

## MODERN ANTHROPOLOGY CRISIS AND PERSONAL IDENTITY IN SUBCULTURES

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### ABSTRACT

The article deals with the phenomena of human-sizedness of the anthropological identity in subcultures and their relationship with the problem of human identity in the context of social and anthropological risks, transhumanistic projects. There can be pointed out a positive scenario of personal identity in subcultures (creative personal experience), as well as negative, non-conformist and marginal, associated with decentering of consciousness and self-consciousness, destructive stereotypes of life style. The most probable variant is recognized the phenomenon of "confused", "mosaic" identity in which the socialization of the person, possible scenario of stagnation of psychological life and painful breakdowns are embedded.

**KEY WORDS:** transhumanism, subcultures, positive identity, tangled identity, negative identity, creative identity.

## SUÇ KÜLTÜRLERİNDE MODERN ANTROPOLOJİ KRİZİ VE KİŞİSEL KİMLİK

### ÖZ

Makale, alt kültürlerde antropolojik kimliğin insan boyu olgusu ve sosyal ve antropolojik riskler, insanlık dışı projeler bağlamında insan kimliğinin problemi ile olan ilişkisi üzerinde durmaktadır. Altkültürlerde (yaratıcı kişisel deneyim) kişisel kimliğin olumlu bir senaryosunun yanı sıra, bilinç ve benlik bilinci, yaşam biçiminin yıkıcı stereotiplerini merkezsizleştirme ile ilişkili negatif, uyumsuz ve marjinal olarak da belirtilebilir. En muhtemel varyant, kişinin sosyalleşmesinin, psikolojik yaşamın durgunlaşmasının olası olası senaryosunun ve ağırlı çöküntülerin gömülü olduğu "şaşkın", "mozaik" kimlik olgusu olarak bilinir.

**ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER:** transhümanizm, alt kültürler, pozitif kimlik, karışık kimlik, olumsuz kimlik, yaratıcı kimlik.

### INTRODUCTION

Modern people are really in a situation of anthropological crisis, and the crisis of identity is only one of its forms. In particular, the transhumanistic projects, which propose removing of the anthropological crisis in the production of post-human reality, are facing in their scientific and technological implementation with the problem of translation in artificial systems of structures of consciousness (especially in AI, Artificial Intelligence) associated with the identity (Grimshaw, 1996).

D. Dubrovsky, one of the Russian pioneers in the transhumanistic project of creation of artificial intelligence, identifies such fundamental, ontological structure of consciousness, associated with complex forms of personal development and socialization of a person, as "I - not me", "I - The other", "I - We". He writes: "If we take as a reference system the modality of "I", in the first approximation, "I" acts in relation to "not I" as the ratio "I" to: 1) to external objects, processes; 2) to own body; 3) to itself; 4) to another "I" (another person); 5) to "We" (to the social community, "I" identifies itself with this group, with which it considers itself in one way or another); 6) to "They" (to the community, the social group to which "I" opposes itself, or at least, from which it distinguishes itself); 7) to "absolute" ("Peace", "God", "Space", "Nature", etc.)" (Dubrovsky, 2009). These structures are important for our analysis. It should be noted that the opposition "I - Not me", "I - The other", "I - We" is phylogenetically and ontogenetically later than the opposition "We - They", associated with complex forms of personal development and socialization.

## **SUBCULTURES AS PRACTICES OF SEPARATE SOCIAL GROUPS**

Actually, all subcultures (traditional, modernist and postmodernist) produce this ancient mental structure in transformed quasiforms. Concerning the term "subculture" we mean *practices of separate social groups*, institutionalized and not institutionalized, forming *axiological local worlds*, opposed to the base - the "big", "adult", "mother", "dominant" - culture; individual and collective *behavioral stereotypes and modes of activity*, as embodied in the specific *semiotic and symbolic forms, social code, mythological forms of consciousness* and structures of *personal identity*. The Subsystem of styles and of style behavior is associated with this, it distinguishes a way of life of one or another subculture, group forms of community life, cultural and living standards as specific products of not institutionalized spiritual production (marginal, "shadow", etc.) and informal mass culture.

It is very important to figure out the problem of standardization and non-standardization in the socialization process of human personality, gaining of his identity and quite structured system of individual consciousness and self-awareness. The fact is that the "eternal" ontological structures of the human mind and personality are never given once and forever in varying configurations. Firstly, the personality and the human consciousness are always historical, determined not only by socio-cultural factors and contexts, but also the daily life of each individual. Secondly, at all times in the structure of consciousness of the person (we assume a sufficiently developed personality, appeared from the depths of anthropogenic "creation"), we can observe the complex *dynamics of centration and decentration* of "I", as its cognitive and value-praxeological dimensions (Dubrovsky, 2009). Their "balanced" combination, providing specific *holistic identity of person* (the self), is possible when in the process of socialization through the mechanisms of self-awareness the person shows specific, creative or simply intentional effort, directed to the balance of physical, mental and spiritual structures of his consciousness (measure of centration and decentration, of creation and negation - negation is not always to be understood in a purely negative sense; it often causes such fluctuations of a person and his consciousness that give an active, creative state in the world.), and the establishment of links with the environment, natural and social, through communicative practices.

Actually, in a general form it is the process of socialization of the person which is going all his life, from the birth to the death a person is forced to assert himself in the world facing others and God. And on this way a person always experiences crises that are caused not only by external conditions of the crisis, but also by the ontology of personal development. Of course, personal identity crises are intensified in the crisis world. Perhaps it is no coincidence that E. Erikson conceptualized the problems of *identification* and *identity* exactly in the 40s, when in the conditions of the totalitarian regimes and totalitarianism of liberal societies there began the crisis, anthropological crisis, which continues to this day.

The current destruction of identity, as the most painful and visible manifestation of an anthropological crisis, manifests itself in various forms of depression and apathy, senseless cruelty, various forms of dependence and helplessness, aspiration to escape from the real world, in the exercise of excessive authoritativeness and aggression, various forms of nihilism and narcissism, alcoholism and drug addiction, sexual and hedonistic perversions. All this leads to negative personal autonomy, to the feeling of timelessness, the disintegration of life meaning, as well as to a lack of life plans and strategies, ie to *loss of identity*. We do not idealize post-industrialism, and we do not associate these negative phenomena with the transition to this level of civilization. In our view, all this is just a continuation of the "second wave", of industrial capitalism, but it is only brought to the absurd (totalitarianism was an attempt to "freeze" these processes, to combine technical achievement of modernization with the benefits and stable standardization of "creative traditionalism").

## **THE CONDITIONS FOR IDENTITY CRISIS**

All threats of the modern globalized world - technological disasters and the nuclear threat, moral irresponsibility and media-communication, symbolic violence, reassessment of the role of gender and experiments with gene codes, etc. - create the conditions for an identity crisis in which a modern person may lose not only his ontological properties (social and biological). The modern man must not only create a new cultural universe, shared and lived-by all (otherwise there is no unified world, shared and understood by all), but also to overcome all the prejudices of the past, "the traditions of the dead generations" (Marx), but also non-normative chaos of the present. Without all this it is impossible to form a positive and creative (harmonious) identity. Even our "God-given" ontological identities have a lot of negative characteristics and may be subject to degradation and destruction. Eternal running forward, the unrestrained desire for the new,

the destruction of the past, stable and long-term forms of communication, the intensification of contacts, exacerbation of cultural identification processes do not contribute to the formation of "positive identity". In an age of information revolution, the number of problems, associated with the comprehension of social and cultural identities, becomes even greater. The modern media and information systems, the development of the information society violate the borders, the system properties of gender, class and ethnos, religion, ethnicity, subcultures. They destroy the old social institutions that generate psychological costs of freedom, alienation, lack of interpersonal relationships, their instability.

All this dooms those "normative" social groups that we observed during the period of "modern" and which succumbed to schematization in terms of the theory of classes or stratification (working and middle class, "white" and "blue collars", etc.) to be constantly on the edge of marginalization. This social (and psychological) phenomenon came to the attention of sociologists in the 30-ies of the last century, virtually simultaneously with the phenomenon of subcultures (they are often viewed as mutually supplementary concepts). Subcultures and marginalized groups were classified as very active layers of the population (ethnic and religious minorities, representatives of the thinking artistic and scientific intellectuals, etc.). We believe that marginalization, as well as subculture process, does not carry the negative impulses and not an indication of deviance of human or social group, but also contributes to the creation of creative innovation by "subcultural marginals", which appear on the "joints" of cultures. But the strongest marginalization in these circumstances is subject to the youth, the very status of which condemns her to the permanent "transitivity" in the process of socialization and gaining of identity. If young men meet certain obstacles (from external regulatory and internal censorship to sublimative and reflexive) marginality can take destructive forms, respectively, affecting the negative reaction of identity and decentration of consciousness and self-consciousness.

But the forms of identity and self-consciousness of the modern person have certain common typological and taxonomic forms.

We rely on the latest domestic studies of consciousness and of human consciousness in philosophy and social sciences and humanities. In particular, D. Dubrovsky compared the axiological structure of I-personality with a cone, its base is everyday, relative "profane" values (horizontal, decentered), and the top is regulations, "sacral" (hierarchical, centered). Crossing the axiological "vertical" and "horizontal" in conditions of "normal" socialization creates a harmonious identity and self-consciousness. Any violation of them under the influence of "external" and (or) "internal" factors leads to a crisis of identity, which is, as Erickson showed, sometimes "postponed" until better times - until the old age, also it leads to the formation of transformed forms of consciousness and self-consciousness.

And there is a variety of possibilities of personal development from the vagus, decentered "I" to the over-centered, maniacal Egos. D. Dubrovsky described very well the phenomenology of self-consciousness and identity: "In the context of a sharp increase in the number of valuable intentions of the lower level, their exorbitant "spread" (so characteristic for this consumer society), the top of the "cone" is lowered, sagged, hierarchical outline is deformed, the highest value intentions is "decreased", their controlling function in relation to the intentions of lower rank is greatly weakened, or in so many ways is lost entirely. There is violation of the dynamic unity of centration processes of centration and decentration of "I", which leads to the phenomenon of decentered "I" (vagus in itself and of itself, in the jungle of non-genuine needs and communications). At the same time "I" still retains its weakened unity by strengthening relations of value intentions of the same level and situational elevation of rank of any lower values. This is different from pathological decentered "I".

The antipode of this phenomenon is a supercentered "I", which is characterized by rigid hierarchical institution that has view of not truncated cone. The dynamism of this structure is minimal; the highest value intentions are often reduced to the "only one"(Dubrovsky, 2009). As a variant of the supercentered "I" there can be often considered the religious fans (for example, shahids). Most likely, applied to the subcultural religions we have different versions of centration and decentration of personality. Supercentered variant of personal identity is rather rare one, it is often created artificially and intentionally by leaders of religious groups of really "totalitarian" and authoritarian type, and it is increasingly characterized by religious identity of a group, rigidly determined personality. Obviously, the variant of fuzzy (mosaic) identity will prevail (as

follows), and that causes the need for supercentered values, structuring in converted forms of identity and self-consciousness of members of subcultural religious communities.

### **VARIANTS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY**

Relying on some ideas of authors who work with us to explore the youth subcultures (Belousova, 2008; Belousova, 2009), we can select multiple variants of personal identity of a young person in the modern world of crisis:

- Positive identity (conformists, rather painless entry into the adult world, the assimilation of life and standard technologies primarily horizontal value standards);
- Confused identity (God-seekers or reflective whiners, rushing between consumerism and "servicing" to society, to God, etc.);
- Negative identity (personal and social marginals, sometimes it nonconformists on the edge of deviance, finding themselves in subcultural and countercultural groups, including religious or sacred have vertical);
- Creative identity (revolutionaries, often belonging to the subcultural groups, including religious, mythology and life strategies which are focused on the individual creative potential, innovation and experimental practice, including everyday practices).

If you look at all types of identity, in each of them we can find either destructive or negative intentions of personal development. It could be argued that a positive identity is the norm, which allows a person to develop successfully and live. But is conformist normativity always "positive"? Does not it still generate "Ionych" or "Akakiy Akakievich" of the postmodern world? Do not all of these successful yuppies, managers, and other normative individuals of post-industrialism stay in one moment in front of the abyss of their own drabness for falling down into another abyss of a "fight club" for a dose of adrenaline?

Some people may object that creative type of identity, of course, is the most preferred, but it contains the variants of destructiveness, in our opinion: thoughtless pursuit of the "new" often degenerates into a simulation of creative activity, also destroying a personality as well as immeasurable dimension and normativity of conformism. Therefore, we also can meet the entire spectrum of personal identities in subcultures. Then what is the difference? In our view, the difference is that in subcultures a person quickly and immediately, "here and now" gets everything what he will not get or will go to it alone for a long time in the "big world". Even though he gets everything in the transformed forms of consciousness and self-consciousness that determines its mythological nature. What do we mean?

In subcultures a young person implements a range of the implementation of opportunities in the available temporal and spatial horizon of his group and community. Subcultures give a young person real quick prescriptions for the implementation of his own social activities, aimed at helping close people here and now. We can take as an example subcultural religions and compare them with the traditional confessions or secular organizations. The latter are often carry out numerous charitable campaigns, which are often accompanied with their promotional events, causing irritation and even rejection of the majority of young people. Take a look at activism, including social and charitable, of the various artificial pro-Kremlin "youth movements" ... And numerous subcultural religious groups (including those within the traditional religions - for example, the Orthodox brotherhoods, etc.), are engaged in socially important works only when facing God, without publicity, even if it is a charity or activity within their own subculture religious group. Of course, many contemporary subcultural religions promise "paradise on earth" or paradise after the Last Judgment, when only "Chosen" can survive, that means, only they can survive. But there is nothing new: the entire medieval heretical chiliasm or new Protestant communities of the Reformation era promised this. All new is well forgotten old...

Nevertheless, exactly in this sub-cultural environment that does not relevant to the "educational normativity" and "normative socialization", there are often found talented and creative young people, reading a lot, who are familiar with the music, possessing modern information technology, sensitive and responsive to the troubles of others, full of desire to make something here and now, in this world, among their fellow men. But

in our opinion, they are a minority in their "alternative" groups as they sincerely believe. The majority of members of subcultural groups are all the same "people of the masses", which are generated by our urban culture on an unprecedented scale and receive the same spiritual ersatz products in illusory forms, as in the mass media cult supermarkets. So in subcultural groups gaining of personal identity is often more effective than in the traditional social institutions (school, family, university), albeit in a transformed form.

In this context, we can highlight the creative personal identity in subcultures, rather painless entry into the adult world after a short time "spiritual searches" (in this version of socialization there is possible the acquisition of creative personal experience). Also we can distinguish variants of destructive personal identity, originally non-conformist, and then more and more marginal, associated with decentering of consciousness and self-awareness with nihilistic stereotypes and strategies of life. However, the most probable variant is the phenomenon of "confused", "mosaic" identity, in which the socialization is stored, as well as there are possible scenarios of stagnant spiritual and psychological life, sometimes broken down in painful symptoms.

It should be noted one more thing: confused identity in the virtual culture of informational post industrialism increasingly acquires features of eclectic, mosaic identity, which corresponds to a postmodern culture and facilitates a young person the acquisition of their own identity, life strategies and meanings. But mythologized subcultures are more appropriate to this type of identity: myth-consciousness is mosaic consciousness, not hierarchic, and horizontal, at least regarding the axiological and emotive structure of "we." Similarly, the "loser" and "sick person" of the age of industrialism could be "normal" and creative in the postmodern era. Also definite expanse of subcultures is given to this personal type. Negative identity also can smooth his rebellious, nonconformist form the world's information and media virtuality, becoming one of the many simulacrum of postmodern culture, which do not surprise anyone, and they are a form of subcultural myth-consciousness.

In this way, personal, activity-related and institutional forms of youth culture in the past and present determined earlier and determine today the formation, socialization and identification of young people as a specific social group, as a young man is not only a subject of an action, a creator of innovative cultural norms and patterns, but also a carrier of certain traditions. The realization of potential possibilities of a young man often occurs in subcultural, marginalized and not institutionalized forms, rather than in the traditional ("adult" and normative, institutionalized).

The situation of personal development is often exacerbated by the fact that the young man appears lonely in the family, at school and in his own soul; he is possessed by the fear not only of the future, but also of every minute of the present. Subcultures are the "existential space," in which a young man tries to preserve his selfhood, his identity, to develop chronotopos existential, which allows to assert himself stoically in a collapsed world, to link past, present and future not only in the space of everyday life, but also in the carnival or sacred world (hence we can explain such craving of "new believers" to various eschatology and experiments with different temporal reproduction of game scenarios).

It is often fact that the young person can easily move from one subculture to another, a religious subculture is eclectically combined with belonging to the secular forms of subculture (eg, is the subculture of Goths secular or religious?). But even here a person finds himself in a world of phantoms and illusions: subcultural narratives and discourse practices allow a young person to speak artificial languages, giving rise to the situation of postmodernist "Tower of Babel", when no one is listening and wants to hear, and there are so many subcultural languages that, perhaps, even the Apostle Paul could not speak those languages of "new pagans." For example, it is the main problem of the "return" of young people from religious subcultures to normative, "adult" culture, which is itself becoming increasingly subcultural configuration.

In our complex world there is often determined quite small bifurcation, small cultural outrage. If we make a little effort, the development will be directed to another target. No matter how much could we talk about the necessity of educational work with young people and about their "spiritual and moral education", all our efforts will be in vain without changing the entire socio-cultural context of our lives. It is not the "global" changes in politics and the economy, which can only lead to unpredictable relapses of religious fundamentalism or nationalism and xenophobia (the latter we have seen in recent events in Ukraine). The

real force is not belonged to different kinds of religious and ecumenical or church-state projects, but to constant, daily efforts of scientists and culture figures, some politicians and businessmen, hierarchs of traditional religions, ordinary people according to the new system of cultural values.

### **CONCLUSION**

So, there are several variants of personal identity in the modern world of crisis: positive identity (conformists, rather painless entry into the world, the assimilation of life and standard techniques, "horizontal" standards of value); confused identity (or God-seekers reflective whiners, rushing between consumerism and "servicing" to society, God, etc.); negative identity (personal and social marginals, nonconformists on the verge of deviance); creative identity (revolutionaries, their life strategies are focused on creativity, innovation and experimental practices, including everyday practices).

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