

Archetypical Bases of the Value of Labor in the Russian Culture

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Abstract – This paper considers the process of the formation of the archetype of labor in the Russian culture on the basis of adaptation of a community of people to the natural and social living conditions in the course of the formation of the Russian civilization. A conclusion is drawn that in modern conditions the value of labor is determined by the archetype of labor formed by the compressed collective memory.

Keywords – *archetype, value, tradition, labor, rationality, irrationality, orthodoxy*

I. INTRODUCTION

The inner foundation of any society is constituted by values shared by the members of the society. In the context of human civilization transferring to the era of information society the problem of values is relevant not only in terms of theory, but also as a practical problem since there is the need for search of new development benchmarks.

This paper aims to identify the basis of the value of labor in the Russian tradition through the archetype of labor formed in the context of adaptation of a community of people to their living conditions.

II. VALUE AND TRADITION

Labor is the only way for humanity to survive. Therefore any society forms, creates a system of values that explains not just the necessity of labor but its value, its transcendent meaning. The issue of general trends in the changing attitude to labor in the modern society has repeatedly been the focus of a variety of studies [1–9].

Based upon the analysis of sociological data, the authors of [1–9] observe a change in value-based orientations of modern Russians and interpret this change in different ways: they either note a contradiction between the declared values and people's actual behavior or point out the replacement of the traditional Russian labor values by those belonging to Western civilization. These estimations do not contain any contradiction as the researchers consider different aspects of the complex phenomenon of value.

To identify the specific features of the value of labor in the Russian culture, we turn to the study of the irrational side of the mass consciousness determined by the presence of the archetypes of the collective unconscious.

The problem of values is the eternal philosophical problem. It is connected with one of the fundamental metaphysical

questions, the search for the meaningful principles of human existence. Values are the integrating basis of any social community. The presence of an integral system of values ensures the stability of the society while disintegration of the system inevitably leads to disharmony and destructive conflicts. The problem of values at the present time is gaining priority against the background of the escalating confrontation between two directions of social development. On the one hand, it is the dissemination of the standards of the so-called universal lifestyle shaped by the communication revolution and international economic cooperation; on the other hand, it is the pursuit of national-state sovereignty, cultural-ethnic and regional identity.

Values are a complex phenomenon having a dual nature: they exist both inside an individual being and outside it. Thanks to values man retains the general, he is involved in the general. The key aspect in the nature of values is the social-collective, the meaning. The nature of values is supra-individual in terms of their emerging not in an individual but in a community of people. The sources of the unique character of values are the distinctiveness of the nature, the space where the community resides, and the peculiarities of its historical experience.

According to the dialectical approach, development is the connection, the unity of variability and sustainability. Tradition is the element of sustainability that determines this connection. In the tradition, accumulation of experience is realized through the general property of information, i.e. compression. Information is compressed into a compact matrix and thus can be stored and transmitted. Thanks to tradition's cumulative capacity people are relieved of the need to build their relationships starting every time from their origin.

In order to be able to exist in a particular space, man has to work out the principles of interaction with the natural world and the society. The combined positive experience of the society is enshrined in the system of social values which impose bans on some types of activities and encourage some others. Thus, a society's system of values is the spiritual expression of its way of adaptation to the environment.

III. FORMATION OF THE ARCHETYPE

The research of the German scientist C.G. Jung is of methodological value for understanding the essence of traditional labor values. Jung gave the rationale for the phenomenon of the collective unconscious at the social-psychological level. The collective unconscious is the

repository of the latent layers of humanity's memory which consists of archetypes, the primary psychic images (Greek arche 'origin', typos 'model, pattern'). Archetypes can be innate ideas, memories determining people's abilities to perceive, experience, and react to objects and events in a certain way [10].

Archetypes are entities organizing the process of individual's being involved in all the variety of complex interactions with their natural-social environment. It is the archetype in Jung's social-psychological constructions that is of key importance for understanding traditional values as compressed collective memory. Due to its ability to unite opposites, the archetype serves as an intermediary between the unconscious basis and the consciousness. It bridges the gap between the modern existence, which is constantly threatened with losing its own roots, and the natural, unconscious, instinctive integrity of primitive times [10].

The concept of the archetype allows to explain the phenomenon of inheritance in the psychic, cultural life of the society, to understand the logic of its development and predict its future, which is one of the main objectives of any scientific research.

Further consideration of the role of the collective unconscious is connected with transpersonal psychology whose foundation was laid by S. Grof. The representatives of this direction reported insufficiency of knowledge and methodological premises of modern theories of consciousness and psyche. They also proposed a new model.

The new paradigm of consciousness and psyche was based on important discoveries in physics and quantum mechanics, first of all Einstein's theory of relativity, N. Bohr's complementarity principle, M. Faraday and J. Maxwell's wave theory. In particular, the theory of relativity replaced the theory of three-dimensional space and linear time with the concept of four-dimensional space-time continuum, which made it possible to explain transpersonal feelings relating to different historical periods. The special theory of relativity allows (under specific circumstances) a reverse course of time. In modern physics, it is becoming a conventional practice to treat time as a bidirectional (directed both to the past and to the future) entity. These conclusions are transferred to explaining transpersonal feelings and inexplicable states of consciousness.

Based on experimental studies of altered states of consciousness resulting from special breathing practices or preparatory exercises, S. Grof confirmed that the experience of the testees contained images which cannot be the result of individual and even human experiences in general. The participants in the experiments are able to experience not only their own biography but also sensations that go beyond human experience, from feeling like a biological cell to experiencing cosmic-scale events. These experiences show that each of us has access to information about everything and in a sense is at the same time the entire cosmic network and its infinitesimally small part, a separate biological entity [11].

An interesting interpretation of transpersonal experiments was proposed by I.A. Beskova. She relied on a certain

reconstruction of the archaic worldview and mechanisms of transmitting information from generation to generation.

According to the data of modern anthropology, the archaic world view was based on the feeling of unity of man and nature, man's fusing into nature when his own impressions and experiences became an integral part, an extension of cosmic processes.

On the basis of such world perception, psychic experiences were formed where the subjective and the objective were merged together. Today, this can be called syncretism of the emotional-mental sphere. In the archaic perception, thoughts and emotions were inseparable mental constructs that defy modern language. Man is seen as an open, boundless "sensorium" which, for instance, feels the hair of an approaching antelope as its own hair.

At present, these relic forms of perception that are different from modern ones have remained intact. This question can be clarified through the mechanism of transmitting information from generation to generation, which is explained by the theory of gene-cultural co-evolution. According to this theory, in addition to the genetic channel of experience transfer there must exist other mechanisms of transmission, since acquired characteristics can not be inherited. In this regard, it can be assumed that human cultural evolution represents a genetically programmed trend towards increasing the adaptive capacity of a species that can not be transmitted genetically, but is important for survival. [12]

In understanding the nature of transpersonal experience as the practice of transferring experience from generation to generation, I.A. Beskova exploits the concept formulated by E. Berne, a well-known theorist following the direction of psychoanalysis. This concept assumes that three personalities converge in every individual: the Parent, the Adult, the Child. The Parent is the ego states similar to the image of the individual's parents. The Adult is the ego states developed by the individual for the objective evaluation of reality. The Child is the ego states remaining in effect from the moment of their fixation in early childhood and representing, as E. Berne puts it, archaic relics [13].

The content of the Parent in an individual's personality is identified with a parent, and the parent of the parent, and so on, i.e. the stereotypes and skills granted to the child by the parent; and the parents carried their parents in themselves thereby retaining the experience of the previous generations. Due to the influence of this transmission mechanism, all changes in the public consciousness related to the history and culture of the people where the individual belongs turn out to be "built-in" in the structure of the individual's personality, and, to a large extent, regardless of the individual's will or desire. This historical and cultural experience predetermines many forms of the individual's activities, variants of their reactions to the current events, the evaluation of the events, etc [12].

The archaic perception has not been lost, it is "built-in" in the subconscious through language, traditions, the system of stereotypes and beliefs. The mechanism of transmitting the cultural-historical experience through "the Child-the Parent" system allows the transmission of a specific world perception.

Human memory stores not only the components of the individual's experience acquired in the course of their life activity, and not only some stock of impersonalized universal cultural information. It conceals a long chain of personal implementations of the culture the individual belongs to, a link between the modern era and the initial stages of human evolution.

In this way, transpersonal psychology clarifies and expands the scope of psychoanalysis through the study of those levels of the psyche that were previously out of sight in psychoanalysis. For this study, it is important to emphasize that modern values constantly reproduce the evolution of the systems of values, culture, forms of behavior, etc., characteristic of a particular society.

IV. RATIONALITY AND IRRATIONALITY AS WAYS OF ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES

In the process of the formation of the Russian civilization, the adaptation of the community of people to the extremely unfavorable natural-climatic conditions, the irrational character of psyche orientation was formed. N. Berdyaev notes that the Russian people faced the complicated task of organizing their enormous land. The absence of boundaries and limits displayed itself in the structure of the Russian soul. The landscape of the Russian soul corresponds with the landscape of Russia, the same boundlessness, formlessness, reaching out into infinity, breadth. In the West everything is limited, formalized, and categorized, everything (both the structure of the land and the structure of the spirit) favors the formation and development of civilization. The Russian people fell victim to their natural environment. Formation didn't come easy, the gift of form is not great among the Russians [14].

Rationality and irrationality are two opposing ways of perceiving and processing information, they are different, but complementary ways of understanding the world, each of them having its own strengths and weaknesses.

Rationality implies that the information coming from the outside world is dismembered in the process of perception, divided into separate elements that are systematized and arranged in a certain sequence. Thinking and behavior of the rational types is distinguished by stability, firmness, adherence to complete forms. When setting an objective, a rational person outlines the stages of achieving it, comes to the solution of the problem consistently. Such an orientation of the psyche is realized in a stable environment. The weakness of the rational character is its inability to quickly switch to other modes of behavior, inflexibility.

The irrational way of the psyche organization implies the perception of information in the form of an image, which can be either specifically sensual (sensory) or vague (intuitive). The integrity of information perception assumes that it is absorbed by the individual in the unity of all its opposing aspects. An irrational person's behavior is inconsistent.

The formation of the irrational psyche orientation is a kind of a mechanism of adaptation to the complex natural-climatic conditions. Irrationality is a characteristic of the national (social) character that helps understand Russia "with the mind":

the reasons for the rapid changes in political regimes, willingness to accept novelties, inability to push the matter through (inconsistency of political and economic reforms introduced at different times) [15].

Adaptation to natural conditions also determined the nature of the Russian labor which is dominated by emergency and readiness for excessive effort that replaces prudent systematicity as the short summer requires the ability to rise to the task and carry out all the works from seed to harvest in sixty–ninety days. V.O. Klyuchevsky notes that not a single people in Europe is capable of such a short-term labor strain as a Great Russian can develop; but nowhere else in Europe, it seems, is there to be found so much hopeless incapacity for long-sustained, systematic toil as in that same Great Russia. The nature of Russia often makes sport of even the best-laid agricultural plans of the Great Russian peasant: the wayward climate and soil deceive his most modest expectations, and, having grown used to these deceptions, the sagacious Great Russian comes to take a pleasure in choosing the most hopeless and extravagant decision, opposing the whims of their own courage to the whims of Nature. This inclination to tease happiness, to play good luck, is the Great Russian *avos'* (perhaps) [16].

A Russian person does not do everything according to a premeditated plan, but through last-minute improvisation. This is due to the fact that in addressing an issue the irrational person has several options, and the choice is made in the course of the activity. This feature was brilliantly characterized by N.O. Lossky: a clear-cut form appears where specialization has begun, where from the many possibilities a particular one is selected and all efforts are concentrated on it, so in one area an effectively high degree of development is obtained, but the other abilities die off [17].

Thus, the result of an activity was far too often at odds with the pains taken, so "the Great Russian *avos'*" becomes a protective mechanism of the psyche in extreme conditions. On the other hand, "the Great Russian *avos'*" was compensated for by the ability to concentrate on what was important in a particular situation, which always resulted in managing seemingly unmanageable tasks and achieving what seemed to be impossible.

In the context of the modern stage of development of human civilization, these qualities – the ability to prioritize properly, to align with the fast-changing conditions, to employ non-standard methods for achieving results – become especially relevant.

V. CONFESSIONAL LEGITIMATION OF THE ARCHETYPES OF LABOR

In all societies, the type of economic spirit – making sense, setting the objectives, choosing the methods of managing the economy – is determined by religiously sanctioned values. In its meaning orientation, the type of the economic culture of Russia is driven by the non-economic values of Orthodoxy. The meaning is found in the purposes of economic activity. In Russia, it is satisfying the "natural needs" that determined the economy of redistribution (universal equalizing). The archetypes of the Orthodox understanding of the meaning of

economic activity continue nowadays, only their content has changed.

The Russian culture is not labor-centric. Labor is not a self-value, it is regarded as a means of building righteousness, spiritual cleansing. Labor is not a vocation, but a devotion.

For Orthodoxy, regarding personal interest as the main motivation for labor is unacceptable. This means to deprive labor itself of its meaning of general commandment, to make it something accidental, as V.I. Solovyev states in [18]. This implies that labor, transforming into religious devotion, accomplished for the sake of love for God and neighbor, aimed at revealing the talent given by God, is recognized as virtuous labor in Christianity. Labor, whose purpose is only self-assertion and satisfying various passions, pride or vanity, lust for power, labor for the sake of labor is regarded in Orthodoxy as vain, even detrimental to the soul. The Russian culture inspires the man to labor for the good of society.

In Catholicism and Protestantism, the inner motivation for labor is not denied, but external factors are of paramount importance: the objective utility of a particular profession for the society, and profitability.

M. Weber gave a vivid portrait of a Protestant entrepreneur characterized by outstanding strength of character, composure, ethical qualities that ensure customer and staff loyalty so necessary in conducting business in a new way. These are qualities “incompatible with laid-back life and enjoying oneself” [19].

Relying on the principle of individualism, Protestantism created new values aimed at man’s fulfilment in economic activities: personal success, pursuit of wealth, initiative, thrift, striving for individual prominence.

Thus, Orthodoxy has determined the attitude of the Russian people to labor: an activity receives a boost only when its meaning is clear, when it is defined for what’s or whose sake it is necessary to work; without the higher meaning or a great cause, Russian people lose all interest in the affair, become apathetic, seem to be lazy and sluggish. That is, labor was regarded as an instrumental value, not a terminal one, as it is assumed in Protestantism.

A characteristic element of the Orthodox labor ethics is the hedonistic motivation for labor. Orthodox theology emphasized the significance of mastery, master hand for ensuring the success of the activity. Labor proved to be valuable if the process itself gave pleasure to the artisan. The other possible constituent of motivation for labor (labor as a source of profit) was not developed in Orthodoxy.

VI. THE VALUE OF THE STATE IN THE ARCHETYPE OF LABOR

Under the complicated climatic and geopolitical conditions of the formation of the Russian civilization, the Russian people have formed a need to live in a strong state that would take over the functions of defense and volitional mobility. What is more, these conditions have led to the formation of the priority for collective survival and retaining the institute of the commune for a long time. The earliest and most important values of the Russian commune were the commune itself, the person

surviving in it, and the idea of justice as inherent equality, irrespective of the labor input.

G. Gachev suggests imagining this country at its beginning, with a scanty population living in the forests of north-western Rus. Populating and civilizing this space through the natural reproduction of its phlegmatic inert people ... would take tens of thousands of years. However, Russia was surrounded by more dynamic and aggressive peoples, especially from the South ... It was necessary to build a state in defense from the neighbors. However, its mission in Russia is not only military, but also structural: it is the main principal and venturer, the propeller of civilization in this space of forests, steppes, taiga, ocean ice and permafrost, that cannot be mastered relying on an individual’s desire... [20].

The volume of the aggregate surplus product in Eastern Europe was much smaller, and the conditions for producing it were much worse than in Western Europe. This objective law cannot be disregarded by humanity. This circumstance explains the prominent role of the state in the history of our society as the traditional creator and guarantor of the “universal conditions of production”.

Sociological studies [2, 5, 7, 21] show that the labor values of Russians are instrumental in nature and that they ensure the implementation of dominant values, such as family, health. For the entire population of our country, there is a characteristic demand for socially oriented mild conservatism: justice, equal rights, and a strong state are priorities. The paternalistic attitudes of the majority of Russians consist in expecting institutional conditions to be created, fair “rules of the game” to be established, compliance with them to be controlled, and the interests of separate groups to be reconciled [21].

In our opinion, the expectations of Russians pointed out by sociologists show the persistence of the traditional values of a strong state and social equality. These values are rooted at the level of the archetypes of the collective unconscious.

Better working conditions will lead to greater job satisfaction and better attitude to labor, sophisticate the structure of motivation for labor and increase the importance of such motives as active participation in operations management, welfare of the people, social recognition of one’s labor, i.e. structural components constituting the Russian archetype of labor.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study allows us to conclude that in modern conditions the value of labor in the Russian consciousness is determined by the archetype of labor that has been formed by the compressed collective memory in the process of the formation of the Russian civilization, adaptation of a community of people to the natural and social living conditions.

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