



PHILOSOPHY OF MOTHERHOOD AND CHILDHOOD IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENTIFIC REFLECTION

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the main philosophical views on the phenomenon of motherhood in the history of philosophy, all the diversity of opinions on the relationship between mother and child.

Keywords: motherhood, philosophical views, Antiquity, medieval philosophy, Renaissance, philosophy of modern times, diversity.

In the history of social thought, motherhood is a multifaceted phenomenon that is being studied by representatives of different scientific directions. Separate aspects of motherhood are represented in most humanitarian scientific disciplines, but at the same time, a comprehensive study of this category does not exist. Considering motherhood through the prism of the history of philosophy, one of the main forms of human spiritual culture, one can trace the history of the development of this concept, identify its social and cultural status.

The growth of interest in the topic of motherhood in antiquity gave rise to philosophical teachings about the essence of motherhood as a socio-cultural phenomenon and its significance for society.

In the concepts of ancient philosophers, the topic of motherhood was considered through the prism of state requests. The main idea for this period was the strengthening and development of statehood. The concept of motherhood was based on natural and biological positions. Children, as the ancient philosophers Plato and Aristotle believed, were an important component for men, and maternal feelings, thus,



were initially reduced, being determined individually by a woman. According to the teachings of Aristotle, each family is part of the state, and motherhood is not a value within the "male" type of culture [1, p. 3-5].

In Plato's treatise "Laws" it was stated that "every marriage should be useful for the state" [2, p. 30-33]. In *The State*, he noted that the education of citizens of an ideal state had to begin with the selection of parents, since in the interests of the state, the best men and women had to unite for the birth of children [3, p. 43-47]. His teachings also indicated the timing of childbirth: for women - from twenty to forty years, and for men - from the end of the best time for running and up to fifty-five years. This indicates that fertility, in addition to biological and socio-psychological, was also of national importance. In this regard, children from the moment of birth were brought up separately from their parents in order to understand the basic concepts of statehood.

Thus, in ancient philosophy, the phenomenon of motherhood depended on the dominant male culture. The oppression of the instinct of motherhood and the reduction of maternal virtue in women are characteristic features of that period. Philosophers viewed motherhood as a manifestation of the biological and social aspects of the life of society, as a social order of a pragmatic and utilitarian nature. However, there was another point of view, the representatives of which were the ancient Greek playwrights Euripides and Sophocles. They revealed the spiritual tragedies of society, criticizing the traditional worldview, which neglects the spiritual world of a woman and her main roles as wife and mother. The works of Euripides (*Praying, Hecuba, The Trojan Women, Medea*) revealed the deep tragedy of a woman's life. The images of virtuous wives and suffering mothers were the main ones in his works.

In medieval philosophy, the topic of motherhood was rethought and the main roles of women began to be considered in the context of the Bible.

The ideal forms that the church preached could not be correlated with motherhood, which is realized through the birth of children. Therefore, during this period, a woman becomes a bearer of sin and evil. This tradition was revealed in his concept by Aurelius Augustine. In his philosophical teaching, there is an idea of a



saving mission for a woman-mother, who was supposed to atone for original sin through piety, faith and love for a child.

At the same time, medieval culture is peculiar in that motherhood and specifically a woman were considered in two main guises: Eve (a woman who gives life, but becomes a "vessel of evil") and Saint Mary (a woman who represents virgin purity and femininity). Thus, the mother was viewed as the bearer of the divine seal, transmitting universal values, and motherhood was interpreted as a given value.

The shift of philosophical views towards man and society originated in the Renaissance. The emerging philosophical teachings were the opposite of the previous stage, oriented towards religion. Renaissance philosophers viewed a woman as an object of love, in which beauty was revealed (Guido Cavalcanti's "Chancellor of Love", Marsilio Ficino "On Love", Agnolo Firenzuola "On the Beauty of Women"). Motherhood was presented as the physiological essence of women and was considered in relation to childbirth. Maternal care and the difficulties associated with motherhood were perceived as natural. The main image at this stage of culture is "Madonna and Child".

In the culture of the New Age, the problem of motherhood is revealed from a different position, as it becomes an object of study for teachers, lawyers and politicians. The idea of educating a new citizen is being formed, putting a sense of duty at the head of everything, which exceeds his own interests (scientific philosophy).

The representative of this period F. Bacon believed that knowledge becomes reliable only if it does not contradict the sensory experience of a person, formed using the method of induction. The theme of motherhood in his works is considered through the two roles of women: wife and mother. He considered the main thing in motherhood to be childbirth, based on the idea of love as the law of life and the level of humanity in a person.

Another representative of the New Age, T. Hobbes, in his work "On Man" compared the appearance of the individual as a representative of the natural world and the formation of plants. He noted that "when a person arises, the matter of the embryo is the mother's blood, which is set in motion by the fertilizing juice of both parents and from which the human body is formed" [4, p. 100-122].

Philosopher and teacher D. Locke proposed his idea of raising a gentleman on pragmatism and rationalism, preparing for real life. He argued that the mind is a



"blank slate", and knowledge is formed only through experience gained through sensory perception [5]. From the above, it follows that the philosophical works of the modern era were based on the significance of natural law. Motherhood and the attitude towards it were determined through the totality of moral and ethical qualities necessary for a woman-mother to raise a child-citizen.

The philosophical teachings of the German classics were similar to the teachings of the period of Antiquity: they saw the purpose of a woman in procreation (biological aspect), and considered motherhood as a "life program". Thus, GVF Hegel pointed to the secondary position of women in the family. The second, the social nature of man, in his opinion, is the moral, which is above the first - the individual. It has three forms of manifestation: family, civil society, state. Here, the main purpose of a woman-mother is the moral upbringing of a child. In addition, Hegel, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, noted that the attitude of parents to a child is formed from the perception in children of themselves as something "different", at the same time alien afterwards. He attributed maternal attraction to the natural component, which consists in replacing one singularity with another [6].

I. Kant, in turn, adhered to the point of view of the initial inequality of women and men. He saw this position of the sexes even in an uncivilized society, where the right to be a ruler was with the strongest in the house, i.e. men. The philosopher considered women as a "subject of possession" or "pet", which is not an independent person. Children born into a family had the right to be provided with everything necessary until they were separated from their parents. At the same time, according to Kant, marriage was of greater importance than just childbirth, otherwise it would have been dissolved immediately after the termination of this process [7, p. 334]. At the same time, in his work "On Pedagogy," he emphasized the importance of maternal upbringing in the formation of a child's natural abilities and spirit [8].

A. Schopenhauer, F. Nietzsche, Z. Freud adhered to a different view on this issue. What these philosophers had in common with the topic of motherhood was that they did not recognize the right of superiority of women due to their fertility. A. Schopenhauer noted that a woman is intended only for procreation, and motherly love manifests itself only during the helplessness of a child and is based on an animal instinct. At the same time, the father's love for children has a different level and



consists in the recognition of his own "I" in the child. F. Nietzsche's philosophical views had an even more negative connotation. He perceived a woman as an animal (cat, cow, bird), and a man as a warrior, obliged to go to her with a whip. Z. Freud believed that the inferiority complex in women is their fault and is based on the bisexuality of nature, combining the characteristics of muscularity and femininity, and not on the prevailing male control and superiority.

Thus, the philosophical teaching of this period was based on the perception of motherhood from a natural-biological position, where the only form of woman's self-realization was procreation.

As a result, we can conclude that ideas about motherhood have changed in different eras. Within the framework of the traditional or patriarchal approach, motherhood was viewed from a natural and biological point of view and seemed to be the only form of woman's self-realization (ancient philosophers, German classics). Within the framework of medieval philosophy, this topic was studied in the context of the Bible. The woman became the bearer of evil and the fall. The main mission of a woman-mother was to atone for original sin through piety, love for the child and his initiation into faith. During the Renaissance, motherhood was thought of as the physiological essence of a woman and was directly related to the birth of children. Raising a citizen from a child was the main purpose of a woman in the Age of Enlightenment.

The variety of views and positions that formed during these periods had a direct impact on the emergence and development of a variety of trends that are emerging in 50 modern society.

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