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**PHENOMENON OF MALE SEXUALITY
IN MODERN RUSSIA – METHODOLOGY OF COGNITION**

**[Жаров Л.В., Агличева О.Ю., Ибрагимова А.А., Тищенко Е.О.
Феномен мужской сексуальности в современной России: к методологии
познания]**

In Russia and in the world of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical thought there is a large number of studies on male sexuality. Male sexuality is studied in different aspects - performative, figurative, virtuality, identity, compilation, discursive and communicative, linguistic practices and hyper-reality, in short everything that allows currently post-modern installation in philosophizing. One of the relevant problems in the field of study and comprehension of sexuality is the problem of the norm and deviations from it, the problem of justifying the norm itself and its historical evolution. It is actively developed the problem of androgynism having socio-cultural and spiritual regulatives of its development. The article raised the question of an adequate methodological approach to sexual research, the relationship between scientific and non-scientific approaches, taking into account the state of post-nonclassical science itself.

Key words: sexuality, male sexuality, masculinity, norm and pathology, androgynism.

More than 5 years ago there died an outstanding domestic scientist, academician of Russian Academy of Sciences I.S. Kon. One of his last books was finished by him with a meaningful phrase “Protect (from) the boys”. This is the result of his long-standing considerations about fate of male sexuality in the world and in Russia on different stages of history. The book had an intriguing title – “The child is father of the man”, that sounded paradoxical for common consciousness of an ordinary person but it reflected the deep essence of the processes taking place in the modern world. The burden of these paradoxes was the feeling of an all-round crisis of “manliness” and “sexuality” phenomena at the beginning of XXI century in the number of West-European countries and in Russia.

It's evident that this is a classical sample of a complex social problem and its decision is possible with taking into account economical, socio-political, psychological and medical-social factors as well as the peculiarities of national mentality and the 'image' of a man in consciousness of our contemporaries. Numerous discussions about a 'true man' witness this fact. Such a man becomes extinct because for some reason our glorious forefathers didn't demise us their talents and skills, including sexual and reproductive ones.

There are numerous attempts of philosophical-sociological and psychological-pedagogical thought to diagnose the present day state of male sexuality in the world and in Russia and to foresee its nearest future. We can mention some interesting works of the recent years by G.Sergatsky, Y.P. Zinchenko, S.T. Vorkachyov, K.Martynov, M. Konina, A. Kholmogorova, T. Kochetkova, O. Litvin, A. Vityazeva, G. Borozinets, M. Epstein, R.L. Perin and others where male sexuality is studied in different aspects – performativeness, figurativeness, virtuality, identity, compilativeness, discursiveness and communicativeness, language practices and hyper-reality – in a word, all the phenomena, accepted by the present day postmodern line in philosophy. At the same time such a superrich palette of poorly-grounded opinions has led to a considerable descent of authority and value of modern philosophical thought, aiming at decision of topically important problems of a modern man, including the aspect of male sexual behavior. One thing is clear – everything is being changed very quickly, traditional norms and values regulate a modern man's behavior badly and the proposed new norms and projects in this sphere just shock consciousness and, as many people believe, are really dangerous for a man's existence and moreover for his sexual and reproductive functions in their traditional interpreting. It can be and should be discussed, though nowadays philosophical considerations often resemble a young recruit who has been taught to assemble and disassemble a machine-gun, but who hasn't been taught to shoot. Of course, philosophical thought can't influence these processes directly but it can and must help a man to find the sense of his private life and potentiality of mankind in general, not being limited with simulacra and hyper-reality. There has always been an eternal question – what was the degree of influence of personal sexual practices and ideas of scientists and researchers on their theoretical conceptions? In other words – did they describe the objective reality of sexual relations or were they the products of their personal, subjective

and as many scientists believe, perverse perception of sexuality, that caused their evident “morbid” interest to such problems. In this respect their self-searching in the depths of their abnormal sexuality can hardly be regarded as science achievements in classical interpreting. In fact, modern philosophy of science emphasizes its post-nonclassical image where subjective-objective relations of classics look like anachronism, which has given its place to a narrative, inseparable from personal perception of sexuality. In this respect pure sexology can't exist by definition, and its “distilled” advice doesn't work in practice [1-3].

In the sphere of studying and cognizing sexuality there is one more topical problem, that has been worrying mankind for centuries and nowadays it's as far from being solved as thousands years ago. The matter is the notion of a norm and its deviations, about reasoning of a norm itself and its historical evolution, taking into account a postulate of modern sexology that there is no perversion that wouldn't be considered as a norm in the particular society on the particular stage of its development. A quarter of a century ago an American feminist Judith Butler published a work under a symptomatic title “Gender trouble – feminism and the subversion of identity” and it stimulated researches in the sphere of a queer theory as an original philosophy of overcoming sexual and other normativeness. For this period of time anxiety, or as J. Butler said, “performative flexibility” hasn't been settled but has become even more topical and has gained new rather shocking forms of panic.

So everyone who writes about sexuality has to grasp a number of questions – who is he according to gender characteristics and if a male can analyze female sexuality (let's remember Freud's deep doubts in this respect); if the author expresses some objective truth and whether it is provable or not; if the things written by him are his personal narrative, reflecting his own sexual life script, just like the one understood by J. Money as a “disposing of a pack of sexual cards” during his own life-time. At the same time we should remember long-standing or even centuries-old discussions between nominalists and realists which now have the image of polemics between social constructivists (followers of nominalism) and essentialists (followers of realism). With the reference to the problem of sexuality it means that a human gender is either mainly essential, i.e. given by the God or the Nature or they are the fruits of social constructions, these or other social “signs” that determine a variety of manifestations of a social gender, denoted by

the term “gender”. If the first position is right (and it’s supported by followers of conservative ideas, who suppose that the notion of gender leads mankind to a dead lock), a man, being born the same, must have and display only specific male qualities, to be phallus-centric and everything that reminds of a female in him is regarded as a drawback or a vice. The other point of view of social constructivism proceeds from the fact that a biological base of gender is cardinally modified with the language, culture and especially politics, that means diversity of gender roles and puts a man to the position of a free choice of different existence styles including sexuality manifestations.

Besides, from olden time there has come and is being actively developed now the problem of androgyny, which unlike the problem of hermaphroditism, has not biological and genetic but socio-cultural and spiritual regulators of its development. On the domestic ground in every day consciousness it acquired the form of opposition: “muzhik” – “baba” as a normal variant of understanding the essence, and “muzhebaba”, “moonlight people”, “the third gender” as they were called by V.V.Rosanov at the beginning of the XX century. He wrote prophetically in 1916, when there were no problems with male sexuality and procreation: “A male degenerates, males degenerate. A male sex degenerates. The sun fades” [6]. One century has passes and we have to think over and over the process of degeneration of a male sex, its reasons and consequences.

If we accept the fact that determinants of sexual behavior of a man include the notion of gender (taking into account its complex hierarchical structure), gender as a social construct of rules of behavior, orders and bans, peculiar to the given culture on the definite stage of its development and finally a personal self-determination of a man as a result of his free choice, we have a peculiar sexual triad. We can find in it the specific expression of triplicity, triadic idea of everything existing that was the matter of interest of researchers of spiritual systems of the East and the West as well as physicists and mathematicians (academician B. Rauchenbach and others). Theoretically we can single out a natural producing source – the source of the phenomenon itself (sex in its differentiation), corresponding to the notion of the Supreme, the dual source derived from Him and connecting the world with a man (God the Son in Christian traditions) and finally spirituality as a substance of a personal choice and formation of the individual path of sexual biography (the analogue of the Holy Spirit). Does

the scheme bear any relationship to reality or is it a construct of a restless mind having some pivot? – that is the matter to find out. One thing is evident now – the author who is going to describe and explain such complicated reality as a human reality and in particular, male sexuality, has to determine with the research methodological tools, neither making a fetish of it nor yielding to temptation of methodological anarchism.

The problem of the appropriate methodological approach to sexological researches joins with the problem of the choice of a philosophical point of view on the problems of human sexuality, on correlation of scientific and nonscientific approaches, taking into consideration the present day post-nonclassical condition of the science itself and a kaleidoscope of nonscientific and pseudoscientific approaches and interpretations. The striving to find some magic methodological wand, which would disclose all the mysteries in this sphere of a human life evidently belongs to the past. Starting from the works by M. Foucault, G. Deleuze, J. Derrida in the modern Western thought there is a more and more deeply rooted idea of impossibility to understand sexuality apart from in a sign-symbolic form which, in its turn, became the reflection of “multiplication” and “degeneration” of gender, losing its autonomy, as well as its principle indeterminacy in the manner of schizoanalysis by Deleuze-Guattari. That is why the problem how to write about sexuality – manlike, womanlike, androgynelike or “neutrally”, soaring above gender distinctions - is topical both for Western and domestic thought. We can agree with the conclusion of M. Mozheyko about sexual rhizomorph, its permanent proceduralness, nonlinearity unlike “direct” and “linear” sex which aim is to fertilize plus some crude pleasure.

In some measure the present day condition of mass sexual culture with its nonincumbency, randomness, striving to get everything for money and to bear no responsibility estranges a man from his essential characteristics in their classical interpretation and makes him choose the corresponding methodological tools in order to get at least some understanding of the processes going on. It's told on male sexual culture in its present day state. The main message of this analysis is the exciting and quite paradoxical character of this phenomenon, its deepest divergence where incongruous things go well together and at the same time sufficient stability of the system in general is being kept. A Russian man's sexual behavior seems to be his challenge to the God, the Nature, and often to the society

and despite all these things he survives and functions though the latter causes more and more questions. It doesn't mean that he has some inborn abilities for such a behavior in the manner of the conception of absolute primordialism, verging on the idea of Peculiar People.

To keep the God's image inside and to become similar to him as much as one can, to direct one's own wife and children, to keep the Gospel commandments and most of all love for one's neighbor and the God in everyday life, to be ready for death and to remember about eternal life hourly – that is the main task of a traditionally imagined Russian man, his “quintessence”. He can be subject to sin attack and mainly in the sphere of fornication, i.e. wandering, deviation from the Truth, thus breaking national traditions. The origin of such a state can be both internal and external; “spoilage” comes both from western influences and from one's own irrational heart. Consolidation of faith, protection from the harmful foreign influence – these are the things that a modern man who observes orthodox traditions has to do.

Evolution of the notion “manliness” in the domestic history is still waiting for its researchers, but what already exists in the data array, starting from classical works by N. Berdyaev, V. Ivanov, V. Rosanov, I. Kon witnesses about multifoldness of this notion and the necessity to go behind the limits of a classical opposition “muzhik” to “baba” at least as a personified opposition of Logos to Eros, Spirit and Flesh. If a woman is sexuality itself, a man can possess this attribute as a specific “makeweight” to the central core of his personality [4].

That means that a man has to become a male not according to his external genitalia or the level of hormones or even according to centimeters reflecting the phallic state but according to the complex of those socio-psychological characteristics which make him a “man” in this particular culture and civilization. It seems to be evident and finds its reflection in common maxims like the one, saying that the main erotogenic zone of a man is his brain but not some unit made from the mixture of a cash machine, a phallus imitator and body armor that is often interpreted as a real “manliness”. In a thousand-voiced female's entreaty about a he-man who has already become something like yeti, one can hear these particular notes. Having money, power, glory and sexual tirelessness which can be even based on the latest achievements of andrology and medical technologies are supposed to be the main male “trump cards” to secure for him of the chosen

female(s) either for procreation or for confirming his status of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (I.Kon).

In other words, male essentialism was opposed to female constructivism that can characterize interconnection of the paradigms of manliness and womanliness in their modern interpretation. We should note that the existing conceptualizations of manliness in the Western thought – discourses of its deficit, masculinity (as a way to overcome this deficit with the help of ‘domination’ and differences, as a search of a primary “male energy”) get some different characteristics on domestic basis in the form of the ability to be a “muzhk” [5]. It is the matter of a strategy to survive in a severe male society with the stress on patriarchal relations spreading on family-marital and sexual behavior. The latter is expressed in a hegemonic position of a man and passiveness and obedience of a woman. The type of behavior based on the principle of “the maximal manliness” is not the only one in mass consciousness of a modern man in Russia and the notion of “manliness” is wider than the one of “masculinity”. The first one has a much more symbolic character reflecting those deep constructs of a male’s essence that appeared in domestic history and were reflected in the well-known book characters of “puer aeternus”, “a superfluous man” who is going to a date as if it were the execution.

There is an argument of two basic lines – one of them asserts the necessity of Absolute in life because without this Absolute life and especially sexuality would lose their meaning in the face of Eternity and death while the second one is based on the existential conception of freedom and demands to exclude the notion of Absolute in the same categorical way, emphasizing the idea of self-constructing of the meaning of life by the individual himself.

Speaking about the nearest future of male sexuality there are many both scientific prognoses and parascientific maxims. They forecast disappearing of ordinary condoms and introduction of high means of non-mechanical male contraception, the growth of the number of man-“herbivores” who prefer deep sleep to sex, widespread operations to grow penis from one’s own cells, developing of the so-called “teledildonics”, giving way to virtual sex, appearing of sex robots, etc.

Comprehending once more the mentioned triad (genome, environment and one’s own activity) as applied to the reality of modern Russia we should emphasize the importance of one’s own activity in working out of a new standard of manliness and

its specific interpretations in sexual and reproductive behavior. It is connected with complicated processes of the world-outlook self-determination of men, taking into account the present day situation and forecasts of the nearest future.

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