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Complaint: Between silence and speech

The problem of plaintive self-expression exists in psychological practice. It may reveal itself in individual work of psychologist and a client subtly or evidently but is always present. Why is it so important and why does it need to be discussed so particularly?

Because, first of all, in case of professional communication a psychologically stressed aspect is present in identification image of a person, who asks himself: "Am I the one complaining, or the one who doesn't?" And the answer is one-valued for most, since complaint has an image of moral evil or a sign of weakness in social consciousness. Psychologists and their clients fall into a singular trap: on the other hand, one can't describe many problems otherwise than by complaining, on the other hand it exists and actively operates a social "taboo" on this form of speech. Moreover, efforts of real "plaintive" self-expression in psychological interaction can be stopped both by the client himself ("Just don't think, that I'm complaining!"), and by psychologist, when he suggests the client to use special terms in the story of his life and troubles, that rather cliché plaintive speech from position of professional perception, then make it clear.

In all fairness, we have to admit, that acceptance of plaintive form of speech as natural and necessary in client practice gradually pervades in psychologists' professional consciousness [2]. Nevertheless, acceptance of complaint as a normal speech form for psychotherapeutic conversation needs additional grounding, materials for which were found in a small philosophic-philological research, made for the purpose of locating the reasons for dual tension "silence-speech" in plaintive experience. The results are presented to my colleague-psychologists

Necessity of "speak yourself out" as a dependence on the one who can "hear you out" is certainly, a human existential situation. Accordingly, contexts of "speech" and "silence" in plaintive experience (when the necessity of "a tale of bad, that a man knows or feels" is obvious) carry inter-complementing semantic filling for both the author and his addressee. To denote sense and abilities of plaintive speech on the back ground of silence, let's appeal to theoretic speculations of scientists and compare them with our own research conclusions.

M.M. Bakhtin addressed to a silence as a notional "absence of word" and a special logosphere was addressed in due course by; he depicted it as a whole, ceaseless, open and incomplete for outer examination integrity [1; p. 337]. Accepting Bakhtin's image, we'll elaborate that silence as "the other" of plaintive speech necessarily bears an imprint of plaintive context; but then a natural question comes up: Why does speech (the complaint itself) not always appear in a "plaintive situation"? To answer it, it is necessary to elicit and denote situative contexts, that for distinctively "intelligent" silence. On this back ground "notifying the world" of the bad you have will invari-



ably sound as “a suffering and a hope” – this conclusion of L. Moreva about reluctant character of speech in some meaningful human situations is also actual for plaintive communication [4; p. 104-110]. And forasmuch author’s self-expression in a complaint inevitably reflects “degree of inner pain, looking for salvation from its own intolerability” [4; p. 112], then you can speak of such of it’s sign entailment, by which occurs the psychological discharge of subject from the “bad” and living intended “speaking out” to the addressee with it’s help.

In this case the logic of philosophical speculation is grounded by empiric illustration, which was revealed during comparative semantic analysis of words “silence” and “speech” [3, 6]. In particular, historically etymological comparison of words “молчать” (Russian “keep silent”) and “молвить” (Russian historical analog of “speak”) revealed that their initial meaning are different and supposes: a) clemency, weakness, verdancy or even stupidity in “silence”, caused by its ancestry from Indo-European roots *milk-, *meld-, *mold- and connection via those roots with words “young” and “pray”; b) strength and power in “speak”, as it’s Indo-European roots are *mel-, which means “connect, combine”, and *mol-, which means “crush, granulate”, in ancient Russian it was used as “gaggle, brawl, care” [6; Vol.1. p. 538-540]. In their turn, words “речь” and “реку” (Russian “speech, speaking”) descend from Indo-European roots *rek- and *rok-, meaning “define, collocate, arrange”, and besides definition of speech as a word, they expressed the definition of speech as a thing or even action; in Slavic this sense was projected into words “рок” (Russian “fate, doom”) and “пропок” (Russian “prophet”) with meaning of “divine power, that gives advise” [6; Vol.2. pp. 109, 114]. In most ancient ritual practice semantics of “keeping silent” was defined in connection with the state of primal-nature, which signified in sacred silence as a symbol of immediate mergence of human with the divine, with world soul [3], and was objectified in the images of sky, sun, tree (semantics of “stairway to heaven”), and was also combined with the term of a lonely man’s strength. In the language such silence is initially matched with word “feel” in the meaning of “listen to the divine”, “listen to ancestor”, and the derivative word “feeling” is then interpreted as a simple ability to “sense something deep within ones’ soul”.

Thereby, if “silence” of first kind – is not a right, but a age-based strangulation of the ability to “hold speech”, then speech from this position can be defined as phenomenon of sacred communication inaccessible to young and weak man, which is additionally grounded by semantic parallels “make noise” and “Бог” (Indo.-Eur. *bag-, Russian “God”) [3]. On the other hand, if the ability to speak is a product of human consciousness, the communication with the divine is only possible through “silence” of the second kind, and this position is proved by ancient ritual practices; although, semantic connections in other modification exist between “make noise” and “ill, bad” [4]; but there is no contradiction here, there is only very deep historically cultural convergence of “ill” and “God”, as soon as shamanic ability to augur was associated with body and soul illness long before even Greek lore.

It’s likely, that choice between silence and speech in plaintive experience not only as apperceived form of behavior, but also as a spontaneous human reaction suggests



development of special relations between author and addressee. Therefore psychologists skill to define complaint author's position in text and use it's features in communication with client necessarily requires additional knowledge about "plaintive" ethno-cultural phenomenon as an epic habit of Russian people of total verbalization of "common-cultural consciousness" via communication and "collective adherence of subjects" [5]

Literature

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