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**THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE FORMATION
OF AN AESTHETIC AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL IDEAL**

SUMMARY. Religion favours sanctification and personification of the basic values of culture. The result is a subject of culture — an aesthetic and anthropological ideal.

KEY WORDS. Aesthetic and anthropological ideal, religion, phenomenology, personification.

Different branches of aesthetic anthropology developed both in Russia and abroad seek a possibility to reveal the sides of human essence which cannot be explained and understood only through conception thinking. Aesthetic and anthropological studies carried out by a group of researchers led by M.N. Scherbinin use such methods as personification, the self-comprehension reflection principle, figurativeness and other methods [1; 4], [2]. Using aesthetic anthropology methods to study religion as the generic essence of a human allows deeper acknowledgement of specific features of interpretation of basic cultural values and the dynamics of their development and functioning in a society. In particular, the process of formation of a society and a human being in onto- and phylogenesis is impossible without personification when abstract ideals, thanks to artistic thinking, appear to be a tangible reality. On the other hand, the personified apprehension of a human norm may not function in the life of society and people without sanctification and being communicated by religion.

There are different alternatives in the systematization of the concept of culture, giving coverage to relations of religion and culture in opposite ways [3], [4], [5], [6; 130]. According to the sacral model of culture, religion is just one component of the social and cultural life of a human being. Culture is a result of human aspirations and their implementation in life. That's why its character is contradictory and temporal. Religion, on the contrary, links human beings with the Absolute, thus preserving its image not made with human hands, i.e. determining the development of true culture. It is religion in the broad sense of the word which determines the existence of culture and of its sense [3; 90], [7; 389].

Using E. Durkheim's statements, the well-known Yekaterinburg philosopher V.D. Pivovarov sees the essence of religion in the sacralisation of basic values serving as grounds for culture. At the same time, he notes the historical priority of an individual who enters into direct communication with the God, and the secondary meaning of the social aspect of monotheism [5; 7-23]. This notice partially explains why religion is able to harmonize individual and social human existence. If religion appears and develops due to personal experience of a link with the

Absolute, then an individual formed as a result of contact with the sacred, interacting with other individuals, fills these relations with personal meaning. That is why new norms and rules created by such individuals get established within social life in the course of time. They are perceived by other persons as not something external and weighing upon them, but as something corresponding to true human nature and expressing the true sense of sociality. As a result, interacting individuals form an *aesthetic and anthropological ideal* — a personification of a human norm and the right matter. The aesthetic and anthropological ideal appears and starts determining the specific character of the existence of society. A personality itself often becomes such a personalized ideal bringing in a new vision and understanding of the sacred.

Let us consider the role of religion in forming an aesthetic and anthropological ideal more closely. We should call on phenomenology in order to tackle the issue. According to E. Husserl, the mind is focused on one thing and exposed to another. He emphasizes that “any mind is “intentional” [8; 13]. It is always “a state of awareness” of something. If perception of the whole outer world depends on the focus of the mind, then we may say that the intentions form or assist forming certain connections between the mind of a person and a subject constituting its content. Phenomena on which the mind is focused as a priority and with which it forms a connection represent true reality for an individual. They represent modernity, a major value, a God or gods. M. Scheler, the most influential follower of E. Husserl’s phenomenology, interpreted religion as an indispensable component of any knowledge [7; 389].

Apparently it is no coincidence that in ancient times the word “religion” originated from the words “regeneration”, “relation” and “harness”. Thus, the Christian apologist of the 4th Century AD Lactantius (circa 250 — circa 325) understood being religious as re-establishing lost communication with God. St. Augustine Aurelius (354-430) considered the origin of the word “religion” as the verb “reeligere”, i.e. “reunite”. “Being religious”, according to Augustine, means re-establishing lost communication with God. In the same way as Lactantius, he sees the essence of religion in linking and communicating with the Divine Principle. Augustine writes in the book “De Civitate Dei”: “Electing (eligentes), and more precisely (as we were losing Him by neglecting)—re-electing (reeligentes) Him (where the word “religion” originates from), we set our hearts on Him in order to pacify when reaching Him; therefore we become blissful as far as we grow perfect by reaching the goal” (Augustine: 451). Modern etymologists also link the origin of the word “religion” with the Latin verb “religio”—“enlace”, “bind”, “harness” [9; 109]. S.L. Frank pointed at this feature of spirituality [10; 405]. Modern researchers also stress this feature [11; 19], [12; 62].

P. Tillich defines religion in the broad and fundamental sense of the word as the ultimate interest demonstrated in all the creative functions of the human spirit [13; 240]. Other interests are in a subordinate situation to absolute and ultimate interest. If they enter into contradiction with the latter, then a person feels readiness to sacrifice any other end interest for the sake of what he considers the most important. Some people define the content of this interest by the word “God”, the others — by “gods”. The notionalist P. Tillich considered fascism and communism as the most outstanding representatives of quasireligions as far as both of them raised national and social interests to the ultimate level.

It is possible to draw a parallel between “the ultimate interest” of P. Tillich and the preference and negligence, love and hatred of M. Scheler, which appear as intentional functions and acts promoting values and their orders [7; 287]. Love as “experience of a contact with the world” determines the activity of a human spirit, the link of consciousness and social being, mediation and thinking. “Love always moves to cognition and volition, moreover, love is the mother of the spirit and reason” [7; 352]. The order of love is imagined by M. Scheler as the intimate core of a personality. Love is the basis for a religious attitude to reality insofar as by the means of this phenomenon we experience intentional feelings of values belonging to the “Absolute sphere” and to other personalities as well as to creation on the whole. By means of love, a personality becomes a participant of existence and its central point—God. Thus religion as a primary factor of spiritual development basing on the “ordo amoris” (the order of love) makes possible the creation of cultural values which initially depend on the attitude of a personality to the Other, the Absolute.

Representatives of phenomenology consider evident that the ideal does not exist if a human mind does not address it. In M. Scheler’s works the direct vision of an object from the point of view of senses and emotions is the condition of its authenticity. In his understanding the feelings are not of psychological, but of cosmic nature. At the same time we directly feel the object itself. It means that the feeling, to a certain extent, does not depend on the subjectivity of a personality. To be exact, a personality as a spiritual creature, which should be distinguished from an empirical individual, being a centre of intentional acts, is not just open to the world, but possesses the world. Thus a personality cannot be objective.

The structure of the spiritual world is such that the relation to the ultimate sense, ideal or value defines the understanding on the ideal of a person, its role and place in the universe. Basing on the apriority and self-givenness of phenomena for the human consciousness, Scheler built a hierarchy of values with the final background represented by the absolute value of God. Other values are placed in the hierarchy depending on their relation to the Absolute. The hierarchy also serves as a values classifier.

In “Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values”, M. Scheler writes that the inborn sense intuition prioritizes intrinsic values in ascending order as follows: values of pleasant and unpleasant (or hedonistic values of useful); vital values; spiritual values (ethical and aesthetical values and pure perception values); the value of sanctity [7; 323-328].

Based on the values hierarchy, M. Scheler builds value models or ideal types of personalities serving as examples of personal orientation in people’s real lives. The following models of ideal types of personalities are distinguished in the order of “decreasing value rank”: the holy man, the genius, “the lead spirit of civilization” (der Fuhrende Geist der Zivilisation) and “the painter of pleasure” (Kunstler des Genusses) [7; 328]. Not only pure types of personalities correspond to certain types of main values, but also certain technical trades (e.g. the priest, etc.), as well as pure types of communities like a community of love (Scheler describes its technical form as a Church), a state governed by the rule of law (and its technical form represented by a state), and finally, simple forms of so-called “societies” [7; 328].

A human being tries to bring his/her activity into agreement with his/her vision, emotional and sensorial experience of the ideal. Depending on the intentionality of an individual spirit, any given values become contemporaneous to a person. A person personifies these values, sanctifies and worships them. This process of personification, sanctification and worship of oneself and of the world is conducted by a human being not in isolation but in a dialogue of interacting persons. The values and types of values presented by M. Scheler and which serve as ideals of conduct and behaviour patterns cannot be mechanically linked with each other. Individuals interacting with each other integrate their individual cultures, their ideas on the ideal rooted in the spirit, into a general social culture. The latter, being a commonplace in the mentality of individuals, unites, creates agreement and provides mutual contribution into different ideas not only in their similarity but also in difference. Thanks to the phenomenon of religiousness, the totality of values and ideals forms an integral character of a person in the mentality of interacting individuals — his/her aesthetic and anthropological ideal. This ideal is institutionally consolidated and sanctified in religion. Owing to religiousness as a generic feature of a human being the basic values of culture are personified and sanctified. Religion contributes to the incarnation of an ideal in life and directs a person to the transfiguration of him/herself and his/her environment.

All types of ideal persons described by M. Scheler are present in the aesthetic and anthropological ideal. Any real person should indeed play many social roles throughout life. A real person is always a little bit of a merry fellow, a technician, an artist, a lawmaker and certainly a bit of a saint. Living in a society, each individual has his/her own idea of a norm which always coincides in some way with the same idea of some other individual. It means that an individual possesses social culture. Otherwise, an individual remains misunderstood by other people, or becomes a castaway, or jointly with similar persons forms a counterculture.

Ideal types of personalities, expressing the main moral and sense-bearing love lines of a person and of his/her value-based world in a personal form, correspond to ideas on aesthetic and anthropological ideals in each concrete social culture. The ideal is based on an individual culture, on the essence of a human spirit and corresponding value categories. Value modalities, e.g. the value of the sacred, are absolutely independent from what things, forces, real personalities, institutes, etc. at some time were considered "saintly" by some nations. However, they and associated ideal types of personalities as metempirical patterns are endowed only with ideal existence, thus they require the flesh and blood of historical experience. An aesthetic and anthropological ideal appears only at the crossing of an individual culture as being himself/herself and a holder of the spirit, and a social culture as being different. The ideal is formed only in integrity and dialogue of the individual and social cultures. A human being acts in accordance with this ideal, even if unconscious of it.

Even though every epoch and every national culture expresses an eternal idea of sanctity as a cornerstone, each concrete culture in a definite epoch is characterized by proper and unique ideals of sanctity. Thus Buddhism has its own ideal of holiness, and Christianity has its own. But the powers bringing these religions into being, notwithstanding historical ups and downs and the fact that most of the above religions and others have fallen into oblivion, remain efficient and up-to-date since the ability to discover the sacred is in human nature.

An aesthetic and anthropological ideal, being widely accepted and general for a given culture, sets the rules and norms of social life. The ideas of a person and his nature and essence are formed as a result of the interaction of individual cultures and empirical reality on the basis of values which are actual for an individual. In turn, a culture corresponding to the above ideas appears in the process of communication on the basis of the established aesthetic and anthropological ideal. Such an ideal determining rules and norms of the social culture is present in each culture, starting from archaic ones characterized by the absence of formal logic in the human mind and finishing with highly rational ones [14; 77-86]. Each individual seeking to live like a human being has his/her own ideal of a person, with more or less in common with other individuals. This ideal is of universal significance for the given culture. It overmasters minds of individuals in a hidden way in order to promote the functioning and development of society and civilization on the basis of mutual understanding.

Thus due to religiosity as a generic feature of human beings, basic cultural values are personified and sanctified. Religion contributes to turning ideals into reality and motivates a person to transform him/herself and his/her environment. Therefore studies of the values which were and are given aesthetic and anthropological personification and personalization in religion, and studies of aesthetic and anthropological ideals translated and expressed by religion, allow deeper recognition of specific features of individual and social being and increase the possibilities of the existing prediction methods concerning progress in social processes.

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