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PROFESSIONAL MORALITY
AS A PROJECT CULTURE PHENOMENON

In loving memory of Fyodor A. Selivanov

SUMMARY. The thesis of professional morality's origin and development is established and presented in the framework of the project culture type. The Hippocratic Oath is analyzed in its subject matter and project influence on making professional ethics.

KEY WORDS. Profession, professional and labour morality (ethics), professional group, Hippocratic Oath, projection, project and canon cultures, Prometheus culture.

In last two decades the question of professional morality in our country has not lost its significance, on the contrary it has increased in scope with respect to the subject matter. To some extent this happened due to the introduction into academia and then into scientific practice of relatively new "ethics", namely entrepreneurial, corporate, business and communication ethics. However, the basic impulses of the question's expansion were provided by the everyday routine. Indeed, during these years the words "professional", "professionalism", fell beyond the scope of common use. They became evaluative-sounding, synonyms of great mastery, well-done work, in other words, took on properties associated to a greater extent with labour morality than with professional morality. Although such a replacement seems to be rather innocent, nevertheless it may be a characteristic of professional ethos dilution. In fact, primarily it was expected that professional activity be approved by society and legalized as being morally neutral from an operational point of view. In simple terms, there are neither bad nor good professions; as far as moral tension is concerned, it arises not while evaluating the subject-matter of a profession, but at its boundary. In this case, social legality frames as well as the object of activity are determinative; and thus the bearer of supplementary or enhanced moral obligations turns out to be an individual or a professional group. Traditionally, publicity is important at this point yet not as activity advertising but as a manifestation of positive professional intentions and responsibility comprehension. All this is in agreement with the etymology of the word "profession", namely, a public (official) announcement of one's own occupation, i.e. how to make one's living.

It stands to reason that it is ineffective to try to return its prior status to the profession and their initial meaning to the words. Therefore, extended interpretation of professionalism's moral aspects seems under such circumstances quite natural.

Moreover, the possibility emerges to analyze these aspects both diachronically and synchronically (including the contemporary mosaic of cultures and subcultures). However, this interpretation is dangerous to a certain extent.

Professional morality lines are being blurred in the lap of culture; general professional ethics cease to be the core (intersection) of specific ethics and are unified into integrity. And the main thing is that professional morality loses reliance upon the transversal centuries-old tradition, "its birth sacrament" is relegated to oblivion, and exclusive features are lost.

Indeed, speaking about professional morality as a phenomenon, it makes sense, first of all, in terms of the distinctness and uniqueness of the cultural domain where it was conceived and established. And this is the culture of a specific *project* type. A culture that does not only presume itself but presupposes. The principal task of this paper is to justify this thesis and use its heuristic potential.

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The project type culture idea became the philosophical reflection subject matter over the last two decades of the 20th Century. It had no emphasized ethical aspect, but to a greater degree was resonant with technical aesthetics ideas and correlated with the sphere of architectural and planning concepts and styling design. At this point, the conception of a "design common denominator" developed by V. Gropius, which was creatively accepted by national researchers (O.I. Genissaretskiy, K.M. Kantor, V.Ph. Sidorenko, G.P. Schedrovitskiy, etc.) played a certain role. Later, social ideas from the West kept influencing the discussion of project type culture problems; however, basically it was an original movement (school) that reflected cultural and project particular characteristics of the Soviet civilization. Methodological, epistemological, social and other aspects of project conception came into the researchers' focus of attention as a dominant idea of scientific and technological progress. Therefore, these aspects were viewed mainly from a technocratic standpoint (i.e. once again in a morally neutral way) [1], [2], [3], [4].

By this time, projection had turned into independent intellectual activity on knowledge objectification, and then into a separate sector of public production. Large project groups appeared, forming into industrial type organizations. Transformations in subject field and in project conception status grew perceived as characteristics of major cultural development, elabourating a specific project method of social reproduction, namely one's own culture-explicit programming. The retrospective view at the origin of projection and its cultural role consolidated researchers in their pursuit to distinguish a specific culture type — project culture, as opposed to canon cultures, where time-honored tradition reproduced successive generations' way of living practically intact. Later on, the subject of scientific controversy became the problem of regenerating canon culture into project culture (and even of the time and place of such regeneration) [5], [6].

This recalls Max Weber's well-known thesis about conventionalism's breakthrough. Indeed on the whole, the project/canon cultures difference was associated with Weber's opposition of modernized to conventional society. Weber entitled this renovated society "industrial capitalism"; in this connection the word *industria* in his texts often means *industry or diligence* and carries a certain ethical load [7; 92]. Unlike his predecessors who observed in the historical destiny

of the Western world a certain universal human standard, Weber wonders "what set of circumstances resulted in the situation that it is only here, in the West, that appeared such cultural phenomena, which developed ... in a direction that gained universal meaning?" [7; 44]. He finds the response in a unique coincidence of a number of factors each carrying a rational beginning. These are represented by rational antique science formed on the basis of demonstrative mathematics, a rational theory of law, "estimated" art (primarily, musical and monumental art), the rational experimental science of the Modern Age, machinery-based rational technology and a rational mode of economics. The culmination of such integration is Weber's Protestantism with the rational labour ethics that elevated success to the rank of a religious calling. All this gave rise to the emergence of a specific production society, the essential feature of which became the formal rational organization of formally free labour [7; 44-57].

Project type culture ideologists, though, take no notice of such similarity in positions. In any case, technical and aesthetic sets overshadow labour and professional ethics issues for them, and they take an interest in a rational beginning within scientific and engineering knowledge (like all Weber's other concept elements) to a much lesser extent than in antique mythology as the seed of the majority of project ideas, and project type culture in its entirety [8], [9]. They perceive in myths the prototype of the special attitude to the universe and even a sort of a project labouratory where constructive solutions defining cultural stratagems are made and tested [10], [11]. Thus, for them project culture is nothing more than Prometheus project implementation.

Certainly, there is a certain reason in it. It's no coincidence that G. Gadamer considers the myth about Prometheus as the "European destiny myth", supposing that "to tell the story of the myth's interpretation means to tell the very story of European humanity" [12; 243]. Nevertheless, this in no case contradicts the fact that industrial society is a kind of culmination of similar project development.

It is appropriate at this point to recall that the word "Prometheus" is translated into Russian as "idea a priori". And that, on the one hand, captures the essence of project conception, and in the other respect, is resonant with the following words: *Providence, craft, industry*. This significant heuristic prompt counts in favor of a strong interrelation between the dominant idea of project culture and its industrial presentation parameters, including those representing home analogies.

The Acts of Prometheus contain a substantial moral load. Having presented fire to people and having educated them for trades, he in so doing taught them to live and work collectively. Therefore he may be quite reasonably considered as the founder of both the communal and the labour ethos. While correcting Epimetheus' misdeed and more exactly the curiosity of Pandora, who had released from the box illnesses and misfortunes that filled the entire human world, Prometheus taught people the art of healing and instilled in their hearts the hope left at the bottom of the box. It is noteworthy that the punishment of the gods that followed may be regarded as some sort of a mythological precaution, which stimulated Hippocrates to pronounce his famous Oath [13; 10-11], the first professional and ethical code in the history.

Thus the Hippocratic Oath may be quite reasonably considered as the origin of the Prometheus project. The subject matter of the Oath is also project-based.

Firstly, it is a public sacramental declaration about commitment to one's own occupation prior to undertaking medical activities. This is its moral program.

Secondly, following the moral canon, the ability to improve a doctor's mastery as well as his social status overlap closely in the Oath. Thereby Hippocrates, improving the medical treatment tradition, becomes the founder of modernizing practice.

In the third place, this represents a method for medical activity upgrading closely connected with family modernization. Hippocrates (a representative of *Asclepius*' family line), oaths to Apollo (doctor of the gods), his son *Asclepius* (the physician-god of people) and the daughters of *Asclepius* — *Hygeia* (goddess of health, from here originates the word "hygiene") and *Panacea* (goddess — healer, origin of panacea). By doing this, he emphasizes not only the family nature of medicine, which means hereditary transmission of medical mastery but divine-family patronage of its sectors. Indeed, medicine in ancient Greece used to be a family vocation. However, in the days of Hippocrates, doctors began taking apprentices. According to Hippocrates, an apprentice is included in his teacher's family on an equal basis with the teacher's sons and the apprentice's obligations are treated as a childlike duty [13; 702-704].

In the fourth place, the art of healing transmitted to an apprentice (as from father to son), naturally contains some mystery. However, this family secret, like a professional secret, must be revealed for other people, at least, in terms of the doctor's aspirations.

Good intentions of the kind pervade the Oath, then accumulate as the principle "First, do no harm!". This raises the question: may such declarations be interpreted in a broader context as an essential characteristic of future professional ethics? And in this case, may the Oath be considered as ethics' project pattern?

In fact, the Hippocratic Oath was an example of a professional and ethical code. Nevertheless, it did not grow into an "act to follow" straight away. At the time of its conception, there were not so many occupations which the given example could be applied to. In the times of developed slavery when Hippocrates lived, physical work, except, perhaps, farming, was regarded as a contemptible activity. The negative attitude towards craftsmen was quite definitely expressed by antique philosophers — junior contemporaries of Hippocrates. Aristotle denied their right to human perfection. At this point, he probably followed Plato, for whom handicraft labour was the aspect of moral impairment.

A similar situation was observed also in the flourishing period of the Roman Empire. Physical work was the fate of slaves. It was considered as an inappropriate activity for a free citizen. The latter regarded manual labour as senseless and stultifying, devoid of inner beauty and incapable of dignifying an individual. A Roman's freedom is, first of all, disengagement from physical work, preoccupation with social, political and cultural life. Obviously, this life included activities containing features of professionalism, and then became the basis of the so-called free professions. However, they were by no means associated with labour. Physical work failed to turn into a standard of morality of that time [14; 192]. Carnivals and festivity not overlaid with labour duties predominated. No wonder, therefore, that idleness instead of diligence became the goal and value of that time.

Nevertheless, some positive changes regarding the attitude to work and labourers happened due to Christianity's dissemination. On the one hand, Christianity, like Judaism, interprets labour as punishment for the Fall from grace. On the other hand, there are no occupations that God does not accept. A certain *equality in sin* was expected, that is why an obligation to redeem it was supposed to lie on *the whole of mankind*: it was necessary to work hard in order to get hope for forgiveness in the afterlife. Nevertheless, true elevation of labour was still a long way off in Christian culture.

According to Weber, this elevation happened for the first time under the Reformation, and to the fullest extent it was expressed by the ideologues Martin Luther and John Calvin. It is they who were considered by Weber as the founding fathers of a new protestant ethic. This ethic regarded labour no more as God's curse; work took the shape of worldly asceticism and was raised to the rank of a religious vocation. Such a viewpoint until quite recently has been if not the sole one, at least predominant. Meanwhile, according to contemporary researchers, already in the 12th Century a number of fundamental transformations in social life occurred in Western Europe. They were tantamount to a renaissance (for a while written with a lower case letter) [15]. Concurrently with cultural changes inspired by Anselm and Abelard, the "process of labour value reconsideration" commences, "attempts are made to justify specialized activity that may be apprehended not as enforced, not as a punishment for the Fall from grace… but as a principal ground of human dignity and spiritual destiny" [16; 104]. In other words, the first labour theology appears where "God becomes the first toiler" [16; 105]. All this is done within the context of reconsideration of a profession as a quite different way to salvation. According to Jacques Le Goff, the point at issue is salvation not in opposition to one's own profession but by using it. "The working saints' age is changed to the holy workers time" [15; 102].

It is particularly remarkable that it was exactly at that time of changing the actors and performers of the labour play that the term "profession" was established with a meaning similar to its current one. The title "profession" was given to the community of priests who exercised their functions not on a voluntary basis but for a fee. In this case, as a rule, a public procedure on taking office was provided for. This procedure included the announcement of one's own occupation and the assumption of relevant obligations. Hence it follows the opposition of the terms: *confession* — joint (intimate) avowal of faith and *profession* — public declaration of one's own occupation (source of livelihood).

However, professionalism's characteristics were still embryonic in labour ethics. Their formation was connected with the dynamic development of crafts and commerce. These were concentrated in cities. The profession turned out to be not only a source of living, but helped a citizen find his place in the world, identify his own substantiality. On the whole, the forge of professional and moral culture became medieval guilds. There formed initial professional groups, consolidated with uniform customs and labour ethos. The guilds' statutes regulated requirements for a worker who could become a member of the guild. These rules of order were assimilated to city statutes. The latter, in their turn, copied to some extent the statutes of knightly and religious orders, though not in subject matter. Moral requirements played a significant role in the guilds' statutes. It was assumed that a worker's morality

strengthened reliably personality traits and professional skills. The worker spent all his life — manufacturing, social and religious — in the guild community. A medieval guild represented a brotherhood of people occupied with one trade where each worker carried responsibility to the others [17].

Gradually the borders of professional groups being formed began falling beyond the scope of the guild. Statutes appeared that determined rules of competition between shops (guilds) and were dedicated to setting up equal possibilities for all manufacturers. Rules of order regulated the number of apprentices, the number of manufactured products, the use of signs, the guild's working hours, etc. There emerged a common professional ideology, overcoming workshop constraints and in a way tracing the path for overarching uniform professional and moral culture.

As long as professional statutes, regulating workers' attitude to labour, to profession, to each other, were gaining the authority of a moral law, professionalization in its entirety took on moral value. Profession became a way to salvation. There arose comprehension of labour's necessity as a tool of human improvement, spiritual self-perfection and moral development. This strengthened individual responsibility for sin and personal sense of redemption and salvation.

The period of the late Middle Ages was characteristic of labour perception as a possibility to get closer and become similar to the Creator, and become immortal through one's own work (and not receive mercy as it was at the beginning of the era). Contrary to their predecessors, guild masters began impressing a seal upon their products, thus confirming the author's responsibility for his labour results. This was a kind of social action over accentuation: it shifted from a religious sphere to a secular one, mainly, to a professional domain. In this case the principal influence on professional and moral culture development was exerted by personality reasons, though this started as a joint guild labour culture.

Therefore, profession, institutionalized as an *individual* moral vow, and received approval as a *community* phenomenon, was updated at that time on a *personality* level. Every professional occupation acquired its public presentation. This is a certain generalized character of a Master, a creator of unique products.

However, transformation of profession's subject-matter as well as its public presentation does not stop at this point. Manufactories are developed; they are amalgamated into bigger enterprises and absorb artisan workshops. As the context of labour is complicated, the Master already can not lay claim to the role of *deus ex machina*, capable of solving difficult production problems arising everywhere. A machine itself is turning into a divine being, an idol. Everywhere machine labour supersedes manual work, changing its character, the role of a human being in production and the attitude of people towards their activity and each other. Manufactured products turn out to be mass and impersonal, since the production process is mechanized and specialized. The integrated manufacturing process management results in amalgamation and agglomeration of professional groups; *profession is established as a social institution.*

In this period, professional morality takes on its classic shape. For a number of professions, the question of their own morality becomes of current interest. The professional morality core is formed. It is invariant with respect to various professional

activities. As a matter of fact, these are profession-fundamental attributes in their moral dimension.

As far as the contemporary ("postclassical") professional and moral situation is concerned, it appears rather variegated and mosaic-like. It does not demonstrate any prevailing trends. However, a certain scenario adjustment has occurred. The machine remains as before one of the leading characters, but not the only one. The organization has come into its rights with confidence. It covers the majority of social life fields, namely, governmental, military and civil domains, and penetrates both into the labour sphere and everyday life. The organization has developed into a particular hypermachine, people and their groups being details and units within it.

Professional morality under such conditions acquires dualistic status. On the one hand, it dissolves into labour morality, sometimes being indistinguishable from organizational and process discipline (at times it is defined as a method for public life organization, as a form of social discipline). On the other hand, professional morality defines a certain responsibility standard for everybody, subordinating most of the moral rules to one commandment — be in the right place at the right time, ready for the right business! In this case, has professional morality any future, and what is it like? A variety of assumptions exist in this respect. They are not worth analyzing in this paper. After all, the mere fact of putting them forward is an additional argument in favor of the professional morality project; i.e. the thesis justification to which the present article is devoted.

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Professional morality has existed for two thousand and five hundred years, but its history has not been written yet. The retrospective presented in this paper is not a historical sketch but a theoretical attempt, starting out from professional morality's origin, to trace the project-dominant idea of its development. Such an attempt, to the best of our knowledge, has been made for the first time and irrespective of a certain risk of schematism, seems efficient thus justified.

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