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**THEORY OF LIFE WITHIN F.C. S. SCHILLER'S
HUMANISTIC PRAGMATISM**

Стаття, заснована на концепціях гуманістичного прагматизму, підкреслює необхідність пошуку взаєморозуміння і злагоди людських істин в суперечках сучасного світу.

Ключові слова: *гуманістичний прагматизм, взаєморозуміння, гармонія наших людських істин.*

В статье, основанной на концепциях гуманистического прагматизма, подчеркивается необходимость поиска взаимопонимания и согласия человеческих истин в противоречиях современного мира.

Ключевые слова: *гуманистический прагматизм, взаимопонимание, гармония наших человеческих истин.*

The article, based on concepts of humanistic pragmatism, stresses the importance and necessity of looking for mutual understanding and harmony of our human truths in the complexity of the present world.

Keywords: *humanistic pragmatism, mutual understanding, harmony of our human truths.*

Granting that various peoples, opinions and attitudes do and must disagree it is important to understand how far such disagreements can go. It is also vital to try and find ways able to appease any differences that hinder or threaten progress and well-being causing disquiet and suffering in the world. At the end of the nineteenth century the way of tackling this problem was sought in the philosophical teaching of pragmatism. Pragmatic approach was suggested as a method of settling differences. With time pragmatism became nearly forgotten but at present there is a growing interest in this philosophy all over the world. In this context it seems worthwhile to look deeper into the pragmatic theory of life.

Among the founders of the pragmatic way of thinking along with C. Pierce, W. James and J. Dewey a very important place is to be assigned to F.C.S. Schiller. Schiller's scientific interests covered a wide range of problems. Theory of life was one of the main philosophical issues for him and he treated it in the light of humanistic pragmatism.

As the main principle of his theory of humanistic pragmatism Schiller chose the assumption that in the reality of his surrounding man defines the truth of an idea, an act or a relation by its practical effectiveness. According to his approach all human aspirations, intellectual, spiritual or any other kind of achievement, same as moral and ethical values known to man, are deeply practical, both as to their origin and their essence. All of them appeared from practical necessity. They are still tied to it and have their roots in

bewilderment, obstacles, curiosity, danger or some other difficulty in the life of ancient, and also modern man [2, p.19]. In all his papers Schiller stressed that mankind must be forever thankful to Protagoras for his assumption that man is the measure of all things, those that are, because they are, and those that aren't, because they aren't [1, p.34]. This assumption of Protagoras made Schiller state that the meaning of truth, which revealed itself to one man, is revealed to others simply because it became available, it was discovered and presented in the adequate correlation with the level of human problems and knowledge [1, p.33]. He believed that the infinite creativity of man is stimulated by his personal individual intentions and ambitions. He wrote that every man on his own microscopic level, but very really, makes reality, for himself and for the whole humanity. Through his inquisitiveness and curiosity he will find the truth that is able to meet his immediate and urgent practical needs. These ideas constitute the «be-all» and the «end-all» [1, p.64] of Schiller's philosophy of humanistic pragmatism.

Every truth has its own calendar and its special space. Each has its own destiny. Suppositions, assumptions, truth-claims can be true but they also may turn out wrong. The decision in defining the quality of an assumption in full measure depends on its expediency. It is proved or discarded on the grounds of the consequences that are connected with it. In accord with the valuation of its influence it is either taken as an objectively acknowledged and useful idea "working" for the positive change in the position of an individual/society or refuted as not satisfying to requirements, expectations or criteria of usefulness. Responsibility for the choice lies on him or them who make the decision. Common sense always guided man and led him to understand that his mission in life was to make the best choice so that he protect himself from every and any menace threatening his freedom, well-being or life. As in the past, so at the present time he bases his judgment of the quality and content of the alternatives, facing him. Practical considerations will make him look for a means of getting concrete results out of any refractory material [1, p.17]. Historically long experience and numerous previous mistakes have taught man that the ultimate principle directing him in determining the way of his life is the humanistic pragmatic principle [2, p.20]. According to the fundamental principle of Schiller's humanistic pragmatism what is true must be useful in the context of «our human truths». In his terms it must "work". In other words it must result in effects positive for human practical needs.

But people perceive reality differently, they have different ideas about values, they do not share identical views about what is or is not true. Some people have a better insight and can judge reality more adequately than others. They are more inclined to alterations and modifications in their life or positions

and grasp the advantages or failures of the suggested alternative at first glance. Others reject it on the grounds of a firm belief in the unshakable rules of the existing establishment. Individual choice may be differently received, valued and understood. It is impossible to achieve an ideal harmony in opinions and judgments, which are always personified. This obvious fact does not lead to skepticism, it rather points at pluralism and tolerance than at nihilism or absolutism. Plurality of ideas and meanings of the same things can and does co-exist in different minds. Difference of judgement is found in all civilized human societies and in human behavior because diversity is the natural form of man's existence.

The history of mankind shows that on the whole man was rather successful in coping with his practical problems. His decisions made it possible for him to get out of difficulties and rise high over the level of natural existence. He has not only adapted himself to the conditions and requirements of the environment, often hostile, dangerous and unfriendly. He has created various ethical and spiritual social cultures, let alone other great achievements. But in spite of all his spectacular breakthroughs man still has to construct his behavior and activity in such a way as not to threaten his life or life in general. This biological fact conditions all his life and motivates all his actions [1, p.189]. It lies at the foundation of the structure of human society and its moral principles. It is also the basic principle of human psychology. Whatever happens through and thanks to human activity is judged and understood in reference to human existence and values. To be able to harmonize the realities of his life and adapt to them man had to learn adequate ways of reaction to the stimuli and challenges of his immediate surrounding. Reaching the aim became the more accessible, the more strength, moral, spiritual or physical he put into his effort.

A little reflection about the way man feels in the surrounding environment will show that there are two diametrically opposing models of adaptive behavior. Man can passively submit to the habitual flow and influence of the environment, natural or social. On the other hand, he can show his spirit and fight, resist and choose in his attempt to control and modify the conditions of his life. The choice of attitude and responsibility for it are exclusively his. If he does not have the will and energy to control his life and persevere in pursuit of happiness and success he will have to seek for help in the outer world and depend on it. If, on the contrary, he mobilizes his own resources, physical and intellectual, and starts breaking his trail in life he will have to rely on himself and be prepared for possible crises and failures. Naturally he can combine his approaches. He has a wide choice of the ways of behavior, which vary in accordance with the changes in the circumstances of his life [2, p.18]. No matter what approach he prefers he will go on looking for the best decision on the basis of the practical

experience of ideas, judgments and values he acquired as a member of his society.

Man is a product of the system of education and upbringing that prevails in his society. The content of man's conceptual system is formed by his environment. His mind, his impulses and desires correspond to the mass consciousness that is characteristic of his environment. He develops in the culture of his society and is determined by its imperatives. It shapes and molds him as a personality [2, p.226]. Taking part in various forms of community life makes him believe that he may influence changes in the surrounding world in accordance with his own individual perceptions and values. His awareness of the eternal values of his present determines his vital need of continuance, of a stable and unbroken contact with the main traditions of his culture. His subtlety of perception, knowledge and appreciation of the real and possible events is conditioned by its prevailing tendencies. He is unbreakably bound to his cultural background, which simultaneously supports and suppresses his individuality. At the same time his life orientation and its priorities are deeply personal and are greatly affected by the ways of communication he chooses. His identity, his personal perception of the uniqueness of his personality greatly depends on the balance he can achieve between society as a whole and himself as a separate individuality.

Plasticity of human nature permits man to choose any way in life. As a rule man seeks for the «right ways». In the long history of human evolution he has formed a firm inclination to act according to the rules, established and preserved in the culture of his social environment. He follows these rules, finds them useful and consequently true [2, p.206]. As different cultural groups think, feel, act and do differently, more often than not, the «right way» is «our way» in contrast to any other way. For the most part «our way» in one society never coincides with «our way» in another. Unfortunately there is no standard or criteria in science to distinguish the «more correct» from the «less correct» way of one culture compared to any other. Culture is a historic and social reality with changeable parameters. Its moral laws, religious doctrines and ethic norms are regulations tested by time and men's practice. They undergo alterations or cardinal changes in the face of new challenges. Evolution of manners, customs and behavioral ways, progress in science and technology contribute a lot to the modification in the social structure. No society is free from inner differences and distinctions, which prevent it from being identified with similar cultures. But on the other hand neither man, nor his culture exists in a vacuum. Every culture has suffered an influence of other cultures, and there is no culture that is not a synthesis of individual thinking and collectively established regulations.

All through the history different cultural identities and attitudes made people compete and engage in conflicts. In different cultures and societies the notion of the physical and psychological make-up and inter-personal relations are based on the double idea of the «other» as a personality and a socio-ethnic being. «The other» meaning «stranger, foreigner» is not only a person of another nationality or another culture. It is an image that everybody creates for himself about those whose identity and originality of perceiving relations, be they personal, social, connected with age or family, are seen as incomparable with, unequal to or altogether not the same as his own reality. For these reasons they may harbor some indefinite threat. Practically always the situation of stress and conflict, especially when it tended to turn into war, resulted in the appearance of the «image of enemy». This image was formed in people's subconscious, it fed the peculiar psychological enmity and hatred to other groups, peoples and countries. The «strangeness of the other» is at once attractive and even worth imitating but difficult to understand. Those «others» have different ideas of values, of violence, of love, their way of thinking is unlike the one that is one's own, habitual and understandable. Escalation of hostile psychology has its special logic. It makes man see it his sacred duty to intentionally look for distinctions, differing him from those «others», and doggedly continue the «bloody feud» [1, p.246] instead of realizing that there is much in common. Thinking subjected to the psychology of enmity is deaf to moral criteria. It is the outcome and at the same time corroboration and support of ignorance. As a result of such a way of social thinking there appears a generalized image of «enemy», devoid of any human features, having no human face. According to Schiller's humanistic pragmatism there is only one way of escaping from this harmful and destructive attitude. Information concerning the character of cultural differences between peoples and societies, including the reasons of their appearance, meaning and possible consequences, should precede judgment and action. Shaking off tension and suspicion presupposes a new level of thinking. This may become feasible on condition of reciprocal efforts undertaken by both parties in looking for a compromise, for co-operation and shared judgments. In other words there is a need for a revision of former stereotypes of thinking in favour of overcoming enmity and national/cultural hatred. Positive attitudes and mutual understanding of the causes of diversity or distinctions will smooth reciprocal relations. The desired positive outcome of this process is bound to be achieved through constructive interaction directed towards priorities of interests common to all human race. To overcome prejudice, bias and destructive antagonisms communication must be based on tolerance and goodwill.

It has now become clear that the essence of present-day culture consists in looking for understanding. Through better knowledge of the «others' difference»

it will be possible to come to a communicative, commonly acceptable interpretation of the contradictory and various reality of today. Complexity of contemporary global problems and the intellectual level of thinking and judgment reached by man require a new adequate unbiased notion of oneself, of the «other» and of the world as a unique commonly inhabited «house». This change requires a strong mutual effort motivated by goodwill. Real differences and contradictions are too great to be overlooked easily. Inherited superstitions, suspicion and distrust die hard. It would be naive to suppose and reckon that the substitution of the «hostile and menacing image of the other» for a «friendly, smiley buddy» could be quick and painless. It presupposes each man's responsibility for his intended or realised suggestions and decisions. Schiller's theory of life in terms of his humanistic pragmatism implies that it is a feasible perspective. Its concepts are open to all ideas and arguments. Their main message, aimed at conciliation, compromise and practically useful decisions, fully corresponds to the humanistic aspirations of present-day world.

1. Schiller F.C.S. *Our Human Truths*. N-Y., 1939.
2. Schiller F.C.S. *Studies in Humanism*. N-Y., 1907.