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In the Trace of Human Identity

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The article is focused on the issue of human being and human identity (both collective and individual one). Two methodilogical approaches – essential and existential – are considered to be so called traditional approaches of the philosophical antropology. An interpretative/narrative approach are the current state in the analysing of the identity issue. The mentioned approaches are used in the special sciences: social and cultural anthropology, psychology, etc., as well. The author emphasizes a cultural dimension of identity reflecting the human situation in globalized, multicultural world (e.g. the conceptions of multiple identity, sliced identity, split identity).

Keywords: human identity; inclusive identity; exclusive identity; multicultural society.

We are living in the multicultural society in the period of globalization. And to typical features of globalization we may refer unification of various spheres of our life. Some manifestations of unification are supported by us (for example, we would like to live «as well, as in the West» from the view point of our welfare), and we resist the others (first of all, because we are afraid of losing our unique peculiarities, which determine our identity). Multiculturalism is closely connected with globalization, though, for the first sight, they seem to be opposite (multiculturalism presupposes multiplicity, variety, in comparison with globalization, which claims for unification and universality), though if we take for attention the amplitude and the intensity of acculturation processes, then multiculturalism turns out to be a powerful means of globalization. Paradox of each globalization project is in the following: on one hand, it is targeted for erosion of the national

identity, and, on the other hand, it indirectly leads to its revitalization and renewal.

The mentioned processes and symptoms actualize the problem of identity and its preservation as on the local cultural level, so on the individual one.

In the European culture, the problem of man has become a subject of philosophical reflection, and, first of all, it happened in the periods of social-cultural instability and radical changes. And the present time is not an exception. Historically, the answer to the question «What is man?» has been connected to the attempts to define the essence of man. In philosophical anthropology it has corresponded to the so-called Essential approach. The essence of man was accepted as something, preceding to a concrete person, something aprioristic to a certain degree, super-temporal and unchangeable (and only Hegel disclosed historical status of

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the individual). The question was about generic essential definition of man. The truth of man as such was equal to the knowledge of his essence, and the truth of a concrete man was connected to the degree of realization, materialization of this eidetic essence. The situation drastically changed with the appearance of the existential philosophy. Sartre formulated the thesis «existence precedes essence» and wrote that existential definition of man was always his individual definition (taking into consideration the difference between the essence, which was perceived as *eidos*, i.e. a general form of the existing nature, and the substance, which was perceived as *morfé*, i.e. a concrete form of the creation). In his lection «Existentialism is humanism» Sartre formulated the so-called first principle of existentialism: man is nothing at the beginning, and only in some time he becomes what he makes of himself. The truth of man is connected with him himself. And its criterion is his responsibility for himself and for the whole humanity. The world has become that very space, which is created by the deeds and the words of people. Man differs from the anonymous existence of other creatures by his necessity «to reveal that he is in his unique peculiarity, in his deeds and his words» [3. P. 197]. Deeds and words indicate at the fact of humane existence and reveal the truth of his identity as much, as there is somebody, who is able to comprehend the meaning of these words and the senses of these deeds. Person «loses his reality» out of the sphere of Otherness [3. P. 58].

In XX century, philosophy began to understand more and more that the human world was not the light of objective facts, existing independently from the determinating humane activity. And first of all, it was the world of symbols and senses, being an integral part of humane understanding, interpretation, expression, i.e. being the consequence of humane conscious. If the world exists in the parameters of symbols,

meanings and senses, by which means people not only cognate, but also create, then this world, which they share and which they speak about, exists in the form of a cultural construct, created by the people. And, consequently, if humane identity is created in the result of interaction with thus understood world, then communication (or, to be exact, narrative and interpretive activity) is the means of its creation, i.e. we are speaking about narrative identity.

If in classical metaphysics the statement that everything is identical and synonymous to itself, is an axiom, then philosophy of XX century discloses a paradox and makes it absolute. In connection with the notion of identity, thinking mixes up two notions: identity in relation to the equal, similar, and identity in relation to oneself («I»). Antinomy is concluded in the fact that usage of one and the same word for denoting of the person from his birth to his death presupposes that there is some unchangeable bases, but humane experience denies the existence of person's unchangeable bases [15].

One can also find the mentioned approaches from the sphere of philosophic anthropology on the level of special humane sciences. At the end of XIX – at the beginning of XX century, the essential approach was prevailing (for example, they used the notions of Volksgeist, «nation's character», «nation's soul» in philosophy; Berdyaev spoke of «the soul of Russia»; and it was «ethno-cultural identity» by Wilhelm Wundt in psychology). One can find essentialism tendencies even in history, if history is perceived as a way of nation to self-realization in a national state, and nation is conceived as a super-historical, eternally existing phenomenon, gradually coming to self-cognition and self-reflection.

In the meanwhile, we come across essentialism revelations in social and cultural anthropology in connection with the Ruth Benedict notion of cultural pattern (patterns of culture are dominating

psychological qualities and ways of behavior, which are peculiar to the representatives of some culture), in connection with the R. Linton theory of basic types of personality (basic personality), with the A. Kardiner notion of "basic personality structure" and others. At the same time, the R. Lynton theory of social roles caused significant complications in the problem of identity. It raised a question, whether identity was a sum of certain roles or one and the same person was used to have many identities.

In response to the one-sided essentialism there appeared theories, which denied the possibility of group, collective identity existence (cultural, national and so on.). For example, in their work «Social Construction of Reality» Berger and Luckmann argued about collective identity understanding in the vein of Durkheim sociology and anthropological school «Personality and Culture».

These days can be sooner characterized by the tendency of searching of an adequate measure of balance between collective/group and individual identities. They differ significantly, being under the condition of constant tension and mutual interaction.

There are a lot of conceptions of identity in the modern social-scientific (philosophic, sociological, psychological, social-anthropological and other) literature. In spite of terminological differences, some conceptions of «I»-identity give an opportunity to define several leading methodological principals: «I» consists of two parts (internal and external), which create more or less consistent integrity, being the result of humane interaction with the society and within the society. One of the component parts of this interaction is the process of self-identification with the help of «symbolization» (G.H. Mead) and self-identity correction with the opinion and attitude of «Others» (Ch.H. Cooley «looking-glass» identity conception – *the looking-glass self*). The main factors of the personal «becoming» are as the tension between «I» and social, cultural sphere (the mentioned authors, and also R. Linton, M. Mead, R. Benedict and others), so «the key contradiction» between spontaneous internal «I», on one hand, and external «I», being subjected to social limitations and prohibitions, on the other hand (contradiction between internal «*I*» and external *«me»* can be found in the works of M. Mead and E. Goffman). Goffman also sticks to the so-called dramaturgic version of the symbolic interactionism, which conceives the world as one colossal theatre, wherein man has to play not only different performances for various communities in correspondence with their demands and expectations, but also in correspondence with his (man's) choice of some of the institutionalized roles and in correspondence with the quality of their performance. Investigating the problem of identity and identification in connection with the theory of primary and secondary institutions, Berger and Luckmann prove that in the process of socialization one can observe as unification/ identification with the only possible world of «important Others» (for example, parents) and then «generalized Others» [6. P. 42-50], so creation/appearance of symmetry between the subjective and objective «I» realities as a result of the processes of internalization, externalization and objectivation, going on by means of the social institutions net. The authors write: «In reality, identity is objectively defined as a place in some concrete world and subjectively it can be perceived only *simultaneously* with this world. In other words, all the identifications go on the boarders, defining a certain social world... to get one's identity means for one to get a given certain place in the world» [6. P. 50].

An important moment of the «I» identity theory is the processual character of «I» (we come across it already in Sigmund Freud's works). R. Jenkins sticks to the point that we can

avoid a huge gap between the activity and the structure thanks to the fact that social identities are conceptualized by the notion of process [13. P. 26].

Cultural identification plays one of the main roles in definition of human identity. Geertz writes, that one of the most important truths of us is that one, that we are prepared by nature to live thousands kinds of lives, but in reality we live only one life in one culture [10. P. 57]. Thus, culture is an image (construct) of reality (one of possible definitions of culture), existing between the man and the world, coordinating, limiting, and stimulating inter-human relations. And this image does not exist out of the conscious of its carriers and their activity. It is the bases as of stability, so of changes as well. The world of culture is given to us in the form of symbolic models, which include more or less coherent narration about what kind of world it is, what it consists of, and where it moves. Sloterdijk sais that mythomotorics is a summation of identification stories-narrations, being necessary for integrity and fullness of sense of some culture [17. P. 36]. Since Humboldt's times we have been coming across the opinion that languages differ not on the level of symbols and phonemes, but, first of all, on the level of world outlooks. A certain completion of this thought could be seen as in the Sapir-Whorf theory of linguistic relativism, so in the thesis of L. Wittgenstein «the boarders of my language are the boarders of my world». «The real world is mainly built subconsciously on the bases of linguistic norms of a certain group.» [16. P. 57]. Every language is determined not only by that, what gives the speaker an opportunity to express himself, but also by that, what (formally and contextually) makes him speak. «Subject does not perceive or reflect the things; order, being their autonomic self-reflection, is that, what metaphysics calls to be subject» [9. P. 34]. Cultural identity is that very order. Identity of every person is connected to understanding «becoming» of this order and is legitimated by its anticipation. Order is the space, wherein understanding takes place; it is the criterion of obviousness and heresy [7]. It gives sense to our existence. Expansion of certain behavior and linguistic codes goes on in the sphere of socio-cultural institutions, where the process of self-identification and identification formation (by means of collisions, acceptance and being accepted by «Others») takes place. Institutions are represented and legitimized in the modes of thinking, and, just the same way, identity is inseparable from the situation of human thinking, from human ability to separate and to integrate by means of language, attributing categories, «giving labels» (labelling) to other people, who are defined as «we», «they» or «a good-looking», «a jerk» and so on.

Being specific constructions of reality, cultures (these variously structured and differentiated spheres) predetermine the sense of humane existence in culture. «If there is any specific, peculiar sense, then this sense is possible only within the frames of the differentiating structure itself... all the sense determinancy is based on its distinctions» [9. P. 63].

In cognitive anthropology, culture is defined as «cognitive map», which gives all the representatives of a certain culture some «instructions», which determine their ways of behavior in standard situations and which let explain and understand complicated situations. Representatives of a certain culture differentiate on the latent level of thinking some common patterns of thinking, on which bases they perceive and interpret the world. These patterns of thinking are revealed in their real inter-relations, «saturate» their social statuses and roles. But people are not just «products», patterns carriers; first of all, they are patterns creators. Being representatives of one and the same culture, people do not possess its absolute identical models. We live

in a heteronomous cultural reality, and that is why, being caused by individual psychological dispositions, aspirations, values, and «existing on the edge» of various subcultures, our individual world model is a summation of cognitive maps. «Culture does not offer identical maps, but it sooner suggests certain complexes of principals of maps creation and navigation. Various cultures are like different navigational schools, which serve for various landscapes and seas crossing» [8. P. 6-7]. In symbolic anthropology, such an approach is developed by means of the following notions: «reality patterns» – its interpretation and «patterns for reality» – its organization instructions [10].

We consider the modern world to be multi-cultural and of many faces. Every concrete-historical culture is a result of not only internal inventions, but also of the processes of acculturation and migration, which cause foreign (new) cultural elements to be saturated and processed. But, while in preceding epochs the role of tradition was explicitly prevailing, at the present time, the intensity of innovative changes is so high (let us recollect Childe's considerations concerning «hot» and «cold» cultures), that it is a threat to cultures' existence, as far as it violates cultural entirety and inner integration. And the life of a person becomes a life on the edge of cultural collisions, on the «boarder» of cultural worlds with their pluralism of axiological orientations and life styles (Czech author V. Belogradsky uses the metaphors «an intermediate world» and «in the gap between the worlds»).

Identification degree of different persons is always various, as far as it is connected as with psycho-social data of the person, so with the historical «character» of the culture itself, and also with the degree of its openness or Withdrawnness? One can observe a contradiction between the individual «cognitive pattern» (a consistent system of knowledge, beliefs, moral mind sets and ideals) and facts of the new objective reality in the course of fast cultural changes, when transformation of traditional institutional structure of culture takes place (i.e. transformation of external reality). This contradiction can be connected with a disintegration of the current system of «cognitive maps», and it can even lead to disintegration of the individual in some extreme cases. Giddens writes: «To a large extend, self-understanding is determined by the stability of the individual social position in the society. But even there, where traditions are forgotten and where man has a choice of his life style, human «I» is not free» [12. P. 27]. That is why the ability of each of us to preserve our personal entirety becomes the leading factor, and this ability is the bases of cultural identity of the opened and changing phenomenon, which determines our humanness.

But when we are speaking about the phenomenon of multiculturalism, we also come across other opinions. Thus, P. Adler underlines the role of changes and sticks to the point that new type of multicultural man, being born in the multicultural reality, is the type of man, who has not any cultural roots, and who is able to change his identity and features that way, that he can exist and function amid cultures. [1] A. Vattimo even considers that post-modern man will not think about the problem of identity at all and will cease to perceive himself as a steady entirety [19. P. 223].

The time of post-modern has really made the problem of identity more complicated. Individual identity is very sensitive to the impacts and changes of its environment; group/collective identity is more inert (its stability degree has been historical caused by specifics of its inner development, by the character and intensity of its relations with the environment). Most of people have situational individual identity, while collective identity is steadier and longer-lasting.

Multiplicity becomes a typical sign of individual identity.

«I» is understood as something constantly changing, multilayered, poly-dimensional (*multiple identity, sliced identity*), but, at the same time, split (*split identity*). For example, multiple identity conception presupposes that identities can be not only different, but even «potentially opposite, they can reveal in different time and in different places, threat, they are not necessary to form any uniform and coherent entirety» [5. P. 387]. They change in correspondence with the changing of social statuses and roles of the human, his contacts with various socical goups and his behavior within the changing social and cultural environment. And the subjective factors of identification become of very high importance: «I am the one, whom I want to be», but so far, as «I» is accepted by the environment.

Actually, identity becomes a summation of «situational» identities. That is why, «grasping» itself, definition of «I» identity, as its entirety, becomes a problem, because it is one of the variations of the eternal methodological problem, how «to capture and to freeze» the changing with the help of a word. As a metaphor of the modern situation of man in relation towards himself, towards his life journey, towards the world/worlds, which surround him, we come across with the image of labyrinth both in special scientific literature, (Wallace defines the situation of humane identity as «a way in the labyrinth – mazeway»), and in fiction (J.L. Borges considers the image of labyrinth as a synthesis of the metaphor of the way, of the open space and changing with the metaphor of closed space and constancy and it is one of the most favorite ones). Changeability becomes a feature not only of individual, but also of collective identity. Multiculturalism raises a row of questions, being connected as «with indefiniteness and variety, so with

possible ways (or their absence) of one's own identities' construction» [20. P. 6].

One of the most widely-spread conceptions is an inclusive understanding of identity (compare it with the exclusive identity). Exclusive identity is based on cognition of one's own way by means of non-acceptance, refusal from «otherness» as being «foreign»). We can meet this conception in the works of some thinkers, including Giddens. While the inclusive approach is considered to be not only as a purely theoretical one, but also as an expected form of social communication between cultures and societies.

In connection with all the mentioned, we find the identity conception, which has been formulated by Tajfel and Turner, to be very interesting [18]. The authors write that our Self-conscious is based on our perception of ourselves as a component part of some group (ethnic, national, linguistic, gender and so on). To define «I» means to realize «We» and to be accepted by these «We». As much a person perceives him(her) self as a member of different groups, as much his (her) identity can change depending on which group he (she) is identified with. Each of these identities is connected to certain expectations, belief, behavior and corresponding norms of the given group. Identification with the group is one of three stages of the process... The next two are categorization (2) and comparison (3). With the help of categorization (2) the surrounding world gets its sense. Real content and ways of categorization, which are a specific construct (in the cultural space and historical time), are based on historical experience of every culture and are fixed by its tradition. Cultural identity grows from the common past (as a rule, we are proud of it), from the present and the common «plans» for the future. «Social capital» of every culture also includes mechanisms of adaptations to a new cultural environment. The individual can be a member of some culture to as much extend, as

much he shares his cultural experience with other members of this culture. The man preserves his ties with the culture he has been brought up in the course of all his life. These ties help him to «cope» better with the inter-cultural situation.

The idea of social comparison (3) is connected with the following: we compare our group with other groups in order to define our own (and ourselves). We need «Them» to define «We». We search for compatible, but first of all, distinctive features and signs. We need «foreignness», «peculiarities» (otherness) in order to conceive «ours» and «mine».

In most cases, the members of a certain group/culture make their comparison as follows: first of all, they estimate positively themselves (compare with MacGarty [14]), as far as they use categories, being advantageous for their group. Positive self-estimation contributes to strengthening of the group self-conscious, solidarity and group integration. And it becomes the bases of generation of positive and negative stereotypes (also including prejudices). That is why identity is very often defined as something negative. To be identified with a certain group means to exclude other groups (that is the so-called exclusive understanding of identity, which is closely connected with ethnocentrism). To the mind of Murdock, ethnocentrism is an emotional and intellectual basis of the ethnic dualism, according to which everything, that exists and has a positive meaning for the society, is connected to its own group, and everything, that is problematic, is ascribed to other, very often unknown groups. Intolerance towards «Otherness», being not yet assimilated, is a defense of one's own existence, as far as everything «other», «foreign» is perceived as a threat, and it means that it meets an aprioristic repulse. **In the course of previous epochs, collective social/cultural identities were mainly formed on the basis of the tendency to social exclusion of «Otherness», and it was connected to the ethno-centric world outlook (including Europe-centrism, West-centrism and others).** According to the mind of already mentioned Vattimo, cultures of the Western word are cultures of conflicts, as far as their identity presupposes a constant reconstruction in the process of conflicts. But, in the situation of cultural pluralism, «our identity is a constant game of disintegration. Being thus constructed, identity does not vanish, but, turning backwards from violence and hegemony of one culture over another, it accepts other cultures to have a right for freedom and contacts, threat not derogating their systems of value. For the post-modern individual, there will appear conditions for his authentic citizenship development, being not already based on violence» [19. P. 224].

The question is in the following: shall there be formed other identities, which will be based on the opposition «We» and «They – other, foreign». When identity is considered in the context of the problem of relation towards «Otherness», then inclusive identity cultivation is considered to be the means of anticipation and overcoming of social conflicts. (Though, this concept has its opponents, as far as there is a real danger that inclusion can be understood as absorption, i.e. assimilation.) Cultural relativism is a theoretical approach, which explains the possibility of inclusive identity. This approach started to be developed in the previous century by representatives of cultural and social anthropology – it was a critical response to Euro-centrism (de facto to any form of Ethnocentrism). According to cultural relativism, every culture is an original, unique phenomenon. And it should be perceived by the «view», being purified from the stereotypes, which are typical for our culture, i.e. by «the eyes of a stranger». Cultural relativism has to deal with a row of problems, for example, cultural agnosticism (every culture is such a unique phenomenon, being concentrated in itself, that it is impossible to cognate it[*]) or

axiological and moral relativism. That is why one can hear some critical opinions regarding to it in the modern literature. But, appeal to the necessity of overcoming of stereotypes and prejudices, as «a horizon of pre-understanding» of the foreign culture, remains to be the axis of our relation to «Otherness». New optics of the world perception gives one a possibility to see oneself by the eyes of some other person, and to see the other person as oneself, every action is experienced as a moral collision, and one's own existence is not taken as once and for all «given existence», but as an act of choice. Possibly, here is the sense of the famous utterance of Rimbaud: «I am an Other».

Though, in the situation of cultural pluralism, new «foreign» structures of symbols penetrate in the sphere of our culture with its peculiar cultural patterns, with its system of cognitive maps and unique symbolic structure. These foreign structures pretend to be the deciphering codes of our experience. And there appears a situation of antagonism between alternative definitions of reality, which can lead to the paradox of «overfilling vacuum», when human identity vanishes by itself and freedom becomes ineffably easy. To the mind of Augé, attitude towards the other person, which is very important for any identity becoming, loses its bases, as far as the modern world is characteristic of predominance of the situational and individual. Life consists of multitude, detached, various episodes [4. P. 59].

Society comes across with a serious problem: tyranny of identities or crisis of legitimacy. The crisis of legitimacy is connected to understanding of relativism of our world's image and our method of living. Under the tyranny of identities we mean as revelation of ethnocentrism (do we still need «barbarians» in order to feel ourselves to be the representatives of «European Civilization»?), so absolute paternalism in the form of acceptance of minorities' peculiarities, which contains in

indirect form the mind set of superiority towards «Others».

A principal possibility of cultural contacts and multiculturalism as a historical phenomenon do not mean that such contacts and creation of inter-cultural phenomenon exist in reality. «Heterogeneity can impact the attempts to change...identity, but it is not an obstacle by itself» [11. P. 47]. Cultures may be territorially close, but so-called «weak» members of closed societies turn out to be on the periphery, and their distinctions and closedness are intensified by their economical and social levels. Predominant cultures may make certain paternalistic steps, but this paternalism underlines and, thus and at the same time, intensifies their distinctions, according to the mind of some authors, it is a violation of the principle of freedom (Friedmann), i.e. it leads to «violence» over human identity. Huntington also writes that the policy of support and development of various cultural identities may lead to USA disintegration and contradicts the idea of individual freedom.

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The question is in the following: will the multicultural civilization create new cultural identities, being connected with the existing identities changing, or create a society without identities and without any depth in that sense that cultural identity will refer to the private sphere of human life (viz. The problem of correlation of cultural and civil identities in multicultural societies)? In any case, the future is connected with «the coming back to man» (to know the other presupposes to believe oneself) and with a constant dialogue as a means of searching for agreement. The time requires that the man takes responsibility for his own becoming and existence, without any absolute guarantee for his unmistakable behavior and without any possibility to correct his mistakes.

Comments:

* Human identity is considered to be a cultural construct, which cannot be transferred from one culture to another. But, in this case, there appears a question: are cultural contacts possible in general, in the global, multicultural light? According to D. Allen, we remain to be prisoners of Euro-Atlantic understanding of «I» as an atomized, self-defining creature [2. P. 3-26].

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По следам человеческой идентичности

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Статья посвящена анализу проблемы человеческой идентичности (индивидуальной и коллективной). Эссенциальный и экзистенциальный подходы рассматриваются в качестве традиционных подходов философии человека. В современной литературе проблема идентичности человека всё чаще анализируется в контексте интерпретативного/ нарративного подхода. Упомянутые подходы используют и специальные науки о человеке, например, социальная и культурная антропология, психология и др. Особое внимание автор уделяет анализу культурной димензии идентичности, в которой отражается ситуация человека в глобальном, мультикультурном мире (концепции множественной идентичности, расслоённой идентичности и др.).

Ключевые слова: человеческая идентичность; инклюзивная (включающая) идентичность зксклюзивная (исключающая) идентичность; мультикультурное общество.