CRITICAL THINKING AS A REQUIREMENT FOR DIGITAL LITERACY IN THE CURRENT SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

EL PENSAMIENTO CRÍTICO COMO REQUISITO PARA LA ALFABETIZACIÓN DIGITAL EN EL CONTEXTO SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTUAL

VLADIMIR GLADYSHEV
gladyshevvi@susu.ru
South Ural State University - Chelyabinsk State University
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8431-125X

EKATERINA MILYAEVA
miliaevaeg@susu.ru
South Ural State University - Chelyabinsk State University
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6771-1219

SOFYA REZVUSHKINA
rezvushkinasa@gmail.com
South Ural State University - Chelyabinsk State University
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6208-2950

Abstract: The article deals with contemporary problems of critical thinking formation in the current socio-cultural situation from the perspective of philosophical practice and philosophy teaching in higher education institutions. The authors explore the communicative component of the current socio-cultural situation, describe the characteristics of the modern socio-cultural process, and point out how and why critical thinking has become an urgent component of the digital literacy of a modern person. The practical experience of teaching

philosophy in higher education with a focus on the development of critical thinking skills is described in detail.
Keywords: critical thinking, digital communication, information violence, digital literacy, philosophical practice, philosophy in higher education institutions

Resumen: El artículo aborda los problemas actuales de la formación del pensamiento crítico en la situación sociocultural actual desde la perspectiva de la práctica filosófica y la enseñanza de la filosofía en las instituciones de educación superior. Los autores exploran el componente comunicativo de la situación sociocultural actual, describen las características del proceso sociocultural moderno y señalan cómo y por qué el pensamiento crítico se ha convertido en un componente urgente de la alfabetización digital del hombre moderno. Se describe en detalle la experiencia práctica de la enseñanza de la filosofía en la educación superior centrada en el desarrollo de las habilidades de pensamiento crítico.
Palabras clave: pensamiento crítico, comunicación digital, violencia informativa, alfabetización digital, práctica filosófica, filosofía en instituciones de educación superior

Introduction

Critical thinking is an integral concept used by various humanities, such as philosophy, pedagogy and psychology. Due to the peculiarities of the socio-cultural situation of the XXI century, information wars and the necessity to make decisions in conditions of information abundance, the discussion about critical thinking, ways of its formation has become the main issue of attention of theorists and practitioners of various fields. In this part of the monograph the issue of critical thinking as a necessary condition for the formation of digital literacy will be considered.

Today, in the space of virtual communication, social compensatory mechanisms take place that are expressed in three meta-forms: decompensation, direct compensation and overcompensation. All three metaphors are fully manifested in the interaction of people in digital space, and the problem arises that freedom and violence coexist antinomically in the digital dimension of today's social and

cultural situation. Media freedom leads to information violence, which aims to manipulate the consciousness of the subject of digital communication. For this reason, in a situation where freedom and violence coexist, it is necessary to form critical thinking that is relevant to all generations involved in digital communication. Critical thinking is revealed as the ability to think clearly and rationally, to improve oneself, and the tools for forming such an ability can be logic and philosophy, generating a dialogue with oneself (autocommunication) in the meta-form of overcompensatory communication. Media violence is seen as a self-destructive force, and critical thinking, which opposes media violence, becomes a force of self-creation.

Critical thinking training is originally presented in the tradition of philosophical practice and philosophical counselling. These traditions work with the formation of critical thinking through the identification of cognitive distortions that have allowed a person to ask about something in an effort to come to a solution or clarification of the situation. Philosophical practice reveals the inadequacy of critical thinking for life, despite its fundamental importance. In addition to critical thinking and rationalisation, it is important not to forget the creative, humanitarian 'wisdom' that is important for examining content in the age of information wars, that 'wisdom' which, unlike critical thinking, cannot be reduced to formal criteria. There is an understanding that in a society experiencing information turbulence, there is a growing demand for the introduction of philosophical counselling as a separate regulated profession.

One of the most important educational tasks of higher education is the formation of a student's world view. The development of critical thinking skills will enable the younger generation to form a unique individual worldview based on logic, reflection and critical perception of value orientations and behavioural models conveyed through information resources. The practical experience of the teachers of the SUSU Department of Philosophy has allowed them

to combine both the achievements of academic philosophy and the resources of philosophical practice in order to form critical thinking in the process of teaching the discipline of "Philosophy".

In this way, the problem of modernising the formation of critical thinking in contemporary conditions is taken into account. The resources of the discipline "Philosophy" combined with academic traditions of philosophising with methods of philosophical practice and philosophical counselling, through the use of available digital educational tools, help to implement this issue.

The aim of the research is to study the possibilities of forming critical thinking in the modern socio-cultural situation.

The research objectives are to describe the specifics of critical thinking in the digital environment, to analyse the potential of philosophical practice for the development of critical thinking, to present practical experiences in the formation of critical thinking at the university.

Critical thinking under the conditions of modern network communication

The current socio-cultural situation in the world is very complex and places high demands on both the society in which we live and the individual. When we talk about the socio-cultural situation, we emphasise the importance of considering specific conditions, a specific historical period in which the social process we are interested in is unfolding. The analysis of the socio-cultural situation as a whole requires special research. In the context of the task, we are primarily interested in the communicative component of the socio-cultural situation. It is appropriate to call it a modern communicative situation. By a communicative situation, we mean a set of objective conditions for the exercise of communicative activity by the subjects of communication. Various modalities of the subject

can act as the latter. The "nuclear structures" of communication are, of course, specific persons. However, the subject of communication can also be the so-called "symphonic" aggregate subject of communication, a quasi-subject (an autocommunicator). They play an important role in the socio-cultural process.

The novelty of the modern communicative situation is primarily connected with the revolution in the means of transmitting and processing information. We can say that at the end of the twentieth century there was a radical change in the communicative situation. In the structure of personal communication, the proportion of mediated (instrumental) contacts in relation to direct contacts, called "face to face", has increased sharply. Of course, this does not cover the changes in the communicative situation. Radical changes in the sphere of communication require considerable effort on the part of the individual to master a new communicative situation, new conditions, means and norms of communication. Moreover, as a rule, this should be done as soon as possible. We must not forget the irrational components of human activity. It is known that the larger the scale of human activity becomes, the more events are realised in it that no one has specifically looked for. The irrational component of human activity acts as an alienated force that requires additional efforts to control and manage. In this way, social compensatory mechanisms are created in society, which serve to harmonise the social whole. Without diminishing the importance of the holiday as a sphere of creativity, for example, it is impossible not to take into account its compensatory function[1] (the compensatory value of the carnival culture of the Middle Ages, for example, was convincingly demonstrated by M.M. Bakhtin).[2]

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[1] ZHIGUL'SKIJ, K.: *Celebration and culture*, Moscow, Progress, 1985.

[2] BAKHTIN, M.M.: *The Works of François Rabelais and the Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Moscow, Fictional literature, 1990.

Compensatory communication is a special case of compensatory processes that are extremely widespread at all levels of being. It is enough to consult at least the reference literature of natural and technical sciences, biology and psychology, philosophy and other socio-human studies to be sure of this.[3] Referring to the etymology of the Latin word compensare and generalising the meaning of compensatory processes that take place at different structural levels of being, we consider compensation as the process of replenishing, compensating, balancing something. Different kinds of deformations in the informational, emotional and action-volitional components of communication encourage the subject of communication to compensate for them. Particularly "compensatory" are the periods of sharp change in the communicative situation in society. It is also true that compensatory and communicative processes always take place in public life to one degree or another. However, in the conditions of a radical change in the communicative situation, the ageing compensatory fund of society must inevitably be radically updated. Experimentation in the field of communication inevitably takes place in an antinomic combination of good and bad creativity.[4]

Like any communication, communication on the Internet can be compensatory. Moreover, the use of virtual space as a sphere of intensive informational interaction among a large number of people has greatly expanded the possibilities for compensatory communication. It is important that, as far as possible, these opportunities are not used in the direction of a frivolous and short-sighted solution to momentary problems but are aimed at the harmonious development of the sphere of communication and of the person himself. The above needs to be clarified.

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[3] VYSHESLAVCEV, B.P.: *Crisis of Industrial Culture. Marxism, neo-socialism, neo-liberalism*, New York, Chehov, 1992.

[4] Ibidem.

Compensatory processes are often considered to be purely adaptive. That is, within the limits of the homeostatic approach. The essence of our interpretation of compensatory processes is to take into account the presence in their composition of the contradictory unity of homeostasis (homeostasis - the ability of open systems to perform dynamic self-stabilisation and self-regulation, maintaining their inherent level of systemicity and integrity) and heterostasis (maladaptive activity). Heterostasis is the ability of open systems to evolve, to transition in the form of a jump from one state of dynamic equilibrium to another with a different level of systemicity and integrity. Heterostasis can be realised in terms of both upward and downward development). Accordingly, when considering compensatory processes, including compensatory-communicative ones, we distinguish three meta-forms: decompensation, direct compensation (compensation proper), overcompensation.

Decompensation, such an activity of an unbalanced dynamic system, which eventually leads to its equilibrium, but only through the transition to a more elementary level of complexity and order. In the social sphere, including the sphere of communication, where people act on the basis of consciously set goals, real decompensation is often mistaken by them for real compensation or even overcompensation. In this case, it is appropriate to speak of illusory compensation, which only appears to achieve its goals. Illusory compensation is the same as decompensation. Illusory compensation in the field of communication, in its extreme forms, contributes to the degradation and destruction of the personality. Thus, for example, in order to compensate for the lack of certain components of the communicative needs of a young person (teenager, young man) which are very important to him (need for recognition by peers, self-assertion, mutual understanding, etc.), he can join various informal youth associations. Numerous subcultures associated with hedonistic risk (i.e. risk that brings pleasure, risk that is meaningless, with heroism that raises the status of the pseudo-hero only in a

certain and rather narrow circle of people) are very popular in the modern urban environment. These are "diggers" (explorers of technogenic underground objects), "roofers" (extreme people who conquer city roofs). The "heroic deeds" of extremists are inevitably posted on the Internet and find numerous imitators and followers. Numerous communities of extremists are thus formed in networks, communicating and exchanging experiences. Emotional saturation through hedonistic risk primitivises the spiritual needs of the individual and his/her communication, distracting from more socially significant contacts. The compensation of the components of the need for communication which are important for the individual and which do not find satisfaction takes on an imaginary, illusory character.

Overcompensation is aimed at harmonizing an unbalanced dynamic system and gaining a new state of dynamic equilibrium, a higher order of integrity and organization. Overcompensation is a process of upward development of the system. In the life of society, overcompensation is carried out due to heterostasis (maladaptive activity). In the field of overcompensatory communication, a person transcends beyond his own everyday life, the grounding of interests. His communication is not limited to the use of norms and means provided by the "compensatory fund" of the company. "Communication for the sake of communication", that is, for the sake of those existential values that are contained in it, in overcompensatory communication acts as a creative activity to improve old and create new values. The general function of communication – self-affirmation is transformed in overcompensatory communication into dialogical mutual affirmation. And this, in its turn, contributes to the personal growth of its subjects, the formation of new social skills in them; expands their circle of communication, develops the ability to communicate. With the help of overcompensation by means of communication, a person acquires a powerful impulse to comprehensive development.

For example, overcompensation in the sphere of communication and activities woven into volunteering, as well as communication in creative activities in role-playing games and in reconstructions of historical events.

Direct compensation or actual compensation is adaptive in nature. It does not take a person beyond the boundaries of the communicative world familiar to her, does not lead her to a new state of dynamic equilibrium and does not contribute to her development. Being consumer-oriented, it brings a certain variety to the life of the individual and nothing more. For example, leisure socializing that fills free time, actual socializing - chatting, spectacle consumption, sports cheering, etc.

These meta-forms of compensatory communication are fully manifested in the interaction of people who are in the information flows created by modern media. Compensatory overcompensation through network communication is widely used by those who, for whatever reason, find other forms of creativity difficult. Freedom and violence coexist antinomically in network communication. Freedom is primarily expressed in free access to information. But intrusive information is constantly gaining access to a person, violating his freedom and doing violence to him. In general, the issue of violence is becoming more and more relevant. But so is the issue of freedom. With regard to these fundamental philosophical concepts, however, it should be noted that they are far from providing an unambiguous solution. But it seems to us that these categories must be analysed reflexively and antinomically through each other. There are other approaches, of course. But A.M. Maksimov's approach to the analysis of freedom seems to us to be very productive.[5] Drawing on Hegel's theory of reflection and the categories of "self" and "other", "development" and "alienation",

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[5] MAKSIMOV, A. M.: *Freedom as a contradiction of identity and otherness*, Ekaterinburg, Ural University Press, 1998.

Maximov sees freedom as a measure of the alienation of the self and the development of the other. Violence, in whatever form, is simply a violation of this measure. Thus, for example, informational violence is coercive, it prevails over the alienation of one's own, it dominates the alien (even the alien). It takes place without the consent of the person and violates his freedom of information.

Forms of information violence include: deliberately distorted and incomplete information about something important for the recipients, information pressure, dissemination of confidential information about a person or a group of people in order to damage their authority, compensatory self-assertion in the field of information by reducing the status dimension of opponents, dissemination of information insulting the moral and religious feelings of the public, dissemination of illegitimate information.

The main purpose of information violence is to manipulate the consciousness of people or a specific person (e.g. cybermobbing), followed by changing their behavior in the direction desired by the manipulator. At the same time, the responsible (if such a thing can be imagined) manipulator should imagine that the irrational components of his informational activity may be of a very delayed nature. Thus, researchers of the problem of the influence of media products containing episodes of violence on the criminogenic behavior of young people note the following Firstly, their subsequent aggressive behavior (once it manifests itself) depends on a combination of many factors. Secondly, it can be 'triggered' by any real-life event after a young person has been regularly watching the relevant content for a considerable period of time.

It is noteworthy that in recent years the demonstration of violence, its discussion, has occupied an important place in the media space. By analysing the details of the pathological acts committed, the mass media literally savour the details of the crimes committed. There is a process of massing media violence in quantitative and qualitative

terms. Researchers note the convergence of media formats and other media.[6]

When considering violence in the media, it is advisable to focus on two aspects. The first is related to the analysis of the suggestive impact of violent scenes broadcast on television and other media on the criminogenic situation in society. Researchers try to understand the degree of influence of media violence, violence on the screen, on the subsequent close or distant behaviour of viewers in real life; on the subsequent state of their psyche, value orientations, world view, etc. The second aspect is related to the analysis of the suggestive effect of violent scenes broadcast on television and other media on the criminogenic situation in society. The second aspect takes into account the fact that the creation of new media expands the boundaries of the individual's freedom of information, but at the same time creates new forms of media violence. If in the first case we are talking about violence demonstrated in the media, in the second case we are talking about violence perpetrated through the media.

The total communication that takes place on the Internet, which gives the individual unprecedented freedom of information, at the same time creates ample opportunities for deviant and even criminal behaviour in the information space.[7] The negative aspects of virtual communication are increasingly becoming the subject of scientific attention. For example, in 2020 N.V. Starykh applied to the Russian electronic library "CyberLeninka" (https://cyberleninka.ru/) with the request "trolling". The results were as follows. This term is found in 674 sources, of which 494 articles are included in the list of the Higher Attestation Commission and 8 in the Scopus list. The first

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[6] MARZAN, M. A.: "Media violence as a mass phenomenon" in *the Bulletin of Volga University,* 2, 2018, pp. 251-258.

[7] STARYH, N.V. "Deviant Behaviour in Internet Communication: Diagnostics and Prevention", *Medialingvistika, number* 7 (4), Sankt Petersburg (Russia), 2020, pp. 516-530.

publications on this topic date back to 2011-2012. Since 2016, the interest in "trolling" has grown exponentially.[8]
In these studies, the authors come closer to understanding that the communication of trolls with their victims on the web is an illusory compensatory communication. "People who have difficulties in real communication," writes T.A. Fetisova, "can fill in the lack of interpersonal interaction by communicating in social networks. This is where they get their share of self-affirmation and compensate for the lack of communication and attention from others." [9] This is the imaginary self-realisation and the imaginary rise in status of a "troll". It is no coincidence that "trolls" unite in communities and share the experience of deceiving their victims in a small circle with their colleagues. Isolated unity is another sign of illusory-compensatory communities. Informational violence with the help of the Internet can be carried out not only by an individual subject of communication. In modern conditions, the role of information violence on the part of the aggregate subject of communication is increasing. It can be large groups of people, representatives of states, who carry out aggressive political activity against someone, etc. The Internet is used as an information weapon. According to researchers, information violence, for example in the form of information terrorism, is increasingly taking on an explicit rather than a latent character. Informational violence has always accompanied physical violence; it has been woven into physical violence. In the modern socio-cultural situation, information violence has become autonomous. It has become an activity in its own right, with its own

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[8] GLADYSHEV, V.I., SHAGRETDINOV, A.A. "Violence in Media and Media Violence" in *Homo holistis: the holistic perso. "Homo digital: The anthropological dimension of digitalization",* Chelyabinsk, SUSU, 2021, pp. 89-92.
[9] FETISOVA, T. A.: "Aggressive behavior in Internet communication" in *Culturology, number* 4 (87), 2018, pp. 185-197.

characteristics, goals, objectives and means.[10] In the context of compensation theory, information violence takes away much more than it gives, and in the long run. It is self-destructive, its achievements are illusory and imaginary. Academician A.A. Guseynov said well about the negative meaning of violence: "Violence is a destructive force, it would be more accurate to say: self-destructive, because in its consistent implementation as an absolute evil it turns against itself".[11]

In order to ensure the information security of society and its individuals, special measures are needed to protect against information violence. The development of such an important quality as critical thinking among citizens plays an important role in this process. This is especially true for the generation of "computer natives" who spend a lot of time on the networks. The development of critical thinking is an important component not only of computer security, but also of digital education. In this country, a lot of attention is paid to this, not only in education, but also in all structures that work with young people.

Critical thinking is usually understood as the natural or acquired ability to doubt the truth of information received from outside and in one's beliefs. It is the ability to think clearly and rationally, to seek a logical connection between facts, and to formulate convincing arguments. Critical thinking is based on the ability to reason. Words and phrases in italics automatically create an allusion. Thus, the first sentence suggests Cartesian rules of method, and the second emphasizes that the ability to reason is the main thing in philosophical thinking, because philosophy is deductive knowledge. P.S. Yushkevich draws attention to this and emphasizes that

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[10] BORSHCHOV, N. A:. "Information Violence in the Network Society" in *the Bulletin of Chelyabinsk State University number* 31 (212), Chelyabinsk (Russia), 2010, pp. 48-52.

[11] GUSEJNOV, A.A. "Ethics of nonviolence" in *the Questions of Philosophy*, *number* 3, 1992, pp. 72-81.

philosophy is thinking about all things from the point of view of one thing... A logician rightly notes: "Critical thinking is thinking about thinking when you reflect in order to improve your thinking. Two circumstances are important here: 1) critical thinking is not just thinking, but thinking that entails self-improvement, and 2) the desired self-improvement comes with the skills of using standards for the correct assessment of the thought process. In short, it is the self-improvement of thinking based on certain standards" [12] From what has been said, it is clear that logic and philosophy are positioned as critical thinking. By exercising their reasoning skills, students develop critical thinking. Books on applied logic can be of great help in developing critical thinking. For example, S.I. Povarnin's book "The Art of Argumentation" teaches how to expose various tricks of the opponent. On the Theory and Practice of Argumentation". Internal dialogue can play an important role in personal growth and in the development of a person's critical thinking. By improving a person's ability to think critically, internal dialogue acts as an overcompensating communication[13]. This happens when, in terms of principles and demands on oneself, one transcends all external value judgments.

Critical Thinking in Contemporary Philosophical Practice

Traditionally, in philosophy, critical thinking is understood as a system of judgments used to analyze things and events from a critical point of view, formulating reasoned conclusions. Critical thinking

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[12] TYAGLO, A.V. "The Science of Reasoning" in the "Fast World", in *Filosofskie nauki, number* 3, Moscow (Russia), 2013, pp. 128-136.

[13] BUSH, G.: *Dialogic and Creativity,* Riga, Avtos, 1985; KUCHINSKIJ, G.M. *Psychology of inner dialog.* Minsk, University Press, 1988; GRIMAK, A.P. *Communication with myself: The beginnings of psychology of activity*, Moscow, Politizdat, 1991.

enables you to make reasoned judgments and to interpret and apply the results correctly to situations and problems.[14]

Critical thinking as a tool of knowledge has its origins in antiquity. Certain elements of critical thinking can be found in the methodology of the Socratic dialogue proposed by Plato and in the logical constructions of Aristotle[15]. Elements of critical thinking can be found in the works of Bacon, Stewart and Mill. They shaped the modern understanding of scientific thinking as an educational goal.

However, modern interest in critical thinking and its educational potential came from philosopher J. Dewey. In his work Psychology and Pedagogy, he introduces the concept of "reflective thinking" as "an active, consistent and careful consideration of any belief or assumed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads." [16] Dewey believed that the development of reflective thinking would be of value both to the individual and to society. In the 1930-s, an eight-year study was conducted that demonstrated the importance of developing critical thinking skills in young people and justified the need for its introduction into the general education programme.

Nowadays, critical thinking is not only present in philosophy, but also in psychology and life coaching. In particular, the leading online education portal Coursera offers the course "Mindware: Critical Thinking for the Information Age."[17] This course introduces the basic concepts of statistics, probability, scientific methodology,

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[14] FACIONE, P. A.: *Critical Thinking; A Statement of Expert Consensus for Purposes of Educational Assessment and Instruction. Executive Summary,* Fullerton, Santa Clara University, 1990.

[15] HATEGAN, P. V. "Critical thinking, an effective educational tool in philosophical counseling", *Journal Plus Education,* 1, volume XIX. 2018, pp. 262-263.

[16] DEWEY, J. *Psychology and Pedagogy*, Moscow, Sovershenstvo, 1997.

[17] NISBETT, R.E. *Mindware: Critical Thinking for the Information Age*. Coursera, (https://www.coursera.org/learn/mindware?action=enroll#about).

cognitive psychology and cost-benefit theory, and shows how they can be applied to everything from choosing a product to critiquing media reports on scientific research.

V. Ruggiero shows a similar understanding of critical thinking and its place in the life of a modern person. In his book "Beyond emotions and Feelings. The Guide to Critical Thinking" he says that critical thinking allows you to avoid manipulation and conduct correct fact-checking. As a result, V. Ruggiero suggests using critical thinking to "teach a person the very process of thinking; that is, how to think "beyond the senses", solve problems and controversial issues analytically. "[18]

This understanding of critical thinking is close to the phenomenon of "calculating thinking" described by M. Heidegger, which is a cognitive process for generating new opportunities and benefits. According to Heidegger, such thinking technicises the mental sphere and leads a person away from reflection on the true ontological foundations of the surrounding phenomena. In other words, such "critical computing" thinking will allow a person to confidently navigate various kinds of relationships and carry out predictive activities, but it will be completely useless in anything related to the humanitarian expertise of any consumed content.

According to D. Halpern, critical thinking uses formal logic as the main verification tool and represents a set of competencies based on it (the so-called "soft skills"), among which the ability to analyze, draw conclusions, interpret and evaluate is especially important. Critical thinking tends to rely on meta-knowledge and is guided by classical criteria of intellectuality such as fairness, depth, perspective, accuracy, plausibility, significance, clarity. However, despite the apparent logocentrism, Halpern emphasizes that for

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[18] RUDZHERO, V.R.: *Beyond emotions and feelings. A Guide to Critical Thinking*, New York, Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1975.

critical thinking to be fully functional, it requires value attitudes and creative imagination in addition to formal logic[19].

Studies have shown that critical thinking enables students to form and defend their positions on important existential issues in a reasoned way. Naturally, due to the research region (USA), particular emphasis was placed on the political sphere.[20] It is significant that the author of the research, H. Siegel, has no illusions about critical thinking, and in his American reading, cultivated as a means against indoctrination, it can become such only if it becomes a doctrine itself[21].

Understanding critical thinking as a means against indoctrination and cognitive stereotypes also applies to the sphere of philosophical practice.   According to W. Shibles, taking into account all methodological differences, the whole philosophical practice is aimed at: analysis and formation of a correct argumentation system; conceptualization, analysis and definition of key terms and concepts; identification and evaluation of basic assumptions and logical consequences; search for conflicts, inconsistencies and cognitive distortions; study of traditional theories of philosophy and their meanings in relation to the problems of the consulted people.[22] Obviously, 4 points out of 5 presented are based on the use of critical thinking as the main tool. This methodology is particularly evident

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[19] HALPERN, D.: *Psychology of critical thinking.* Sankt Peterburg, Piter, 2000, pp. 22.

[20] SIEGEL, H.: *Educating Reason: Rationality, Critical Thinking, and Education,* New York, Routledge, 1988, pp. 55-61.

[21] Ibid, pp. 62-90.

[22] SHIBLES, W.: The philosophical practitioner and emotion in *Thinking through Dialogue*, Oxted, Practical Philosophy Press, 2001, pp. 50-57.

in such a specific form of philosophical practice as philosophical counseling[23].

According to G. Achenbach's definition of philosophical counseling (philosophical praxis) is a form of assistance to people looking for an answer to difficult life questions. The concept of philosophical counselling can be traced back to the earlier works of I. Yalom, however, it was G. Achenbach who established the International Society for Philosophical Praxis, defined its aims and objectives, and thus integrated philosophical counselling into the scientific field[24].

R. Kramer, in his work "Artes del buen vivir", describes the process of philosophical counselling as studying the arguments of the person being counseled, clarifying their concepts and assumptions, identifying contradictions in the arguments, and finding connections between the client's arguments and philosophical theories.[25]

The first attempts to apply critical thinking in philosophical counseling were made by French philosopher O. Brenifier. According to his concept, philosophical practice is set by thought processes or philosophical reflection, which manifests itself in three stages: identification of a dilemma or problem; their criticism; their conceptualization. About these stages, Brenifier writes: "for identification we have to think about another person, for criticism we have to think through another person, and for conceptualization we need to start thinking about ourselves, in the same mode as about

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[23] BARRIENTOS-RASTROJO, J. "Why Critical Thinking is not enough in Philosophical Practice?", Lecture at the International Conference on Philosophical Practice, 2018, download at https://www.cecapfi.com/descargas.php.

[24] MUSIJCHUK, M. V. "Philosophical counseling as a direction of psychotherapy: from "Man of habit" to "Man of will"" in *Medicinskaya psihologiya v Rossii,* 6, 2018, pp. 8.

[25] KREIMER, R. *Artes del buen vivir*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Anarres, 2012, pp. 17-18.

the other."[26] The passage of these stages brings the reflexive to the level of metaposition, which brings philosophical practice closer to critical thinking.

Deepening and extending this understanding of philosophical practice, Brenifier proposed a method of philosophical counselling based on the synthesis of parrhesia, critical thinking and Socratic dialogue based on questioning. Critical thinking plays an important role in this form of philosophical counselling. According to Brenifier, the philosopher-consultant should carry out three main operations during the session aimed at finding cognitive stereotypes and/or presuppositions: identification, problematization and conceptualization[27]. It is significant that this method is successfully used in both individual and group philosophical counselling. In particular, critical thinking is successfully used in a format of reflective work such as the "philosophical café". Examples of this approach are the groups of K. Phillips in the USA, F. Barrera in Spain or T. Magalhaes in Portugal[28].

During a counselling session based on the Brenifier method, the philosopher-counsellor asks the client to formulate a specific question that is essential for the questioner. It should be noted that philosophical counselling does not offer ready-made answers to the client's existential question. Moreover, the ultimate goal of counselling is not so much to criticise the question or to seek a specific answer, but to identify the cognitive distortions and thought patterns that have made such a question possible. The task of the consulting philosopher is therefore to rationalise the questioner's basic premises and translate them into a conceptual and logical form.

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[26] BRENIFIER, O. *Filosofare come Socrate. Teorie e forme della pratica filosofica con i bambini e gli adulti*, Milano, IPOC, 2015, pp. 29-30.

[27] BARRIENTOS-RASTROJO, J. "Why Critical Thinking is not enough in Philosophical Practice?", Lecture at the International Conference on Philosophical Practice, 2018, download at https://www.cecapfi.com/descargas.php.

[28] Ibidem.

Furthermore, in the form of a Socratic dialogue between the counsellor and the counselee, there is a joint reflection on the basic attitudes of the psyche and the soft formation of the capacity for critical thinking.[29]

But as mentioned above, critical thinking is not a self-sufficient tool. According to R. Lahav's position, it is part of that part of philosophical practice, which can be conceptualised as 'problem-solving approaches[30]. It is characterised by an emphasis on the development of thinking skills with which subjects can solve personal problems and problems. Echoing Lahav, G. H. Helskog writes that 'critical thinking skills are simply not enough if one wants to have wisdom as a vision of one's philosophical and pedagogical practice. Thus, there has to be more than just critical thinking in philosophy and this is what Brenifier's idea is[31].

One of the leading practical philosophers, J. Barrientos, sees this "more" in experience. In his opinion, a person comes to a philosophical consultant during a crisis of beliefs. However, critical thinking is based on ideas, while beliefs are based on experience (individual, collective)[32]. Accordingly, a critical analysis of a person's beliefs entails reflection and purification of ideas, but not the creation of a new ground for beliefs based on experience.

[29] DYDROV, A.A, PENNER R. V., REZVUSHKIN, K. E. "Notes on philosophical practice of O. Brenifier", *Socium i vlast'*, 6 (62), 2016, pp. 112-115.
[30] BORISOV, S.: "Reseña de LAHAV, R.: Stepping out of Plato's Cave: Philosophical Counseling, Philosophical Practice and Self-Transformation", in *Revista Internacional de Filosofía Aplicada HASER,* 11, Seville (Spain), 2020, pp. 199-205.
[31] HELSKOG, G. H. *Philosophising the Dialogos. Way Towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, Abington, Taylor & Francis, 2019.
[32] BORISOV, S.: "Reseña de LAHAV, R.: Stepping out of Plato's Cave: Philosophical Counseling, Philosophical Practice and Self-Transformation", in *Revista Internacional de Filosofía Aplicada HASER,* 11, Seville (Spain), 2020, pp. 199-205.

According to the Romanian researcher V. Hategan, there is a request in society for the introduction of philosophical counseling as a separate regulated profession. He investigated the nature of the interdisciplinary connection between philosophical practice and didactic practice, the analysis of which implies the role and contribution of critical thinking as a necessary and useful tool in the training of a practicing specialist in philosophy. The problem of adapting classical educational courses to the requirements of the digital age is raised in the study of S Bećirović and the relevance of teaching critical thinking in new conditions is justified[33]. To achieve this result, it is necessary to move from the classical course of philosophy to the adaptation of the professional training programme to a new profession, so that critical thinking is easily understood and applied in practice by any practicing professional.

Practical experience of teachers of the SUSU Philosophy Department on critical thinking formation among students during teaching the discipline of "Philosophy"

Critical thinking implies the ability of a person to evaluate information, its reliability and to draw logical conclusions based on incoming information and data. Increasing digitalization has actualized the need to develop critical thinking in connection with the increase of information flows and the need for a modern person not only to choose available digital technical means, resources and channels, but also to be able to assess the reliability of information obtained by analyzing various sources, to apply the laws of logic in

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[33] BEĆIROVIĆ S., HODŽIĆ, F., BRDAREVIĆ-ČELJO, "A. Critical Thinking Development in the Milieu of High School Education", *European Journal of Contemporary Education, number* 8 (3), 2019, pp. 469-482.

drawing conclusions, as well as to evaluate the results and consequences of their actions. in the digital space.

In the system of Russian higher education there is traditionally a discipline of the general humanitarian cycle, in the process of which the student should get the basics of critical thinking - it is philosophy. According to the Russian educational standard, the intended result of studying philosophy is the ability to use the foundations of philosophical knowledge to form a worldview position. The study of philosophy is aimed at developing skills of critical perception and evaluation of sources of information, ability to logically formulate, present and argue one's own view of problems and ways of solving them, mastering the techniques of discussion, polemics, dialogue.

Significantly, the tendency for students to develop specific practical skills while studying philosophy is not unique to Russia. J.C.R. Sánchez notes that "Philosophy of Education is associated with the field of practical philosophy from the moment it is configured as a type of knowledge oriented towards analysis of educational processes simultaneously with their implementation, extending the focus from the theoretical to the pragmatic field"[34]. In other words, the shift from theorising to the phonation of concrete knowledge, skills and abilities inevitably places the teacher in transition from the classical teaching of philosophy to philosophical practice as such.

The practical experience of teachers in the Department of Philosophy at the SUSU Institute of Media and Social Sciences and Humanities, especially during the recent 'pandemic' years, has shown that the introduction of digital technologies contributes to the effectiveness of critical thinking formation among students through the dissemination of a mixed form of education, i.e. classroom work

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[34] RUIZ SÁNCHEZ J.C., "El papel de la experiencia y la formación de profesorado en la filosofía de la educación de John Dewey y Matthew Lipman" in *HASER,* 6 (13), 2022, pp. 81-103.

and active use of the distance learning opportunities of the SUSU Electronic Education Portal.

For teaching philosophy, it is important to understand critical thinking as "a way of thinking aimed at identifying the structural features of reasoning, checking the correlation between reasonably put forward theses and their corresponding arguments, evaluating the put forward theses, characterizing the contexts of reasoning taking into account the characteristics of the author and reader, opponent and proponent. Critical thinking involves: the skill of reflection on one's own mental activity, the development of analytical skills, the ability to work with concepts, judgments, conclusions, questions, the ability to evaluate the same skills of others. Critical thinking is formed as a practical logic located inside and depending on the context of reasoning and the reasoning subject"[35]. It is worth emphasising that it was philosophy that developed these skills long before the concept of 'critical thinking' was institutionalised.

It is important for a teacher who teaches full-time or distance courses to bear in mind that in Russian culture and mentality the word "critical" has a rather negative connotation, and students often see "critical thinking" precisely as identifying shortcomings in answers, themselves, the situation as a whole, using biased criticism, sarcasm towards each other. Practical experience of teaching philosophy at SUSU has shown that it is necessary to explain to students that, from a philosophical point of view, critical thinking is an important, deep, complex reflection aimed at a comprehensive understanding of the situation, using logic and leading not only to the formulation of the most objective answer from the whole variety of available, but also to the construction of a person's worldview.

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[35] SORINA, G.V. "Critical Thinking: History and Modern Status" in *the Bulletin of Moscow State University, number* 6, Moscow (Russia), 2003, pp. 97-110.

The teaching of philosophy within the SUSU Philosophy Department's Strategic Academic Direction "Philosophical Practice in Science and Education" is not primarily aimed at the mechanical memorisation of academic material, but at the development of skills of reflection and self-reflection, argumentation, logic, questioning, which contribute to the formation of both specific philosophical and developed critical thinking.

The e-learning course "Philosophy" has been developed by the teachers of the Department as a convenient and variable template, whose content corresponds to the state educational standard, the working curricula and the regulatory framework of the University, which regulates the pedagogical and methodological work. The course presents in full educational materials, both prepared by the faculty of the department, and links to electronic libraries available from the digital environment of the university. Each of the twelve topics of the course is provided with an introductory video lecture, detailed content, methodological recommendations for independent work, assignments for seminars and recordings of in-line lectures held during the academic semester. The teacher can adapt the content of the assignments according to his/her philosophical and scientific priorities, the needs of the students and the current socio-cultural situation. In this way, students are shown the possibility of effectively using the digital environment to solve work, educational and practical tasks, which contributes to the development of an objective critical attitude towards the content of training courses in general, as well as towards their own educational activities.

Let's present the practical experience of lectures using digital technologies during the pandemic. For example, in the "History of Philosophy" section, students are shown the history of the development of critical thinking through examples from the historical philosophical heritage. The development of thought, reason and logic in philosophy has been going on since ancient times - from the tradition of ancient philosophical dialogues, masterfully

presented by Plato, and then fixed in the logic of Aristotle. Through medieval scholasticism, the ability to argue one's own opinion leads to the emergence of modern scepticism and the actualisation of new approaches, based on critical thinking, to the understanding of man, the state and society in modern science.[36]

Thanks to information technologies, the acquaintance with the ancient philosophers becomes more fascinating than in a regular online lecture, because during a remote lecture it is easy to use illustrative photographic, audio and video material, to send it easily to the students, to highlight important points to which the students can return at any time, because the lecture is recorded and placed in the course. It is also easy, with the help of the testing platforms available both on the electronic SUSU portal and on other services, to offer students a short online survey, asking the audience a question relevant to the subject of the lecture, inviting students to reflect and, of course, presenting an overview of the answers. The analysis of the content of the lecture and its correlation with the materials of the educational and reference literature, with the tasks of the practical classes, allow the student to independently assess the significance of the sources, to choose both the most suitable for independent work on the course and to delve into the study of philosophical doctrines. In practical classes, both online and face-to-face, the emphasis on the development of critical thinking is based on the following algorithm of work. In the first stage, the teacher defines a question on the topic in a problematic form and suggests different forms of work (individual or small group search for answers, discussion, brainstorming, etc.) to find an answer to it. The second stage is the comprehension of the information received - questions are put to the speakers and the teacher explains new terminology which is analysed, the students analyse their level of understanding of the

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[36] KOROLEVA, A. V. "Philosophical Aspects of Critical Thinking" in *Gaudeamus*, *number* 1 (17), Tambow (Russia), 2011, pp. 16-22.

topic. At the third stage there is reflective work - the answers received during the lesson are integrated by the students into the system of their existing scientific knowledge, into the picture of the world, into the idea of themselves and their place in the world.[37]

Information technologies allow students to have almost unlimited access to information during a practical lesson, and this is the basis for the development of critical thinking, since it is important for a student not only to find the right information through a search engine query, but also to present it to the teacher and the audience, forming their own position on the issue and arguing the thesis presented.

The teachers of the Department of Philosophy used active teaching methods such as the case study method, cinquaines (creative analysis of information), brainstorming and, of course, the traditional philosophical method - discussion in the form of a dialogue in which the parties should present their points of view, theses, conclusions on problematic issues of the course in a reasoned manner. Philosophical reasoning and critical thinking aim at a strict and reasonable use of concepts, therefore the task of compiling a glossary on topics involves not only the selection of terms, but also their careful understanding and a reasonable selection of personalities related to the topic.

Philosophical and critical thinking are similar in that they should lead to reasoned reflections and be presented in a coherent logical context. Reasoning in this case takes place at a more complex level compared to the usual one. This is facilitated by the tasks of working with the text of the original source and writing a philosophical essay. It is worth noting the high requirements for the authorship of the text of answers and essays - their uniqueness should be more than 75%. This teaches students to carefully select sources using the unique

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[37] GULEVATAYA, A. N., MILYAEVA, E. G., PENNER, R. V. "Modern Stoicism at the XXI Century University" *in European Journal of Contemporary Education, number* 11 (3), Sochi (Russia), 2022, pp. 746-759.

possibilities of the digital environment - not to use databases with ready-made abstracts, but to search and study philosophical texts and scientific articles available on the web, for example in the online library "CyberLeninka". The author's text requires independent reflection and it is easy to check a small essay for plagiarism using any free online service. Critical thinking implies awareness of the student's responsibility and the form in which he expresses his thoughts. One of the important points of development of critical thinking in the process of carrying out written works of the course "Philosophy" is the principled position of the author, i.e. an essay, which is written only on appeal to authorities and consists of quotations, without the student's own reasoned point of view, will not be counted. This form of work allows you to teach a student critical thinking when writing texts, which can be useful when communicating in the network space, including when creating author's contributions, longreads, topics in forums, Internet discussions.

Combining an individual approach with a strong academic base, the Philosophy course at the University is based on the principles of philosophical practice, aimed at the current problems of a modern student in a modern socio-cultural situation, taught in a 'blended' learning format, with a balance of offline and online communication between teacher and student, contributing to the development and consolidation of critical thinking skills.

Conclusion

The current socio-cultural reality, which has undergone a radical change with the advent of network communication, has a number of characteristic features, one of which is the presence of freedom and violence, leading to information wars. If violence and war act as a destructive and self-destructive force, then critical thinking, which

opposes them, acts as a force of creation, self-creation and self-improvement. Philosophy has traditionally been interested in the formation of healthy human thought processes. If philosophical counselling as a field of activity, including the formation of critical thinking and the struggle against cognitive distortions in the perception of reality, is crystallised and institutionalised in our country, we can count on the fact that the forces of teaching philosophy in higher education will at least partially satisfy the demand for the formation of critical thinking of the modern generation, which desperately needs, although and often without realising it, digital literacy to save itself in a turbulent world.

We have outlined the relationship between critical thinking, philosophy and philosophical practice, but further philosophical reflection on the relationship between experience, wisdom and philosophical practice is needed, so we invite discussion and further research.

Acknowledgements

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