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SYMBOLIC NATURE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

Any person since childhood is involved in the socio-cultural space of symbols. Symbols affect a person's self-determination and can become either the cause of mental inflation or the basis of personal ontopsychological integrity. The roots of identity can be found in the thinking person, in the socio-cultural environment or some transcendental sphere of a human being. Each of these options has its own specific way of self-identification. In this case, self-identification is existential and dynamic in nature, it is formed in the process of understanding the relationship of a person to his being and can change throughout his conscious life. At a deep level, self-determination of a person is determined by a system of fundamental existentials: finiteness, freedom, meaninglessness and loneliness. Depending on their interpretation, a constructive or destructive character of self-determination of a person is formed in the space of symbols. Accordingly, we can distinguish a unique sphere of symbolic representation, which transfers meaning from one subject to another and sets a particular semantic dynamics in the framework of the interaction of associative fields, on the one hand, of an object that is conceptualized, and, on the other hand, of a representative form by which this comprehension becomes. Thus, the self-identification of a person in the socio-cultural space of symbols lays the existential foundations of interaction with the outside world, the formation of integrity and the subject, and his making an existential choice, which is determined by the responsibility for his being and the being of other people.

1. Introduction

The problem of self-identification of a person remains important, significant and deep. Considering the question of a person's understanding of his being, Frank (2004) writes: "This question is not a "theoretical question", not a subject of idle mental play; this question is a question of life itself, it is just as terrible, and, in fact, even more terrible than in dire need, the question of a piece of bread to satisfy hunger" (p. 4).

The emotions, thoughts and actions of a person, on the one hand, are determined by the influence of symbols, which are used in the acts of knowledge to represent the world, and, on the other hand, are themselves symbols that refer to the deeper layers of the psyche. Since childhood, a person who is involved in the space of symbols experiences their influence both from the socio-cultural environment where he grows and is brought up and from the immanent sphere of the psyche, in which, on an unconscious level, symbols are generated by his own mental activity (Privalova, 2015). Therefore, for a person who performs the existential act of choosing one's being in the surrounding world, it is important when immersed in the socio-cultural space of symbols, to distinguish truly meaningful and relevant content from what is brought into the human mind by the associative field of symbolic representation.

According to the views of most of the currently developing psychological schools, such as humanistic psychology, gestalt psychology, psychoanalysis and analytical psychology, the necessary condition for achieving ontopsychological integrity is the assimilation of symbols used by the subject in existential acts of self-determination (Matveicheva, 2015). This allows a person, firstly, to make his being congruent and overcome the destructive influence of archetypes, which K.G. Jung called psychic inflation, and, secondly, thanks to his own efforts, to find, regardless of the influence of socio-cultural norms of behaviour imposed from outside, an existential landmark, thanks to which he can independently determine what is really important and valuable for him in life, and what destroys its authenticity also makes being non-authentic.

2. Problem Statement

The way a person understands himself, how he defines his place in the world, and what representative strategies he uses to make sense of life, determines the formation of his ontopsychological integrity, the development of his creative potential, building relationships with other people, the implementation of specific life scenarios and the approval of certain forms and ways of a social being. Therefore, the problem of personal self-identification in a socio-cultural context is one of the most important and never-losing relevance of the existential problems of humanity.

Researchers believe that the main thing in scientific research today is the development of methods to achieve the highest status of identity, in which a person embarks on a constructive path to harmonizing relationships with people around him, creating personal integrity, gaining a purpose and meaning in life (Morgunov et al., 2019).

Symbols can have a positive or negative effect on a person. In particular, on the one hand, they lead to loss of individuality and dissolution without conscious choice in collective norms of being, and, on the other hand, they form the mythological component of life, thanks to which a person maintains

existential integrity and builds a comprehensive picture of the universe. Each age has its own specific mythology, affecting both the macrosocial and microsocial levels of human beings, without which it is impossible to establish either an individual person or the entire human culture as a whole (Dotol, 2015). The only question is what is positive and what is negative that mythological forms and essences are appropriate for a given place and time. In addition to being included in the space of collective symbols, each person is the creator of his own myth, which is one of the essential aspects of his individual personality, for as Losev (2001), "myth is a personal form, and personality is a myth" (p. 117). Therefore, it is imperative to understand the socio-psychological mechanisms of both collective and personal myth-making, in order to manage them, to move in a constructive rather than destructive direction of personal self-identification.

On the one hand, symbols and myths make a person obsessed, make him commit cruel acts, push him to war and unleash interethnic conflicts, but, on the other hand, they transmit universal human wisdom and contribute to the spiritual development of a person. Therefore, the choice of the correct position in the mythological space and time is a crucial existential task in terms of using the positive aspects of individual and collective symbols and levelling their negative impact on the human psyche.

3. Research Questions

The problem of self-determination of a person in the space of symbols is especially relevant for the present moment, when the Muslim East, obsessed with its sociocultural myths, declares war in the form of terrorist acts on the whole civilized world. The West, being captured by its forms of symbolic representation, devalues the human being, replacing mental experiences with the manipulation of representative signs.

Now it is vital to understand the transcendental mechanisms of the influence of symbols on self-representation of a person and learn how to use them in order to transform society positively. For this it is necessary: to identify representative mechanisms of self-identification of a person in the sociocultural space of symbols; to describe the structures of the existential layer of the psyche, contoured by symbolic representation; to consider the processes of introjection and assimilation of characters in the framework of self-determination of personality.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the article is to identify specific forms and mechanisms of self-identity in the sociocultural space of symbols.

5. Research Methods

The study of the mechanisms of self-identity in the sociocultural space of symbols is carried out using the methods of phenomenological description and hermeneutic interpretation.

6. Findings

The process of self-identification of a person is the process of forming an identity, which in the psychological and philosophical literature is understood as self-identity, integrity, unity, continuity, constancy of a person in relation to changing time and changing circumstances of life (Fedotov & Rakova, 2015). The analysis of works directly devoted to the identity or considering it in the context of a broader psychological and philosophical problematics shows that personality identity can be represented as three different phenomena of human existence, namely: 1) as a stable state of the psyche characterized by a special feeling self-identity, which is based on a person's continuous memory of himself and the world around him, 2) as a dynamic system of relationships, the development of which involves the struggle and synthesis of opposites of mental experience, and 3) as a form of being of a person striving for a certain significant goal, which is the meaning of his existence and justifies his life in the world around him. These three understandings of identity complement each other, forming three different dimensions in the semantic space of understanding the phenomenon under consideration.

E. Erickson studies the phenomenon of identity in the first semantic dimension, defining identity as the oneness of a personality and its internal constancy, due to the experience of personal unity and understanding of the historical continuity of a self-conscious subject. According to E. Erickson, a sense of identity is based on a comparison by a person of the individual perception of their own being in space and in time with the perception of it by other people who have their own specific opinion about this person and her existence.

In the second semantic dimension, the phenomenon of identity is considered by G. Mead, who believes that a person perceives their behaviour, their experiences and all their being in the world as a whole due to the fact that their I is formed as a system of social interactions with other people, with groups people and with himself at the level of self-awareness and self-determination.

In the third semantic dimension, one of the founders of existential philosophy S. Kierkegaard presents the identity of the person as a form of being in the world around him, thanks to which the person makes a free choice of himself and assumes responsibility for his own life. According to S. Kierkegaard, the formed identity assumes that the personality is self-determined based on its individual characteristics and preferences, and not on the basis of universally accepted norms and stereotypes. Developing this idea, M. Heidegger introduces the concepts of genuine being and non-genuine human being.

If we consider the formation of an understanding of identity in the historical context, based on the teachings of philosophers and psychologists, starting from the New Time to the present day, then we can distinguish three main trends in terms of revealing the ontological source of identity and the mechanism of its formation, i.e., in other words, the roots of identity can be found 1) in the most perceiving and thinking subject, 2) in the surrounding social environment and 3) in a certain transcendental, spiritual sphere of a human being.

The first tendency in his philosophical teaching was R. Descartes, who appealed to the thinking substance, which he contrasted with the physical sphere and in which he found grounds for the self-identification of the thinking subject. G. Leibniz represented the cognizing subject in the form of a center of self-representation, from which a unique vision of the surrounding world is formed and in which the ontological condition of self-identity of a person is concluded. G. Locke introduced ethical certainty into

the understanding of the phenomenon of identity, deducing the identity of a person from his moral responsibility for his own actions on the basis of memory, which establishes their personality. According to G. Locke, a person's personality is formed to the extent that he takes responsibility for his individual actions and for his entire realized life as a whole.

In the transcendental philosophy of F. Schelling, the identity of the cognizing subject is considered as the identity of the structures of pure thinking, the ideal self, which is opposed to the empirical self as the subject of philosophical analysis, but not the source of mental acts. Kant (1998) promotes the concepts of objective and subjective unity of consciousness, understanding by the former the transcendental unity of apperception as "that unity, thanks to which all that is diverse in contemplation is united into the concept of an object", and by the second "The definition of inner feeling by which the variety mentioned in contemplation is empirically given for such a connection" (pp. 248-249). G.W.F. Hegel speaks of the formation of a self-identical subject of knowledge, introducing a dialectical aspect into the understanding of its identity as preserving unity in diversity and unchanging in becoming.

The second tendency in terms of revealing the ontological source of identity and the mechanism of its formation is adhered to by D. Hume, who, developing ideas about the phenomenon of the identity of G. Locke, deduces the self-identity of the knowing subject not from the mental organization of his inner experience, but from social conditioning and social relationships in which the subject in question is involved. D. Hume believes that in itself the human, I cannot find the ontological foundations of its own self-identity because, generally speaking, the human self is not identical with itself due to the constant variability of internal experience. According to D. Hume, the self-identity of the knowing subject is achieved by fixing external labels, with the help of which people around fix the idea of this person as something known and permanent. In other words, the identity of a person is rooted in his public image, in the well-established ideas of the people around him, and without these ideas, the self-identity of the knowing subject would be fundamentally impossible.

Self-identification implies self-observation and introspection, and, therefore, in self-identification, the subject and the object are identical (Gurov, 2018). In this regard, S. Frank points to the paradoxical nature of self-identification, which has two sides: firstly, acting or reflecting, and secondly, being exposed or reflected. However, both the first and second sides belong to the same mental subject, split into two subpersonal parts. Criticizing the introspection that W. Wundt used in his psychological experiments, W. James observes that in properly conducted self-observation, the subject will find himself engaged in self-observation and nothing more. W. James criticized introspection as an unscientific method since it involves the inclusion of an observer in the observable system itself.

This problem of the splitting of a self-identifying subject in a philosophical and psychological aspect is solved: 1) G.W.F. Hegel, A.F. Losev dialectically, when I-knowable and I-knowing are considered as two manifestations of one essence, 2) E. Husserl, I. Kant transcendentally phenomenologically, when the knowing subject is divided into empirical I as an objective unity of intentional acts aimed at its own transcendental the source, and the transcendental I as a formal unity of all possible intentional acts of the knowing subject in general, 3) S. Grof, K. Wilber, P. Florensky metaphysically, when I understand it as not an entity proper to the physical world and observing its object reflections in it, 4) J.-P. Sartre, V. Frankl existentially ontologically, when I am considered as a self-

transcending entity, i.e. an entity that is outside its own self and which goes beyond its own boundaries, due to which it can be identified with other entities without losing its ontological unity. As for the last way of interpreting the being of a self-determined subject, in particular, J.-P. Sartre speaks of existential abandonment, which is a consequence of the intentionality of consciousness and thinking of a person as a directivity towards something external, external, alien.

In the process of self-identification, a person distinguishes the I from the non-I, my feelings from not my own, my thoughts from introjected, my desires from those imposed from without. K. Wilber observes that "describing, explaining, or even just feeling your "I" internally, you draw a mental demarcation line through the entire field of what you experience; and that which appears inside this line you feel or call "yourself", and that which is outside it, you call "not-yourself". In other words, your identity completely depends on where you draw this boundary line" (Wilber, 2004, p. 97). Therefore, self-identification is existential and dynamic in nature, i.e. it is formed in the process of understanding the relationship of a person to his own being and can change throughout his conscious life. A person has the freedom of self-determination, which means that he is responsible for who he is and how he understands the essence of his being. Speaking about the demarcation line between the self and the non-Self, C. Wilber writes: "A remarkable feature of this line is its ability to shift, and quite often. It can be carried out again. In a sense, a person can "edit", draw up a new map of his soul and discover territories on it that he did not even suspect existed" (Wilber, 2004, p. 118).

The dividing line between the I and the non-I is symbolic, as it expresses the values and needs of a person, as well as defines his psychological problems and sets ways to solve them. K. Wilber on this occasion writes: "By defining the boundaries of his soul, a person thereby determines the nature of the battles ahead of her" (Wilber, 2004, p. 127). Understanding of oneself, one's essence and one's nature forms the basic life guidelines and existential meanings of being. For example, according to the teachings of Zen Buddhism, a person in his true essence is already perfect, harmonious and whole, but simply cannot realize this. Christianity claims that the deepest essence of man is damaged by original sin, and therefore man himself cannot cope with his ontological disease with his own forces. At the same time, psychoanalysis teaches that a person by his true nature is an instinctive animal whose natural desires are limited by a system of social prohibitions. Accordingly, in the first case, the main method of self-realization, which is consistent with the ontological nature of man, will be awareness, in the second - repentance, and in the third - sublimation.

I. Yalom identifies four basic existentials of human existence - finiteness, freedom, meaninglessness and loneliness. These structures of human existence raise existential questions, to which only a symbolic answer can be given, in accordance with which the constructive or destructive nature of self-identification is formed. The existence of a limb raises the question of whether death is the completion of the being of a person or whether it has an eternal, indestructible soul. A rigorous answer to this question cannot be obtained logically or empirically (neither a priori nor a posteriori), and therefore it can be only symbolic in nature, which determines the forms of a human being in the world around us. If a person believes that he is eternal, then two possibilities of self-identification open up before him - constructive, which reduces to the fact that it is necessary to correspond to one's indestructible essence, manifested in the high ideals of human being, and destructive, which is determined by the fact that there

is no need to show high values and you can completely devote your life to the satisfaction of selfish needs, for existence will never cease, and to eliminate the negative consequences of such a mercantile life, enough time. If a person believes that he is mortal, then two possibilities of self-identification also open up before him - constructive, which boils down to the fact that in a situation where a person can die at any time, there is no time for irrelevant and wrong things and you need to commit every day an existential effort in terms of self-realization and solving basic life problems, and a destructive one, which is determined by the fact that there is no point in striving for something substantial and significant, since everything in this world will be destroyed and somewhere will disappear without a trace.

Regardless of how a person symbolically represents the existential of loneliness, he assumes the other as an existential boundary between the self and the non-Self. Moreover, this applies to both personal self-identification and social. Tracing the path of European self-determination of personality, B.V. Markov notes: "Europe, which was initially aware of itself primarily as a carrier of culture, civilization, Christianity, was forced to defend itself and attack, assimilate and colonize. For her, the other is a barbarian or not a Christian" (Markov, 2001, p. 526).

Self-determination of a person occurs in the space of social interaction, when a person understands and chooses his own being, based on how people around him perceive it, as many Russian and foreign philosophers and psychologists have pointed out, for example, L.S. Vigotsky, S.L. Rubinstein, H. Murray, E. Erikson and others. D.I. Dubrovsky remarks on this occasion: "The internal interaction of the "I" with your "You" means reflecting yourself through the prism of understanding and appreciation of other personalities, and ultimately through the prism of some complex of socially defined values and at the same time reflecting others through understanding yourself and self-assessment" (Dubrovsky, 2002, p. 98). Frank (2004) adheres to this extreme position and argues that "no ready "I" exists at all until "meeting" with "you", before relating to "you" (p. 85).

The assumption of the other as the existential boundary between the I and the non-I determines the dependence of the self-identification of the person on how she translates certain ideas about herself to others, and also on how others represent them (Chesnokova, 2015). The identity of the person is formed in the space of such a broadcast or such a story, and therefore, using the terminology of P. Ricoeur, we can talk about the narrative identity of the person. Consequently, the identity of the person formed in the space of the narrative is determined by the semantics of the representative text.

M. Poster notes that in the process of narration, the text is thought of as devoid of ontological support and generated in a subjective act of interpretation. As a result of such a subjective narration, personality identity is built on the facts of objective reality and is formed in the space of symbolic interpretation. For example, according to the ideas of the fathers of the Orthodox Church, a person should mourn his virtues as well as his vices, because, being ontologically unhealthy, with a damaged and sick essence, even committing good deeds, he inside remains vicious, eaten up by pride and vanity. In this case, the idea of the ontological weakness of a person, which makes him turn to the Savior for help, is a purely subjective construction that determines the life strategy of a person and the main meaning of his being.

J. Brockmeyer and R. Harre emphasize that the narrative representation does not describe reality, but gives instructions for understanding it and sets the modes of being corresponding to this narration. For

example, a mother, being in a symbiotic fusion with her own child and experiencing anxiety when this fusion is broken, may consider her child unable to make the right decisions on his/her own, and then in all his/her independent actions she will seek and find serious mistakes. An example of a narrative representation that determines the phenomenal reality of a person, regardless of the objective state of affairs, is the thinking of a paranoid, who believes that everyone around him is persecuting, talking about him and discussing his behaviour.

A symbolic representation defines one object through another object, and if at the same time such a definition is understood as identity, then the associative field of the defining object absorbs the definable object, thereby depriving it of its own essence. For example, a person may say: "I am a loser" or "I am a successful entrepreneur", "I am a celebrity" or "I am an outcast", "I am a Russian" or "I am a Jew", "I am a Buddhist" or "I am a Christian", "I am a husband" or "I am a wife", "I am a man" or "I am a woman". All these are examples of symbolic definition, which one subject defines through another and in which the semantic content of the determining subject influences the essence of the determined subject, but, generally speaking, does not completely absorb it, but only gives it its expression in a certain cognitive context. However, expressing something symbolically, a person can take this expression for the essence of the subject in question and then draw speculative conclusions related to this subject, not on the basis of its subject essence and not even on the basis of how it is given in its symbolic representation, but on the basis of such symbolic moments of the associative field of determining objectivity, which initially did not participate in the representation of the determined object. Therefore, the symbolic definition presented in the form "X is Y", where X is the definable objectivity, and Y is the determining objectivity, should also be understood as a statement that can be represented in the form "X is not only Y". Hegel (1938) observes that "if, on the one hand, the content that makes up the meaning and the image used to designate it coincide in one property, then, on the other hand, the symbolic image still contains other completely independent definitions, different from the quality common to both of them that this image once meant" (p. 314). Therefore, any symbolic definition in its full version should consist of two dialectically complementary opposing statements such as "X is Y" and "X is not Y". Expressing this side of symbolic representation, Losev (1990) in his Philosophy of the Name writes: "Symbolism is apophatism, and apophatism is symbolism" (p. 56).

Take, for example, the famous phrase: "Knowledge is power." This symbolic definition means that the use of knowledge gives strength that allows you to achieve certain goals and makes it possible to transform the world. But if the associative field of a defining object (a concept of force) swallows a definable object (a concept of knowledge), then some aspects of a defining associative field that were not originally assumed in this symbolic representation can automatically enter the concept of knowledge and reveal its essential meaning. For example, a force can be constructive and destructive, constructive and destructive, positive and negative, and as a result of non-existent construction of the concept of knowledge by the semantic aspects embodied in the concept of force, the corresponding qualities of power are also attributed to knowledge, i.e. it will be considered as positive or negative, good or evil. It is clear that the truth itself is neither good nor evil, it is irrelevant to the "good-evil" dichotomy, but the symbolic formula "knowledge is power" implies a similar definition, which means that knowledge exists, which must be avoided and which should be fought, which are dangerous to humans and which should be

destroyed. This, in particular, gives rise to the idea of heresy and, in general, of knowledge in the mode of evil. Irreconcilable disputes between some religious groups can serve as examples of such an inferior symbolic representation, which was observed, say, during the holy Inquisition and which is now observed in the Muslim holy war of jihad. The fight against knowledge was also inherent in our country in Soviet times, when bourgeois philosophical concepts were regarded not just as incorrect, but as they were evil and, therefore, subject to militant eradication from the consciousness of the masses (Petrova, 2018).

Thus, self-identification in the form of "I am Y" in terms of its semantic completeness should be accompanied by the opposite statement, "I am not Y". If the essence of man identifies himself with certain objectivity defining the Y, then he thereby makes his being deficient in certain areas of life, which, by their semantic content beyond the scope of the associative field, the Y. For example, a woman who identifies herself as "I am a wife" without the corresponding adjustment "I am not only a wife" can become a housewife who does not realize herself outside the home and family, but who has certain abilities and desires, supplanted by pressure from a powerful husband or reputable parents. Since the self-determination of a person occurs in the space of social interaction when a person understands and chooses his own being, based on how people around him perceive it, the assumption of another as an existential boundary between the I and the non-I determines the dependence of the person's self-identification on how she translates certain representations of oneself to others, as well as how others represent them. Therefore, the identity of the person formed in the sociocultural space of symbols has a narrative character.

7. Conclusion

A person's self-knowledge is realized through thinking, rational or figurative, but both in the first and in the second case, one can single out a particular sphere of symbolic representation, which, unlike other methods of meaningful reflection of the surrounding world, transfers meaning from one object to another and sets a specific semantic dynamics in the framework of the interaction of associative fields, respectively, of the object that is conceptualized, and of the representative form by which this comprehension becomes possible (Mazlumyan, 2015). The more complex the situation is, the more complex and confusing experiences a subject has, the more difficult it becomes for him to describe both the external world of objective reality and the inner world of subjective experience, and as a result, to resort to the existential task, he resorts to metaphors, allegories, allegories, mythological representations, archetypal images and symbolic paintings. However, this kind of symbolic representation not only reflects a specific part of the external or internal reality but also affects the psychic experience itself, due to which such a symbolic representation is carried out. In other words, the description by means of a symbol has transcendental activity, for it transforms the described object, brings in it specific semantic nuances that were not initially present in it before the symbolic representation. Thus, the self-identification of a person in the space of symbols acquires the aspect of laying the existential foundations of interaction with the world, the formation of the integrity of the subject of self-knowledge and making an existential choice, which is determined not only by freedom but also by responsibility for one's own being and other people's being. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the mechanisms of symbolic

representation and understand how, in the process of reflection, you can not only monitor the constructive and destructive course of self-determination of a person but also control it and make timely corrections.

Thus, the mechanisms of symbolic representation have a significant impact on how a person understands himself and what life values are formed in the process of self-determination. Therefore, the knowledge of these laws and the ability to use them not only in psychotherapeutic practice and psychological and congruent practice, which contributes to the formation of ontopsychological integrity and strengthening mental health, counselling but also in a person's daily life allows him to make his social being genuine, authentic.

Acknowledgments

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