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PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW ON IMPORTANCE OF LOVE IN SOCIETY: PLATO VS ARISTOTLE

Abstract

The paper shows specifics and features of understanding of importance of love in society in the legacy of Plato and Aristotle. Explication of the role of love in society in Plato is revealed on the basis of the texts of his two dialogues «Symposium» and «Laws». In the «Symposium», through the speech of Eryximachus, it is emphasized that thanks to love, a complete unity is possible in society as a whole and between people. Love occupies a key place in society and its presence or deficiency leads to certain social phenomena (war, revolution, revival). Love cannot separate people both on a personal and social level. Destructive, destruction brings only hatred. Accordingly, every member of society who wants the society in which he lives to be prosperous and stable, should feel friendly to others, be sensitive and caring to those who need it.

Also, in the «Laws» the ancient Greek thinker talks about how important it is to teach children—future citizens of the policy—who and how to love or hate. This is due to the fact that if the wrong way of understanding love among people develops, then this can lead to the destruction of society. After all, if love is inherent in justice, then it is not able to create disorder, to make destructive, to one degree or another to be a carrier of deviant behavior. Love is always where there is truth, where there is justice. And where there is a lie, a deception, the place of love no longer remains. She calmly and without resentment walks away from those people who have felt a sense of love, and does not knock again until the lie stops.

It is proved that Aristotle is ambivalent about the importance of love for society. To some extent, he continues his predecessors Socrates and Plato, and emphasizes that the state is based on love and friendly relations. Love is not limited only to individual relationships and circumstances, it affects the entire social and cultural life of mankind. At the same time, he opposes them, because he notes the negative consequences for society and the state system of various manifestations of love deviations.

Aristotle also emphasizes that social status is not important for close relationships. Intimacy, closeness to each other is higher than those or other social divisions, beliefs and disagreements. Thus, love overcomes social disunity, thereby creating a special community for which the main thing is the good of Other.

Keywords: love, society, Plato, Aristotle, ancient philosophy, justice, philosophy of love.

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ФІЛОСОФСЬКИЙ ПОГЛЯД НА ЗНАЧЕННЯ ЛЮБОВІ У СУСПІЛЬСТВІ: ПЛАТОН VS АРІСТОТЕЛЬ

Резюме

У роботі показано специфіку та особливості розуміння важливості любові в суспільстві у спадщині Платона та Арістотеля.

Розкрито роль любові в суспільстві у Платона на основі текстів його двох діалогів «Бенкет» і «Законо». У «Бенкеті», через промову Еріксімаха, наголошується, що завдяки любові можливе повне єднання в суспільстві в цілому та між людьми. Любов займає ключове місце в суспільстві і її наявність або дефіцит призводить до певних соціальних явищ (війни, революції, відродження). Любов не може розділити людей як на особистому, так і на соціальному рівні. Деструктив, руйнування приносить лише ненависть. Відповідно, кожен громадянин, який хоче, щоб суспільство, в якому він живе, було процвітаючим та стабільним, повинно відчувати себе привітним до інших, бути чуйним та дбайливим до тих, хто цього потребує.

Крім того, у «Законах» давньогрецький мислитель розповідає про те, як важливо навчити дітей — майбутніх громадян — кого і як любити чи ненавидіти. Це пов'язано з тим, що якщо неправильний спосіб розуміння любові розвивається серед людей, то це може призвести до руйнування суспільства. Адже, якщо коханню притаманна справедливість, то вона не здатна створити розлад, зробити щось руйнівне, в тій чи іншій мірі бути носієм девіантної поведінки. Любов завжди там, де є правда, де є справедливість. І там, де є брехня, обман, місця коханню вже не залишається. Вона спокійно і без обурення відходить від тих людей, які не відчули почуття любові, і не стукає знову, поки брехня не припиниться.

Доведено, що Арістотель неоднозначно ставиться щодо важливості любові для суспільства. Певною мірою він продовжує своїх попередників

Сократа і Платона і наголошує, що держава заснована на любові та дружніх стосунках, тим самим підкреслюючи, що любов не обмежується лише індивідуальними стосунками та обставинами і впливає на все суспільне та культурне життя людства. У той же час він опонує їм, бо відзначає негативні наслідки для суспільства та державної систем, коли проявляються час від часу різні роду любовні девіації.

Арістотель також підкреслює, що соціальний статус не важливий для близьких стосунків. Близькість, інтимність один до одного вища, ніж ті чи інші соціальні поділи, переконання та розбіжності. Таким чином, любов долає соціальну роз'єднаність, тим самим створюючи особливу спільноту, для якої головне — благо Іншого.

Ключові слова: любов, суспільство, Платон, Арістотель, антична філософія, справедливість, філософія любові.

Introduction

The relevance of the topic of this study is due to the fact that we are currently observing trends in society, which are referred to by Western researchers as «chaos of love» (W. Beck), «confluent love» (A. Giddens) or «liquid love» (Z. Bauman). These processes challenge the understanding of both fundamental ethical categories such as love, freedom, responsibility, justice, and human nature in general. This situation prompts us to turn to philosophical thought as a source of deep wisdom, the universal phenomena of being a person, including and love. Plato and Aristotle are undoubtedly one of the iconic figures in the historical and philosophical discourse in the context of understanding the idea of love.

The scientific work of Ivan Boichenko [1], Anselm Grun [2], Vladimir Solovyov [7], Pitirim Sorokin [8] and others became the theoretical and methodological basis of this study. Also, one can mention the scientific works of David Konstan [3], Constance Meinwald [4], David Naugle [5] & Bruce Russell [6], in which certain aspects of the philosophical understanding of love in the works of Aristotle and Plato are investigated. However, they do not find a comparative analysis of the understanding of the role of love in society in the works of two titans of ancient philosophical thought.

Therefore, the aim of our article is an attempt to reveal the specifics and peculiarities of Plato and Aristotle's explication of the importance of love in society.

Research methods

The key methods for us were dialectic, which allowed us to identify unity and contradiction in understanding of love between Plato and Aristotle, as well as comparative, with the help of which it was possible to compare certain aspects of the concepts of two ancient Greek philosophers. Also, rational reconstruction

became important for us, because it made it possible to identify hidden meanings in the texts of the studied ancient thinkers.

Results and discussion

Platos understanding of importance of love in society

The main aspects in which Plato considers the role of love in society are the dialogue «Symposium» and «Laws». Let's consider it in more detail.

So, analyzing the role and importance of love in human life, related to its physiology and passion for music, Eryximachus goes on to find out the relationship between Erot and society and being. He describes in detail how Erot covers all life, and notes that even the properties of the seasons depend on which love is now. If the moderate love conquer the cold and warmth then they combine in a rational and harmonious way, the year is fertile, brings to all living creatures health, without causing any of them harm. On the contrary, it happens to nature and all beings, if they are conquered by ugly Erot. Ancient Greek physician emphasizes: «Furthermore all sacrifices and the whole province of divination, which is the art of communion between gods and men-these, I say, are concerned only with the preservation of the good and the cure of the evil love. For all manner of impiety is likely to ensue if, instead of accepting and honouring and reverencing the harmonious love in all his actions, a man honours the other love...» [Symp. 188c – d].

Indeed, «The energy of love not only increases the longevity of individuals, but also the period of life of society and organizations. Social organizations, built mainly on hatred, conquest, coercion, like the empires of Alexander the Great, Caesar, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Napoleon, Hitler, usually had a very short life – several years, decades, rarely several centuries. This is the case with various organizations where non-selfish love plays a minor role. The average life expectancy of small businesses such as pharmacies, iron or grocery stores... is only about four years. Large trading firms (which have participated in USA and European commodity exchange) survive on average about 29 years. Even the life span of most states rarely goes beyond one or two centuries. Long live the largest ethical-religious organizations, such as Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. All these organizations existing for more than one millennium – some more than two millennia – and there is no sign of their disintegration in the near future...Plato and Aristotle were absolutely right in their claim that true friendship or love is the most vital material in all genuine social relations» [1, p. 128–129].

Therefore, it is logical the opinion of the ancient physician that only Erot, who wants the beautiful, leads people including to justice [Symp. 188d]. The same opinion is expressed by another member of the «Symposium», Agafon, who states that justice is an ontological characteristic, an attribute of love [See: Symp. 197a]. Plato's disciple, Aristotle, who agrees with the teacher, emphasizes

in «Rhetoric» the connection of love and justice to the fact that we love people who always find justice in everything [Rhet 2, II 1381a]. Without justice, love would not be able to be called and exist as love. Accordingly, anything in the world can be unjust, but only love, as the gift of heaven, is always where justice is, and where truth is.

If love, in Eryximachus's opinion, leads to justice, it means that in itself it is always just, because it never does what contradicts its nature. Love never becomes hatred, envy, ruthless, impatient, passionate jealousy. She exists and always acts according to what it is. Another thing is that people are used to her as a passion, to see only joy, pleasure and happiness. Thus, by analyzing the main aspects of Eryximachus's speech in Plato's «Symposium» that his understanding of the meaning and meaning of love in the world, we can conclude that love occupies a key place in society and its presence or deficiency leads to certain social phenomena (wars, revolutions).

However, it is worth noting that the analysis of the investigated issues is not only in the «Symposium», but also in the «Laws». In this dialogue, Plato seems to continue Eryximachus's thoughts on the importance of love in society, emphasizing that various kinds of love practices help or hinder unity and stability in society.

Describing «cultures of love» in the various policies of Ancient Greece, Plato writes in the aforementioned work: «Now the gymnasia and common meals do a great deal of good, and yet they are a source of evil in civil troubles; as is shown in the case of the Milesian, and Boeotian, and Thurian youth, among whom these institutions seem always to have had a tendency to degrade the ancient and natural custom of love below the level, not only of man, but of the beasts. The charge may be fairly brought against your cities above all others, and is true also of most other states which especially cultivate gymnastics. Whether such matters are to be regarded jestingly or seriously, I think that the pleasure is to be deemed natural which arises out of the intercourse between men and women; but that the intercourse of men with men, or of women with women, is contrary to nature, and that the bold attempt was originally due to unbridled lust. The Cretans are always accused of having invented the story of Ganymede and Zeus because they wanted to justify themselves in the enjoyment of unnatural pleasures by the practice of the god whom they believe to have been their lawgiver. Leaving the story, we may observe that any speculation about laws turns almost entirely on pleasure and pain, both in states and in individuals: these are two fountains which nature lets flow, and he who draws from them where and when, and as much as he ought, is happy; and this holds of men and animals—of individuals as well as states; and he who indulges in them ignorantly and at the wrong time, is the reverse of happy». [Leg. 636c-e]. He says that the only type of family to be supported by the state is the biological unit, the marriage between «one man and one woman [See: Leg. 836c].

Therefore, in the third book of «Laws», he states that the task of the state is to educate citizens in what is to be loved and to be hated [See: Leg. 653c]. In this context, the ancient Greek thinker emphasizes the social significance of human feelings, their influence on certain social processes and events. In order to instruct properly, one must combine mind and love [See: Leg. 688b]. Plato, both in his youth and on the slope of years, holds the view that reason and love are not antithetical, but their synthesis is capable of helping people through life.

It is necessary to learn to love and hate because of the need to understand the false love of self. Plato warns the disciples and condemns to this manifestation of love. In the fifth book of Laws, he writes: «Of all evils the greatest is one which in the souls of most men is innate, and which a man is always excusing in himself and never correcting; I mean, what is expressed in the saying that 'Every man by nature is and ought to be his own friend. ' Whereas the excessive love of self is in reality the source to each man of all offences; for the lover is blinded about the beloved, so that he judges wrongly of the just, the good, and the honourable, and thinks that he ought always to prefer himself to the truth. But he who would be a great man ought to regard, not himself or his interests, but what is just, whether the just act be his own or that of another. Through a similar error men are induced to fancy that their own ignorance is wisdom, and thus we who may be truly said to know nothing, think that we know all things; and because we will not let others act for us in what we do not know, we are compelled to act amiss ourselves. Wherefore let every man avoid excess of self-love, and condescend to follow a better man than himself, not allowing any false shame to stand in the way» [Leg. 731e-732a].

Therefore, we can emphasize that Plato was engaged in understanding the role of love in society throughout his life. In the texts of the «Symposium» and «Laws» dialogues, we see some transformations in him and complementing the topic under study, but the key is that love is the basis for the formation of society as such and for existence in peace and stability internally and externally.

Key aspects of Aristotle`s view on role of love for society

First of all, it should be emphasized that it is in the treatise «Politics» that the most fully reflected socio-philosophical, to some extent, even political-philosophical vision of Aristotle phenomenon of love. Undoubtedly, the analysis of love in this work, in particular, and throughout the Stagirite corps, is quite small in volume and one that cannot be called a social (political) philosophical concept or doctrine of love. However, in our opinion, some of the sentences about love in Politics is worthy of detailed illumination for a fuller and more complete understanding of the specifics of the explication of love by Aristotle.

In the author`s view, in the context of this part of this report, it is advisable to highlight the following major issues:

- 1) love and power;
- 2) love and laws (justice);

First of all, the ancient thinker in the work «Politics» says an association of royal power with the love of parents for children. The first book of this work states the following: «The government of children should be kingly; for the power of the father over the child is founded in affection and seniority, which is a species of kingly government; for which reason Homer very properly calls Zeus «the father of gods and men» (*See: Il. I 544 – V.T.*), who was king of both these; for nature requires that a king should be of the same species with those whom he governs, though superior in some particulars, as is the case between the elder and the younger, the father and the son» [Polit. 1259a11–17].

Therefore, as we see Aristotle sees a similarity between one of the individual manifestations of love and social. According to the ancient Greek philosopher, the statesman should not neglect people; he should not abuse the power that is in his hands, but he should treat his subjects and the people as such with care. Indeed, «love does not eat itself up in hidden malice. It is marked by calmness and strength, warmth and clarity. Love is never offended, even if it seems insulting at first. It eliminates misunderstandings but does not close before aggression» [2, p. 104–105]. The reason for this attitude of the ruler to his people Stagirit sees is that everyone who is in a particular social, state formation, are people, and therefore equal in nature.

Continuing to reflect on the importance of love in society, it should be noted that the text «Politics» reflects both positive and negative evaluations of the direct impact of love relationships on the development of the state and society. In the second book of this treatise, Stagirit emphasizes the overwhelmingly positive influence: «we think that friendship is the greatest good which can happen to any city, as nothing so much prevents seditions: and amity in a city is what Socrates commends above all things, which appears to be, as indeed he says, the effect of friendship; as we learn from Aristophanes in the *Erotics*, who says, that those who love one another from the excess of that passion, desire to breathe the same soul, and from being two to be blended into one» [Polit. 1262b].

Ancient Greek philosopher stresses that the power of friendship and love is not limited to personal relationships. As P. Sorokin rightly points out, love goes beyond individual relationships and circumstances, it affects the entire social and cultural life of mankind. It acts as a driving force for man's creative progress toward a fuller eternal truth, a more worthy eternal virtue, a purer eternal beauty, a deeper eternal freedom and the most beautiful eternal forms of social life and institutions. Throughout history, every positive step in this direction has been inspired and «fueled» by love, while the regressive step back from these values has been driven by hatred [8, p. 134].

In this context, it will be appropriate to recall the opinion of the well-known Ukrainian philosopher I. Boychenko that the historical (social) process «is not only created but also internalized by each of us, forming the inner, spiritual

world of the individual. Therefore, in a certain sense, not only world history lives in human individuals, but is realized in people (their activities, relationships, communication, consciousness and other manifestations of their existence)...» [1, p. 95]. One of these relationships, of course, is love.

Therefore, Plato, as Aristotle's teacher in the famous dialogue «Symposium», emphasizes the importance of the existence (emergence) of love in human society. He states that it would be very good if the state, society, or army consisted exclusively of those who love and those who love them, because they would not do anything wrong and shameful, as the subjects of the discourse of love. Therefore, summarizing the ancient Greek thinker writes: «For the principle which ought to be the guide of men who would nobly live--that principle, I say, neither kindred, nor honour, nor wealth, nor any other motive is able to implant so well as love» («ὁ γὰρ χρῆ ἀνθρώποις ἡγεῖσθαι παντὸς τοῦ βίου τοῖς μέλλουσι καλῶς βιώσεσθαι, τοῦτο οὔτε συγγένεια οἷα τε ἐμποιεῖν οὕτω καλῶς οὔτε τιμαὶ οὔτε πλοῦτος οὐτ' ἄλλο οὐδὲν ὡς ἔρωσ») [Symp. 178c – d].

However, at the same time, Aristotle, on the basis of historical events, says on the negative and destructive aspects of the influence of love, and more precisely of its various deviations, namely, mad passion or marital betrayal or same-sex relationships [See: Polit. 1303b20–25, 1306a32–1306b3, 1311a33–1311b23]. It would be logical to ask why this is happening?

The main difference between love and its various simulacra, says P. Sorokin, is that the soothing power of love is the main force that limits long-term and life-threatening catastrophes in the lives of certain peoples. The systematic study of all such disasters in the history of Ancient Egypt, Babylon, China, India, Persia, Israel, Greece, Rome, and the Western countries shows that all such disasters were eventually overcome by the altruistic ennoblement of the people, cultures and social institutions of these peoples [8, p. 132].

Also in this treatise does not miss the problem of the correlation of love and justice, the law. Aristotle, analyzing the laws, said: «This system of polity does indeed recommend itself by its good appearance and specious pretences to humanity; and when first proposed to any one, must give him great pleasure, as he will conclude it to be a wonderful bond of friendship, connecting all to all; particularly when any one censures the evils which are now to be found in society, as arising from properties not being common, I mean the disputes which happen between man and man, upon their different contracts with each other; those judgments which are passed in court in consequence of fraud, and perjury, and flattering the rich, none of which arise from properties being private, but from the vices of mankind» [Polit. 1263b15–22].

Also in this treatise does not miss the problem of the ratio of love and justice, the law. Aristotle, analyzing the laws, said: «Legislation may seem good and based on philanthropy. Knowing him, he will gladly agree with him, thinking that under such legislation, everyone will be amazed by the love of all, especially

when one becomes exposed to their evil that exists in modern states because of the lack of commonality of property in them: I mean processes debt collection, court cases on charges of perjury, flattery before the rich» [Polit. 1263b15–22].

Aristotle denies the close bond of love and justice. Justice is guided by the fact that it draws its conclusions overwhelmingly from the perspective of the merkantile person. Instead, in the discourse of love, the main value, the meaning of life and the «pole of attraction» is always the Other, that is, the person I love. That is why the opinion of the Russian philosopher V. Solovyov in the work «The Meaning of Love» is correct: «the lies and evils of selfishness consist in the exclusive recognition of the unconditional significance for oneself and in the denial of it to others; the mind shows us that this is unjustified and unjust, but love directly in fact abolishes such an unjust attitude, forcing us not in the unconscious consciousness but in the inner feeling and vital will to accept for ourselves the unconditional importance of Other» [8, 507].

Love as the basis of the unity of society: Ukrainian realities

In our realities this problem of philosophy of love may also be relevant in the context of the current difficult situation in the country, which is marked by armed conflict in the east of Ukraine. This problem also becomes important, since different regions of the country have their own specifics of understanding history, well-known historical figures, events, and traditions. Therefore, to consolidate Ukrainian society, it is necessary to look not for what separates, but for what unites, something that can overcome indifference, lethargy, and extensiveness. Such a phenomenon is, of course, love. Such a value of culture as love, from the point of view of its expression, does not require substantiation, it itself is the basis for understanding the world and human relations to it, itself is a mirror reflecting the originality of modern realities of human being.

The importance of love as a unifying factor for Ukrainian society is also due to the fact that it implies tolerance and understanding of the Other, regardless of any political, religious, or social differences. Even Plato wrote, speaking of Eros as a hermeneutus (interpreter), a god who provides an understanding of the mysteries for people [See.: Symp. 203e], thereby emphasizing the importance of love in interpersonal, social relationships. Only love, like nothing else, that can overcome those or other barriers that very often put forward by society.

Enduring significance for any society, incl. and Ukrainian is occupied by love, since it is she who teaches mercy, sacrifice, compassion and mutual assistance. Aristotle in «Rhetoric» emphasizes that we love those who help us. Therefore, what matters in interpersonal relationships is not envy, but support, not indifference, but concern. This becomes especially important when the country is in one or another difficult circumstances. It is mercy and mutual assistance, and not hatred and indifference, that can help consolidate society.

Conclusions

Thus, having analyzed the views of Plato and Aristotle on the role and significance of love in their legacy, we can draw the following conclusions:

Explication of the role of love in society in the legacy of Plato is revealed on the basis of the texts of his two dialogues «Symposium» and «Laws». In the «Symposium», through the speech of Eryximachus, it is emphasized that thanks to love, a complete unity is possible in society as a whole and between people. In the «Laws» the ancient Greek philosopher says that if an incorrect way of understanding love develops among people, then this can lead to the destruction of society.

Aristotle considering this problem in «Politics» analyzes the following two points: love and power, love and laws (justice). Speaking of power, Stagirit says that the ruler should love the people in the same way that the father of children loves, thereby avoiding preferences for any of the people, and also so that there are no disagreements in society. However, Aristotle also says that love and justice do not have a close relationship, since they have different foundations and goals in in public (social) relations.

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