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«The Theory of Value and Its Place in the History of Ethics» (1901).

Анализ статьи Ч.Г. Шоу

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Аннотация. Данная публикация представляет собой аналитический обзор статьи 1901 г. «The Theory of Value and Its Place in the History of Ethics» за авторством Ч.Г. Шоу. В статье рассматриваются аспекты категории «ценность».

Ключевые слова: Чарлз Грей Шоу, американская этика, ценность, аксиология, добродетель, долг, интуитивизм, гедонизм.

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«The Theory of Value and Its Place in the History of Ethics» (1901)

by C.G. Shaw. Paper Review

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Abstract: This publication is an analytical review of the 1901 paper by C.G. Shaw, «The Theory of Value and Its Place in the History of Ethics» (1901). The paper discusses the aspects of the concept of value.

Keywords: Charles Gray Shaw, American ethics, value, axiology, virtue, duty, intuitionism, hedonism.

The article titled «The Theory of Value and Its Place in the History of Ethics» was published in the third issue of the *International Journal of Ethics* in 1901¹.

The author of the publication was Professor of philosophy at the New York University Charles Gray Shaw (1871–1949).

He was actively published in the first half of the twentieth century and was known for his https://www.amazon.com/Outline-Philosophy-Part-Charles-Gray/dp/B000OENS88/ref=sr_1_1?qid=1690381435&refinements=p_27%3ACharles+Gray+Shaw&s=books&sr=1-1 outlines of the history of philosophy. Charles Shaw was particularly interested in the problems of theology and ethics.

This publication, despite the fact that it was published more than 120 years ago, is of interest in the context of the history of philosophy. It gives an idea of the way in which the concept of «value» (and in general axiology as a philosophical discipline) becomes an integral part in the discussion of ethical problems.

The continuation of this path will be the books on ethics by G.E. Moore and the emergence of analytical philosophy, and perhaps, the book «Ethics» by N. Hartman, entirely built on the idea of ontological values.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of value had become the key concept of the most influential trend of continental (primarily German, of course) philosophy — neo-Kantianism. Shaw rightly points out that the concept is also actively and fruitfully used in economics, praxeology, theology. He urges not to stop there, but to immerse the new concept in the ethical field, where, in his opinion, it can be used especially fruitfully.

The article provides a schematic description of the key approaches to solving ethical problems in antiquity and modernity (relative to the author). The presented scheme is very controversial. It boils down to the fact that all

¹ Shaw, C.G. The Theory of Value and Its Place in the History of Ethics // *International Journal of Ethics*. 1901. Vol. 11 (3). P. 306-320.

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previous ethics, one way or another, comes from the category of goodness and virtue. And modern ethics is based on the ideas of law and duty.

At the same time, the author argues that modern approaches can also be considered as represented by the direction of intuitionism (Kant first of all) and hedonism (Mill and Sidgwick). Each of these directions also splits into two currents.

Intuitionism uses two different methods of justification. One method comes from conscience, which becomes the principle of justice. And the other is based on the problem of free will, which leads to the idea of duty.

Hedonism, in turn, also falls into two variants. Firstly, as a justification of utilitarianism. And, secondly, as the primary basis for explaining social evolution.

This view is also difficult to call indisputable, although in our time utilitarianism and deontology are considered to be two general lines in ethics.

As a result, the appeal to the category of «value» seems fruitful to the author, since it should make it possible to bring all these directions to a single denominator, reconcile them and show new horizons.

The basis of such optimism is the idea that «value» is at the same time the starting point for explaining behaviour, i.e. it is linked to psychology (and through this with all natural science disciplines), and on the other hand, it is a metaphysical category, which is a method of studying and describing reality.

Further, inevitably, in the course of reasoning, the philosopher faces a problem that continues to be relevant to this day. Namely, with the definition and identification of the content of «value». There are two ways to discuss this issue: by contrasting values with similar concepts, identifying the common and specific, or by giving a direct definition, which in itself would separate the concept from all available alternatives. Shaw chooses the first path.

The main concepts to which value is opposed in his reasoning are desire and pleasure. Later in philosophy, arguments about the nature of value have always been built around opposing understandings of value as a goal, on the one hand, or as a cause, on the other hand. In other words, there was a dispute about the source of value. Whether the object is the bearer of value or the value is entirely in the subject, which transfers and links it with the external object of desire.

An elegant vision is proposed, which is based not on a topological principle (there is value outside or inside the subject), but on the idea of the time of the emergence of value. If desire is linked to the future, and pleasure to the present, then value is designed to unite both understandings. Value for the author is what is timeless, i.e. simultaneously in the present and the future for the subject.

The second meaningful characteristic of value is the understanding of the source of its (value) origin. Shaw believes that value is a product of the free will of the subject. And, consequently, every human value has an ethical dimension.

In the final, the author proves that the ultimate task of values is to determine the meaning of life in general. Like meaning, value is simultaneously a) a goal, b) a result, and c) a criterion for evaluating everyday events.

From the point of view of the history of philosophy, Shaw's article is extremely interesting and revealing.

Firstly, it shows that by the beginning of the 20th century, all the necessary foundations were laid for using an axiological approach to solve ethical problems.

Secondly, the text demonstrates that American philosophy followed the European tradition based on ontology and metaphysics in ethics. The subsequent turn into analytical philosophy deprived the English-speaking philosophy of these developments.

The ideas outlined in the text are somewhat controversial, but very progressive for their time.

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