

інституції, технології, людський потенціал і соціальні процеси формують основу цього суспільства.

Суспільство знань – це не лише технологічна чи економічна трансформація, а глибока соціокультурна еволюція, яка вимагає усвідомленого управління, міждисциплінарного діалогу та активної участі всіх членів суспільства. Інтерпретуючи суспільство знань як посилену версію інформаційного суспільства, можна виокремити сукупність умов, що дозволяють розуміти інформаційне суспільство як суспільство знань. Серед цих умов – зростання масштабів застосування і значущості теоретичного знання; зростання масштабів відтворення і розподілу знання.

QUESTIONS ABOUT POWER, HUMANISM, AND FREE THINKING IN THE ESSAY “LETTERS OF OBSCURE MEN”

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The “Letters of Obscure Men” (Latin “*Epistolae obscurorum virorum*”, around 1515–1517) is a classical humanistic satire that arose in the polemical context surrounding the position of the German humanist and Hebrew scholar Johannes Reuchlin, in his defense of Jewish books against the “obscurantists”. The probable authors of this anonymous satire [1], including Crotus Rubianus and Ulrich von Hutten, used parody of the monastic and scholastic style - to dismantle the intellectual monopoly and ultra-dogmatism of the Catholic Church, and university scholasticism in the early 16th century. The mentioned text is important from a historical and philosophical point of view, since it not only ridiculed individual opponents, but also highlighted the *institutional gap* between the humanistic practice of free thinking, and the conservative authority of medieval scholarly circles [2].

The semantic framework of the essay “Letters of Obscure Men” is centered on satire as a form of intellectual protest. This work functioned as a literary trope and rhetorical tool, since irony and parody allowed humanists to show the absurdity and internal contradictions of the scholastics' arguments, while undermining their moral and epistemic authority. A comparison with contemporary practices of opposition to institutional power might begin with the recognition that, both in the 16th century and today, satirical forms do not simply ridicule the situation, but reframe the problem: who has the right to determine the “normative” form of knowledge and speech? A historic-philosophical reading of the “Letters” as an articulation of the demand for the *autonomy of reason* provides a starting point for matching it with the nowadays problem of *control over discourse*.

In the 16th century, institutional power was concentrated in universities, monasteries, and church institutions, which claimed a monopoly on canonical interpretation and educational practice. In the 21st century, the form of speech control has changed: large social platforms practice algorithmic content curation, implement new moderation mechanisms, and create renewed infrastructure through which meanings can be filtered and blocked. These mechanisms are not identical to the old clerical censorship, as they are distributed, technically mediated, and often opaque. However, the effect of *narrowing the field of permissible speech* and the motives for control (political, economic, ethical) are essentially the same: controlling what is considered “acceptable” to say aloud. In 2023–2024, international studies recorded an increase in restrictions on the diversity of the information field, and a growing tendency to remove “controversial content”, which makes the current discussion about freedom of speech – and the means of regulating it – extremely vibrant and practically relevant [3].

Humanists of the Reformation era appealed to reason, classical texts, and criticism of clerical authority as the foundations of scientific and ethical autonomy. Today, free thought faces new challenges, such as internal self-censorship, pressure from “public opinion”, “online judging”, and the risk of statements being labeled as “inappropriate”. Two aspects should be emphasized here. The first is that institutional protective practices (academic autonomy, guarantees of scientific debate) remain critically important. The second aspect is related to the change in the means of struggle: while 16th-century humanists wrote pamphlets and parodies, contemporary criticism often uses digital forms (manifestos on social media, blogs, memes, podcasts). Both eras demonstrate that free thinking requires not only personal courage, but also suitable collective communication strategies.

Classical humanism proclaimed an individual, a human being as the measure and subject of knowledge. Yet in the 21st century, humanism faces challenges from post-humanist and transhumanist projects, as well as demands for recognition of historical and social inequalities (issues of gender identity, critical race theory, postcolonial studies). Analysis of sociological and political scientific discussions shows that public reputational punishing practices function according to their own network logic, and can lead to a “self-restraint of expression” effect in academic and cultural circles [4], out of fear of being labeled “sexist”, “racist”, “intolerant” etc.

Finally, contemporary discussions about “new ethics” raise the question of whether the humanistic emphasis on the autonomous individual remains an adequate ethical orientation, or whether it should be revised in favor of relational approaches? Publicistic and philosophical reflections in recent years have noted both attempts to “update” humanism, and a criticism of its widespread conception as outdated and inconsistent with the spirit of the times.

References:

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УМОВИ ІСНУВАННЯ КАПІТАЛІСТИЧНОЇ СИСТЕМИ ЯК СИСТЕМИ СТАЛОГО РОЗВИТКУ

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Капіталістична система у сучасності є домінуючою економічною системою, яка цілком і повністю несе відповідальність не тільки за сучасний стан розвитку людської цивілізації, аде й за майбутнє людства. Соціальні та економічні катаклізми, які відбуваються у сучасному світі виникають велике занепокоєння у багатьох людей і навіть цілих суспільств та країн. На тлі цих бурхливих зрушень було б дуже бажано бачити замість економічного, політичного, культурного хаосу та турбулентності поступовий розвиток та прогрес. Зрозуміти, при яких