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HUMANISTIC DIMENSION OF THE PROBLEM OF CHOICE

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The article is devoted to the problem of choice that man has to make to adjust and harmonize his ambitions and expectations to and with the changing circumstances of his reality.

Key words: *humanistic choice, autonomy of personal interest, individual decision, personality, social responsibility, ethic and moral principles, synergetics of a wide human interaction.*

The reality of the human world is created and changed by the agency of man. This well-known statement goes back to Protagoras - man is the measure of all things, both those that he has discovered and studied and those that he does not yet know, because he did not have time or did not care or did not think necessary to know. Modern interpretations of this statement are presented in many winged phrases. A similar sense is contained in the metaphor «man is the master of his destiny» and in the philosophical postulate - man makes his reality.

In the context of this ancient assertion it is possible to conclude, that creation of a humanistic culture of constructive co-operation in society lies within the sphere of responsibility and is a prerogative of its subjects. Productive organization of a harmonious social space is possible only on the basis and in conditions of a conscious personal and group choice.

The deep structure content of such a choice is based on the acknowledgement of changeability and variety of the surrounding natural and social world. The world exists in a chaos of contradictory phenomena and various relations. Man is one of the elements in it. He experiences their influence and within his abilities tries to cooperate with or resist novelties of their transformation. In the course of his life he constantly finds it necessary to make a choice in favour of one or another alternative both in his personal and in the wide publicly meaningful space. Even in his everyday surroundings he is always in the state of uncertainty in which he has to determine what is right or wrong and choose what he thinks is best. Making a decision, man tries to harmonize the current situation of his life in accordance with his value principles and expectations. Though not always faultless, his choice inevitably correlates with his biological and psychological matrix and can be understood only in this context. In this process man shows his ability to define the correlation in the dichotomy of «his natural right for a free choice / his social responsibility». Philosophically the coordination of the senses in this correlation has been treated in terms of the problem whether human behavior is determined or indetermined. Philosophy of classic pragmatism suggested that it could also be examined in the light of multiplicity and diversity of human life experience. In the course of this article we will try to analyze stimuli, motivating man to make a choice and take a particular, but not any other decision.

To resolve this problem we will turn to the founders of pragmatism - to the works of W. James, J. Dewey and F.C. S. Schiller. The analysis of their postulates and arguments proves that their message is valid today. Especially important it is for understanding inner stimuli, making man direct his mental efforts in one or another direction. The general

tonality of their reasoning consists of the assumption that in the long run man's mental processes are always caused by and directed to the interests and needs that he comes across in the world of permanent becoming and development. The aim and purpose of man's efforts consist of an attempt to put in order situations in which he feels uncomfortable. In our analysis the problem of choice is presented as a contradictory process of interaction between man's personal interest/need and his personal or social responsibility.

All processes and things in the world, including man, are in the state of becoming and development. Man in such a world is always faced with sudden changes distorting his idea of the customary habitual structure of reality, verifying, refuting known or discovering new truths. Nothing and nobody can exist in the halo of hard indisputable absolute truths. The phenomena, events and facts, that break the usual flow of man's life, appear in different settings and develop in unpredictable ways, meanings and forms. They get a new and often lose the old content, so that usual stimuli, impulses and rules can no longer direct man's life and actions adequately.

In such circumstances man finds himself on a forked - road [Dewey, 1910]. He loses his orientation, not knowing or understanding what to do and what way to take. In a situation, when he is overcome by doubts, he is forced to make a choice. Plasticity of his human nature allows him to choose any sphere or way of applying his actual skills and hidden potential. Having lots of options to choose from, he can act as he thinks proper or necessary. He is free to consider and compare existing alternatives and finally decide which of them seems most attractive, promising or easiest to realize. The choice he makes and his subsequent activity are always characterized by an egocentric tendency [James, 1907] His efforts are consciously directed to himself, to his own benefit and prosperity. Living in a society, he acts, creates and forms social connections by a free choice, in accordance with his personal interests, needs and values. The unique sequence of his meaningful decisions determines his selfconsciousness. His intuition guides him in developing his actual and hidden abilities. The feeling of inner freedom carries him to achievements of the highest degree. He clearly sees his aim and does not have the least doubt as to the rightness of his choice. His activity becomes self-sufficient and there is no limit to his aspirations.

In an attempt to solve his problems he begins to think, playing with different alternatives of a possible decision in his mind. He does not only study and systematize changes that are happening in his actual life. Trying to put in order the chaos of his existence, he purposefully looks for answers to hard questions. Actively and constructively applying his knowledge he critically reconsiders the course of his life experience to understand the relevance of his past victories and failures for the problem at hand. He immediately interferes in events, phenomena and circumstances, if they for some reason fall short of his ideas about life perspectives, correct and valid, from his point of view. By virtue of his abilities, possibilities and aims he tries to influence the way his problems can be resolved. Thinking of how to act, he selects a way among the present alternatives. He chooses the method that, if used, will lead to a result closely correlating with his inner moral and value attitude to himself and to the problem he deals with.

His choice is founded on and induced by different factors. It can be oriented to his former experience, prompted by advice of other people or made spontaneously, at random,

on the spur of the moment. Mobilizing his own resources, physical and intellectual, man breaks his road in life and depends only upon himself not afraid and in spite of possible crises and losses.

However there is another possibility, in the context of which all concrete unicity of man's existence passes in strictly regulated borders above which he has no control. By virtue of innate mechanisms and under the influence of social conditions man is forced to repress instinctive attempts of free and active self-expression. In a weak-willed way he submits to the natural flow of the environment, trying to find methods of self-preservation. In the structure of his consciousness there is a concept of his human rights and claim on acknowledgement by other people, meaningful for him. But because of different reasons he is not ready to control his life, to predict and overcome its disappointments. In any life situation he realizes that the need to make an independent choice and take a decision nonpluses him. He is forced to seek help in the outer world and rely on it. Being strongly dependent on the opinion and support of other people, man is a passive creature who dares not go outside his narrow cultural community. Trying to understand what and who he is, he feels it necessary to self-identify himself [Schiller, 1939]. In such conditions this necessity is expressed in assimilation, i.e. a desire not to be different and not stand out from a general stereotype. It results in typification of personality, standardization of behavior, unification of world perception and passivity in making decisions. Without having any clear motivation, man cannot make a choice and agrees to any variant, thinking that he does not have any other alternative. Or he takes no decision and that, in itself, is also a life choice.

Undoubtedly, there can be a combination, a correlation of different approaches. In this case there are a great number of methods and ways of behavior that vary depending on and in accordance with changes in man's psychology, ambitions, intentions and life circumstances. Regardless of what approach he gives preference to, he will continue to look for the best choice, relying on ideas, attitudes and values that he mastered and accepted, as a member of his society, and defined as the sense value of his own life..

Thinking of how man feels in the surrounding world, it is possible to discover in his behavior certain norms, the important features of which are determined by the degree of activity and self-sufficiency in the dynamics of his life. Being a product of historical evolution, the nature of man is not only a sum of innate, biologically envisaged motives. Neither is it a lifeless mold from the matrix of social conditions. Human nature is plastic, flexible and changeable. Man is capable to adapt in different natural and social environments. In the process of dynamic adaptation to the new realities of life man realizes that there appear certain new aspects in his perception of his own subjectivity. In the changing environment he notices the appearance of some powerful stimuli motivating his feelings and actions. Adapting to the impact of social conditions and requirements, man develops in himself such character traits that induce him to want to operate just like he has to operate in the new reality. This process can take place consciously and intentionally or spontaneously, but in both cases these stimuli are a strong psychological factor. Once arising, they require satisfaction [James, 1907]. Aspiration to satisfy these new necessities induces man to perform certain acts and to take certain decisions. It becomes an active force that influences the process of his personal and social development. It is also expressed in the change/ loss of his former and the appearance of

new models of behavior, ways of thinking and world perception. These changes are observed both at the level of an individual man and in the features of behavioral codes, communication practices and attitudes characteristic for separate groups and society on the whole.

Modifications and changes also happen in the structure of man's personality [Schiller, 1939]. His self-perception acquires new features because of the influence of new stimuli and unfamiliar conditions. There appear glimpses of new priorities and doubts in his idea of his own identity. All these changes diversify his life and extend his range of interests. They allow him to adapt both his inherited character features and learned skills to the changing circumstances. As a result, man develops and creates new forms and motivations in his relation with reality.

This process of adaptation is long and difficult. It has not always been successful. But on the whole, man was able to find ways to settle his practical questions constructively enough. To reach harmony in the reality of his existence he learned to adequately meet challenges and stimuli of his immediate and outer surroundings. Reaching aims and getting results became the more real, the more force and energy, spiritual, intellectual, moral or physical, he put into the choice of his actions and decisions. All along known history man has made a lot of unsuccessful attempts and errors. But his decisions allowed him to find a way out of difficult situations and raise high above the level of natural existence [Schiller, 1939]. He has not only adapted himself to the uncertainty of changeable environment and requirements of the surrounding world. He managed to create various ethic, moral and spiritual social cultures, not to mention other great achievements. In spite of that, he still has to organize his behavior and activity so that not to be exposed to life-threatening danger. This biological fact is the basis of human society and its moral values [Schiller, 1939]. It stipulates man's life and psychology, inducing him to look for wise decisions and a most promising choice among existing probabilities and possibilities. Man's choice has never guaranteed successful resolution of his problems. In the changing world any decision is risky as the value of its consequences depends on a great number of facts and events, great, unnoticeable and insignificant. The deep structure sense of his choice consists of organizing the process of relations so that it should stimulate positive growth and development, i.e. be constructive and productive in resolving unacceptable life situations. As a rule, however, in the orderly natural chaos [James, 1907] of the changeable reality hopes of pre-arranged result do not always fully correspond to expectations.

Naturally there arises the question - how can man find grounds for making the choice that would prove correct and true, i.e. how to distinguish the right from the wrong. The answer to it has been sought for during all human history. Both philosophers and people, far from philosophical reflection, tried to find it within two planes - in life experience and in philosophy. It must be admitted that neither human practice nor achievements of philosophical thought can give an exhaustive answer to the question - how to find the right decision and balance the contradiction in the opposition «good/evil» «correct/false». Socrates suggested looking for it in the area of ethics. After him Aristotle agreed with his thesis but also stated that virtue, personal and social harmony is an art hidden in knowledge. The wrong and the evil originate from ignorance and poor intellectual development.

It is true that man's behavior, his reactions and attitude toward life, as well as the choices he makes are greatly a result of what he has learned. Basic qualities and features of man's personality are formed by and correlate with the mentality and culture of the environment of his habitation. In it and under its influence he acquires his ideas of the right and the wrong. He imitates models of behavior, creates his set of priorities and value preferences in his environment. People surrounding him, both families, teachers, enemies and friends, help him not only understand and perceive the psychology and philosophy of his attitude to himself and to his place in the social environment. They also motivate his curiosity to learn more about the world outside his immediate surrounding, thus enriching and widening his mental horizons and erudition.

It is difficult not to agree with the idea that erudition and education, depth and breadth of knowledge are a meaningful factor helping man make an optimal choice in a critical life situation. However the sense and value of choice is determined not so much by the volume of subjects and facts that man has studied. His knowledge, no matter how rich, will not help him make the right choice unless he understands its ethic content. It is the ethic aspect of knowledge in its holistic dimension that will turn man from a selfish individual into a thinking intellectual, for whom humanistic moral and ethic attitudes have a priority value.

The humanistic dimension of choice is determined by the correlation of many factors among which ability to think ethically is of primary importance. It is motivated by the aspiration to co-ordinate contradictions between universal antichaos flow of life and the natural state of man's free activity in his individual system of life experience. [Dewey, 1910]. In conditions of competitive social interaction the feeling of absolute freedom, i.e. actualization of the natural personal, inner psychological sensation of freedom, man's choice can be either antihuman, according to the metaphor «man to man is wolf», or responsible and socially aware. Depending on the vector of its development and realization it may both unite and disunite the world in which man makes his choice.

Man's ethic choice should be a humanistic choice. It should proceed from humanistic moral principles, which take into account, on the one hand, the autonomy of his personal interests and needs, and on the other, include the concept of synergetics in a wide and diverse human interaction. As a result their joint influence will generate energy constructive for harmonizing the life of both the man, who has made the choice, and that of people surrounding him.

In the ontological sense man is free to make any choice he thinks is proper in given circumstances. Making his choice he proceeds from his present practical need, looking back at his life experience of the past. Taking a decision, he maps it for the future, as it always fulfils a prognostic function. While estimating and predicting its possible consequences, he must clearly realize the value of their humanistic dimension, i.e. their ethic and moral value. Whatever choice he makes, it is completely within his personal responsibility. The final decision on vitally important or banal questions is a decision that man takes independently, coming from his own individual intentions, interests, and knowledge and value principles. His is the final 'yes or no'. Responsibility for it, therefore, lies on him and, as Plato once stated, nobody, even Lord Almighty, will ever release him of it.

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ГУМАНІСТИЧНИЙ ВИМІР ПРОБЛЕМИ ВИБОРУ

Стаття присвячена проблемі вибору який людина має зробити щоб гармонізувати свої амбіції та очікування із змінними умовами свого життя. Вона засновує свій вільний вибір на гуманістичних етичних і моральних принципах, які об'єднують її особисті інтереси і потреби із синергетикою широкої людської взаємодії, і несе відповідальність за наслідки свого рішення.

Ключові слова: *гуманістичний вибір, автономія інтересів, індивідуальне рішення, особистість, соціальна відповідальність, етичні та моральні принципи, синергетика широкої людської взаємодії.*

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