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## Macro- and Micro-Philosophy of Self-Consciousness

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*The given article is dedicated to analysis of one of fundamental categories of philosophy – self-consciousness. The main emphasis has been put not so on the definition of self-consciousness, as on analysis of correlation of self-consciousness and «I». General theoretical reason of the article is concluded in denotation of the thesis of social, cognizable and changeable human essence, which is determined by the temporal component: the past, the present and the future. Basing on a wide experience of the study of self-consciousness structure within the frames of philosophy, psychology, sociology, religious theory and practice, the author of the article follows the classics in the problem of self-consciousness and once again underlines the importance and the necessity of analysis, first of all, of social nature of self-consciousness, determining the content and the structure of self-consciousness, and, consequently, the content and the structure of human «ego».*

*Keywords: Self-consciousness, «I», self-consciousness structure, nature of self-consciousness, theories of self-consciousness, sociality, duality, cognizability, changeability, time, the past, the present, the future, experience.*

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### **Point of view**

Self-consciousness is a reflection of a man of himself, of his «ego», in other words, it is a reflection of his «ego». Consequently, the content and the structure of «I» define the content and the structure of self-consciousness to a great degree; «I» is the ontological basis of self-consciousness and of its structure.

In the native literature the connection of self-consciousness with the problem of «ego» is not denied, but is comprehended in different ways what concerns their genesis and volume. Some philosophers consider that in genetic relation self-consciousness comes before «ego» and that «ego» is the result of self-consciousness (T.O.Bazhutina); others, visa verse, suppose that

«ego» is a precondition of self-consciousness (D.I.Dubrovskiy). And in dependence of the volume of these notions, the authors' opinions have been also divided: some of them think, that «ego» is narrower than self-consciousness (A.G.Spirkin), others state, that it is wider than self-consciousness (I.S.Kon), and to the mind of the third persons, «ego» and self-consciousness coincide in their volume (S.L.Rubinshtein). Here, we may rightfully recollect the words of A. Zhid, that the highest target of human «ego» is its being in harmony with itself. Though, achievement of the target of «I» (survival) is constantly interfered with its harmony with itself, with «not-I» – human body, other people, society, objects of first nature, cosmos – all in all, with everything, being

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different from «I» but accompanying it. But, the target is attracting, and the problem of survival makes «I» solve a constant contradiction between «I» and «not-I» [3. P. 191].

To our mind, «I» is not at all an originally given, out-of-society, non-cognizable and unchangeable essence of a man. «Ego» has been historically formed according to its content, mechanism and stages of development. It is determined by the social structure of society and changes from epoch to epoch, in other words, it represents a «fragment» of society. The individual is a social being. Though, «ego» is a derivative from society, it is not at all a mechanic form of social relations. Being an object of formation from the part of society, at the same time, it acts as a subject of social activity.

We should include person's spiritual world and his physical entity in its past, present and future into the structure of his «ego». Today's «ego» always contains both its past in a shot form, and its future in person's potentials and ideals, in his strivings and abilities. «Ego» is never completed. «I» is a bio-psyche system, having been formed by social and natural factors. Essence of «I» is social. But, it (essence) is revealed in a shot form, mainly, in the form of the person's spiritual world, and partially in the form of its physical organization. In fact, sociality of «I» by itself does not exist independently, autonomously from the spiritual and the physical being of a person or anything situated nearby by the latter. Sociality composes the essence of «ego» and is realized in the spiritual and physical world of a man.

### Examples

Not paying special attention to analysis of different points of views, we shall only note that everything depends on what the purpose and what the reason of researching of correlation between self-consciousness and «ego» is. We are interested in the question only because it helps

to show deeper the phenomenon of person's self-consciousness and its structure, in particular. And we shall approach analysis of the problem of «I» from these very positions.

As we have already mentioned before, the structure of self-consciousness is mainly defined by the structure of «I». When we apply it to a certain individual, then the problem of self-consciousness is presented as a question: what «I» is? For the first sight, this question is not a problem at all: in his everyday life a man constantly correlates himself with his surrounding, he differs himself from it, he feels himself, knows his own necessities, puts himself certain tasks, estimates his abilities, achievements and failures, in short, he is aware and experiences himself, and all his life. Though, such an ordinary self-consciousness is often not enough to solve even simple life collisions, when one has «to search for one's ego», «to define one's fate», to put the goal and the sense of one's life.

Though, there is not only an ordinary, but also a theoretical-philosophical explanation of «ego», and various conceptions of «ego». Revealing the structure of self-consciousness in connection with the problem of «ego», it is appropriate to address, at least briefly, the main conceptions of «I».

The theory of ego-alter by W. James has been rather widely spread. According to this theory, «I» is a general total of that, what a person can consider to be his own. According to W. James, person's «ego» is «not only his physical and spiritual qualities, but also his dress, his house, his wife, children, ancestors and friends, his reputation and his work, his property, his horses, his yacht and capitals». Thereat, W. James divides «I» into three components: 1) material «I» – one's body and property; 2) social «I» – that, what surrounding people consider him to be; 3) spiritual «I» – person's psychological abilities and inclinations [2].

If W. James limited «ego» only by a man and his property, then E. Mach went beyond these limits. He wrote: «the borders of our «I» can be widened so much, that finally they will include the whole world» [6]. Identification of «ego» with the world is also typical of R. Avenarius, A. Binet, W. Wundt and others.

The conception of ego-alter has been also developed in the works of American social psychologist C. Cooley. To his mind, human «I» presents by itself a sum of the following psychological reactions of the person to the opinions of surrounding people about himself: 1) notions of that, what «I» seems to be to another person; 2) notions of the evaluations, another person gives to this image of mine; 3) a peculiar feeling of «I», something sort of pride or humiliation. As we can see, social aspect of «I» acquires a domineering meaning in the theory by C. Cooley [6].

Ego-alter evolution in the way of socialization comes to its completion in the social-role theory of «ego» by J. Meade. According to Meade, «I» is the result of social interaction, in which process individual has got accustomed to look at himself as at an object with the eyes of «a general other»: «I, as that, what can be an object for oneself, is in its essence a social structure and is formed in the process of one's social experience». In other words, the content of «ego» is defined by the collective mind-set of some social group. «I» is a mirror of others; it is defined by the opinions of surrounding people. But this opinion is being formed in dependence on the roles, which are performed by the subject. That is why we may say, that «I» is a complex of the roles, which the person identifies himself with [8].

«Ego» conception by Z. Freud is also of certain interest. According to Z. Freud, the structure of person includes in itself the following three elements: 1) «it» (Id) – the subconscious, which is acting according to the principle of

complacency, the source of psychic energy; 2) «I» (Ego) – the mental, which appears in the process of ontogenesis and acting according to the principle of reality (proceeding from the conditions), an intermediate between «it» and the surrounding (natural and social); 3) «super-ego» (super-ego) – the conscious, concentration of moral norms, principles and prohibitions, which appears on the basis of «I». Thereat, Z. Freud considered the sub-conscious to be absolute. Following Plato, he compared «I», as a central, integrating part of the person, with a houseman, who had to ride a creature – «it», a biological formation, being stronger than himself (ref. [8]).

Stating «I» and «it» into antagonistic relations, Z. Freud tried to reconcile them at the same time. And on this way he noticed some significant moments in the correlation of the mental and the subconscious. In particular, he suggested an idea of «psychological defense», in which basis there is a principle of coordination of the mental («I») with the subconscious («it»). Understanding of his own position gives the person a possibility to accept, to adapt for it and to avoid neuroses. Z. Freud also noticed the fact that understanding of one's own feelings was often slowed down by one's «super-ego» (moral censor); especially it concerned forbidden and antisocial feelings. Thus, the social-role conception of «I» by W. James and his followers C. Cooley and J. Meade had got its further development in Freud's works from the point of view of psychological interpretation. And the credit went to Z. Freud. But, he did not manage to reveal adequately the structure of «I» and to explain the mechanism of coordination of its components [8].

C. Jung is rather close to Z. Freud and according to his theory, man's psychical world includes «I», «mask», «shadow», image of soul, the subjective-unconscious and the collective-unconscious. Their central part is «I» and all the components of the person's spiritual world are

striving to it. Individual «I» undergoes a complex way of self-becoming in its development and finally, it coincides with its cosmic «I», as it is in the spirit of immanents of various kinds (Christian ascetism, mystics, yoga, shamanism and so on.). «Mask» is «a social skin» of the person and it can be in a various degree of coordination with «I», i.e. it can whether protect it or destruct it. The task of psychotherapy is in the following: to bring «mask» and «I» into harmony. «Shadow» — «a shabby man» is the dark counterpart and the basis of «I». «Shadow» has a negative sense, it is the man's evil («beast-man»), and struggling with it represents a necessary condition for person's development. Image of soul is a part of psychic, which has sexual sources and fulfils the function of connection between «I» and the unconscious. The later is a complex of stable links, being formed on the basis of individual or collective experience. Thereat, the unconscious domineers over the conscious: every change of the conscious is the result of a change of the unconscious. If social interpretation of the unconscious gives C. Jung some advantages before Z. Freud, then his lodgment of the unconscious with the supreme power makes their conceptions again closer. Along with all this and in the same way as Freud did, C. Jung introduced his antagonistic principle – an active creative self-evaluation of the person on his way of achievement of his authentic «I». But in general, C. Jung's deep psychology mystified the problem of «ego», brought irrationalism and divine influence into it [8].

Here, we should notice that, religious interpretation of «I» is very widely presented. Thus, according to German thinker I. Scheffler, that inexhaustible and secret human «ego» is «the philosophic stone», wherein the whole world is concentrated. «I» underlies and takes a shot from the reality of time and space. Though, beside it, there is cosmic «I» of God, which infinitely exceeds human «I». German psychiatrist Kleist adhered

to the conception of plurality of «I» – personal, social, and religious. Thereat, to his mind, each of them corresponds to a separate isolated part of brain. Russian religious philosopher S.L. Frank considered «I» as a floating, flexible, open, unique phenomenon, supported and revealed through God (ref. [5]). N. A. Berdyaev connected self-consciousness with freedom and logos. Logos is from God, and freedom is from abyss, preceding the being. Thereat, «I» is primary; it appears from nothing and is reduced to nothing. Originally, it is everything, the same as everything is «I». «I» cannot be defined externally, from «not-I», it is defined from within. Existing inside itself, at the same time «I» is thrown outside into the external world. Hence, «pain, injury, abruption and ambivalence enter «the self-consciousness of «I»... and it is the main mystery of «I» [1].

According to E. Mach, «ego» is a conditional title of complexes of elements (feelings), being of imaginary character [6]. By «I» French philosopher Le Senne understood a mystically active center, uniting personality and its character [12]. By the theory of Schelling, «I» is an objective subject-object, absolute equality of subject and object [11]. Indian thinker M. Iqbal reduced all the existing to a combination of separate self-determining «egos» [12]. In its turn, every «I» is closed in itself, possesses its unique individuality, though it is able to interact with other «egos». According to American personalist Calkins, the Universe presents by itself an all-including «ego», and all the minor «egos» being its integral parts. One can be only in somebody's conscious [6]. By the theory of Rosenberg, image of «I» includes in itself present «I», dynamic «I», fantastic «I», ideal «I», future «I», idealized «I», and also a whole row of imaginary «egos» – images and masks, being presented for the public [6]. Neo-Freudian K. Horney considered «I» as a basis of personality, as a central inner power, being common for all the people and at the same

time being unique for every man. This power has an unconscious nature and it is a mystic source of person's development. Thereat, none of them have even a hint of the physical reality of «I»: «I» is not a flesh of mine, «I» is my spirit, and only my spirit» [8].

We should underline, that finally every of the given points of view represents a theoretical construction, in which basis there is a thesis of incognizability of «ego» or, at least, a doubt that it is possible to be cognized, and that is why it is rather illustrative, that famous writer I. Murdoch states: «mechanic springs of our «ego» remain to be hidden from us, until divine power brings their work to complete perfection, but then there is nobody and nothing to know about them. Every person is petty and ridiculous in the eyes of his neighbor. Everyone has a notion about himself, and this notion is false» [7; 8].

On the whole, human cognition can be whatever deep, though at every present moment it is not enough developed in order to reflect all the complexity of real «I» – much in it remains to be a mystery. Real «I» is never completed; it is a process, in progression to infinity within the frames of one's finite life. Image of «I» is sure to move but it only copies its nature. Copying mistakes are inevitable. Moreover, image of «I» is not able to comprehend its original, because not everything in the original can be reflected by the conscious. Activity subject is real «I» – and it is subconscious in most of its revelations. To a greater degree, the unconscious, intuition determines the activity of real «I», but they are not reflected directly, not reproduced in the image of «I». At the same time, one should not, of course, make the place of the unconscious absolute in the structure of «I», as Z. Freud did.

Thus, when researching correlation of «I» and self-consciousness, one needs to differentiate two «egos» – objective and subjective. (Here, we should specify that objective «I» is not free

from subjectivity, it is an objective-subjective phenomenon by its nature. It is objective only in that sense that it exists independently from its comprehension.) Subjective «I» (image of «I») is narrower than objective (real «I») because of reflection costs. And precisely it forms the basis of self-consciousness structure. But, the latter is not limited by the structure of image of «I»; it is wider than this image (subjective «I»), as far as it also includes reflections of other elements, have not been covered by this image. What concerns correlation of structures of self-consciousness and objective (real) «I», so they also do not coincide with each other. On one hand, self-consciousness does not embrace all the richness of real «I» (original is never fully covered by its image, and in this sense, the structure of self-consciousness is narrower than the structure of real «I»). On the other hand, self-consciousness includes also reflection of potential structures of real «I» (and in this sense, the structure of self-consciousness is wider than the structure of real «I»).

Now, if we ask ourselves a question: is «I» the result of self-consciousness or is it its precondition? – Then, we must state that it is impossible to give a curt answer to this question. «I» is both the result and precondition of self-consciousness. All depends on the aspect of its consideration: «I» can be considered as an objectively existing reality («I» – original, real «I»), and as a reflection («I» – for-oneself, image of «I»). «I» – for-oneself, or reflective «I», is the result of self-consciousness, it appeared much later than self-consciousness. «I» – for-oneself appears from phylogenesis of self-consciousness, and is originated from «we». That is why the history of reflective «I» should be considered from phylogenesis, from «we». Group self-consciousness – kind, tribe existed long before reflective «I». In this sense, self-consciousness is primary, and «I» is secondary, a derivative from it. On the other hand, «I» is a precondition

of self-consciousness. It is also true, if we mean real, objective «I». Such «I» should exist, before being comprehended.

I. S. Con indicates at duality of «I». Under «I» he understands two phenomena: 1) «I» as a subject – a dynamic integrity of psychological processes, being directly experienced, and 2) «I» as an object of self-cognition – an individual, as he sees himself [4. P. 43]. While supporting this idea, to our mind, one should clarify the terminology: the first «I» should be called objective, and the second one – subjective. As far as «I» as a subject (according to Con) exists objectively, while «I» as an object is a subjective image of the objective «I». More over, I. S. Con reduces both «egos» only to psychic processes, physical part of «I» is not underlined. A.G. Spirkin also points at the spiritual nature of «I»: «First of all, «ego» stands out as a subject of conscious, psychic phenomena in their integral entirety. When one says: «my ego», then one distracts from one's physical organization» [10. P. 133]. We have already expressed our attitude towards it in that sense, that real «I» is both physical and spiritual reality. This point of view has been rather precisely expressed in the theory by S. L. Rubinstein: ««ego» is not a conscious, but a man» [9. P. 118].

There appear a lot of difficulties while defining a volume and a concrete content of real «I», and consequently, the image and the structure of self-consciousness. Any definition of «I» (spiritual, physical) is undetermined from the point of view of dialectics of definiteness and indefiniteness. And in its turn any indefinite «I» is determined. And in this relation, it is impossible, for example, to fix spiritual «I» in its full volume, as far as the volume itself does not have any strict determination. In fact, man's spiritual «I» is all his knowledge and emotional-willful revelations, all his psychic. Man's psychic is a social phenomenon and its essence is in reflection of the reality. Reality changes and, consequently,

«ego», as its reflection, changes along with it. This «ego» can be infinitely various and contradictory, as a reflected and experienced world inside a man. Spiritual «I» is subjective, deeply intimate and sensually-thrilling; revelation of its nuances does not have any qualitative or quantitative limits. As I. S. Con justly notices, ««I» is the deepest, the finest and the most difficult-to-reach measurement of the person». [4. P. 76].

### Conclusion

1. While considering human «I», one pays special attention to its contradictoriness: it is not only limited and unlimited, and owing to this reason «ego» of one person differs from «ego» of the other and always seems to be more or less determined, steady and integral: «... always one and the same «I» absorbs in itself... various sensual kinds of experience, lives them through, and thus, integrates into one entirety». In the basis of this integrity of «I» there is not an aprioristic sense of time (I. Kant), but, material integrity of the world and physical integrity of a man, integrity of his physical organization and of his nervous system, as the final result.

2. In its sociological aspect, integrity of «ego» is obviously caused by the dominating social role of a person, as it is marked by I.S. Con: «Integrity of «I» consists precisely of the supraliminal role and axiological dominance, which unites all the other roles and values of the person. The more this dominance is determined, the more integral is the person». [4. P.-68]

3. In the psychological scale, there is memory in the basis of integrity and stability of «I», which represents an ability of the person to fix, to preserve and to reproduce the data of his experience.

4. Organic self-feelings – feelings of hunger or satiation, thirst, delight and so on are a natural basis of «I», the same as of self-consciousness. (in the history of philosophy these «ego»

feelings had different meanings, as a basis of self-consciousness: by Hume – it is «a bundle» of various perceptions, following each other at an inconceivable speed and being in a constant movement»; by Condillac it is «a modification of soul»; by Kant is «a pure primary apperception» and so on.). Though, organic self-feelings is only a precondition of «I», being also peculiar of an animal, but «the later does not reach the comprehension of itself as «I», i.e. does not reach its pure integrity of itself in itself». Proper human «I» is preconditioned by the peculiarities of its character, temperament, by the manner of feeling, of thinking and acting. Thereat, the steadiest part of «I» is the person's world outlook, his social mind-sets.

5. In general, dialectics of «I» is the following: it is steady and changeable at one and the same time. Consequently, speaking about integrity and stability of «I», one should bear in mind, that these «I» attributes are relative. Even the most significant qualities of «I» are not fixed; they both determine this «I», and change along with it. «The person «remains to be himself»

thanks to presence of some significant invariant characteristics of spiritual world structure. We move from one life station to another, carrying with us all the baggage of our spiritual acquirements, and along with enriching these treasures, we change ourselves and shift our natural organization» [10. P. 137].

6. While analyzing the structure of human «I» and through it the structure of self-consciousness, it is important to reveal it from the point of view of dialectics of singular and general. In this case, «I» is presented as a system of general (universal), peculiar and singular characteristics of the individual. Universal form of «I» is a generic or general social essence of a man. Universal «I» characterizes the form of sociality on the whole. One can say that universal form of «I» is a certain social community of people, a certain meta-collective, a certain «we». It was remarkably expressed by S. L. Rubinstein: «Universality of «I» is a collective subject, community of subjects, «a republic of subjects», community of persons; this «I» is in fact «we»» [9. P. 171].

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## **Макро- и микрофилософия самосознания**

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*Статья посвящена анализу одной из фундаментальных категорий философии – самосознанию. Акцент сделан не столько на определении самосознания, сколько на анализе соотношения самосознания и «Я». Общая теоретическая посылка статьи заключается в обозначении тезиса об общественной, познаваемой и изменяющейся сущности человека, детерминированной темпоральной составляющей: прошлым, настоящим и будущим. Опираясь на богатый опыт изучения структуры самосознания в философии, психологии, социологии, религиозной теории и практике, автор статьи еще раз, вслед за классиками проблемы самосознания, указывает на важность и необходимость анализа, в первую очередь, социальной природы самосознания, определяющей содержание и структуру самосознания, а, следовательно, содержание и структуру «Я» человека.*

*Ключевые слова: самосознание, «Я», структура самосознания, природа самосознания, теории самосознания, социальность, двойственность, познаваемость, изменчивость, время, прошлое, настоящее, будущее, опыт.*

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