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## The Concept of “Personal Identity” and its Social Implications

The article discusses the main approaches to the study of personal identity issues. The authors analyze studies devoted to the study of the interrelationships between the phenomena of personal identity and tolerance, identify the presence of opposite approaches to this problem. The main thing in the problem of personal self-identification is the human essential parameter of identity. Only by understanding what the true essence of a person is, it is possible to clarify the question of whether an individual in his culture is identical to truly human principles. Identity issues are addressed when there are any problems. This issue is not raised in the crisis-free stage of society's development. Therefore, although there is a well-known danger in the identity crisis, namely, the danger of destabilizing the social situation, nevertheless, one should not treat the identity crisis as an entirely negative process. The crisis is the threshold of the transition to a new, perhaps higher stage of social development. Therefore, the task is not to prevent any crises in society and culture, but to set them the proper vector of development, to direct them in the right direction.

*Keywords:* identity, individual, personal identity, collective self, symbolic personality, crisis, identity crisis, philosophical aspect, culture, cultural system.

### Introduction

The problem of personal identity has acquired an extremely high degree of relevance in recent years, primarily in connection with the growing processes of globalization, which carry a potential danger of socio-cultural and personal leveling.

However, the concept of personal identity and the corresponding problem has much deeper roots, since it is closely related to the problem of the essence of a person, his true self. The understanding that we have about ourselves as a person is a distinctive feature of human consciousness. Reflecting on one's subjectivity and social identity means and requires, first of all, an idea of oneself.

Already in ancient Indian philosophy, in the famous Upanishads, we find a scrupulous analysis of the question of what the human personality should be identified with — (atman — spiritual), with the body (bodily “I”), with consciousness free from the body, as, for example, in dreams (empirical “I”) or with dreamless sleep (the transcendental self).

As a result of the intense dialogue between the Prajapati teacher and the Indra student, an understanding is achieved that later became classic for all Indian thought, and with it for Eastern culture in its essential features. The point is that the Upanishads find the true essence of man, his true Self, not in the bodily, not in the empirical and not in the transcendental states of the Self, but in their entire and all-pervading unity — in the incomprehensible Absolute or Brahman. “Atman is Brahman” is the conclusion of ancient Indian philosophy as a result of the procedure of reflection on the issue of personal identification [1].

However, even this seemingly all-encompassing answer to the question leaves open a difficulty concerning the actual “individuality” of a person. Simply put, if my “I” is absolutely, then how do I differ from other people and creatures? What is my peculiarity, uniqueness, my own, unlike anyone else's personality? Does it not dissolve into the absolute and impersonal beginning?

Dissatisfaction with the answer of the ancient Indian thinkers, although it is very thoughtful in itself and in many ways fruitful, forces us to turn to this problem again and again. Without setting the task in this section to analyze the entire history of philosophy in this aspect, we will note only some important points in the historical consideration of personal identity.

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### *Research methods*

In this article, we relied on the principle of unity of historical tradition, the principles of integrity and concreteness, the principle of cultural historicism.

The methods that allowed to reveal the content of this study are: the unity of logical and historical, which helped to consider the problem, first of all, in conceptual terms; methods of comparative studies and hermeneutics, which allowed to identify the way of synthesis of new cultural and philosophical formations.

The sources of the research were the works of thinkers of the past and present, devoted to the problems of personal identity, culture, globalization, etc.

### *Results*

Great attention has been paid to the problems of personal identity in modern times, in particular, in German classical philosophy. Thus, the ratio of “I” and “not — I” was closely studied, as is well known, by Johann Gottlieb Fichte.

Immanuel Kant tries in “Anthropology from a practical point of view” to comprehend the discipline to which the mentioned work is devoted as the doctrine of man acting for himself as the highest and last goal. All cultural achievements in the context of anthropological knowledge should, according to Kant, acquire didactic significance — to teach a person to be himself, otherwise any knowledge is worthless and futile [2].

As for the concept of “identity” itself, it was thoroughly analyzed by Hegel under the form of the concept of “identity”. At the same time, he came to the fundamental conclusion that identity is always concrete, i.e., it includes a difference. In the aspect we are interested in, this means that a personality, especially if you look at it from the point of view of its social characteristics, never coincides with itself completely and unconditionally.

In addition, it should be noted that Hegel identified the human personality with the spirit, or the ideal principle, which has its source in the pure element of thinking. By this identification of man with the spirit, Hegel sought to emphasize the actual fact of human universality, the ability of man to move according to the logic of universal definitions. At the same time, the universal in Hegelian philosophy completely suppressed individual and special formations. In relation to social reality, this meant, in essence, an apology for the totalitarian system with its unifying ideology. No matter what reservations were made, it is clear that such a position could not but provoke a response from those thinkers who defended the sovereignty of the human personality and its freedom in the social world.

Returning directly to the question of the historiography of the problem of personal identity, we emphasize the following. As for the Soviet scientific literature, the problem of identity was not as relevant in it as it is typical for today, but there was a certain appeal to this problem. Thus, I.S. Kon, speaking about identity, emphasized its complex nature and pointed out: “The consciousness of one’s identity for a person is not just self-knowledge, but a dynamic attitude, a certain attitude towards oneself” [3].

The problem of cultural identity occupies a very large place in the modern philosophical literature of Russia and other CIS countries, but there is no clear unity in views on this problem. Rather, there is a large set, or even a spread, of diverse opinions and points of view, which are sometimes diametrically opposed to each other. This is probably explained by the lack of a proper theoretical and methodological basis for these studies.

There is, for example, a point of view in post-Soviet literature that the problem of identity (and with it the concept of identity) is a pseudo-problem, that it is necessary not to talk about identity, but to solve specific problems. This is, for example, the point of view expressed during the dialogue at the round table “Ukraine is not Russia, or Ukraine is identity” (June 2003). But, in our opinion, “this is a reduction of the problem of identity as a strategic issue to the level of a tactical, even narrowly pragmatic one. If we talk in general about socio-philosophical studies of the problem of cultural identity in Russia, then the following concepts of social identification and identity in the Russian-language literature are quite applicable to them, which are very poorly developed, despite the abundance of studies using these concepts” [4]. Literally the same must be said about the problem of cultural identity. And this is not surprising, since the last decade has demonstrated rapid changes in all areas of life, which does not have time to develop both cultural identity itself and a stable concept of it.

It is all the more important to understand the essence of this problem. Russian researchers understand this perfectly well. One of the evidences of this is the fact that many conferences, national and international, are held at which the problem of cultural identity in the modern world is directly or indirectly discussed.

Among the many publications in the Russian cultural philosophical and socio-philosophical literature, the view of the problem expressed by O.I. Genisaretsky in his numerous writings, speeches and interviews is particularly interesting. The position of this researcher is interesting primarily because he approaches it from verified theoretical positions, unlike some other authors, who are characterized by a somewhat biased and empirical approach. O.I. Genisaretsky calls for considering the concept of identity in the mandatory three parameters:

- a) identity should be *scaled*, i.e., include a well-defined, specific scale — specifically — individual, group, national, etc.;
- b) identity should be *objective* — i.e., answer the question whose it is: individuals in the region, whether the region itself, etc.;
- c) identity should be *human-sized*, or human [5].

I think all this is very important, especially the last of these points, or principles. He is truly the main one in solving the problem of identity.

In other words, it is necessary to constantly keep in mind the human essential parameter of identity — especially if we are talking about identity in general and cultural identity (in the case of regional, ethnic, etc. identity, the conversation may need to be conducted in a slightly different plane). It is necessary to understand the essence of a Person — and only then it will become clear not so much whether I am identical to my culture, but whether, being inside my own or any existing culture, I am identical to truly human principles.

Since the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstani researchers have also begun to address the topic of identity quite often.

Here are just some positive examples of the disclosure of this topic in the works of philosophers of Kazakhstan.

“Identification, identity” writes the famous Kazakh social philosopher and ethnologist G.V. Malinin, “are concepts that reflect important aspects of human life as a social subject. Their methodological content is related to the process of forming an individual’s self-awareness, his self-determination in the social sphere — gaining his social status, social roles, social position. The genesis of identification processes is social in nature and is associated with the impossibility of a social subject to act rationally and expediently without knowing himself, his own knowledge. And the latter is possible only on the basis of assimilation, comparison, correlation of oneself with other social subjects. In other words, correlation (identification) of oneself with others gives a person an adequate idea of himself, the absence of which is a source of overestimation (or underestimation) of one’s abilities and capabilities, exorbitant ambitions (or self-doubt) the choice of such ways and mechanisms that do not contribute to self-realization, self-expression and self-affirmation” [6].

Giving a definition of identity, another Kazakhstani researcher, Sadykov N. emphasizes that identity in individual terms means the identity of a person to himself and denotes a firmly assimilated and holistically accepted image of himself in all the richness of personality's relations to the outside world, a sense of adequacy and stable ownership of a person's own “I”, regardless of changes in “I” and situations. At the same time, he rightly clarifies that identity has many levels. A person, in addition to his own body, name, personal biography, also identifies himself with his family, clan, tribe, ethnos, other social groups (professional, party, etc.), religion, culture, history, traditions, space (place of birth, residence), time (epoch, significant years for a person events), the state, civilization [7].

Thus, “identity” means a person’s awareness of his own irreplaceability in relations with the social environment, his identity with a certain system of social communities, symbols, behavioral acts, traditions.

The point of view of A.A. Stepanov and K.T. Zaitsev is very interesting. It expresses not only a peculiar, non-standard approach to the concept of “identity”, but also shows a serious difference between identification and self-identification. “The problem of identification”, the East Kazakhstan authors write, “is the problem of rejecting a historically established stereotype, a standard. A person as a result of identification is a set of internalized standards. The problem is that there is something stable in me, but this stable is not mine. Self-identification, understood by analogy with identification, implies identification with oneself as a set of internalized stereotypes and roles, i.e., as identification with oneself” [8].

Clarifying the position of the cited authors, it should be emphasized that a person is not just a set of roles and stereotypes prescribed to him by society. He is something else. And, therefore, it is necessary to understand what is the true “I” of a person in the true sense. In fact, this is exactly what constitutes the whole depth and vastness of the problem of personal identification, starting from antiquity and ending with the present day.

Taking into account the above approaches to the problem of identity, the following definition can be given to it: identity is the coincidence (or at least correspondence) of a person's present existence and present quality with his human essence and/or individual purpose, cultural origins and specifically social background, ethnicity and other forms of universally natural, spiritual and socio-historical manifestations of man.

#### *Discussion*

In general, the problem of identity has been raised in the history of thought, including in socio-philosophical research and writings, in a wide variety of forms, in a variety of aspects and under many different names. So, in the philosophy of Marxism, there was, for example, the problem of the ratio of the masses and the individual in historical progress. In essence, this is an identity problem. It can be reformulated as follows: can an individual (personality) be fully identified with the epoch, the existing culture, and, consequently, the entire mass of the people, or is there an "indecomposable residue" in the personality? At the same time, the problem in Marx's teaching, even taking into account all the advantages of this teaching, was ultimately solved in such a way that a person turned out to be no more than a set (ensemble) of all social relations, i.e., identified with society.

It is not for nothing that Marx's concept was criticized by supporters of individualistic theories of man. For example, Martin Buber believed that a person is a set of individual relationships, not social ones.

Nikolai Berdyaev, a Russian existentialist philosopher and personalist, paid great attention to the problem of personality, its identification and self-identification (although in slightly different terms). The greatest mystery of man, over which many thinkers struggled, N.A. Berdyaev believed, is the mystery of man as a person, "the only person with his only destiny".

In this regard, in the context of the inherited problem of human identification and self-identification in society and culture, one cannot but join the following reflections of the Russian thinker.

The personality in a person says that the World is not self-sufficient. Personality is like nothing in the World, it cannot be compared and comparable with anything. A person as a person is not a child of the World, says N. Berdyaev. The person has a different origin. He is not nature, he is a person — not by nature, but by spirit. To put it more precisely, it can be argued that a person as a person, as a person, is an image, likeness and evidence of the existence of God.

The evidence of the existence of the Spiritual Father of mankind through the unique essence of man himself, in other words, is that humanity as the "discovery" of Man is at the same time the discovery of the Divine. God, according to N.A. Berdyaev, is born in man — and man rises and is enriched by this; and another, less revealed side, according to the Russian philosopher, is that man is born in God, and this enriches the divine life. There is a need for man in God, and there is a need for God in man, and this implies a creative response from man to God [9].

Thus, personality, according to N.A. Berdyaev, is the unity of microcosm and microtheos, or, to put it another way, the unity of natural and divine principles in man. The personality in its deepest and most complete essence is identified, therefore, not with society or even with nature, but with the entire universe, including natural and transcendent spiritual characteristics. However, then a new problem arises — the problem of the identity of the personal "I". A person is identical with the whole World, but he simultaneously identifies with both his generic and individual qualities. This question in modern social philosophy is expressed in terms of the so-called "multiple identity" and presents an important problem. It will be discussed below.

Here and now we note the following circumstance.

From the understanding of personal identity as the identity of a person and the world, it follows that the self-identity of the "I" cannot be completely tied to the generic identity. Meanwhile, a number of modern publications on this issue defend the point of view that these two phenomena are identical to each other. For example, G.J. Aitymbetova writes: "The process of self-identification of the Self is completely adequate to ethnic self-identity" [10]. But, firstly, it is not entirely legitimate to identify the process of self-identification with the phenomenon of self-identity. This is well understood by G.J. Aitymbetova, in another place of her work, characterizes identification as a way of understanding identity. Secondly, the author of the quoted judgment deduces it from uncritically, in our opinion, perceived statements. Ortega y Gasset (which is reproduced in J.G. Aitymbetova): "It is necessary to reverse the traditional doctrine of the Self, most fully and deeply developed by Husserl and his students, for example, Schutz. According to their ideas, "you" is supposedly an alternative. In fact, our concrete unity is born as an alter tu (another "you"), it is secondary to

many "you and arises among them itself — not from my life as a radical reality and loneliness, but on the contrary, only in terms of the secondary reality that empathy is" [11].

For Ortega y Gasset, it is more about love and sociability as the essence of the human inner world, rather than ethnic identity.

It is interesting to compare the above idea of Ortega y Gasset with the points of view of S.L. Frank and S. Bulgakov.

The first of these thinkers considered the personal "I" to be one, indivisible and unique. In its basic and primary sense, it does not and cannot have a plural. "Therefore, we", S.L. Frank emphasized, "is not the plural of the first person, not "many I's", but the plural as the unity of the first and second person, as the unity of "I" and "you" ("you")" [12]. Hence, from this primary unity of "we", according to Frank's concept, human society arises.

Another Russian religious thinker, Sergei Bulgakov, holds about the same idea, although with a slightly different accentuation: "The self-revelation of the self-occurred only through you and him, it has three modes, and this is confirmed by the genius of the language, which knows three personal pronouns and thus testifies to the trinity of the self. I am a conciliatory nature when saying I, the hypostasis speaks at the same time and you, and we, and they" [13].

Speaking directly about the term "identity", it was introduced into scientific use by Sigmund Freud, who attached great importance to the identification process.

Indeed, if there is a huge layer of subconscious and unconscious in every person, then it is clear that an individual cannot be completely and completely identical to his own "I", to himself. Paradoxically, the individual is both "I" and "not-I", or even "It". For this reason, many thinkers, for example, Erich Fromm, call the problem of a person's own individuality a "mystery": "It consists, among other things, in the fact that the true self, i.e., the identity of the person itself, does not want to be discovered, escapes grasp".

The opposite case, when the individual "I" turns out to be completely absorbed by sociality and begins to dissolve among other individual "I", or even slavishly obey them, is expressed in the famous aphorism of Jean-Paul Sartre: "Hell is Different". In this case, a sharp negative reaction of the personality is possible, aimed at releasing his "I" and expressed in the phenomenon of the so-called "negative identification" [14]. This term means that the identification mechanism is carried out through opposition to one or another "enemy".

In general, in modern foreign literature on the problem of personal identity, the ideas of the need to revise the concept of personal or individual identity have already become symptomatic and characteristic (one might even say typical). The understanding of personality as "multiple" is becoming more and more popular. Moreover, this understanding prevails not only in the philosophy of postmodernism, but also in a number of other philosophical directions.

For example, let's refer to Andrew Brennan's book "The Conditions of Identity" [15]. Its author argues: when talking about personality, in our daily life we proceed from completely different concepts about it; our confidence in the identity of personality is based on the uncertainty of the very concept of "personality".

The same point of view can be found, for example, in the monograph by Kathleen Wilkes, which indicates that the widespread belief in the continuity of consciousness and the unity of personality today needs to be seriously criticized [16].

To a certain extent, one should agree with the conclusions of Western philosophers, since in special scientific studies of identity these conclusions are largely confirmed. Thus, in his monograph, Ian Hacking clearly expressed the cross-cutting idea that human memory stores a "multiple personality" [17]. As a matter of fact, the same ideas have been expressed for many decades by representatives of the well-known worldwide school of "transpersonal psychology" and other movements close to it in terms of retention and orientation (S. Grof, K. Wilbur and others). The human self has a complex structured form, built in the form of a certain hierarchy, from the empirical subjective Self to the absolute or transcendent Self.

In this light, it seems perfectly fair that, when talking about identity, it is necessary to clearly distinguish personal identity from human identity proper. It means that the individual characteristics of a person do not always coincide with truly human essential properties and qualities.

The identity of a person can mean its identity with society, culture, etc., or it can also mean identity with the actual human being or with one's own "I", as it is felt by this individual.

That is, when talking about personal identity, one should distinguish between external and internal identity as two forms or two sides of a person's identity. Being external, identity is constantly changing, as individuals' social ties, social relations, and global historical horizons are extremely changeable. At the same

time, the inner identity of the individual, the individual sense of identity is always constant (In this regard, it becomes quite clear the need to distinguish, clearly differentiate between genuine identity and only declared identity).

Explicating the phenomenon of identity in its dynamic and constant hypostases, we can say that the logic of their dialectical interrelation and unity is generally simple. When one element of a cultural system is lost in the process of development, another element immediately takes its place, from another, for example, a new, cultural system. And so, piecemeal, the entire former system of culture is gradually being replaced, replaced.

But, consequently, the cultural system as such has remained, has not disappeared, has changed, maybe even radically, but as a system it has remained.

In the same way, an individual in a culture: he may find himself completely in another cultural system — but he never drops out of culture as such.

Consequently, the most significant acute question is not so much whether the old culture is disappearing and/or a new culture is being formed, but rather in another: is this culture benign or not, favorable or unfavorable for human development. This is the main point in the problem of culture, which is directly related to the problem of cultural antiquity.

The personal self, whatever its content, as a “form” remains an invariant quantity for the “matter” of its specific content. Only the type and measure of a person's attitude towards this latter are subject to changes: a person can “fall away” from his true, higher, or deeper Self, or he can approach it and even coincide with it in all his life manifestations. And it is this point that should be fully taken into account when developing various social, cultural, political programs and development strategies.

#### *Conclusion*

Thus, having analyzed the problem of personal identity in general, we can summarize some preliminary concise results that will help us in the future to better understand the problem of identity in its cultural hypostasis.

1. The most important parameter of personal identity is actually a human, directly human essential parameter — especially if we are talking about identity in general and cultural identity (in the case of identity of regional, ethnic and some other types of identity, the situation is or may be somewhat different). It is necessary to understand the real essence of man as deeply and accurately as possible, and only then and only for this reason will it become clear whether one or another individual in the bosom of his “mother» culture is identical to truly human principles.

2. Is identity possible between an individual and the social world? Such an identity is, of course, impossible to the full extent. No matter how meticulous an analysis of an individual we do, the invisible and permanent self always remains. Similarly, dialogue with others does not destroy the essence of the individual self, because it distinguishes itself from others. The “I”, ultimately, is always free in its choice to accept or reject what is not given or imposed on it.

3. The “I” as an identity never completely dissolves in society, outside of a “collective self” or a “symbolic personality”. The totality of identity cannot be valid for all individuals without exception, because in every person there is, explicitly or implicitly, with varying degrees of intensity, his free personal principle. In this regard, the democratic system is, of course, a higher socio-political type compared to all others known from history.

4. Since man and society, man and culture are never completely identical to each other, insofar as “identity” is always relative, relativistic, it leaves open the possibility of change and self-change of an individual or society, culture, etc.

5. An adequate, although, of course, far from complete, answer to the question of how a person should identify himself with, will probably consist in the following. The identity of a person can mean its identity with its own, culture, etc., or it can also mean identity with the actual human essence or, conversely, with its own “I” in the form in which it is felt by this individual. That is, when talking about personal identity, one should distinguish between external and internal identity as two forms or two sides of a person's identity. At the same time, external identity is constantly changing due to the variability of individuals' social ties, social relations, global historical transformations and prospects. The inner identity of a person, the individual sense of identity, on the contrary, is always constant, it does not change with any changes in the meaningful parameters of the personality.

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### «Тұлғалық бірегейлік» ұғымы және оның әлеуметтік импликациясы

Мақалада тұлғаның жеке басын анықтау мәселелерін зерттеудің негізгі тәсілдері қарастырылған. Авторлар тұлғалық бірегейлік пен толеранттылық құбылыстарының арақатынасын зерттеуге арналған зерттеулерді талдайды, бұл мәселеге қарама-қарсы көзқарастардың бар екенін анықтайды. Жеке тұлғаның өзін-өзі идентификациялау мәселесінде басты нәрсе тұлғаның адамдық маңызды параметрі. Адамның шынайы болмысының неден тұратынын түсіну арқылы ғана оның мәдениетіндегі индивид шын адамдық принциптерге сәйкес келе ме деген сұрақты нақтылауға болады. Жеке басын анықтау сұрақтары кейбір мәселелер туындаған кезде шешіледі. Қоғам дамуының дағдарыссыз кезеңінде бұл мәселе туындамайды. Сондықтан, бірегейлендіру дағдарысында белгілі бір қауіп, атап айтқанда, әлеуметтік жағдайдың тұрақсыздану қаупі бар болса да, бірегейлік дағдарысын толығымен теріс процесс ретінде қарастыруға болмайды. Дағдарыс — бұл әлеуметтік дамудың жаңа, мүмкін одан да жоғары деңгейіне өтудің табалдырығы. Сондықтан қоғамдағы, мәдениеттегі қандай да бір дағдарыстардың алдын алу емес, оларға дамудың дұрыс векторын белгілеу, дұрыс жолға салу міндеті тұр.

*Кілт сөздер:* бірегейлік, индивидуум, жеке сәйкестілік, ұжымдық «Мен», символикалық тұлға, дағдарыс, сәйкестілік дағдарысы, философиялық аспект, мәдениет, мәдени жүйе.

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**Понятие «личностная идентичность» и ее социальные импликации**

В статье рассмотрены основные подходы к изучению вопросов личностной идентичности. Авторы анализируют исследования, посвященные изучению взаимосвязи между феноменом личностной идентичности и толерантности, выявляют наличие противоположных подходов к данной проблеме. Главное в проблеме самоидентификации личности — это человеческий сущностный параметр идентичности. Только поняв, в чем заключается подлинная сущность человека, можно прояснить вопрос о том, является ли индивид в своей культуре носителем подлинно человеческих начал. К вопросам идентичности обращаются тогда, когда существуют какие-то проблемы. В бескризисный период развития общества этот вопрос поднимается редко. Поэтому хотя в кризисе идентичности и кроется известная опасность, а именно — опасность дестабилизации социальной ситуации, все же не следует относиться к кризису идентичности как к всецело негативному процессу. Кризис — преддверие перехода на новую, возможно, более высокую ступень общественного развития. Поэтому задача состоит не в том, чтобы не допускать в обществе и культуре никаких кризисов, а в том, чтобы задавать им надлежащий вектор развития и направлять их в правильное русло.

*Ключевые слова:* идентичность, индивидуум, личностная идентичность, коллективное «Я», символическая личность, кризис, кризис идентичности, философский аспект, культура, культурная система.

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