

## Original article

УДК 101

DOI: 10.21209/1996-7853-2023-18-2-68-76

## Philosophy: An Apologetic Etude

Aleksey N. Fatenkov<sup>1</sup>, Andrey A. Davydov<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod<sup>1,2</sup>Privolzhsky Research Medical University, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia<sup>1</sup>fatenkov@fsn.unn.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8628-2413>,<sup>2</sup>npirogov2009@yandex.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0954-6929>

Philosophy as a cultural phenomenon, a type of worldview, an academic discipline has a difficult destiny. Society either raves about philosophical thought and practice or ostracizes and pompously distances itself from them. The authors attempt to understand the causes of this situation and highlight philosophy's non-devaluated worth. The paper is based on existential dialectics in conjunction with a hermeneutic approach. The question of worldview's genesis, essence and structure is addressed. The nature of philosophy's relationships with worldview framework as a whole and its important elements, religion and science is clarified. The latter talk about providence or law. Unlike them, philosophy talks about fate – not blind, not manageable but capricious. Philosophy turns to a wayward man, supporting and strengthening his craving for autonomy in actions and thoughts as well as advising him to approach the traditions of world and national culture with intelligence and responsibility. The authors specify the interdisciplinary subject of philosophy equated with its problem field. The multi-faceted nature of philosophical problems and the irremovable subjectivity in its fixation determine ambiguity in ranking the range of issues. The authors give preference to the version rooted in Greek philosophical thought. The premises and the arguments presented in the text allow us to summarize: philosophy is neither a servant nor a mistress, but a life companion of an autonomous man. The pressure on philosophy is caused by the society's and authorities' ever-present suspicion towards an autonomous man.

**Keywords:** man, autonomous man, worldview, philosophy, religion, science, problem field of philosophy

## Научная статья

## Философия: апологетический этюд

Алексей Николаевич Фатенков<sup>1</sup>, Андрей Александрович Давыдов<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Национальный исследовательский Нижегородский государственный университет им. Н. И. Лобачевского<sup>1,2</sup>Приволжский исследовательский медицинский университет, г. Нижний Новгород, Россия<sup>1</sup>fatenkov@fsn.unn.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8628-2413>,<sup>2</sup>npirogov2009@yandex.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0954-6929>

У философии как феномена культуры, типа мировоззрения, университетской дисциплины – непростая судьба. Общество то превозносит философскую мысль и практику, то подвергает их остракизму или с пренебрежением дистанцируется от них. Авторы предпринимая попытку разобраться в причинах сложившейся ситуации и подчеркнуть недевальвируемую ценность философии. Размышления выстраиваются с опорой на экзистенциальную диалектику в её сопряжении с герменевтическим подходом. Рассматривается вопрос о генезисе, сущности и структуре мировоззрения. Проясняется характер взаимоотношений философии с мировоззренческой матрицей в целом и такими значимыми её элементами, как религия и наука. В отличие от них философия говорит не о промысле и не о законе, а о судьбе – не слепой и не податливой, о своенравной судьбе. И обращается философия к своенравному человеку, поддерживая и укрепляя его тягу к самостоятельности в поступках и мыслях, советуя ему с умом и ответственностью подходить к традициям мировой и отечественной культуры. Авторами уточняется дисциплинарный предмет философии, уравниваемый ими с её проблемным полем. Многогранность философской проблематики и неустраняемая субъективность в её фиксации обуславливают неоднозначность в ранжировании спектра проблем. В статье предпочтение отдаётся конкретному варианту, уходящему своими корнями в античную мысль. Сформулированные исходные посылы и представленные в тексте аргументы позволяют резюмировать: философия – не служанка и не госпожа, а жизненная спутница самостоятельного че-

© Фатенков А. Н., Давыдов А. А., 2023





ловека. Давление на философию вызвано всегдашним подозрительным отношением общества и власти к самостоятельному человеку.

**Ключевые слова:** человек, самостоятельный человек, мировоззрение, философия, религия, наука, проблемное поле философии

**Introduction.** Philosophy has been fighting on two fronts at once throughout its history. On the inside, it tries to solve eternal problems and prevent a split due to the internecine strife of schools. Externally, it resists the onslaught of competing ideological paradigms and pressure from social institutions and power structures. The authors set themselves the task of clarifying the situation with philosophy mainly on its external defensive lines.

**Methodology.** In this text, the defense of philosophy as a cultural phenomenon, a type of worldview and a university discipline is built based on existential dialectics in conjunction with a hermeneutic approach.

**Results.** This article is not about the abstract essence of philosophy as an axial cultural phenomenon and academic discipline. It touches upon the nature of philosophy, which is not superficial and simultaneously quite specific, which places it amongst living beings, closest to human thoughts, emotions and body movements (for more details, see: [1]).

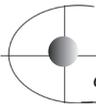
We usually talk, and rightly so, about philosophy in the context of worldview. *Worldview is a prerequisite, process and result of more or less systematic comprehension of the world, external and internal, with a purpose of reliable orientation in it.* Worldview is formed as man realizes and considers, not without passion, his attitude towards nature, culture, society and himself. Attitude is always based on interaction which is necessarily present in this case. There are several reasons for that and all of them are placed between two extremes. At one extreme, it is claimed: man is an incomplete, unfinished being (our insatiable needs obviously testify it) that nevertheless aspires to overcome his imperfection and incompleteness. And it is not that important whether this desire is sincere or wily. One way or another, humans inevitably turn to environment: natural, social, cultural. Each one of us also needs it as a background for crystalizing himself. At the other, it is stated: man is characterized by an excess of qualities, inner resources which cannot be kept inside and usually are taken out. Sometimes as a gift, more often as wastes of human activity and production.

Matching the extremes, we get to the desired human code: “under – over”. Both states –

both with redundancy and with insufficiency – are attributively, in contradictory conjugation inherent in a person. He, almost at the same time, mentally bestows and unceremoniously frees himself from “surpluses”, neglects the subsistence minimum and aims at prestigious consumption. We are constantly in a situation of stable, tendentious disequilibrium alternating with moments of stability – non-equilibrium, unsteady, ephemeral one. In transition period, in times of change this fact becomes existentially and socially flaring, almost banal due to its mass verification and a multitude of naive, unsophisticated everyday interpretations.

Worldview can never be single-level: solely mundane or exclusively above it (philosophical, scientific, religious, mythological or theurgical). At the very least, that is what we want to believe. Otherwise, we cannot avoid unnecessary life losses and worthless gains. Mundane worldview emerges from everyday experience, justifies and consistently expands it quantitatively; if we do not go beyond it, we will push ourselves into a corner of being a common man. A self-enclosed elitist perception of reality is not more efficient. Magician, wizard, shaman, having parted ways with the sphere of profane forever, cannot do without tribesmen dancing around fire. Theologian, having insulated himself from the sinful world, falls straight into scholastic heresy. Philosophical and scientific view of the world which is alienated from conventional human joys and sorrows constructs objectivist abstractions over and over again. The dominance of “above mundane” component in worldview does not guarantee a decent and happy life. But such life is completely impossible without ideas and aspirations that go beyond the limits of trivial everyday existence. Only if we do not take into consideration contentment and happiness of a common man.

So, man is inevitably engaged in relations with the world: with natural and socio-cultural for sure; also, probably, with supernatural one. Why? There are two reasons for that, they mirror each other and are based on two opposite views of human essence. The first one is more common: man is originally interpreted as an incomplete, unfinished being that aspires to overcome its incompleteness. It does not matter whether he does it sincerely or wily. What



matters is this aspiration manifests itself in satisfying needs that we all have and that irrefutably indicate a certain deficiency of something in us. The latter can be easily eliminated by interacting with environment, at least initially. Not to starve to death you need to turn to nature: engage in gathering, fishing, hunting, later in cattle raising and farming. To learn something from others, to acquire or to take something away from them, you need to have a social connection. In the second interpretation, conversely, man is regarded as a being not with deficiency but with excess – for instance, of problems that he wants to shift to others. In reality, man can be different or, in other words, any of the two.

When the relations of man and the world begin to be comprehended – it is not a purely intellectual procedure: sensations, emotions and impulses are equally important here – worldview is starting to be formed on the basis of this comprehension. And if in man's relations with the world objectivity may still somehow dominate subjectivity (circumstances independent of us may be stronger), this never happens in worldview. The postulate "theory (idea) is subjective in its form and objective in its content" is anti-dialectical: it separates form from content within being.

Not in every worldview a philosophical component is present, especially, as its core. Philosophy is an intuitive idea plus its discourse justification performed with the use of special terminology and language. Practical wisdom can delve into philosophical intuitions but is unable to back them up with proportionate reflexive arguments. The absence of philosophical component in worldview does not make it inherently flawed. In fact, practical wisdom coupled with a strong character might be enough for retaining human dignity. In particular, for resisting dominance of objective necessity – both in practical activity and in acts of consciousness. However, resistance will be much more powerful when it is assisted by philosophy.

The choice of additives for mundane worldview is small and philosophy and religion turn out to be competing ingredients that possess both essentially different and similar traits. In the principal debate of large-scale metaphysical paradigms, a clash of two different ontologies is revealing. They both are in search of the most genuine, valuable reality – being or absolute. But in philosophical ontology a reference to God is just one of the many possible solutions

to the problem whereas in religious ontology (theology) it is the only one. No philosophical ontology, even the one that is nurtured at theological faculties, is proportionate to dogmatic religious canon: it explicitly or implicitly drifts to heresy, openly or tacitly cultivates theomachy, carefully or disruptively promotes atheism. Let's recall: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a Thubingen seminary graduate, stated (albeit in a rather presumptuous way) that there was no thing-in-itself which could not be known – thus there was no transcendent being and no God. Martin Heidegger, who studied theology at the University of Freiburg, had another interesting idea: being that invaded the world needed man as its shepherd. So where is a place for an omnipotent supernatural being here?

Both philosophy and religion consider appropriate and try to talk about final causes of existence and states of man, society and nature. In other words, both are teleological to some extent. While approaching each other in that regard, philosophy and religion separate themselves from science which has been denying itself an appeal to final causes and focusing on the search and study of efficient causes since Rene Descartes. Besides, philosophy and religion – in the forms of anthropocentrism and theocentrism respectively – prefer to distinguish man from the rest of being whereas science – in the form of objective patterns – rather likens him to it. However, in religion peculiarity of man is seen less in his rise above everything created and more in his lowliness in front of the Creator. When compared to Him, anything created is undoubtedly lowly. Here, through derogatory likening of everything that is created, a structural linkage of religion and science becomes potentially dangerous for men – for their existence, freedom and existential autonomy.

According to A. Koyre, formation of New Time science coincides with discovering a positive character of the concept "infinity" [2]. Religious genealogy of this approach is quite transparent: God of the Abrahamic religions is an actual infinity; world, which returns to God, is a potential infinity. The infinity of the universe is deduced from limitless capacities of human *ratio*. An appeal to divine authority is unnecessary here albeit is not excluded. For instance, Galileo equates mathematical mind of scientist with a divine mind. Even for a non-religious person such equating seems to be pretentious, sacrilegious and blasphemous. Calculating infinitely small quantities means ultimately cal-

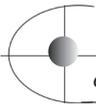
culating God, at least, God-in-things. But it is not less likely that devil may be in calculated details. Hypostatization of mathematical abstractions has never brought man to paradise but has regularly taken him in the toils of virtual reality. Metaphysical, religious in particular, absolute is diminished not only by digitization but also by identification with actual infinity. The latter veils ontological fullness and personal hypostasis of absolute (divine) beginning. Scientist aspires to be like God and this is a big part why he secretly schemes against divine power gradually displacing it from privileged positions: from transcendence, from a zero point of coordinate system. If the Universe is infinite (limitless, boundless), a look at it from the outside will become impossible. Science still insists on objective nature of its summary data (including those cases where it acknowledges that at intermediate stages of research the influence of observer cannot be neglected). And it is not surprising: science traces a religious narrative. To be inside of something and, simultaneously, to be independent from it – that is a dogmatic prerogative of God. *Science is a religion (of theoretical, theological level) which sticks to quantitative correction factors.* In the words of A. Rimbaud, “And again, no more gods! no more gods! Man is King, Man is God! But the great faith is Love!” [3]. Love, like any other true feeling, sends us not to transcendent distances but rather to quite earthly depths of soul-searching.

Philosopher openly competes with God by separating himself from religious absolute, not competing for his place but also not conceding his own – neither to Lord, nor to a master. Philosophy is taken here as metaphysically oriented (non-positivist and even non-phenomenological) that necessarily implies ontological component and is not alien to existentialism. The beginning of philosophical and scientific comprehension of the world is an internal incentive, inner experience of man. As the ancient classics claimed, philosophy begins in wonder. At uniqueness. At the fact that at least something exists; that something, not nothing, exists. Like religion, science stems from fear. Fear of regularity that acts relentlessly and fear of its possible interruption. As L. Wittgenstein pointed out, the nature of faith in consistency of events manifests itself most clearly when we are scared of the expected. Nothing could make me put my hand into fire even though I had got burned only in the past [4]. New burn –

new pain. It is scarier when you do not feel any pain in fire: the one who is an exception to the rule is usually lost in uncertainty and perplexed. Fear enters philosophy when in its picture of the world appears transcendence that starts being comprehended without proper irrational foundation. When there are doubts in genuine religious faith (B. Pascal) or there are no doubts in the absence of such (S. Kierkegaard). Fear decreases if the ontological status of transcendence is low and, on the contrary, the level of irrational defense of man is high: his faith in himself and in the magical, mysterious, in the unique unnatural naturalness hidden from profane experience but that does not go beyond human existence. The point of Karl Jaspers who saw an existential beginning of “Axial Age” in the abyss opened to man seems dubious: standing over an abyss, he sees a horror of the world and his own helplessness [5]. But you cannot see an abyss, you can only look into it. Though a Greek philosopher that worships cosmos, which has its body and soul, would not even look into it. At the very least, he would passionately throw himself into volcano like Empedocles once did [6]. So, introducing Christian, Abrahamic transcendence into a Greek picture of the world would be inappropriate both theoretically and practically. Why spread fear where there is no ground for it? Out of envy of fearless ones?

Science tries to replace inner experience with an outer one and to turn the mood of knowing subject into objectively constructed picture of the world. The strongest argument for scientific strategy can be found in quasi-religious sacrifice of scientist. A religious man who denies himself, his sinful nature, craves for joining a perfect subject, a personal absolute and never mentions his name in vain. A man of science who denies his own subjectivity intends to join objective, impersonal truth while putting it on public display. The critics of scientism ironically point to the fact that scientific objectivity cannot be distinguished from intersubjectivity and conventional validity, and also to anthropocentrism of any scientific paradigm. According to F. Nietzsche, laws of nature are undoubtedly equivalent and secondary to the principle of law-abiding qualities [7].

Philosopher does not talk about laws and providence but, rather, about not blind and not compliant fate – a capricious rival, tough and merciful, both repulsive and alluring. According to N. Machiavelli, “when fortune varies and men remain obstinate in their modes, men are happy



while they are in accord, and as they come into discord, unhappy. I judge this indeed, that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman; and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down. And one sees that she lets herself be won more by the impetuous than by those who proceed coldly. And so always, like a woman, she is the friend of the young, because they are less cautious, more ferocious, and command her with more audacity" [8, p. 101]. The Russian idea of fate is even weirder. It seems like the most fearsome and formidable authority – and at the same time you can argue with it; you may give it all the worst while keeping all the best for yourself. In most uses of the word "fate" in modern speech it contains neither mystique nor fatalism nor passivity [9].

Yes, there is a man and a woman, a Helene and a Jew in philosophy. Just like woman in labor cries in her mother tongue, philosopher uses his native language to touch genuine, inmost reality. This is why sometimes it is impossible to translate some of the key cultural and philosophical concepts from one language into another. And it is not surprising that the thinkers of the Italian Renaissance and the German Reformation replaced Latin with their national languages or dialects. The modern tendency of tailoring any language to the standards of English arises plenty of questions. For a profound thought this might be devastating. What pleases and bothers man in this life? What touches him? What is thrilling for him? The Motherland and craft that he loves, and a woman that loves him. The circle is closed. And there is no place for God in it. Only love, earthly and human. Its fruits break through the closeness of being. Carefully, not tearing man apart.

Philosophy is feminine (at least for an existentialist) and this is why obviously a subject of males' particular attention. Among those mesmerized by it we have: Socrates – participant of the Peloponnesian war, Plato – participant of the Olympic games, M. Heidegger and A. Camus – good soccer players, E. Jünger – a volunteer during World War I. All of them and their lives are convincing. There is a combination of power and the highest level of realism in them. In the words of E. Jünger, "What does not kill me, makes me stronger, but what can kill me, is a hundred times stronger" [10, p. 55]. Man finds in philosophy what he lacks in his real-life companion and edits what is in excess in woman. The woes of today's life, culture,

philosophy are in large part caused by weakening of masculinity. It is in fever of vulgarity and glamour. Geneticists claim that males are a dying breed. And the only serious argument against it can be taken from stoicism/existentialism. Let the world go crazy but I will stubbornly be standing my ground no matter what. In the words of A. Camus, while being a pessimist about human lot, I am optimistic about man [11]. Man does not cheat on himself as long as he is able to do something with a woman and with power, as long as he is not burdened with his life autonomy given by nature.

Religion insists on the fact that man is tied up; that he will not survive and be saved in this life without help from above. Philosophy does not deny human attachments and bonds; it emerges and still exists as an ideological help for autonomous man. It claims through Heraclitus that man lights his own fire at night even though night is the greatest goddess [12]. And this comes not from a sophist who opposes man to nature and mocks sacral reality but from a philosopher of nature to whom man is harmoniously merged with cosmos which is also inhabited by gods and geniuses. By the way, those Olympian gods are quite earthly: one might compete or even have fun with them.

From ontological standpoint an attitude towards religion is a particular case of attitude towards the sacral, mysterious. Philosophy (metaphysical, non-positivist one) cherishes magical, mysterious facet of being that prevents man from falling into cynicism but does not rush to equate it with a religious facet, let alone with transcendent God of the Abrahamic religions including that of New Testament. Nature, native land and blood, home, one's nearest and dearest, amazing intertwining of human fates may be made sacred. Such metaphysical procedure certainly poses some dangers. This is life – and you should not lament and despair prematurely. Where there is danger, salvation ripens. One should not sacrifice beauties of metaphysical depths or be afraid of mad politicians' coming.

While appreciating universe and its hierarchy we should keep culture and man in mind. Since philosophy matters as much as philosopher matters. The greater man is, the more truth there is in his philosophy [11]. Religion and science will shun similar acknowledgements. The subjective, anthropomorphic component of knowledge is exposed by classical science as a trace of idolatry whereas non-classical science

has to tolerate the observer whose influence cannot be neglected any more. Equalizing religion and a believer will be a sign of human pride which is dogmatically disapproved as a deadly sin. The focus of religious logic is evidently opposite: the truer is faith within man, the greater believer is (if the word "greatness" is appropriate here). Monotheistic religions postulate a total depravity and peccability of men. This is exactly why one repentant sinner is placed above 99 righteous men that do not need to repent. And those cannot wash off their original fault. A philosopher will never flatter anyone while pretending to be a righteous man. A philosopher will never limit, shackle or torture anyone demanding obedience. Man is guilty of that he cannot handle everything on his own and this guilt has become only heavier over time [11].

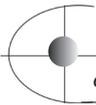
*Philosophy teaches men to think on their own and, therefore, responsibly while honoring the heritage of world and domestic culture.* The same cannot be said about religion and science. Religious consciousness is strictly regulated by a system of dogmas, scientific one – by postulates of dominating paradigm. Unlike these two neighboring cultural phenomena, philosophy and its history are inseparable. The ideas of Heraclitus and Parmenides are as relevant today as they were in ancient times. Whereas monotheist will hardly treat the earliest polytheistic dogmas with respect. And a scientist of the New Time will do the same with Aristotelian physics and geocentrism. Doubt, skepticism, irony – philosophy channels all this into itself, not to its ideological rivals but does not expect the same from them. Philosopher will not construct new temples (he will rather help build a library) but he will not destroy old ones either (unless he turns into a politician). Conversely, since the times of the Roman Empire and up to now church in alliance with secular authority has regularly been closing or helping close academies.

Philosophy emerges among free men and spirit of freedom is ineradicable in it. One is free if he does not need external assistance in the form of morality and law for a moral life. Free man does not deny the presence of authorities – he is against their non-authoritative imposing/dictating and hopes to surpass the ones he encounters. Philosopher is not against faith as a state of mind. The tradition of existentialism consistently subordinates intellect to spirituality. Clearly, soul and faith are higher than

abstract logic and abstract instrumentalism. However, not every faith is the same. Someone believes in himself while trusting others or not. That is a natural male position justified by life. That is a philosopher's position. Some believe in the Other whose role may be played by God or political party. The latter is closer, the former is further. Or vice versa. It does not matter. There is no big difference. One way or another, it is the Other. An insecure man with wounded and split consciousness needs his help just like a constant presence of other Self, this vigilant "inner" observer.

Christian religion originates among slaves and dependents. This is an irrefutable fact from the history of the Roman Empire. So, it should come as no surprise that along with all contradictory social and moral principles one ethical norm still dominates in evangelical Christianity: it preaches patience, humility and forgiving grievances. Exploiters always profit by it [13]. In fact, the New Testament absorbed slavish world outlook, reproduced and replicated it. An appropriate term is used in canonical admonition: those liberated from sin become God's slaves, finding sanctity and eternal life [Rom. 6: 22]. You may say as much as you want that a biblical slave is not equal to a pagan one but it is undisputed that both personally depend on lord, heavenly or earthly. And if you can get rid of the latter by taking up arms and revolting, you will never escape the former. The truth of Apostle Paul is that eternal life is actually similar to slavery: it is contaminated with hopelessness; when it is attained, you are not able to reject it. Eternity gives immortality but takes nascence away. In eternity no one emerges into the world. Eternity is not burdened with love and freedom. Christianity easily deals with a negative human freedom (freedom from sin) but struggles with a positive one. And how else if not all men freely accept evangelical truth. As a result, one has either to interpret cringing as a hymn to true freedom or to equate a slave and a free man in Christ. The idea of humility which is cultivated by religions and encouraged by a sovereign in his subjects always turns against sovereign. Free man at the expense of no freedom of others discredits and loses it himself. But it is not shifted to his subjects, they will not gain anything from his defeat.

According to F. Dostoevsky, if there is no God, everything is allowed. But it is a mistake. Man does only what he can (and wants, sometimes without realizing it) do. Regardless of



whether he wants it himself or at the behest of somebody. Regardless of whether God exists or not. The difference is in something else. If God exists, each and every one is responsible for everything and thus everything is willingly or unwillingly justified. Including any abomination [14]. If God does not exist, each and every one is responsible not for everything, and not everything can be justified in the end. Some will never justify something. That is a real man in all senses of the word "real". Absolute responsibility of man which seems to help redeem himself for condoning evil is as much a profanation of his essence as a notion of limitless human freedom.

Insisting on value and attainability of worldly freedom, philosophy, at least that of existentialism and realism, places human autonomy above freedom. The argumentation is the following. There are two facets of freedom: positive ("freedom for something") and negative ("freedom from something»). The latter pushes us to naïve and mostly fruitless "equating freedom with independence: a complete freedom can be attained by someone who does not depend on anyone and anything, someone who is in a vacuum. Autonomy, however, does not have a negative facet. Autonomy is conceptually alien to temptation of complete independence and to placing an individual into a vacuum. On the contrary, it is close to the idea of essential "rootedness" of subject in being, in his own place. Worldview of autonomous man is imbued with native soil motive. Clearly, one cannot obtain freedom by obliterating motherland, uprooting one's roots or cowardly escaping from oneself.

Efficiently functioning society and its managers do not need philosophy at all. Do not be surprised if it is expelled from academic institutions soon. Of course, it is unjustifiably costly at its core: abstruse and at the same time simple; it takes care of full-blooded man, does not disparage his passionate nature and simultaneously appeals to his conscience; hones his taste, encourages grace, elegance, noble aspirations and still unsentimentally turns us to harsh reality. Philosophy is akin to life and alien to technological schemes. It will not support or glorify them. And this is why it is doomed in terms of efficiency. To refute this point, philosophy, instead of adjusting to situation, should rather fight through it.

Philosophy has long been subjected to optimizing and taming. Tools were different: from

sugary flattery to blatant abjection. It was called the mistress, the queen of sciences – and was methodically turned into their methodological maid. Earlier philosophy was considered a maiden of theology, later – of ideology. The last case showed that even a socialist system, which was a priori designed to eliminate economic oppression and declared commitment to true (not abstract) humanism and freedom, hardly tolerated philosophy as such. Theology, science, ideology... The circle of philosophy's theoretical oversimplification is almost closed. The only role left is that of the theory of art which philosophy plays more and more often today. In existential and social being this is a supporting role, if not marginal altogether. As man with a developed aesthetic artistic taste (whether it is author or audience) does not really need theoretical delights or fads of philosophy.

If self-preservation instinct is still alive in philosophy, the only thing it can do is to stubbornly stand for its cultural autonomy and hold on to it with all its might. In fact, that is exactly what philosophy teaches man in the first place – life autonomy. Certainly, authorities want both of them gone. "Benefit from them is questionable, but harm is obvious". However, this statement is a double-edged sword. Yes, philosophy has gotten the smell of disobedience and revolt – and that is when man is being turned into a function or a cog in the machine everywhere. No wonder! But anthropological defense should be a priority. *Philosophy is neither a maid nor a mistress but a life companion of autonomous man.*

Now, in a more prosaic tone, let us turn to the subject of philosophy (for more details, see: [15]). Strange as it may seem at first glance, it is still not precisely defined – even though its history spans more than 2500 years. And a saving trick of M. Heidegger – philosophy is inexact but strict; unlike science, its exactitude is what makes it strict – is far from perfect. Yes, it protects philosophical thought from reducing it to numbers and arithmetic but it gives rise to another problem – problem of "strictness" criteria [16]. However, where there is danger, there lies salvation.

The bet on the German intellectual line is justified here: in fact, the Greeks and Germans made philosophy a philosophy. Its current state of crisis is largely due to the fact that continental European thought has weakened, and there was no one to pick up the baton. Anglo-American utilitarianism and pragmatism are clearly

not up to it. Russian thought, potentially powerful due to the unregulated polarities of mind, is also unable to make a breakthrough synthesis.

Let's get back to the German point. Actually, the subject field of philosophy is quite often identified with its problem field. If so, the subject of philosophy is a set of problems that it formulates and tries to solve, at least, theoretically. However, it is not that simple. Various philosophical movements and schools operate with different sets of problems and organize them into different hierarchies. And that is not a proverbial pluralism. Pluralism must claim an equivalence of all theories and practices (which is absolutely absurd) and resist any preferences, including its own ones (which is doubly absurd). But pluralism is just a cynical mask for tacitly supported and enhanced flawed hierarchy. The field of philosophy actually appears as a *variety of unity* that cannot be eliminated by any innovations.

In one of the interpretations three main philosophical problems can be distinguished: 1) description of the world as uniform and manifold; 2) finding the place of man in this world; 3) explaining relations between man and the world. These are not exclusively corporate problems as men not professionally related to philosophy still address them. Though there is also a very narrow professional problem: philosophy is inherently problem-oriented and, as a rule, is willingly or unwillingly aimed at something non-positive, diminished within being. Philosophy of joy and happiness is always a nonsense, a caricature of true joy and happiness. It is needed and called upon as long as there is a fair amount of adversity. No real problems, no philosophy. The opposite statement is false: absence of philosophical thought does not guarantee a disappearance of life woes but rather informs about their disguise.

Let's consider the third of the above-mentioned problems. The relations of man and the world inevitably emerge. It is important to emphasize: inevitability is stronger than necessity. You can never escape the inevitable. There is an extremely high objectivity in it and still a

maximum of responsible subjective experience (actual or potential). Whereas a cult of necessity induces men to passivity and irresponsibility. "Freedom as a realized necessity" is a parody of real worldly freedom, a mental phantasm constructed by B. Spinoza.

Expansion of objective necessity threatens to immerse man into totality of natural and socio-cultural connections (contacts and relations) and to turn him into a puppet, an object, a function. So, an individual in alliance with philosophy aspires: on one side – to elevate the inevitable above the necessary (by appealing to death as the highest limit of inevitability), on the other – to attack inevitability itself using his autonomy. Human autonomy is a touchstone of his decent life and philosophical thought about him. Attacks on philosophy are always, one way or another, aimed at being that is autonomous in life and thinking. As M. Heidegger pointed out, philosopher is a loner but he is not lonely, not self-contained. He exists together with the world. And this world exists before any correlation with him – with philosopher or someone else [16].

According to M. Heidegger, philosophy is a passion of utmost questioning that is more powerful than any intellectual act and display of affection. However, let us argue with that. Certainly, many intellectual and emotional phenomena are not rich in substance, simply mannered. But if any question implicitly contains an answer in itself, then questioning is mannered too. The ultimate problem is in finding affirmative forms of conversations about being. There is a lot from childish and old man's whims, from inquirer's and eavesdropper's trick in questioning. Statement is more worthy and responsible than questioning.

**Conclusion.** There is no doubt – and the past two and a half thousand years have been a guarantee – that philosophy will withstand any pressure from outside. The main thing is not to crumble and not to dry out from the inside. Do not isolate itself from the burning problems of life. Do not turn into a language game. To remain – as before – the life companion of an autonomous man.

### References

1. Fatenkov, A. N. Existential Ontognosiology: from Experience to Witnessing. *Filosofiya i kul'tura*, vol. 6 (54), pp. 7–18, 2012. (In Rus.)
2. Koyré, A. *Newton et Descartes. Études newtoniennes*. Paris: Gallimard, 1968: 85–155. (In Engl.)
3. Rimbaud, A. Sun and Flesh. Web. 10.04.2023. <https://www.mag4.net/Rimbaud/poesies/Sun.html> (In Engl.)



4. Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. (In Engl.)
5. Jaspers, K. *The Origin and Goal of History*. Oxford: Routledge, 2014. (In Engl.)
6. Hölderlin, F. *The Death of Empedocles: a mourning-play*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008. (In Engl.)
7. Nietzsche, F. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Bristol: Penguin, 2003. (In Engl.)
8. Macchiaveli, N. *The Prince*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. (In Engl.)
9. Shmelev, A. D. *Russian linguistic worldview: materials for dictionary*. M: Yazyki slavyanskoj kul'tury, 2002. (In Rus.)
10. Jünger, E. *Radiations (February 1941 – April 1945)*. Saint Petersburg: Vladimir Dal, 2002. (In Rus.)
11. Camus, A. *Notebooks 1942–1951*. Boston: Da Capo Press, 1994. (In Engl.)
12. Heraclitus. *Fragments*. Bristol: Penguin Classics, 2003. (In Engl.)
13. Tokarev, S. A. *Religions in the history of world nations*. M: Respublika, 2005. (In Rus.)
14. Žižek, S. *Violence*. London: Picador, 2008. (In Engl.)
15. Fatenkov, A. N. On philosophy and its problem field. *Legal science and practice*, vol. 1, pp. 292–294, 2018. (In Rus.)
16. Heidegger, M. *Ponderings II–VI: Black Notebooks 1931–1938*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2016. (In Engl.)

#### Information about authors

*Aleksey N. Fatenkov*, Doctor of Philosophy, Professor; Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod, 23 Gagarin ave., Nizhny Novgorod, 603022, Russia; Privolzhsky Research Medical University, 10/1 Minin and Pozharsky sq., Nizhny Novgorod, 603005, Russia; fatenkov@fsn.unn.ru; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8628-2413>.

*Andrey A. Davydov*, Candidate of Culturology; Privolzhsky Research Medical University, 10/1 Minin and Pozharsky sq., Nizhny Novgorod, 603005, Russia; npirogov2009@yandex.ru; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0954-6929>.

#### Contribution of authors to the article

A. N. Fatenkov – the main author, text conceptualization.

A. A. Davydov – adaptation of the text to the norms of the English language, text design.

#### For citation

Fatenkov A. N., Davydov A. A. *Philosophy: An Apologetic Etude* // *Humanitarian Vector*. 2023. Vol. 18, No. 2. P. 68–76. DOI: 10.21209/1996-7853-2023-18-2-68-76.

**Received: April 12, 2023; approved after reviewing May 14, 2023;  
accepted for publication May 17, 2023.**

#### Информация об авторах

*Фатенков Алексей Николаевич*, доктор философских наук, профессор; Национальный исследовательский Нижегородский государственный университет им. Н. И. Лобачевского, 603022, Россия, г. Нижний Новгород, пр-т Гагарина, 23; Приволжский исследовательский медицинский университет, 603005, Россия, г. Нижний Новгород, пл. Минина и Пожарского, 10/1; fatenkov@fsn.unn.ru; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8628-2413>.

*Давыдов Андрей Александрович*, кандидат культурологии; Приволжский исследовательский медицинский университет, 603005, Россия, г. Нижний Новгород, пл. Минина и Пожарского, 10/1, npirogov2009@yandex.ru; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0954-6929>.

#### Вклад авторов в статью

A. Н. Фатенков – основной автор, концептуализация текста.

A. А. Давыдов – адаптация текста к нормам английского языка, оформление материала.

#### Для цитирования

Фатенков А. Н., Давыдов А. А. *Философия: апологетический этюд* // *Гуманитарный вектор*. 2023. Т. 18, № 2. С. 68–76. DOI: 10.21209/1996-7853-2023-18-2-68-76.

**Статья поступила в редакцию 12.04.2023; одобрена после рецензирования 14.05.2023;  
принята к публикации 17.05.2023.**