly thematised the connection between the structure of mind and the possibilities of its development in the digital networks of the information society. In this regard the justification of transversality in the context of media-philosophical analysis of Internet by Mike Sandbothe is interesting.

To his mind, Welsch's central ideas of the transversal reason can be summarized with three basic theses. The first one is directed against the idea, which has dominated in philosophy since Kant, that the reason is connected with the ordered, strictly divided frames of the types of rationality. The second thesis resists the danger of diffusion, which can lead, especially in conditions of postmodern deconstruction, to a position of arbitrariness and absolute relativism. The third thesis explains that practical and problem-oriented philosophy should not be reduced to simple application of abstract philosophical models to reality. In its pragmatic and transversal version it is able to reflect over any constellations of rationality, which are already internally defined by contingent realities. Mike Sandbothe illustrates all this three theses with the aid of the interactive hypertextuality of the World Wide Web.

First of all, we should pay attention to the distinction which is central to the understanding of the basic theses of Welsch. Namely: the difference between the rationality and the reason. In recourse to the Kantian distinction between understanding and reason Welsch defines reason as the ability, whose task it is to reflect upon the relationship between different types of rationality. This relationship is defined by Welsch as "rational disorderliness". In recourse to Deleuze and Guattari, Welsch compares "the real constitution of rationalities" with "moving and changing, net and web-like architectures". The classically organized framework of cognitive, aesthetic and moral-practical rationalities is a superficial phenomenon. The fundament for this is formed by a contingent network of "family resemblances" between different paradigms and alliances of paradigms. The maxim of rationalistic theory resulting from this is to uncover "the whole traffic system of both the horizontal and the vertical connections". So it can be demonstrated "that the interparadigmatic entanglements are mostly not hierarchically, but laterally organized. The connection has more the structure of a network than of stratification" [11, P.102].

On this basis, Sandbothe defines World Wide Web as a medium of transversal reason. The entanglements and transitions, analyzed by Welsch acquire the media-reality in the web-space as electronic links. In general the results of his considerations can be summarized in three points. Firstly, the World Wide Web is a genuine medium of transversal reason. Secondly, the concept of transversal

reason establishes itself as a basis for a pragmatic philosophy. Thirdly, the relationship between media in all senses appears as the relationship of transversal entanglements. On this basis the media-transformation of our understanding of reality, which takes place in the age of digital network technologies can be philosophically analyzed and pragmatically implemented. So, the conception of transversal reason of W. Welsch opens new intellectual horizons and forms the pragmatics of our actions in all areas of social life in the era of informationalism as the multi-dimensional reality of networks.

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#### ТРАНСВЕРСАЛЬНОЕ МЫШЛЕНИЕ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ИНТЕЛЛЕКТУАЛЬНЫХ СТРАТЕГИЙ

Статья посвящена проблеме трансверсального разума как концепта теории В. Вельша, которая открывает новые горизонты для выстраивания интеллектуальных стратегий. Центральной идеей статьи является переход и переходные состояния между различными типами рациональности. Автор подчеркивает, что переходы, терминалы, различия, связи формируют среду сложного мышления как трансверсального. В действительности это обнаружение, открытие переходов. Концепт трансверсального Transversal thinking in the context of intellectual strategies

*разума имеет значительный эвристический потенциал в современных условиях существования различий (культур, рациональностей, парадигм, дисциплин) в эпоху информационализма как многомерной реальности сетей.*

**Ключевые слова:** *трансверсальность; трансверсальный разум; переход; рациональность; современная интеллектуальная стратегия.*