HUMAN SELF-APPROVAL: STATEMENT OF SELF VERSUS APPROVAL OF BEING

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Abstract: The article analyzes a person's self-esteem from the standpoint of critical philosophical reflection. This is due to the need to overcome the reduction of the phenomenon to the level of natural need, which was originally the driving force of behavior, and which prevails in scientific discourse and in natural attitudes of everyday consciousness. In contrast to this, they state the heuristic significance of the ontological understanding of human self-assertion as the process of acquiring the metaphysical human essence (never given by anyone or anything, but only freely constituted). The authors substantiated the procedural nature of human self-assertion, in which self-identity is not so much its prerequisite but the goal and the end result.

Keywords: self-affirmation of a man, selfhood, being, self-denial, empiricism, metaphysics of a man.

1 Introduction

F. Nietzsche (Nietzsche, 1996) expressed an interesting idea that we are tired of a person. These words can be interpreted as a sign of immeasurable self-assertion and self-growth of a person in the world, the transformation of the world into a total anthroposphere: as if we are doomed to unrestrained self-assertion. Let's note that by definition self-affirmation presupposes the presence of a personal core, "I". But a modern man, as N.A. Berdyaev noted in the last century (Berdyaev, 1998), does not have the opportunity to immerse into himself, to contemplate himself. Thus, a person is exhausted by his own activity. According to Berdyaev, it is the unity of action and self-contemplation that affirms personality.

Self-affirmation is impossible without the tension of spiritual forces, and deep self-centering. But it is precisely the center that modern man lacks: a man lives in a "divided", split form. The syndrome of "lost self", human "homelessness" is observed by all healers of modern society. Does a "divided person" still have a striving for self-assertion if there is no self as such? At the same time, there seems to be no demand for personality, centralization, they are not in demand by society.

In a society of "fluid modernity", the way of identification is changing radically: a stable identity becomes a hindrance to a person's successful life (Bauman, 2006; Bauman, 2001). The so-called "short-term mentality" is being asserted. A person's "tomorrow" disappears. Although, this does not mean that a person lives in a "here-and-now" situation and is immersed in existence. On the contrary, a person chronically does not have time for something, he cannot stop and collect himself.

The life orientations of a person have also changed: "hankering for infinite autonomy is inherent in the person who has come off the transcendent, saint and timeless, and meanings and values" (Saykina & Kondratiev, 2019). Self-assertion turns into a goal in itself: life turns out to be wrapped up exclusively on oneself, on its narrow, private interests. The principle of "permissiveness" gives rise to moral relativism. There is a loss of universality, a generic dimension in the existence of a man and society.

Pluralistic lifestyles, high social mobility contribute to the expansion of human capabilities in terms of self-affirmation, however, on the other hand, divisibility, human decentering distort the meaning of self-affirmation (as a kind of self-attitude). This contradiction became the starting point of the study. It determines the theoretical and existential relevance of the research topic. The question of a man's true essence is at the center of a person's self-assertion problem: can it be closed only on the struggle for his own ego?

There is one more important point that requires analysis. The statement of human self-affirmation problem in scientific discourse was carried out, as is known, within the framework of psychology. The following question arises: is it really necessary to consider self-assertion only in the plane of natural striving, as it is done in psychology in the most general form? We believe that the answer to this question requires a philosophical analysis of the problem, which became the purpose of our research. However, this does not mean that the research results will be in demand only by the philosophical mind. The fact is that, as we wrote in one of our work, an "anthropological turn" is taking place in the modern corpus of social sciences and humanities, and as the continuation of the philosophical turn of the same name - in the form of anthropologism principle implementation. "Anthropologism is an important principle in view of the fact that modern social nature reveals its anthropic character" (Saykina & Krasnov, 2015). Self-affirmation of a person is implemented in social space, and its quality and methods ultimately affect all of us. The study of self-affirmation fits into the logic of the "anthropological turn".

2 Methods

The authors proceeded from the establishment of a philosophical approach priority to the analysis of a person's self-assertion phenomenon, which allows him to avoid naturalization. The study was based on the ontological approach. In order to identify certain trends in the study of self-assertion phenomenon by a man, we relied on the historical-philosophical approach, the method of the logical and the historical aspect unity. The antinomic character of human self-affirmation is revealed and substantiated by the means of the dialectical method. Two identified types of self-affirmation were analyzed through comparative analysis. The analogy method made it possible to develop the self-affirmation model.

3 Results and Discussion

The introduction of the concept "self-affirmation of a person" into scientific circulation was carried out by an Austrian doctor, a Freudian psychologist - Alfred Adler (Adler, 1964; Adler, 1979; Hoffman, 1994). The problem arose in the framework of medical therapy for neuroses: self-affirmation was endowed with the meaning of an instrument for compensation and weakening of the neurotic's feelings of inferiority. Subsequently, Adler concluded that the need for self-affirmation is also inherent in quite healthy people and acts as a desire to overcome helplessness, insecurity, leading to self-deprecation. Adler's merit lies in the fact that he estimated correctly the strength of the desire for self-affirmation in a number of driving forces of behavior, but in fact he limited himself to this; the analysis of the aspiration implementation, the transfer to the act was left "overboard". On the whole, the development of the problem within the framework of psychological discourse suffered from a biologic approach and naturalized this aspiration.

It was found that the "natural attitude" of everyday consciousness suffers from the same deficiency. The original meaning contained in the layer of "foreknowledge" is reduced to understanding the phenomenon as the process aimed at establishing one's own self, that is, at proving the legitimacy of own opinion, own deed, and own way of life. It is aimed at its own recognition and longs for self-satisfaction. We found that the everyday consciousness absolutizes the power bases of the phenomenon: self-superiority and "asserting oneself at the expense of others". We believe that such a truncated understanding is generated by an "empirical person" (from the "das Man" area) who lives according to the principles of "physis", which means that he is not familiar with the metaphysical dimension of life, and with transcendence. Self-assertion appears as a spontaneous process of realizing the natural self, moreover, in the logic of closure on narrow proprietary interests.

We believe that the ontological approach and the socio-philosophical dialectic of the personal and the generic "expose" the narrowness of the natural attitudes of an ordinary person and "remove" the negative connotation in this phenomenon understanding.

It must be said that the classical philosophical tradition has always opposed the poor, truncated mode of "being in itself". Thus, according to M. Heidegger, a person's self-identity should not be "the satisfaction in oneself" existing in the sphere of "das Man". Karl Marx considered "coming out of oneself" as a universal characteristic of human life activity.

The Hegelian approach was also methodologically important for us. So, in his philosophy, being at the first stage of self-development of the Absolute Spirit is poor in terms of definition, indistinguishable within itself - up to the point that it merges with pure Nothing. And for self-expansion the Absolute Spirit needs the Other; revealing oneself through otherness is necessary in order to return to oneself. We have found that this scheme may well be considered the model of human self-assertion process. We believe that self-assertion must be viewed in the logic of overcoming the narrow way of "being in oneself," and self-satisfaction.

Indeed, a person acquires his own self-feeling (and therefore begins a series of self-attitude acts) only through a collision with other being. The other is both a threat factor and a trigger for self-identity and self-affirmation achievement. Painful parting with oneself is a form of self-identity existence. The distinguishability of oneself as oneself is given only in a collision with another: in oneself and in others. It is important that a person, as was noted by I. Kant, can be aware of the changes in his soul only "due to the unity of consciousness" (Kant, 2006), that is, if he presents himself as one and the same subject in all the changes.

Self-identity should not be defined as a prerequisite and basis for self-assertion, since the process is essentially launched as the result of self-identity, and disidentification crisis. This approach also leaves an imprint on self-assertion understanding: it presupposes not only proof of the right to one's self, but also to self-denial, and self-alienation.

The concept by P. Tillich helped us develop the ontological concept of self-affirmation. He considers the concept of self-assertion through the concept of "courage" that is ontological for him: courage is "a universal and essential self-assertion of any being", and courage to be is "an ethical act in which a person asserts his own being in spite of those elements that hinder his essential self-assertion" (Tillich, 1992). Let's note that the meaning "in spite of" and overcoming is latently present in psychological concepts and in the layer of pre-knowledge.

Despite the fact that self-affirmation always acts as self-affirmation "in spite of" (that is, it involves courage, risk, and sacrifice), it gives rise to joy as an expression of "yes" to one's own true being according to Tillich. In his concept, self-assertion is the ontological act of a person asserting himself in his own essence, participation in a universal or a divine act of self-assertion.

Why is self-affirmation courage, according to Tillich? The fact is that it is carried out during anxiety (as a person's existential awareness of non-being, of his own finitude). He identifies three forms of self-assertion in accordance with three trends in which non-being threatens being: ontological, essential, during the anxiety of fate and death, the spiritual - during the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, moral — during the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. Why do you need to know all these worries? To live according to the laws of being (with the awareness of one's finitude, with meaning, and with goodness).

According to Tillich, "the courage to be" is the mutual dependence of "the courage to be a part" and "the courage to be oneself". "The courage to be a part" dominates in a society with mutual substitution of people and leads to personality loss; "The courage to be yourself" dominates in the society of individualism and leads to the loss of the world. Therefore, balance is important.

We believe that the form of spontaneous self-assertion of an empirical person can be opposed by the self-assertion of a person who has a metaphysical attitude, "the courage to be". The self-assertion of an ontological person is implemented at the level of the metaphysical essence of a person, it presupposes awareness, overcoming one's factuality and entering the sphere of universality, and compatibility. We have established that the content of true self-assertion becomes the task of being, of being fulfilled. The stress is transferred from the self to being - so that it is equated with the affirmation of being as such. Understanding of being as unity, consistency, generic universality does not allow a miserable feeling of superiority over others. In the ontological key, a person's self-assertion is life in the mode of the fullness of being, in the development of space for his own choice, independent decisions, the manifestation of his will, mind, and character ...

Usually, those who do not know how to choose themselves independently, assert themselves according to given, impersonal forms, often illusory ones. A strange form: to stand out in the mass, in the impersonal sphere of das Man. An empirical person (of das Man sphere) is immersed in the smooth course of the daily life (empiricism), subordinate to its logic and the power of natural drives and cannot part with his own present state. He is characterized by an absurd form of asserting oneself without volition (without starting the process of his own) and intense metaphysical work. From the point of view of human metaphysics, this is a "passive" self-affirmation. True, taking into account the fact that it is carried out in the logic of narcissism (Lasch, 1991; Charles & Lipovetsky, 2006), self-belief, self-interest, it has grave consequences: it is an imperious, repressive form of asserting selfhood at the expense of denying others, world denial per se, that is, the denial of social community foundations and the laws of being.

4 Summary

1. From an ontological perspective, a person's self-assertion is not one-time, but a procedural, and is the way of self-assembly and organization of life.
2. Self-affirmation has a dramatic character "in spite of". They revealed the antinomic character of self-affirmation in the dialectically intense unity of affirmation and self-denial, self-alienation. Self-denial is understood primarily in the form of a person's metaphorical "dying" in every metaphysical act of activity, in which a person comes to himself new. In other words, there is always a moment of self-transcendence in self-assertion - going beyond the limits of one's present state.
3. The true way of self-affirmation expresses an active attitude of a person to himself and participation in being. A person living in a metaphysical regime has a universal point of view and a plan of perspective, future. Self-affirmation is assessed from the point of view of its significance for the development of a person's generic body, culture, and for continuity.
4. There are two types of self-affirmation. Empirical self-affirmation is implemented in opposition to the world, in its rejection (the imperious nature of such self-affirmation determines the perception of the world as hostile). However, according to ontological standards, a person should not be confined to the process of his own approval. The ontological self-assertion of a man is the assertion of the world, the disclosure of his diversity, the assertion of the principles of being, the multiplication of being. Through self-affirmation, a person does not deny, but, on the contrary, proves his involvement in the world. In this case, the expression "the courage to be a part" takes on a different connotation than that of Tillich.

5 Conclusions

There is the crisis of humanistic values in modern "individualized society", and the domination of individualistic aspirations. Thus, a negative connotation prevails in a person's understanding of the essence and the meaning of self-assertion: reducing it to the implementation of individualistic, narrow-minded attitudes. The philosophical approach allows to rise it from a private phenomenon to the level of a man's ontological destiny. As was noted by M.M. Bakhtin, "one must remember that living from oneself, from one's own place, does not mean living only by oneself, it is possible to sacrifice only from one's own place - my responsible centrality can be sacrificial centrality ..." (Bakhtin, 1986). Only involvement in being, involvement in the fate of one's neighbor, in the social tasks is capable of filling a person, enriching him with universal content.

Ontological understanding of self-affirmation can become a "medicine" for a modern person, narcissistic in nature. But it also has a deep heuristic potential and can be used as the basis for private scientific and medical practices, as the methodology for conducting humanitarian and ethical examinations.

Acknowledgements

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