**Alienation and Fear among People as a Consequence of the Global Pandemic of COVID 19**

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**Abstract**

The presentation focuses on the Pandemic of COVID 19 and its consequences as a cause of the change in people's lifestyles. Social distance is at the root of unforeseen consequences such as alienation, fear and loneliness, which have radically changed human relationships. Fear of the virus and the ensuing sense of hopelessness and loneliness become not only a topic of public and political debate, but also a question of the meaning of human existence. Loneliness could be presented as an ontological determination of our being, and on the other hand as a reason for the emergence of the phenomenon of alienation. These problems fall within the scope not only of a number of social sciences, but also in the field of philosophy

Keywords: pandemic, COVID 19, alienation, fear, social distance

**Introduction**

The COVID 19 pandemic has brought humanity to a new stage of existence. The pandemic has become a precondition for the emerging crisis of values. Basic human characteristics, which by definition are sustainable, have been rethought and changed. Although restrictions are being phased out today, people's lives will never be the same again. Living in conditions of social distance (although in order to protect human health) is at the root of unforeseen consequences such as alienation, fear and loneliness, which have largely led to a change in human relationships. Fear of the virus and the ensuing sense of hopelessness and loneliness are becoming not only an occasion for public and political debate, but also a question of the meaning of human existence. Loneliness could be presented as an ontological determination of our being, but also as a reason for the emergence of the phenomenon of alienation. These problems fall within the scope not only of a number of social sciences, but also in the field of philosophy. In a situation of crisis, philosophy has an important place. It is perceived as one of the main tools in the process of changing values and attempts to build a just society [1].

The majority of people immersed in their daily lives do not think about the meaning of their own existence. However, sometimes events occur in human life that disrupt routine and confront the individual with eternal philosophical questions. Very often these moments of reflection on the meaning of personal existence are manifested in times of great tragedies - wars, diseases, death. Such tragedies violate our sense of security. At the same time, we often feel a sense of solidarity with the people who are going through the tragedies that we are going through [2]. It is precisely such a tragedy that humanity is facing today. The pandemic of COVID 19 caused enormous economic damage, suffering to a large part of the human population, but also caused the deaths of countless people around the world [2]. This raises the question of the meaning of life, a question that falls within the scope of philosophy.

**Alienation as a consequence of the Covid pandemic 19**

The inevitable change in people's way of life contributes to the growing alienation between them. Much of the professional and personal engagement is already taking place online. These factors will have long-term consequences in various areas of human activity. There are changes in different professional fields, which leads to different levels of motivation to perform daily duties, as well as to different levels of efficiency. People are communicating less and less at work. This phenomenon is observed in personal terms. Fear of the virus and new living conditions alienate people. They have less and less contact with each other. Forced confinement in homes also leads to an identity crisis. Again, we are faced with the question of the "meaning of being," of our own mortality, of the authenticity of human life.

In this context, it is appropriate to refer to the work of Martin Heidegger. When we look for the meaning of our existence, we must accept that in this respect an important factor is death, death as a reflection of “Non – being”. The author argues that Dasein adheres initially to an inauthentic being towards death. Every being to death can be designated as a being to some possibility. The author argues that Dasein adheres initially to an non-authentic" Being -towards-death. Every Being -towards-death can be designated as a Being towards a possibility [3]. The reluctance of man to think about this aspect of life can be illustrated by a number of cultural examples such as the remote location of cemeteries or hospitals [4]. The social isolation of the last two years, combined with the media coverage of those infected and killed by the COVID 19 virus, as well as the hospital footage shown, have contributed to a sense of fear of what may lie ahead. Social conditions become a prerequisite for thinking about the possibility that the Dasein is a Being- towards- death.

The reason for all this is the spread of the virus. It turns out that the modern world is not prepared for the natural activity of microorganisms. The world of viruses, according to Svetlana Solovyova and Vladimir Konev, authors in the field of social philosophy, is foreign and terrifying. In the conditions of a pandemic and in the quest to preserve human health, human life was reduced to its biological understanding, with death being the main limit of life. Social distance and isolation limit man as a social being, a being in need of communication. In this way, man is reduced to a biological unit. In this way, according to the authors, the meaning of the concept of distance is changed. Distancing ceases to be an indicator of social space, but becomes an indicator of man's position in the realm of the space of things. The COVID 19 virus has highlighted this aspect of human existence that culture and science have forgotten - its natural beginning. This became a prerequisite for philosophy to look in a new way at the foundations of human existence [5]. However, it should be noted that the COVID 19 pandemic did not destroy the "meaning of human life". In this aspect, people turn out to be very resourceful. This phenomenon motivates them to promote solidarity, harmony and fruitful relationships in digital spaces, despite isolation measures [5]. The media also cover a number of self-sacrificing acts - the actions of front-line workers who fight for and care for human life, at the cost of endangering their own lives and their health. We have witnessed many altruistic actions, strong manifestations of love and compassion, manifestations of humanity. Although hospitals were overcrowded and many patients were forced to seek treatment at home, people around the world went out on balconies and applauded medics, expressing their gratitude for their efforts. Many of the doctors lived in hospital wards, not returning to their relatives and families. All this gives us a positive perspective, albeit through the eyes of a great tragedy - when people are united, they can overcome everything. Of course, we should not ignore the fact that the pandemic affected in another not so pleasant way - not a small number of front-line workers neglected their duties and put their own survival first. These actions should not be judged too harshly, because in man, as in any other living being, the instinct to survive is stronger than anything.

Historically, humanity has experienced many pandemic situations that have imposed conditions of isolation. From the point of view of our time, it should be assumed that such crises will be overcome much more easily, given the opportunities provided by technology. However, the consequences require a deeper interpretation from a philosophical point of view. The question that raises such an event is about the human presence in the world [5]. Starting from Heidegger, we can interpret presence in the world as a kind of existence, to be present means to be-in-the-world. He argues that being-in has some existential structure of Dasein and in this sense is existential [3].

In the Pandemic, the forced wearing of protective masks is becoming a symbol of a new world. In this context, Slavoj Žižek claims that humanity is facing an extremely difficult and painful process. It must decide what form "the new normal" will take [6]. The tragedies and disasters of the pandemic give rise to a desire to make sense of what happened. With the advent of the virus, society has been forced to accept that everything it has taken for granted is just an illusion. Although people hope to learn to live with the virus, the effects are irreversible. Loneliness, fear, alienation as a result of social distance lead to the question of the meaning of existence, to the problematization of human existence [5]. Fear of the virus has also become a prerequisite for increasing social distance. Interestingly, according to a study by Seoul National University in South Korea, 62% of people are more afraid of the social consequences of COVID-19 infection than of the potential health risks associated with the disease [7]. Evidence of this can be found in people's reactions to vaccines. Even current measures impose restrictions on people who have not been vaccinated against the virus. It turns out that not a small part of the population is inclined to get the vaccine not so much in order to limit the possibility of contracting COVID 19, but in order to avoid the imposed measures. Vaccines, as well as the emergence of the virus, have become an occasion for public debate and disunity among people. Much of society has doubts about the political elite's concern for the health of the population. People find justification for their beliefs that are related to a specific situation or occasion, regardless of the body of knowledge on the topic [8]. There is also a suspicion that with the advent of the vaccine, all who wish will have equal access to it. In this context, some authors argue that the development of science and technology occurs only in powerful countries, and this is one of the factors leading to increasing imbalances and inequalities worldwide [9]. The COVID 19 pandemic, like any other major crisis in the past, is becoming an occasion to rediscover existential loneliness and realize mortality and limitation. According to S. Solvyova, the philosophical answer to the challenge of the pandemic world is to rethink life experience, those cultural attitudes that have become established in the new European culture [5]. According to Slavoj Žižek, the question we need to ask ourselves is whether we should strive to return to our "normal life" or whether we should accept that we are entering a new posthuman era. Žižek explains that the term "posthuman era" is related to our basic sense of what it means to be human [6]. Humanity has lived according to a certain stereotype for many centuries. The old value system is firmly rooted in his consciousness and soul [10]. Alienation and fear can be seen as a result of the resulting feeling of loneliness and isolation. Of course, the topic of loneliness has its deep roots in the past. It could be considered in the context of philosophy, insofar as all philosophical trends appear at a certain stage of human development, when it needs to find answers to current historical issues.

**Loneliness as a condition for the emergence of alienation between people**

Korkiya Demurievna, a researcher in the field of sociology, notes that social loneliness is a phenomenon that has been the subject of research for a number of thinkers from the past to the present. Even in antiquity, some thinkers argued that man is a social being and cannot exist outside society, but at the same time he needs his own identity [11]. The author notes that at a certain stage of the formation of society it is typical for humanity to experience loneliness. This phenomenon is observed mostly in times of crisis. She emphasizes that loneliness is a specific phenomenon and its interpretation is related to the dominant philosophical trends characteristic of the historical period . She emphasizes that loneliness is a specific phenomenon and its interpretation is related to the dominant philosophical trends characteristic of the historical period. In view of historical events, humanity is extremely sensitive to topics such as loneliness, alienation, the meaning of life, death. As a matter of fact such issues, although not on the same scale, are still relevant today. There is no doubt that loneliness also has some enduring characteristics - these are the personal, psychological and social aspects of loneliness. It is a curious fact that in the works of many ancient philosophers these topics become an occasion for the development of a reflective theoretical description of the experience of loneliness as a specific way of knowing the true human nature, achieving harmony and gaining the ability to contemplate and understanding the truth about the universe [11]. From the point of view of modernity, humanity has a huge amount of information, knowledge, technology to facilitate lifestyles. In practice, it turns out that despite the huge advances in technology - the ability to work from home, online communication, etc., society has proved unprepared to cope with the need for lifestyle change. The usual way of interpersonal communication is violated, which leads to a number of consequences. The very fact that fundamental human freedoms and rights have been violated leads to a sharp sense of loneliness and alienation on the one hand and fear of what lies ahead on the other.

**Conclusion**

Global crises such as COVID 19 are largely related to the problem of preserving the human person as a biosocial structure in the context of growing and comprehensive processes of alienation. This problem can also be defined as a modern anthropological crisis. It turns out that the more the world is transformed, the more unforeseen social factors are generated, which begin to form structures that radically change human life [12]. In the context of the current situation, it turns out that one of the most pressing topics is related to the problem of alienation between people. The effects of the virus are reflected in every aspect of human life. Mankind is faced with the task of adapting to new social realities. The crisis is not just about external lifestyle changes. It is much deeper, as the topic of the meaning of human existence is on the human being.

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