
METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS



Elvira SPIROVA

DSc in Philosophy, Head of the Department of the History of Anthropological Doctrines. RAS Institute of Philosophy. Volkhonka Str. 14/5, Moscow 119991, Russian Federation; e-mail: elvira-spirova@mail.ru

“THE OTHER HALF OF THE INTELLECTUAL GLOBE”

The author of this article attempts to consider Wilhelm Dilthey’s philosophical works in terms of philosophical anthropology. Leading minds of this movement, such as Nicolai Berdyaev, Martin Buber, Max Scheler and others do not refer to Dilthey as a philosopher associated with philosophical study of man. However, the author believes Dilthey’s contribution to philosophical anthropology to be significant. First of all, his knowledge of philosophical-anthropological thought is highly competent and original. For another thing, Dilthey can provide several ideas that have a direct import of philosophical anthropology. Finally, his proposition to separate human sciences and natural sciences made a significant methodological break-through. Human sciences, crucial for the understanding of man, could hardly be established without this distinction.

Today the assertion that human knowledge differs essentially from other kinds of knowledge is hardly disputable. Many European scholars made an attempt to follow the history of philosophical-anthropological thought. They relied on a belief that it is history that reveals different sides of human existence. A historical view on human nature as a consistent and widely acknowledged approach in humanities forms in 18–19th centuries. According to specialists, the discovery of man as a special reality, fundamentally distinct from other creations of nature, was made much earlier, in the middle of the 1st millennium BC in the so-called Axial Age. It occurred mainly owing to the recognition of the possibilities of moral development.

There is no doubt that historical knowledge is fundamental for human self-understanding. What other ways except for the historical approach are there to form a notion of human nature? It is in history that man reveals different sides of his existence. With the historical approach we can consider "being human" as a process of self-creation that is extended from the past to the future. Human self-creation becomes possible as a result of a reflective circle of thought and action. However, the article raises a question, whether it is reasonable to identify the becoming of man with the gradual development of notion of man.

According to the author, it is possible to assume that any knowledge about man, obtained in some certain historical period, does not necessarily reveal the authentic human nature. Mistakes, misbeliefs and misapprehensions are likely to appear during the accumulation of anthropological knowledge. For example, today the Enlightenment assumption of the universal human rationality is hardly acceptable without corrections. Of course, one could argue that this concept was improved by subsequent ages. The question is whether philosophers succeeded in perceiving the very core of man. It seems fair to assume that knowledge about man, so painfully accumulated during the centuries, in fact has little to do with the object of philosophical thought itself.

Further, the article discusses Dilthey's philosophical-anthropologic ideas as such. Dilthey argues if there is actually such thing as uniformity of human nature. It is very difficult to determine the basic features of man, since man's scope of knowledge and his field of activity in history are so broad. The article notices that the anthropological-philosophical thought also depends on the opposition of naturalistic and spiritual perspective on man. The theory of neo-naturalism aspires to disclose all the mysteries of man through biology. Neo-naturalists believe that the mystery of brain, the mystery of conscience, the mystery of the entire mental life of man could be revealed only on the grounds of evolutionary theory and with neurosciences mobilized. In the same time, as the article shows, another line of thinking appears, which believes that the human being is not only an animal. It is also a special kind of entity. Therefore there is no reason to identify animal mind with the mental world of man, as neobehaviorists do.

That said, the author explains that Dilthey have never denied naturalistic knowledge. Among other things, he showed a great interest in the achievements of positivists. However, his main interest was devoted to the mental states of man. As the article shows, it is highly disputable to relate Dilthey's theory to the irrational version of philosophical anthropology. As the author believes, this contraposition of rationalism and irrationalism requires philosophical reconsideration. Of course, Dilthey belongs to the "philosophy of life" school (*Lebensphilosophie*). In this context his philosophy was a reaction to Hegel's panlogism. Dilthey was labeled as an irrational philosopher in those times when any deviation from Hegelian paradigm seemed no less than a disavowal of the heuristic model of reasoning.

What reasons are there to talk about Dilthey's irrationalism? Only that he thought that any attempts to understand man from axiological, transcendental or rational perspectives are weak. If such is the case, nearly all the works of philosophical anthropology are to be considered as irrationalism. Human existence cannot be reconstructed, since it does not follow mechanical principles. Any endeavors to enter the world of human transcendence through some fragments of human mentality seem fallacious. What rationalism can grasp does not mean that there is no insoluble residue in man. By the way, this thought can be traced in some works of Jacques Lacan.

According to the author, Dilthey's concept of the stream of life should not be identified with some dark uncontrollable abyss with no structure. Fixedness and flowing are no more than various phases of the universal becoming. That is why sometimes historical life unfolds in its different forms and sometimes it mingles with the stream itself. Dilthey does not consider individual as an isolated entity. Individual is integrated into the universal life.

Keywords: philosophical anthropology, philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*), Wilhelm Dilthey, humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*), human nature, naturalism, mental life, sense, history, society

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