

Body and health as the goods?

(Pedagogical and sociological contexts)

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У статті в соціологічно-педагогічному контексті розглядаються питання здоров'я наркозалежної людини. Автори підкреслюють, що здоров'я все більшою мірою зазнає споживацького ставлення. Це супроводжується різними видами залежності, викликані прагненням задоволення, що, у свою чергу, завдає непоправної шкоди здоров'ю. Наводяться думки сучасних авторів, які вказують на зміну ціннісних орієнтирів, викликану зміною ставлення до власного здоров'я.

Ключові слова: наркозалежна людина, споживацьке ставлення до здоров'я, цінності.

„Science is for the truth, and the truth for a man;

A man reflects the image of the eternal

and transcendent Truth, which is God.

However, the experience of history,

especially recent history, shows how often the progress

of the science can be used against a man,

sometimes in a petrifying way” [1]

Briefly about medicalization of everyday life

Undoubtedly, a significant social phenomenon – and a challenge to sociology and social education – is becoming increasingly fascinated with medicine connected with medicalization of life. Seeing a man through the prism of Cartesian conception of a body and health contributes to control with the help of specialists and the medical technology all aspects of biomedical functioning of a unit. As a result, more and more personal problems of a man are fixed by a medical expert and pharmaceuticals. The popularity of medications for impotence (no need for therapeutic sessions!) and feeling of happiness («Prozac – happiness pill») indicate that the medicine can permanently lead to avoiding the problems of life. As J. Reed noticed: «Pharmaceutical Campaigns try to spread the idea that dysfunctions in terms of the erection was essentially a biological problem, which in most cases is not true. This idea refers to the men' fear of impotence, and it fuels it as well. And, in fact, (...) disorders are usually transient and disappear by themselves or with slightly psychological support» [2].

Therefore – with this in mind – medicalization of life can cause treating the man as an object in the body and health areas, orienting him towards the «artificial» forming of certainty about his own body and health. Specific addiction from medical experts and pharmacological medicine shape the identity of human health, deepens the conviction as to the legitimacy of their activities, progressively stimulates the various choices, that – appear to be – «value» for the body and health. All symptoms and syndromes in humans, without a doubt, put him in worried customer position, contributing to an increase in items economical – ideological people and institution creating contemporary images of the body and health. You can also sign up for – having in mind the significant impact of mass media foremost for young people – that medicalization of the social life appears as a result of satisfaction – standardized by the media content and images – dreams, contributing to minimize the behavior of autonomous – referring to body and health – and create the basis for auto destructive and anti healthy and creating customers / patients. Is this the manufacturing conditions of the acquisition of goods and services from body and health area?

If so, it is fully justified to say that a kind of a cult of a carnality, is an important factor in the image of understanding individual and social health. Is visible in the area of cultural health identity sign [3] – characterized by numerous marks – contributes to their more frequent changes of goods? As a result health evaluation, defined as a state of well-being, result of visual analysis, because it claims Spitzack C. «(...) healthy appearance (...) requires great sacrifice, not only shape of the body and its form, but also fashion, features and positive, valuable personality characteristics» [3]. Thus, as the T. Sobolewski «the reality was eaten by the media» [4]?

The body – health consumerism and a young man's world

The ideology of the consumerism amount to seek, realize, maximize pleasure and fun in the programmed desires, dreams, needs and encouraged by technological culture created by specialists such as advertising. Thus, the consumption of the body and health is associated with the excessive consumption of material goods and services of health and the body, unjustified by actual human needs and not counting the costs (e.g. environmental, social and individual). The consumption of the body and health refers above all to mimic the behavior of people of higher public positions, or who are media «authorities» (creates consumption for showing). Besides binds to the feeling (and only the feeling!) of freedom of choice, compensates for the failure of performance drawn from other social roles and concerns of people e.g. relating to the lack of skills to cope with problems. It becomes a kind of neurotic defensive mechanism from fears (reduces the fear of loneliness, the emptiness), which are a consequence of the lack of opportunities to satisfy the various needs influencing harmonious development of a man. For example, E. Fromm noted that the act of smoking cigarettes has lost its ritual significance and today is associated with the reduction of the tension, frustration. And sometimes a man, rationalizing his behavior says that the consumption of this product gives him a pleasure [5].

The physical-health consumption concentrating on a body and health – especially the young generation very often comes into a habit, which in the last its form may have a form of addiction. «Then appears a strong need of a contact with our own body by the increased access to all senses. People started to check how far are their own border of their physical identity. Wanted to do that, using different means: one is giving up smoking, other is running and playing squash (...) In the sport programs there appear a big variety of extreme sports (...) Their common feature is that they bring risk of disability or even death. All those who go in for extreme sports, want to convince themselves that they really have a body» [6].

It results in a reproductive practice. Physical-health consumption is getting more and more dependent on a media view on a healthy body and an idea about it. So nowadays only the body can be a guarantor of integrity of individual. Every body expect a repetitiveness, a periodicity, a discipline from their own health. It doesn't mean only a biological sphere, which always needs a new habits, but especially it means a social sphere, which is an arena of a physical-health technologies. Words of A. Balsamo are very important here, namely: «The surgery hospital is a place, where a body of a women is cut, stretched, carved and constructed once again by means of items of ideological character» [7].

A consumption of physical-health goods is a main tool of self-expression of a man and it refers not to its external form but especially to outline an outlook of life and a system of values. More and more often we can notice that a choice of identity is as simple as consumption of physical-health goods. «I buy so I am. I buy what is possible to buy. What is possible to buy by me describes who I am. I am what I buy» [8]. Secondly the physical-health goods and services are important elements of the code, thanks to which people categorize himself and their close surrounding. A physical-health consumption contributes to crystallize an individual auto conception (goods and services are realistic and visible), fulfills a psychological function like a relieving, feeling more appreciated, more safe and contributes to fulfill a need of control, membership and it creates time, especially children and youth. It is important to notice that currently activity of young person In the free time can be defined as a voluntary consumption, including a physical-health consumption, which becomes an essential element between the school. So a physical-health consumption is caused more by hedonistic philosophy than a need of fulfill natural needs.

Commercialization of body and health (body and health as goods) is a multifaceted social phenomena [9; 10; 11; 12]. Rationality according to M. Weber is a specific feature our civilization. It has advantages, but also many disadvantages. It leads to dehumanization of life In many fields, but also to dehumanization of psychology, medicine and pedagogy. G. Ritzer has many doubts about possibility of influence on such social processes. In spite of that he shows methods thanks to which people can defend from his process. He claims that there should be built a free from rationalization of economic life niche, appointing to enterprises, which act in different way than a big

concerns [13, p. 342]. It can be changed by forcing own style of bearing, namely not to give in some fashions [13, p. 384] – E. Fromm postulates promoting of new man [14], who will be show features like refusal of property In order just to be, relation with other people gives him feeling of being safety, developing ability of love and thinking. However F. Fukuyama postulates necessity of control over modern biomedical technologies, because they bring a lot of dangers not only for individuals but also for humanity [15].

Issues of body and health in social life is a very important field for sociology and social pedagogy. Describing of tasks and aims turn out to be essentials. So see from the angle of responsible acting in the face of increasing social pathology (a crime, disintegration of society, disappearing of authorities and values) we should inspire such a model of acting, which will hale not only an institutional, an interventionist-compensatory inclination, but also such, which will refer to a family upbringing. In this place there is a need to quote words of a Spanish philosopher and an anthropologist C. Valverde, who claims that in the second half of XX century «(...) when the liberal democracies have triumphed, when human rights have been announced and when it has looked like a period of human happiness has come, predatory and egoistic capitalism led to social inequalities, an unfair wealth division, unemployment of millions of people, a dissemination of drug addiction, deaths of millions of children killed in mothers' wombs, an exploitation of weaker states by stronger ones, famine of large areas, terrorism and sexual mania (...) dominating economy nowadays gives rise to a lust for power, desire of achieving maximum profits, the income at any price. Briefly speaking egoism at the cost of others. The omnipotent god is money. There are no extermination camps any more, but there is egoism harming and destroying millions of people, who live in alienation, caused by possession or they experience drama, because they don't have things which are necessary to life. Many has not discovered yet, that being together means more than having money. (...) It has not been discovered yet, that we are becoming persons and making others to become ones thanks to respect , opening, love, help, properly and deeply understood connections with others(...)» [16].

And what further on with the body as a ware

One can above analyzed problem show on the other side. What are the consequences of being turned down or of liberating oneself by a young man from a bodily-health consumption habit? One can assume that each consumption system, which cannot be because of various reasons a habit , will be pushed towards an ephemeral sphere, short-lived, deceptive. What is therefore a basis of the contemporary bodily-health consumption? It seems that above all a pleasure and satisfaction, not a guarantee of being «of sound body» [17]. If so, then a pleasure should be analyzed as a some kind of a tension between a dream and a usefulness of a specified «element» of bodily-health character or as a tension between an individual desire of a young man and a collective discipline or between a nostalgia and a dream, where a present while, the present is outdated from the perspective of the future. Is it then so, that an implementing to a delight of short-term bodily-health «elements» is a basis of discipline of each young

individual? Is it a short popularity of bodily-health character products and services and also life styles favoring a body and health (from diet to operational sex change) is the only dominant force, penetrating one and servicing – from the time perspective – freezing cultural differences in a body and health area?

It seems that above pictures of a young man functioning may emphasize the fact of turning down (connected with minimizing of «assumption data») ethics based on a dignity of a human being. A lack of an ontological human setting up has its consequences in the approach to needs in a bodily-health character, which appear in a man and each of them has the same value. It is enough to desire something to aspire to get a good and/or a service. In a consequence it provides to a situation where each element of a bodily-health sphere can be a ware like any other thing. Consumer approach of a young man and an economical rationalism being a motor of social life will provide a situation, that a medical space will be under both consumer pressure as well as commercial institutions (mass media). Even more actions will be taken in means of profits not a human good. In this connection we should postulate the return to an adequate man conception as an individual having a value for his/her dignity sake.

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