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QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ‘HAPPINESS’ CATEGORY IN THE PLATO’S WRITINGS

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КАЧЕСТВЕННЫЙ И КОЛИЧЕСТВЕННЫЙ АНАЛИЗ КАТЕГОРИИ «СЧАСТЬЕ» В ТРУДАХ ПЛАТОНА

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Abstract. The article presents the results of the content analysis of the category ‘happiness’ in the philosophical heritage of Plato, conducted while taking into account the different periods of his writings. The appeal to the works of the great philosopher allowed not only to clarify the true meaning of this philosophical category but also to admire the contribution of the great philosopher to the formation of ethical norms and values of mankind.

Аннотация. В статье представлены результаты контент-анализа категории «счастье» в философском наследии Платона, проведенного с учетом различных периодов его творчества. Обращение к трудам великого философа позволило не только уточнить истинный смысл данной философской категории, но и восхититься вкладом великого философа в формирование этических норм и ценностей человечества.

Keywords: Plato, happiness, qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis.

Ключевые слова: Платон, счастье, контент-анализ.

Category ‘happiness’ (‘human happiness’) belongs to one of the main places in philosophical and ethical problems. For many centuries, mankind has been looking for answers to the questions of what happiness is, what it contains and what should be done to be happy — but to this day, unambiguous answers to them have not been found. For human happiness is taken by satisfaction with life, and the joy of being, and a sense of approaching the ideal, while being in a happy state is always accompanied by bright positive feelings and emotions. The multi-aspect perception of a person and the individuality of a happy state entail the ambiguity of the definitions of the concept of ‘happiness’.

The ancient Greek word for happiness — ‘eudaimonia’ (*eu* — good, *daimon* — deity) — literally meant the fate of a person under the protection of the gods. Aristotle associated this concept with the possession of the highest goods [1, p. 234]. In the Russian language, the word ‘happiness’ is also interpreted in different ways: like the feeling and the state of complete, Supreme satisfaction

[2, p. 944], or like the state of contentment, well-being, joy from the fullness of life [3, p. 1471] or as a generalized positive assessment of the man in your life [4, p. 567].

In the modern world, there is a tendency to identify the meaning of the concept of ‘happiness’ with material security, which, in our opinion, significantly ‘lands’ to the primitive definition this philosophical category, makes it utilitarian.

To return this concept to its original meaning of the system-forming factor of human existence, which allows the theme of happiness even to become “the leitmotif of the whole philosophical system of a thinker” [1, p. 57], we turned to the experience of the past centuries, namely – to the philosophical heritage of Plato. The reason for choosing this particular author is justified not only because of the fact that Plato is the greatest philosopher of antiquity but also because his philosophical concepts are still not thoroughly understood [5, p. 231], and there is a scientific need for their interpretation.

The purpose of this article is to try to form Plato's ideas about human happiness, previously assuming that these ideas are quite contradictory and the intensity of Plato's appeal to the problem of happiness is closely correlated with the age of the philosopher. In this regard, the study solved the next research problems:

1. quantitative content analysis of the category ‘happiness’ taking into account the periodization of Plato's works and the calculation of the coefficients of the prevalence of this category in the text;
2. qualitative interpretation of the context used by the author and translators of the category under study;
3. generalization and classification of homogeneous and similar in meaning contexts;
4. writing conclusions on the hypotheses and objectives of the study.

The object of the study was the works of Plato, published in Russia. *The subject* is Plato's concept of happiness.

For the analysis and generalization of Plato's ideas about happiness, the methods of content analysis of texts, historical and philosophical reconstruction, comparison, periodization and others were used.

Due to the weak development of the topic taken for research and the lack of materials for secondary analysis, the conclusions of the article will be based on the results of the authors' own study of Plato's texts.

While working on this study, we have not found any work in Russian, entirely devoted to the problems of human happiness in the philosophy of Plato.

Moreover, it should be noted two specific features. The first is that the works of Plato had been creating almost for the half of a century and this array, which has reached our days, is very large and heterogeneous. In this regard, there are questions about the authenticity of works that have come down to the present under the name of Plato, and the chronological sequence of their creation. Without going into this controversy, for the object of the study, the authors took all the works that are printed in Russia under the name of Plato and included in the full collection of his works of 1990–1994 and 2017.

The second problem is connected with the peculiarities of translation. Plato's texts have been translated over the years by different authors, who have used different vocabulary to convey relatively similar content. In our case, this plays an important role, since a specific word was taken as a unit of analysis during the content analysis, so it should be clarified that this article contains translations that were included in the book Complete works in one volume (Moscow, 2017).

All cases in which the word ‘happiness’ could occur in the text were divided into three types:

–mention of all single-root words of the word ‘happiness’ (this division will be the most voluminous, as it includes all cases of occurrence of the word and its derivatives);

–direct use of the word ‘happiness’ and its forms: plural, singular, and various case forms (this division will be narrower, but more interesting as it shows the explicit use of the word Plato);

–mention of the word ‘happiness’, not carrying a semantic load, for example, ‘fortunately’, ‘by a Fluke’, ‘lucky chance’.

The selection of only one word as a unit of analysis is dictated by the interest in the context of its use: where (in what text), in what form (in the form of a single-rooted word or direct use), in what form (in what quantity, case) the word ‘happiness’ occurs.

At the first stage of the analysis it was revealed that in the total volume of the text (904 pages) the word ‘happiness’ and its varieties were met 378 times. Of this total, 45 times derived from the word ‘happiness’, did not carry a semantic load, so we excluded them from the analysis, obtaining the number 333 (378–45=333). This allowed us to determine the overall prevalence of the category of ‘happiness’ ($K^{\text{overall}}_{\text{happiness}}$) in the text of the writings of Plato.

The value of $K^{\text{overall}}_{\text{happiness}} = 333/904 = 0.37$ suggests that on average, on five pages of the studied texts there are two words ‘happiness’, having different forms.

At the second stage of analysis based on the classification of Plato’s texts, suggested by Frederick Copleston [6, p. 321], was targeted by private contributions to the prevalence of the category of ‘happiness’ ([i]casts, where i varies from 1 to 5). This is due to the fact that this author has identified in the work of Plato four periods: Socratic, transitional, the period of maturity and old age. At the same time, a number of works did not fall into any of these periods and a separate coefficient was calculated for them.

The summary data of the quantitative analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS THE CATEGORY OF ‘HAPPINESS’ IN PLATO,
 IS PRESENTED FOR THE PERIODS OF THE TEXTS

<i>The name of the period of the writing of the Plato texts</i>	<i>Number of texts, which were analyzed</i>	<i>Number of references to all forms of the word ‘happiness’</i>	<i>Direct mention of the word ‘happiness’</i>	<i>Mention of the word ‘happiness’, not carrying a semantic load</i>	<i>The volume of the analyzed information (in pages)</i>
Socratic	8	22	6	3	138
Transition	7	119	19	5	193
Maturities	4	105	21	4	135
Old age	22	114	8	17	363
Outside periods	7	18	2	6	75
<i>Subtotal:</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>378</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>904</i>

Based on the data given in Table 1, the partial coefficients of the prevalence of the category ‘happiness’ for each period of Plato’s works were calculated. So, for Socratic period $K[1]^{\text{part}}_{\text{happiness}} = 0.14$ (word occurs after 7 p.); for the transition period $K[2]^{\text{part}}_{\text{happiness}} = 0.59$ (a word found on every second page); for the period of maturity $K[3]^{\text{part}}_{\text{happiness}} = 0.75$ (the word is found almost on each page); late works of Plato $K[4]^{\text{part}}_{\text{happiness}} = 0.27$ (the frequency of appearance of words is dramatically reduced and it becomes equal to one word on page 4.); for text which was not related to any of the periods $K[5]^{\text{part}}_{\text{happiness}} = 0.19$ (one word on p. 5).

Thus, it can be seen that the problem of happiness is least interested in both early and late Plato. While the average period of his work is closely connected with this problem and in his

fundamental works “State” ($K[\text{State}]_{\text{happiness}}=76/23=3.3$) and “The laws” ($K[\text{Laws}]_{\text{happiness}}=62/26=2.4$) the problem of human happiness is given one of the Central places.

Qualitative analysis of Plato’s texts allowed us to establish that for the first time the word ‘happiness’ and some of its forms are casually mentioned in the Apology of Socrates: “you attribute a Great misfortune to me, however”, [7 (Apology of Socrates), p. 23], “...it would be an amazing happiness for young men, if ... the rest ... would benefit them” [7 (Apology of Socrates), p. 24], “...because he gives you imaginary happiness, and I — genuine” [7 (Apology of Socrates), p. 31] However, already here is the formation of such concepts as imaginary and true happiness. True, judging by the context, is the happiness that gives a life devoted to the study of philosophy and avoiding what the majority cares about — “... neglected ... greed, chores, military officials, speeches in the National Assembly, participation in government, conspiracies, uprisings ...” [7 (Apology of Socrates), p. 31].

The theme of imaginary and genuine happiness developed by Plato throughout the period of his work, despite the fact that the term "imaginary happiness" has not been used explicitly and followed from the opposition of true happiness.

This true happiness it is, for example, believes the lack of fear of death, and the person who knows how to cope with this fear, believes is possessed of good character: “...I often marvelled at how happy the character, and the more marvel now, with this misfortune (the upcoming death of Socrates), both easily and discreetly you carry” [7 (Creighton or the Proper), p. 35].

In the future, developing the idea of a happy personality qualities that allow a person to be happy, Plato refers to wisdom, “but wisdom is happiness, it is known to every child” [7 (Euthydemus, or the Disputer), p. 553–554], “wisdom in all things brings people happiness, for wisdom is nothing wrong, but makes you need to act properly and to succeed” [7 (Euthydemus, or the Disputer), p. 553–554], “if anyone there is wisdom, he needs no other happiness” [7 (Euthydemus, or the Disputer), p. 553-554].

Also, the true happiness for Plato is friendship: “seeing you together with Licid, I’m amazed at the excitement and honor you happy: despite his youth, both of you were able to quickly and easily make this acquisition; and you thus quickly and correctly acquired, as well as other Licid and he is you” [7 (Licid, or of Friendship), p. 537].

The obstacle to true happiness Plato considers slavery and arbitrariness, even if committed from good intentions and loved ones: “... And do you think that a happy man who is in slavery and who is not given to do anything of what he seeks? ... So, if the father and mother love you and strive for your happiness, it is clear in all respects that they take care of you to be good” [7 (Licid, or Friendship), p. 533], “Wishing you happiness, they interfere with the fulfilment of your desires?” [7 (Licid, or Friendship), p. 533] , “But when you return home to your mother, she allows you ... to do whatever you want, with wool or a loom, so that you can be happy with her?” [7 (Licid, or of Friendship), p. 534], “But why are they so terribly prevent you from being happy and do whatever you want ...” [7 (Licid, or of Friendship), p. 534].

In his works, Plato States that the desire for happiness is inherent in every person: “... who really doesn’t want to be happy? — Such a person does not exist” [7 (Euthydemus, or Disputant), p. 553–554]. The main question is how, how and by what means can this be achieved? “... If, however, we want to be happy, how can we achieve this? — here Plato for the first time formulates and the answer — Perhaps, by possession of many benefits?” [7 (Euthydemus, or Disputant), p. 553–554]. He later said that one of the benefits of owning a happy person does not become: “... if a carpenter had all the necessary tools and wood at his disposal, but did not work with them, would he benefit in any way from this possession? — In any case” [7 (Euthydemus, or the Disputer), p. 554–

555] “who wants to become happy must not only possess such goods, but also to use them, otherwise the possession will not bring any benefit” [7 (Euthydemus, or Disputant), p. 554–555].

In the future, developing the idea of a happy personality qualities that allow a person to be happy, Plato refers to wisdom, “but wisdom is happiness, it is known to every child” [7 (Euthydemus, or the Disputer), p. 553–554], “wisdom in all things brings people happiness, for wisdom is nothing wrong, but makes you need to act properly and to succeed” [7 (Euthydemus, or the Disputer), p. 553–554], “if anyone there is wisdom, he needs no other happiness” [7 (Euthydemus, or the Disputer), p. 553–554].

Plato considers reasonableness and justice to be qualities of the same order with wisdom: “this Situation teaches that a person who wants to be happy should not strive for enrichment, but be rich, preserving justice and prudence” [7 (Laws, or on Legislation), p. 1193].

While discussing how to form these qualities, which are important for a happy personality, the philosopher uses such a reliable polemic technique as the formulation of an important thesis in the form of a question: “is Not it much happier than them and do not better get a place to practice the people’s and political virtue, which is called prudence and justice, depending on law and diligence, although not yet on philosophy and reason?” [7 (Phaedo or on the Soul), p. 62]. An affirmative answer to this question automatically leads to the conclusion that philosophy is the tool for achieving human happiness. The real hymn to this function of philosophy is the treatise *The State*, in which Plato already openly declares that happiness can be achieved only by devoting his life to philosophy: “The desire of the soul to wisdom (φιλοσοφίαν)” [7 (Phaedo, or on the Soul), p. 963–964], “Life — like as possible here and in the subsequent — it is always necessary to be able to choose the middle path, avoiding extremes; that is the highest happiness for a human being” [7 (Phaedo or on the Soul), p. 968], “If coming into the local life, the man sensibly philosophized, and when you select him the lot fell not from the latter, then, according to the news of the world, it is likely there will be happy.” [7 (Phaedo or on the Soul), p. 969]. He therefore proposed to solve the problem of building a happy state, handing the reins of the philosophers: “where there is justice and where injustice, and in what between them distinction and which of them need to have a man to be happy.” [7 (The State, or Justice), p. 824], “that neither for the state nor for the citizens will not end in misery, until the Lord of the state will not become a tribe of philosophers” [7 The State, or Justice), p. 880].

The concept of happiness proposed by Plato, is quite controversial. On the one hand, the works of the ancient philosopher raises a problem that is relevant for today. It consists in the fact that most often happiness comes to people unworthy, because either they already have benefits, or do not hesitate to appropriate them with the help of force and power: “many unjust people enjoy happiness” [7 (Gorgias, or on Rhetoric), p. 629]. On the other hand, he sets himself the difficult task of moral purification of society, and links together the concepts of ‘happiness’ and ‘justice’: “the most just life is the happiest” [7 (Laws, or Legislation), p. 1061]. He naively believes that his words will be able to convince people to be fair and therefore happy: “I think anyone who listens to ... words would investigate what is beautiful and good in a person is stronger than pleasure and is approved as such by the law” [7 (Laws, or Legislation), p. 1061], “Who wants to be happy, should keep this law and follow it humbly and in strict order” [7 (Laws, or Legislation), p. 1061]. Plato persistently develops the thesis that a person who is unjust will never be truly happy: “... that a person is beautiful and kind (the same about a woman) is happy, and unfair and evil is unhappy” [7 (Gorgias, or on Rhetoric), p. 629]. In addition, according to Plato: “... a person is unfair and causing resentment though, of course, in any case unhappy, but he’s much more miserable if dealing grievances that are not subject to court and receives no punishment, less unhappy if it falls under the court and suffer punishment from the gods and people” [7 (Gorgias, or on Rhetoric), p. 630].

Unfortunately, the limited scope of the article does not give us the opportunity to show all the features of the concept of happiness, identified by the authors in the study of the philosophical heritage of Plato. But these examples are enough to understand how great the contribution of this outstanding thinker in the formation of ethical standards of mankind and such an important value of human existence as happiness.

Turning to the conclusions, we note the following:

1. The quantitative analysis based on the historical periodization of Plato's works allowed to obtaining not only the absolute values of the occurrence in the texts of the category 'happiness' (which in itself is not informative), but also to calculate the prevalence rates of this category. Obtaining such coefficients allowed to visually characterize and compare with each other both individual works and their totals included in a certain period of creativity. In addition, they allowed us to see the dynamics of the Plato's concept of human happiness. Although this problem Plato addressed throughout his work, but more attention to the happiness as a category of morality and ethical value, was awarded to them when in the period of his maturity the philosopher came close to understanding the social and not personal life.

2. Qualitative analysis of the texts revealed the distinctive features of Plato's concept of happiness at every stage of his creative activity:

a) In the Socratic period, for the most part, Plato translates the thoughts of Socrates, but not his own ideas, so the reasoning about happiness and everything connected with it, written by him in this period, was taken over likely from his teacher. This includes the opposition of imaginary happiness, generated by some personal achievements or material goods, true happiness, acquired through the occupation of philosophy; and the characteristic of a happy person, as an example of decent behavior and compliance with moral norms, as the personification of inner peace of mind and sanity, as a source and object of friendly relations; and, finally, the designation of the problem of the uniqueness of the definition of one's happiness (everyone understands it in his own way).

b) During the transitional period of Plato's work, he does not only continue developing and thoroughly complementing the theses about happiness that he formulated in the Socratic period, but also formulates new ones. He, for example, comes to the conclusion that the desire for happiness is inherent in every person and it can be achieved only by their own efforts (it is impossible to find happiness with the help of others); in parallel with the concept of 'happiness' Plato begins to use the concept of 'good', and explains that it is not enough just to have 'useful' good to be happy, it is necessary to implement them in life. He equates the concepts of 'wisdom' and 'good', leading to the fact that the possession of wisdom is the way to a happy life;

c) the Period of maturity brings the divine principle to Plato's conception of happiness: the philosopher substantiates the thesis that happiness is a gift sent down by the Gods. But the most important achievement of this period in the formation of the concept of happiness is the idea of the common good and happiness at the level of the whole state. And although a happy state, according to Plato, should not and cannot guarantee happiness to all its citizens, but citizens are obliged to voluntarily strive to make the state happy. This should be everyone's personal interest. An important way to create a happy state Plato considers the granting of power to philosophers.

d) the Late period of Plato's work is colored by his personal life disappointments; this affects the concept of happiness. The original ideas of human happiness are reviewed by him, and he comes to the disappointing conclusion that only a few, almost a few, can find happiness, therefore, this topic becomes uninteresting to him.

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