BETWEEN FRUSTRATION AND MOBILIZATION:

EMOTIONAL DISPOSITIONS OF THE HUMANITIES SCHOLARS IN THE
CONDITIONS OF «OUR» WARTIME

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the ability of the humanities scholars to contribute to the demilitarization of our life-world. The starting point of the analysis is the recognition of the affective conditionedness of any thinking/statement about the war in Ukraine. In this connection, the question of a heuristic potential of the humanities as well as that of a social role they play in “our wartime” arise. The first part of the article outlines the polar affective regimes which determine perception of the war in Donbass by citizens of Ukraine in the current socio-political context. The second part considers a possibility of non-coincidence of the emotional dispositions of reflection developed in the humanities with the affective field outlined in the first part (the field “between frustration and mobilization”). Combining the approaches of the “affect theory” and phenomenological hermeneutics, the author shows interconnection between the performative heuristic of utterances produced in the humanities and a politics of affect carried out by these utterances. Focusing on the ability of utterances produced by the humanities scholars to create a new situation in the context of
our wartime (to change the blunt mode of perception of the war, to disavow propaganda, to bar aggression, to free from fear), the author characterizes such utterances in terms of political poiesis. The last one includes the ability of thinking developed by the humanities scholars to mediate the new politics of affect, which is at odds with both the propaganda modulating of the mood of the ‘masses’ and the prevailing emotional landscape of the militarized social field.

It is argued that the war in Ukraine has revealed that the traditional (modern) way of linking rationality with affect within such a political community as nation has been radically put in question. Reflection developed by the humanities scholars is able to detect and analyze such shifts, while having been affected by them. The author comes to the conclusion that today a social significance of the humanities is connected not only with their ability to enlighten people and to criticize ideology. What the humanities scholars have to respond to is the need of people to find a new coordinate system that will allow them to re-embody the connection between the reason and the affect (logos and pathos) through various forms of living together.

Key words: frustration, mobilization, “new war”, propaganda, thinking in the humanities, emotional disposition, politics of affect, nation.

Full version of this article is available in Russian.