Cultural and Leisure “Egoism” in Person’s Everyday Activities

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Abstract. The article under consideration deals with the theoretical analysis and the practical research of the ratio between the two notions: egoism and altruism in person’s everyday activity. The author shows the inadequacy of the one-sided, morally loaded interpretations of both terms. The scores of two investigations mostly show the positive correlation between the cultural and leisure “egoism” and the “altruism” scales in a person’s everyday activity. The results obtained give the opportunity to replace the inadequate view on philosophical reading of cultural and leisure egoism and altruism as opposites by a more appropriate metaphor of the older and the younger brother. Such an approach removes the idea of antagonism which is usually ascribed to the egoism-altruism interrelation.

Keywords: egoism, altruism, creativity, happiness, personal uniqueness, positive socialization.

Introduction

Person-oriented conception of happiness: introduction and the brief explanation. In the years 2000–2012 the author (Victor Popov) elaborated a synthesizing conception of culture and leisure activities, self-realization and happiness, which is based on the ideas of the systemic approach and combines cultural, biological, psychological, social and spiritual (the highest) levels of individual life and activity. The results of ten-year work on the problem are summarized in monographs (Popov, 2010, 2011, 2012a; 2013c) and articles.

“Egoism” is an expression of internal creative and intellectual potential of the personality in all-philosophical interpretation. In the context of such sciences as psychology, cultural science, education, sociology, political science, etc. person’s “egoism” finds peculiar aspects, studying foreshortenings. It’s necessary to notice that generally sciences
of a humanitarian cycle deal with problems of “egoism” research. Humanitarian sciences rely on methodological base of philosophy and they are progenitresses of every, without exception, humanitarian and, in most cases, technical, physical and mathematical, natural-science cycles of sciences’ complex.

“Egoism” is an expression of immutable requirements and interests of the personality in all spheres of its activity. Innovation in the production, the invention of new technologies, improvement of material base, the equipment and products – labor “egoism” of the person. Creation of self-service conditions, housing, a furniture and interior of the housing, a diet choice – household “egoism” of the person. Traditions of the younger generation education, training in national language of children and grandsons, acquaintance with a family tree, training of bases’ communication with contemporaries in nursery pre-school and educational institutions – family “egoism” of the person. Using of public transport, purchase in a trading centre of necessary products, time choice for the rest, personal hygiene, a dream – “egoism” of immutable time expenses.

Cultural and leisure “egoism” of the personality has nothing in common with its manifestations in the above-mentioned spheres:

1. The freedom of choice of social actions’ types is never limited to official duties, the social status, physiological requirements.

2. Representing insignificant part of the general time budget, leisure acts as the irreplaceable sphere of personality spiritual potential realization.

3. Cultural and leisure “egoism” in comparison with others has advantage in the width of the kinds’ activity range, according to experts exceeding figure 80.

4. The art and esthetic orientation of the “egoism” personality realization in the sphere of leisure defines not only its emotional and intellectual development, but also the tolerant attitude towards culture of various ethnic communities.

5. The level of development of cultural and leisure requirements and interests of each person, eventually, enriches all its actions in labor, household, family spheres and the sphere of immutable expenses.

In the history of the human society development initially there is its ability to “self-sacrifice”. Various eras give the examples of the family honor protection, the beloved (beloved) retold by literature classics in images Romeo and Juliette (Italy), Don Quixote (Spain), Zhanna D’Ark (France), Hamlet (Denmark), the King Lear (England)…

“Egoism” and “self-sacrifice” both in historical, and in modern aspects, are expressed approximately equally. The person has an object of his own passion. Emotions in this case are splashed out through night vigils concerning a writing of poetry and songs, solemn oaths, appeals, tortures, readiness recognitions “to get the moon from the sky”. Not always “self-sacrifice” comes to the end with the result wished for the donor. The negative answer, judging by special sources, leads to depressive, and in certain cases, to lethal results.

However the “egoism” manifestations in “self-sacrifice” have more positive, than negative roots. Sacrifice of own personal time which could be spent for any other kinds
of activity, a man uses for self-improvement. Types of leisure occupations are rather in
detail investigated by modern sociologists who on the first places traditionally expose
viewing of telecasts, reading works of art, acquaintance with new events of the interna-
tional life, the country and the region.

The creative impulse from work of talented Russian cinema directors and actors, theat-
er and a platform affects even the Russians household speech. The use of type’s known
phrases is standard: “That you lived for one salary”, “Tsigel, tsigel ouch lyu-lyu”, “If the
person is an idiot, so it is for a long time”, “I am not guilty, he has come himself”, “Russo
turisto, oblico morale”, etc. It goes from the fact that in the 1960–1980th leisure time of
Russian citizens was defined by a framework of cinema visiting. At this time in all cinema
halls novelties of the Soviet film production were shown. L. I. Gaidai’s movies took the
leading place in the film distribution, leisure preferences of the audience united round
such movies’ names as: “Operation “Y” and other Adventures of Shurik”, “The Caucasian
Captive”, “A Diamond Hand”, “12 Chairs”, “Ivan Vasilyevich changes his Profession”, etc.

A bit later phrases from movies on I. Ilf and E. Petrov’s works of “12 Chairs” and “A
Gold Calf” – “How much opium for the people?” “Shall I give you a flat key where mon-
ey is lying?”, “In the morning – money, in the evening – chairs!”, “Your political credo?
Always!” became winged one.

The popular expressions and aphorisms used in a daily communication, undoubt-
edly, help to develop leisure communication in its informal types to a unification of the
speakers’ position. If the person doesn’t know the literature works by such authors as
I. Ilf, E. Petrov, M. Zoshchenko’s in leisure conversation most likely he will not be able
adequately to apprehend humour and allegorical meaning, the phraseological units
applied in conversation. Thus, leisure time becomes time of cultural development of
thinking, the speech, ability of the critical attitude towards reality, eventually, of an
environmental survival.

At all positive estimates of person’s “egoism” manifestation, it is necessary to see its
negative sides. The physiological and social essence of the individual by the nature is
inclined either to interfere, or to indulge to the expressions of “egoism” condemned by
society leading to destruction of the personality – self-damage. Actions of the person
in leisure time are quite comparable to offenses, criminal examples of self-enrichment,
and crimes against the person.

Self-damage takes place in household sense within physiological violence over health
of own organism, sometimes irrespective of the person – aggressive environment, emis-
sions of the enterprises, industrial mining of the earth, the polluted sewage, biologically
modified food, etc. In this case it is hardly worth blaming the services’ consumer of
trade organizations, enterprises of the food industry, agro-industrial complex, and the
water canal. However, in leisure practice examples of conscious self-damage in the form
of alcoholic beverages abuse, drugs, tobacco smoking most often meet. Medical workers
of the Tyumen region in the last 5–6 months are disturbed by teenagers’ hobby for snuff
tobacco, the city made in the countries of Central Asia and extended in the food markets under the name “Nasvay”. All medical indicators show that the teenager's organism is exposed to danger a respiratory disease, lungs, developing of cancer tumors, a blockage of brain vessels.

Own health, its support, treatment of diseases, leaving from stressful situations is one of “egoism” manifestations of the personality within its free time called by self-preservation. Oral poll results showed that the population of the Tyumen region prefers to consume the filtered water, bread of a rough grinding, and local agricultural production. Knowledge promoting healthy lifestyle, a food choice, up to a chemical composition of their elements promotes these results. The central TV channels not casually use keen interest in connection with broadcast of such telecasts as “Healthy to live!”, “Control purchase”, “Health”, “Malakhov +” ...

The culture of a healthy lifestyle is initially inherent to leisure traditions of any people. The concept “traditional medicine” is inseparably linked with leisure kinds of activity – collecting of medicative herbs, berries, mushrooms; herbs growing; using in the medical purposes got as a result of hunting and fishing of trophies. Among the small nationalities living in northern territories of the Russian Federation, historically there was the whole system of rituals, ceremonies, the holidays connected with the sacral attitude towards to fauna representatives. Within many centuries holidays and “Days” of a whale, bear, crow, rook, deer, seal are traditionally celebrated. Similar holidays take place in presence of all inhabitants by certain rules, obeying ritual traditions of each nationality.

Leisure space is the time, unique for self-development, within which the person on his own initiative chooses this or that kind of activity. Selectivity is shown throughout all life, is dictated by family traditions, participation experience in collective forms of creativity, attachments to national sources, tendencies to certain types of communication, the relation to concrete genres of art, certain performers and artists. Width of an “egoism” field is expressed in creative development of the personality in such concepts as “self-improvement”, “self-education”, “introspection”, “self-education”. The purpose of self-development consists in enrichment of knowledge, improvement of personal qualities, knowledge of creative activity innovations, the ability to the analysis arriving from information environment, to the critical relation to the culture values broadcasting by mass media.

By the federal law of the Russian Federation “Legislation bases of the Russian Federation on culture” as the constitutional guarantee the right of the Russian Federation citizen to have access to cultural values and information on problems of cultural life acts. However, even the federal law doesn’t guarantee consumption of the person’s arriving information against low-quality, insufficiently considered, initially false production. Only as a result of self-development the personality is capable to select the truthful, thought-over, objective information on cultural life of the Russian state, its domestic and foreign cultural policy. The egoism development level, thus, guarantees not only
own cultural safety of citizens, but also promotes the increase of a cultural level of the state development in general.

The history of the Russian Federation, its favorable prospects on the future is confirmed by experience of cultural development of the first-ever states of Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, the countries of Arabian Peninsula, India.

In the book of VII. “Policy” (chapter XIII – item 8.) Aristotle wrote: “All human life breaks up to occupation and leisure, to war and peace, and all activity of the person is directed partly on necessary and useful, partly on beauty. The preference should be given here, proceeding from the same assessment, as for parts of soul and the activity caused by them: war exists for the sake of peace, occupation – for the sake of leisure, necessary and useful – for the sake of beauty”. Further Aristotle develops thought that logical reasons, and actual data testify that the legislator has to apply efforts to that its legislation concerning and military science and all other, meant leisure and the peace mainly. After all the majority of the states paying attention only to military preparation keep while they wage wars, and perish, only reach domination. Like steel, they lose the temper during the peace. The legislator who didn’t bring up in citizens the ability to use leisure is guilty of it.

In Aristotle’s treatment leisure already in itself possesses a worthiness and can be considered as the benefit available not to each resident of Ancient Greece. However, along with it leisure acts as that temporary space in which other benefits available to the person are consumed. It is only necessary to possess sufficient “qualification”, abilities and knowledge to use those opportunities which are given by leisure: “If shamefully not to be able to use the benefits at all, even more shamefully not to be able to use them during leisure; being occupied and being at war, to seem valorous, and, using the peace and leisure, to assimilate to slaves”.

Finally all person’s egoism manifestations are connected with his individual activity. All egoism can be defined as “amateur performance”. In the cultural and leisure sphere, certainly, it is displayed in different types of art work. The artistic principles inevitably are present at acts, priorities, a choice of preferences of leisure occupations. Development of social skills of the personality, standards of behavior in society, development of tolerant qualities characterizes the person so, how these qualities are applicable, protected and recognized by community and the state. In special literature processes and results of the personality socialization from the point of view of a social and state system are rather in detail analyzed. “Egoism” is studied extremely seldom. From the point of view of the author “self-socialization” has to become one of the leading directions and a subject of researches of social sciences. The number of research scientific fields has to certainly include also social features of art work in the leisure sphere.

Participation of the person in art egoism has neither spatial, nor ethnic, neither age, nor professional, what other social restrictions. Therefore with good reason it is possible to call an availability sign its major social feature. Along with it mass character of par-
The indisputable leader in mass character of participants’ coverage, geographical prevalence, historical continuity, a genre variety and other important social indicators, the art direction acts. It unites fans of music, painting, dance, literature, theater, circus, etc.

Recognizing indisputability of this fact, nevertheless it is necessary to emphasize that in creative activity there is a set, so-called, their “boundary” types and forms (a photo, video, motion picture art, rhythmic gymnastics, figure skating, etc.). For example, the children hobby, teenagers and youth for sports ball dance turns into the broad amateur movement today. Ball dance is called fairly unique synthesis of theater, music, sport, plasticity. Similar examples can serve as justification of a sign of a sinkretichnost.

And still the “inartistic” directions of leisure work don’t become less significant and attractive to representatives of various groups of the population. The applied, pedagogical, organizing, search, research, technical amateur creativity and other types illustrating a social feature of pluralism are considered as those, for example.

Recently especially actively the latest technical spheres – electronics, cybernetics, the computer equipment develop. Actually each city in the Tyumen region already has the Internet clubs, an Internet cafe which main visitors are teenagers and the studying youth. The similar aspiration to innovations’ introduction, updating of the leisure sphere enriching the traditions which developed in it testifies to existence of a social innovation feature.

Revival and development of some traditional types of creativity are the viability proof in modern conditions of a social polyethnicity feature.

The judgment in leisure work of the general human values, moral concepts, spirituality, etc. forms a humanity sign as a great social movement.

In Aristotle’s book “Ethics” (The book of X, item 8) the philosopher writes: “Really, the philosophy delivers surprising on purity and power of pleasure, and it is natural that knowing more pleasantly spends time, than aspiring. Moreover, so-called “self-satisfaction” is most of all peculiar to contemplation because, as for everyday needs, they are equally inherent, both to the wise man, and the righteous person and all another”.

Divinity activity, according to Aristotle, being the most blissful, there is a contemplate activity and consequently, and from the human activity that is most blessed, which is related to divine.

If to take into account antique including the Hellenic mythology, each of gods makes a set of acts, the sacred, courageous, ritual, moral, virtuous, often approached to a threshold impossible for the person, often crossing a threshold human opportunities. Many of them are called as feats and will be read by different generations and the people. All these acts are that other, as activity, at what, as well as at the person, activity of gods: Zeus operates “weather gods”, Heracles makes feats, Mars watches military fights, Aphrodite consoles the loving hearts <…> The inquisitive researcher has the right to ask some questions:
– Is it possible to claim, that each of gods has its activity for which he is responsible on the earth, among people, that in language of people it is possible to call it “profile”, “professional” activity?

– Whether gods as people affairs just, them “professional loading”, “production works involving all hands” get tired when similar “works involving all hands” on their specialization occur on the earth?

– Whether time for rest, pleasures, entertainments, eventually, of acceptance of food and a dream, education of own children is required to gods after work? After all the known myth about Prometheus, Zeus’s son, is an example of the disobedient son education by the father who ended with the tragedy – murder of the offspring. Whether not in such way arrive sometimes and people? Whether so the exceptional cases similar to who is described at T. Shevchenko in “Taras Bulbe” when the father executes the son for the treachery?

– Is there leisure at gods? If yes, than what it is, what is filled with, who it is carried out, is how big it is, whom is it usually devoted, what aims pursues, how often drops out, to that precedes, then follows <…>?

Conclusions

Our results give the evidence of the opposite: just the unscrupulous altruism has more chances of bringing existential vacuum than the egoism dealing with a person’s self-realization. The given data witnessing the “egoism shadow” reflected by the meaning concept may seriously change the “terrain” in the sphere of existential psychology and psychotherapy. The future adaptation of the elaborated methods with more people (including individuals with different mental and personality disorders) will give the opportunity to clarify the other, more pathological patterns of egoism altruism relation in everyday activity. Thus the detected “norm” in which egoism and altruism do not oppose but finely supplement each other could be understood better, questions can be continued indefinitely.

However, the essence should be looked for not in numerous rhetorical questions, and in reasonable answers. It is thought that the main answer has to be given on the main issue about the relations between leisure of gods and leisure of people. At Aristotle such answer is available and contains it in the book “Ethics”: “Life of gods is entirely blissful, life of people – so, how in them there is a similarity of such activity”. Therefore, leisure of gods – an example for imitation, a sample, a criterion of moral, value, virtue of leisure of people. Whether so it is?
References


Asmenybės kultūrinis ir laisvalaikio „egoizmas“ kasdienėje veikloje

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Santrauka


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