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THE PRINCIPLE OF CONCEALMENT AS THE PHILOSOPHICAL LANGUAGE OF MANICHAISM

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The article discusses the concept of the Manichean pharmacon as a specific philosophical concept. The Manichean teaching in the modern academic tradition is considered exclusively from the standpoint of religious studies. The symbolic structure of Manichean treatises, the space of metaphor, is fundamentally different from European metaphysics. The basic principle of the existence of Manichaeism as a system of knowledge is imagery and the play of meanings. In European metaphysics, these concepts are devoid of philosophical authority, while for Eastern philosophy this is the main way of existence of discourse. This is a deliberate "escape from the Greek logos", presented in other forms of philosophizing and constructing reality. The article examines the area of divergence between the classical philosophical tradition of the Hellenistic era and Manichaeism and the formation of "ethical physics" of the Manichean tradition. The main feature of this system is the principle of shimmering reality hidden behind the system of dual oppositions. Thus, the entire philosophical system is a space of game and pharmacon, aimed at removing the state of difference and gaining initial integrity.

Contact with the space of truth - Manichean pharmacology. It is like medicine for those who interact with it through the teacher, and it is destructive for those who come into contact with its sphere on their own. Interaction with the world of scattering is a game, a concept discredited in European metaphysics. Accepting or not accepting a pharmacon, following a teacher, or gaining the "joy of life" is a multidimensional game. This "unraveling" or discernment of the true essence of being is just as the reading of a Manichean treatise, when a reader is forced to unravel the author's stromata.

Keywords: *New Metaphysic, Manichaeism, Pharmacon, Différance, Kephalia, Symbolic Production and Exchange.*

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ПРИНЦИП ПРИХОВАННЯ ЯК ФІЛОСОФСЬКА МОВА МАНІХЕЙСТВА

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У статті розглядається концепт маніхейського фармакону як окремої філософської концепції. Маніхейське вчення в сучасній академічній традиції розглядається виключно з позиції релігієзнавчого вивчення. Проте символічна структура маніхейських трактатів, простір метафори, принципово відрізняється від європейської метафізики. Основним принципом існування маніхейства як системи знань є образність і гра смислів. У європейській метафізиці ці поняття позбавлені філософського авторитету, тоді як для східної традиції це основний маркер філософського дискурсу. Це навмисна "втеча від грецького логосу", представлена в інших формах філософування і конструювання реальності. У статті проаналізовано сферу розбіжностей між класичною філософською традицією епохи еллінізму та принципом формування "етичної фізики" у маніхейській традиції. Головною особливістю цієї системи є принцип мерехтливої реальності, прихованої за системою дуальних опозицій. Таким чином, вся філософська система являє собою простір гри і фармакону, спрямованого на зняття стану дифферансу і набуття початкової цілісності.

Контакт зі світом істини – маніхейська фармакологія. Вона є лікувальною для тих, хто звертається до неї через вчителя, і руйнівною для тих, хто контактує до неї особисто. Взаємодія зі світом розсіювання – це гра, поняття, дискредитоване у європейській метафізиці. Сприйняття чи несприйняття фармакону, слідування за вчителем чи отримання "радості від життя" – це мультифункціональна гра. Це "розгадування" або розпізнавання справжньої сутності буття схоже на читання маніхейських трактатів, коли читач змушений розгадувати стромаги автора.

Ключові слова: нова метафізика, маніхейство, фармакон, діферанс, Кефалайя, символічне виробництво та обмін.

Introduction of the issue. The end of the twentieth century was marked by the search for alternatives to European metaphysics. Postmodernity has actualized the search for philosophical foundations in "other" systems. The researchers paid special attention to the philosophical systems of the Near and Far East. In the ontological concepts, devoid of the influence of Greek logos, according to Derrida, philosophers of postmodernity saw "overcoming the old fabric of metaphysics". Criticism of Hellenistic philosophy from the side of Middle Eastern wisdom (Midrash, Talmudic tradition, Manichean treatises, corpuses of Syrian and Coptic literature) was seen as a deliberate "rebellion against Plato", similar in its foundations to the post-structuralist criticism of the old metaphysics.

S. Handelman in his work "The slayers of Moses: the emergence of rabbinic interpretation in modern literary theory"

insists that the hermeneutic revolution insisted on by Gadamer, Ricoeur and Derrida took place in the Talmudic literature of the 2nd-6th centuries [4: 24-25]. The conceptual foundations of reasoning about being in the Middle Eastern traditions, for Handelman, mean a rejection of metaphorical space, a departure from the thing-in-itself and knowledge of the truth in metaphorical integrity. This is a state of coexistence of many traditions of interpretation and reading, many meanings, which brings Middle Eastern wisdom closer to the concept of Derrida.

Relevance of the topic. The poststructuralist focus on Middle Eastern wisdom was driven by the fundamental importance of metaphor, concealment, and a conscious avoidance of the uniqueness that prevailed in these traditions. The mobile or, in Ricoeur's understanding, the "flickering" space of the metaphor deliberately introduced the

subject into the sphere of anxiety, uncertainty, while classical Greek metaphysics was called upon to save him from this.

The genre widespread for Middle Eastern literature of this period is *stromata* or *mesekhet* in Aramaic - "mat, wicker, carpet". This is a special form of maieutics aimed at hiding the truth in a treatise so that it is not available to laymen. Unraveling treatises or immersion in them is perceived as a language game, with the help of which the subject is involved in the metaphorical space. This type of philosophizing without the rigid structure of a Western treatise seems to be an alternative to European philosophy today. Game, *agon* can serve as a space for the deployment of philosophical discourse. Thus, the relevance of the topic is due to the deviation of metamodern philosophy from the principles of the old metaphysics and the search for grounds for constructing new philosophical realities. The Middle Eastern philosophical tradition, with its otherness in relation to classical metaphysics, can be the source of modern philosophical constructs.

The outline of unresolved issues brought up in the article. The novelty of the topic is due to the fact that the Manichean doctrine was not previously considered from the position of a philosophical alternative to European metaphysics. The Manichean tradition was assigned the role of a religious-mystical teaching devoid of fundamental philosophical foundations.

The degree of scientific development. Until the middle of the 19th century, historians and religious scholars knew the Manichean teaching exclusively from excerpts from Christian polemicists, and the very phenomenon of the Mani religion was considered exclusively as a Christian heresy. The assumptions of Isaac de Beausobre, then, Ferdinand Christian Baur about Zoroastrian and Buddhist influence were

rather speculative. At the same time, Baur's work "The Religious System of the Manicheans" is fundamentally important for us, since in its second part the author examines the Manichean doctrine from the point of view of ancient philosophy. Baur was the first out of modern researchers, who suggested using the term "Manichean philosophy" in the meaning that late antique authors, for example, Alexander of Lycopolis, endowed it with [2: 419].

The involvement of medieval Arabic sources, in particular, "Fihrist" of al-Nadim, allowed researchers to state a fact of Manichean borrowings either from the ancient religious tradition or Hellenistic philosophy. This, based on the analysis of the "Fihrist", was argued, in particular, by G. Flügel [16: 16].

In the twentieth century, many Manichean archives were discovered, their distribution is amazing - from Algeria to China. The one of works worth mentioning is detailed study of this topic undertaken by A. Khosroev [16: 17-31]. The finding of the archives made it possible to partially reconstruct the teachings of Mani and their unique symbolic language that served as a universal means of communication throughout Eurasia in late antiquity.

After the study of new sources, researchers started avoid talking about "Manichean philosophy", preferring to call the system of Mani "mythological structure". If in the mid-1920s Hans Schroeder talked about the "philosophical system of Mani", presented in the critical treatise of Alexander of Lycopolis, then Karl Schmidt considered the basis of Manichaeism just a "sensory element", and Manichean teaching as a "huge complex of images". Schmidt's research was in a kind of controversy with Schroeder's work "The Initial Form and Further Development of the Manichean System". We can confidently affirm that his point of view was established in academic circles - after the 1940s, the

scientific community spoke about Manichaeism only in the context of the history of religion, not philosophy. The value judgments inherent in the Neoplatonic tradition reappear in the research literature, as if scientists were desperate to find in Manichaeism the "mysterious ancient wisdom" that medieval authors, for example, al-Nadim, spoke of. In the work of G. Widengren "Mani and Manichaeism", in the context of the western channel of this teaching, the classical opposition of Augustine and Faustus is carried out. Faustus, as a literary character in the "Contra Faustum manichaeum" treatise, is not able to conduct a philosophical discourse with Augustine, which is why an image of a specific religious teaching devoid of a philosophical background is formed. "The Manicheans were unable to philosophically develop the dualistic concept," Widengren says [6: 211].

The aim of our study is to demonstrate the philosophical foundations of the Manichean teaching as a conscious rejection of the European logos.

Results and Discussion. The controversy between Augustine and Faustus can serve as a starting point in solving the problem of the existence of Manichean philosophy. In the criticism of Manichean doctrine by late antique authors, a common place is the remark about the primitiveness of Mani's cosmological concept. Augustine does not find confirmation of the Manichean doctrine of the structure of the universe in the "works of the philosophers" [3: 35]. By philosophers, he certainly means astronomers. From further dialogue, we understand that for Faustus the natural-philosophical dimension of the discussion is not fundamentally, cosmology is simply not interested in him. In Augustine's doctrine, knowledge of cosmological principles gives a philosopher the starting point in reasoning, for him the space of ethics, verified by revelation, parallel to the

space of empiricism with its physical laws. Augustine declares "there is no reasonable explanation for the solstice, equinoxes, or eclipses" [3: 35]. A century before, Alexander of Lycopolis condescendingly remarked: "If the Manicheans attended at least the schools of astronomers, they would not have made such mistakes" [1]. Further, he criticizes Mani's peculiar cosmological scheme, which looked very archaic by the first centuries of our era.

For pagan authors such as Alexander of Lycopolis or Simplicius, it was the contradictory ontological scheme that was the first and main argument against the Manichean teaching. Thorough criticism of the Christian bishop Titus of Syrian Bostra also begins with a search for contradictions in the cosmological system and criticism of the natural philosophical views of the Mani followers [5: 40]. The battlefield between Hellenistic thinkers and Manicheans was the sphere of ancient natural philosophy. In such discursive conditions, Mani's syncretic ideas of the world structure which were borrowed from the archaic Babylonian tradition, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and some Greek thinkers, seemed naive and primitive in comparison to the grandiose natural-philosophical schools of late antiquity. This opposition makes it impossible for the Manicheans to be recognized as philosophers by the ancient thought.

We clearly see that the term "philosopher" is used by Augustine, as well as Titus of Bostra, exclusively in the context of the natural sciences. Philosophy as an attempt to embrace being in its entirety, becomes possible, starting with the Stoics, for those who "nurtured a predisposition to knowledge" [15: 144]. In fact, philosophy, especially in the first centuries of our era, is an attempt to find the language of being through the coverage of all its aspects. Numerous compendiums of the late Academy and the genre of compilations itself were the means for the

construction of a multifaceted and universal language between two "I", internal and external one. The unconditional and invariable point of reference is geometry and physics, these are the very "guiding stars of matter", which the *philosopher-navigator* by Philo of Alexandria looks at [15: 167]. On the one hand, late antique philosophy as a practice of person's self, on the other hand, as a mediator between the "I" and the world, the practice of accepting the external in the inner spaces of the self, is similar to the concept that we see in the Manichean teaching. Faustus, in his polemic with Augustine, emphasizes that the doctrine of the cosmos structure is not interesting for him insofar as it does not correlate with the problems of revelation, morality, and selfhood. This is an external, illusory, grotesque world. Augustine's particular indignation is caused by the confession of Faustus that of all the philosophers he read there were only some works of Seneca and Cicero, and no teachings of geometers, astronomers, and geographers.

The emphasized complexity of the Manichaean cosmological system was intended to illustrate the gap between the harmonious world of selfhood, gnosis and the chaotic intelligible world. Kephali are peatedly emphasizes the dependence of a person on the position of the planets, astrology and magic [11: 150], but the complexity of these cosmological constructions is due only to their external character in relation to the human "I", dressed in a "cloak of matter". Internal contradictions in the presentation of the cosmological system in Kephalia, pointed out by both Christian polemicists and modern researchers, emphasize the secondary importance of external natural philosophy for the Manichean doctrine.

On the other hand, Manichean teaching is certainly practical in nature. This is the practice of oneself and building boundaries between the "I" and the external world in the conditions of

painful experience of the Absurd of the universe.

The main thesis of the Manichean doctrine making it a philosophical concept, is the idea of "ethical physics". The cosmic drama, which is characteristic of the Gnostic tradition, obeys moral laws. Ontological concepts of good and evil, truth and falsehood, become a universal language of interaction with the world, this is a philosophical system turned inward. Ethical guidelines act as a kind of constants, similar to the "stars of matter" of Philo of Alexandria, and moral laws perform the same function as the laws of physics in late antique natural philosophy. Cosmology is personalized, the world has the ability to feel and experience because it is based on the absolute practice of the self. Ethics is not just a mechanism, but a global principle of searching for the boundaries of "I" in the changing world of empiricism. The outside world is perceived by the Manichaean doctrine of the thinking individual. The universe can be contemplated, it affects the body of a person and even his fate, but this is just an illusion in relation to the true, inner world. Ethics is not just a mechanism, but a global principle of searching for the boundaries of "I" in the changing world of empiricism.

In the Coptic and Aramaic languages, there are many Manichean ethical terms taken from ancient physics - *προβολή*, *ἐνθύμησις*, *στερέωμα*, *βῶλος* [7: 48]. This proves indirectly that the Manicheans described the moral world in terms of ancient cosmology.

On the other hand, this proves Mani's acquaintance with Greek philosophy, and not at the "profane level", as some researchers, in particular, E. Smagina asserts [11: 48].

By philosophy, obviously, Mani meant knowledge of the laws of the universe, for him endowed with a more ethical than a physical context. The "First Teacher", like most of the philosophers of his day,

offered his philosophy as a medicine - "you are like a doctor who puts medicine on ulcers". This is also called *ἐλπίς* in the Coptic version of Kephalia, the "hope" of life: "And I preached to them the hope of life ... " [11: 76].

According to Hegel, the True should be reduced to simplicity [8: 11]. Only such simplicity can be a *pharmakon*, i.e. medicine. Mani considers a *pharmakon* teaching both as a medicine and as a guide to practical action. Mani's preaching creates a "comfortable hierarchical field" (according to J. Derrida [10: 162]), a space of dual oppositions. In it, the external is opposed to the internal, the profane is opposed to the sacred. This is a heterogeneous space of metaphor, anxious by nature, reminding the subject of the game rules. Moreover, this anxiety is of an eschatological nature. Purity and integrity are achieved by Hegel's *Aufhebung* - catharsis. *Différance* reigns in the world; gaining integrity is possible only after taking the medicine. Contact with the space of truth is the Manichean pharmacology. It is like medicine for those who interact with it through the teacher, and it is destructive for those who come into contact with its sphere on their own. Interaction with the world of scattering is a game, a concept discredited in European metaphysics.

Accepting or not accepting a *pharmakon*, following a teacher, or gaining the "joy of life" is a multidimensional game. This "unraveling" or discernment of the true essence of being, just as the reader of a Manichean treatise is forced to unravel the author's *stromata*.

The main mechanism for hiding the truth in the Manichean text is quotation. The syncretism of Manichean teaching provides a rich library of quotations and references. The meaning of the treatise becomes clear only when one refers to all the cited sources. For instance, Kefalaya, chapter 89 says: "He condemns them according to their deeds and does not

take them to Himself at death, but they go to the devil, whom they loved. As the Savior said: "Where your heart is, there will be your treasure." And the souls who put their treasure to the devil, will be his inheritance" [11: 233].

Numerous commentators have repeatedly noted the quote about the treasure with reference to the Gospel of Matthew 6:21; it seems taken out of context, since in the Gospel itself it's about non-acquisitiveness, while in the Manichean treatise it is an argument in favor of man's free will - "... it was not God who did them wrong, but they did themselves". The treatise appeals to the criticism of Pharisaism in the Gospel of Matthew. The Bible's condemnation of "hypocritical fasting" and "verbiage in prayer" leads to a line between the world of tradition and new revelation. In mood, this echoes the tone of the Manichean treatise, since the chapter quoted is about a Christian who asks the Apostle about the nature of God. Thus, the author draws parallels between Christianity and Pharisaism. This marks the primacy of the *Différance* in our world - even the fairest of the judges sin because they are removed from the True Judge. The righteous are deprived of free will, since they completely entrust themselves to the divine patron, while sinners are gifted with freedom, and therefore are doomed to sin. True freedom is possible only after catharsis - purification, removal of differences at the end of times.

The Manichean treatise cites a favorite technique of Middle Eastern authors - an indirect quotation. The mention of the "treasure" is given for the sake of a hint at the 24th verse of the same chapter from Matthew - "you cannot serve God and mammon". The specific Aramaic word "ממון" means earthly property, material goods. The choice in the Gospel of Matthew is obvious - serving the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of Earth. But the Manichean treatise, hinting at this quote, brings the reader

to the realization of the necessity of existence in the Kingdom of the Earth.

In other words, the Manichean is forced to serve "mammon", referring to the kingdom of heaven. This is the removal of the opposition between freedom and non-freedom. However, the logical chain does not end there. E. Smagina noted that the same passage is quoted in the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas in 50 words: "An evil person brings out the bad, from his evil treasure, which is in his heart, (and) he speaks bad, for out of the abundance of his heart he endures the bad" [11: 353]. The treasure in question is a tracing paper with ܨܘܡܡܐ , a common Aramaic designation of a true treasure, pharmacon, medicine. A passage from the Mishnah (Avot 2.12) is in tune with these quotes. "Let your neighbor's property be dear to you as your own. Prepare yourself to study the Torah, because understanding it is not inherited, and everything you do, do in the name of Heaven" [13], Pharmacon can be both a medicine and a poison at the same time. The study of Scripture is valuable only when it is directed towards the Kingdom of Heaven. If the Scripture for the follower is not a value in itself, it turns out to be destructive.

Pharmacon becomes a poison, a "bad treasure" from the Gospel of Thomas or the "idle talk" of the Gospel of Matthew. In the polemic with the Christian in Kephalia, Mani emphasizes that the treasure, the revelation, is hidden in human nature. Man is a bearer of the original integrity. This wholeness becomes meaningful only when a person turns to God. Otherwise, the "treasure" can destroy a person. Scripture and revelation are part of human nature. In this, Mani is certainly close to Plato's anamnesis. Any study of Scripture only "resurrects" the knowledge that man is the bearer of. However, revelation or "treasure" is not a value in itself; it is important because it points the way to human liberation. It is in the worship of

revelation that Mani accuses the Christian, paraphrasing a quote from the Gospel.

This short excerpt is an example of how Manichean authors interact with the literary tradition of the Middle East. Hyperlinks and quotations form the space of the language game, which largely loses its meaning in translation. Thus, Kephalia was preserved in the Coptic language, and most of the Aramaic constructs lost their meaning in translation. However, the complex principle of quotations can be restored. The Concealment of Truth is a shining example of Manichean philosophical discourse. A passing mention of Plato, Christ, Zoroastrian and Jewish symbolism, outline the space of concealment, in which it is necessary to search for the "treasure", the truth. This principle is fundamentally different from the provisions of European metaphysics. The Manichean treatise lacks an introduction and conclusions, it hints, but never speaks directly. In this "flicker of truth" we can notice a different reality of the text, a different metaphysics and other principles of philosophical discourse.

Conclusions and research prospects. Thus, the concept of "Manichean philosophy" needs to be developed. The reading of Manichean texts undertaken by modern researchers was undertaken exclusively in the context of the search for the influences of the Greek, Persian, Jewish tradition on the teachings of Mani, breaking the treatises into conditionally "Greek" and "Eastern" fragments of borrowing. It is necessary to further study Manichaeism as a separate branch of late antique philosophy, one of the options for the existence of a new ethical metaphysics in its entirety, which is especially important in the modern post-metaphysical era.

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