

THE CONCEPT OF PERSONAL IDENTITY IN MODERN SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECT

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Abstract. Relevance: The article is devoted to the socio-philosophical comprehension of the personal identity problem in the Internet. The situation of our time, characterized by “fluidity,” the variability of self-images, “masks”, has a resemblance to virtual space, which allows the individual to “try on” various social roles. The problem of personal identity requires a socio-philosophical understanding in the modern world.

Purpose: to reflect the modern vision of sociologists and philosophers of the concept of personal identity, to identify the main characteristics of personal identity on the Internet.

Methods of research: The theoretical and methodological basis of the study is the structural and constructivist approach. This approach is based on the conception that identities are the construct of the personality itself, they can be transformed depending on the individual's choice, while the structure of society is determined by the identities system.

The main results: A modern individual can be described as an individual of mass information consumption. The study of modern socio-philosophical works of the concept of personal identity allows us to determine the following characteristics: variability associated with social context; procedural nature; structure planning; reflexivity; categorization; selection.

Scientific novelty of the study lies in the author's position, according to which the key characteristics of personal identity include:

- variability related to the social context;
- procedural nature;
- construction;
- categorization;
- choice.

Directions for future research: in further research, the problem of personal identity in the conditions of Internet communication will be considered by us in the context of the dichotomies “private-public”, “I-Other”, which will make it possible to understand how personal identity is formed and transformed in the modern Internet.

Key words: personal identity, Internet, communication, virtual space, self, social philosophy, modernity, modern man, variability, procedural nature, construction, categorization, choice.

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КОНЦЕПТ ПЕРСОНАЛЬНОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ФИЛОСОФСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ: ТЕОРЕТИКО-МЕТОДОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТ

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Аннотация. Актуальность: статья посвящена социально-философскому осмыслению проблемы персональной идентичности в сети Интернет. Ситуация современности, характеризующаяся «текучестью», изменчивостью Я-образов, «масками», имеет сходство с виртуальным пространством, позволяющим индивиду «примерять» на себя различные социальные роли. Проблема персональной идентичности требует социально-философского осмысления в современном мире.

Цель: отразить современное видение социологами и философами концепта персональной идентичности, выявить основные характеристики персональной идентичности в сети Интернет.

Методы исследования: теоретико-методологической основой исследования становится структурно-конструктивистский подход. Данный подход основан на представлении того, что идентичности являются конструктом самой личности, они могут трансформироваться в зависимости от выбора индивида, при этом структуре общества определяет система идентичностей.

Основные результаты: современного индивида можно охарактеризовать как индивида массового информационного потребления. Исследование современных социально-философских работ концепта персональной идентичности позволяет нам определить следующие его характеристики: изменчивость, связанная с социальным контекстом; процессуальный характер; конструирование; категоризация; выбор.

Научная новизна: в статье сформулирована авторская позиция, согласно которой к ключевым характеристикам персональной идентичности относятся:

- изменчивость, связанная с социальным контекстом;
- процессуальный характер;
- конструирование;
- категоризация;
- выбор.

Направления будущих исследований: в дальнейших исследованиях проблема персональной идентичности в условиях интернет-коммуникации нами будет рассмотрена в контексте дихотомий «приватное-публичное», «Я-Другой», что позволит осмыслить то, как происходит формирование и трансформация персональной идентичности в современной сети Интернет.

Ключевые слова: персональная идентичность, Интернет, коммуникация, виртуальное пространство, самость, социальная философия, современность, современный человек, изменчивость, процессуальный характер, конструирование, категоризация, выбор.

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Introduction

In socio-philosophical thought, the concept of “personal identity” is one of the central ones for comprehension the personality of a modern individual. Besides, in various contexts it is widely used in sociology, social psychology, politology.

Despite the fact that a large amount of scientific and philosophical literature is devoted to the concept of personal identity, in the context of the Internet this issue remains under investigated. In this respect, in the present work we are interested in the problem of personal identity, which can be considered in the context of Internet communication.

Literature review

The scientific notion of personal identity was introduced in the second half of the 20th century. But we see interest in the study of personal identity in the works of Cicero, Aristotle, Plato, which raise the topic of personality identity and the communication role in society. The era of the New Age is characterized by increased interest in the study of the identity issue, so J. Locke in the work “Experience on Human Intelligence” turns to the study of personality equation, the thinker makes

an assumption that the basis of personality unity is memory and consciousness. The ideas of J. Locke were further developed in the theory of G. Leibniz (Leibniz, 2018) [15] about Monad and D. Hume (“A Treatise on Human Nature”).

For the study of identity in the sociological tradition, the concepts of “socialization”, “roles” (J. G. Mead, 1963) [17], “stigmas” by I. Goffman (Goffman, 1963) [11] are used. In the scientific tradition, E. Erikson is considered to be the “father” of the term identity. Almost all modern theories of identity rely on E. Erikson’s works. According to E. Erikson, identity is associated not only with significant aspects of an individual being, but also with his value-sense positioning. To have an identity, according to E. Erikson, means “to have an internalized and acceptable personal image of oneself in relation to the surrounding world” (Erikson, 1996: 32) [8]. J. Marcia (Marcia, 1993) [16], who is the author of status identity idea, continued the case of E. Erikson (Erikson, 1996) [8].

A completely new approach to the problem of personal identity was found by A. Giddens, who essentially made an attempt to substantiate the procedural understanding of the social structure from the point of

view of its duality. From the standpoint of his teaching, personal identity is defined as an individual's reflexive project, as a biographical narrative, which has heuristic value in the research of personal identity in the conditions of modern Internet communication, particularly in social networks. Today it is quite obvious that the research of A. Giddens (Giddens, 2002) [9] has really revealed the essence of many processes related to personal identity. The works of A. Giddens (Giddens, 2003) [10], and a number of other scientists listed above have significantly expanded the field of our ideas about the problem of personal identity.

Nowadays the problem of personal identity in the conditions of modern Internet communication is being studied by such Russian philosophers as Z. E. Vavilova (Vavilova, 2015) [13], E. O. Trufanova (Trufanova, 2010) [23], (Trufanova, 2021) [24, 25], (Trufanova, 2017) [26], V. A. Emelin and A. Sh. Tkhostov (Emelin V. A., Tkhostov A. Sh., 2010) [7]. In the study of personal identity E. O. Trufanova uses the metaphor "a maze of identity" and states the following: "A modern person must choose how, on which foundation and from which elements he/she can construct his/her Self and his/her identity, how exactly he/she will accommodate the maze in which he/she will wander" (Trufanova, 2010: 22) [23]. The merit of V.A. Emelin and A. Sh. Tkhostov is the analysis of the technical means of the information society usage risks: television, computers, mobile phones, as well as technological changes that have led to the deformation of a stable identification model. Today, the problem of personal identity is an urgent and socially significant problem that is being investigated by many modern researchers in the field of social and humanitarian knowledge.

Thus, personal identity, first of all, is closely related to the social environment changes, identity is not something forever given, nor is it an extremely variable structure.

Discussion

According to the theory of social image theory by S. Moskovichi (Moskovichi, 1998) [18], based on the concepts of E. Durkheim (Durkheim, 1991) [5] and L. Levy-Bruhl: in the system of relations between an individual and a group, personal identity is considered as a social representation. In this regard, we will turn to the famous typology of signs conceived by the American philosopher, the founder of pragmatism and semiotics, C. Peirce, who distinguished signs-symbols, signs-icons and signs-pointers (Peirce, 1974) [20].

Iconic signs are signs where signified and significative are connected by the principle of similarity. Index signs – signs that are combined into a group: public, economic, cultural or natural. Sign-symbols, where signified and significative form "the semantic field of the symbol, within which the meaning of the symbol is formed, which determines in the process of self-identi-

fication the existence of the personality and its existential essence" (Cherepanov, 2011: 150) [4].

Decrypting the symbolic message is one of the main tasks of the semiotic approach. For example, a person may claim that preferring a certain color in clothes is simply a matter of individual choice (interpreting the meaning of color as a symbol), but the researcher can establish that there is a relationship between the emotional state of an individual and his choice: "we must <... > decipher values that symbolize an age group, class or artistic circle" (Bourdieu, 1990: 6) [3]. Philosopher and specialist in semiotics U. Eco notes: "the person who gets the message remains a particle of freedom – the freedom to read it differently" (Eco, 1998: 160) [6]. Continuing this idea, P. Shtompka confirms: "How to look at the picture to draw the meaning, to interpret them? I have various directions,

which I tried to describe about how interpretation may be seen. There is very important sociological interpretation: what sort of social arrangements are represented on these pictures, what kind of structure, what type of interactions, what sort of mutual interpersonal relations. This is a kind of structural interpretation." (Shtompka, 2013: 182) [22].

The logical extension of the semiotic approach is the semiotic-structural approach. The signs that we decipher in the structural approach are the keys to understanding significant social structures (structures of interactions, beliefs and views, normative, material and technical, economic ones). When considering the personal identity problem in the context of Internet communication, we turn to the ideas of R. Bart, who discovers a reference point for the visual literacy of an individual: "reading a picture directly depends on my education; a human loves signs and loves them to be clear" (Bart, 2003: 389) [2].

The random choice of an individual, as well as the conscious one, is determined with the general characteristics of the social group to which he/she is in a certain society, where the image he broadcasts on the Internet represents his real or desired identity. In a discursive approach, visual text is considered as an act of communication with the Other. The concept of "discourse" in the most general sense is a language in the eventful aspect, in the context of its use. Actually, in what context, how and by whom the visual message was received and transmitted on the Internet, becomes the subject of interpretation by the Other. In this case, the idea to whom the visual self-presentation of the individual is addressed and what reading practices the Other uses is analyzed. Often, the choice of "reading" the visual text is purely individual. However, under the inevitable subjectivity of perception, we observe the main opinions that form under the influence of socio-cultural status and social position.

It must be taken into account that self-presentation, self-expression of an individual in the Internet carries

no single meaning due to its polysemanism. It is also important how the individual's self-presentation happens. For example, a photo in a family album and a picture in the gallery of Instagram application are likely to have different perceptions. According to J. Habermas, "in discourses, we try to re-produce the problematic consent that took place in a communicative action through justification" (Habermas, 2001: 69) [12]. It can be concluded that J. Habermas arises the discourse concept up to a special communicative space, where communications are aimed at mutual respect, mutual understanding and agreement. Their successful interaction is achieved by respecting ethical standards while dialoguing. "The moral principle, according to J. Habermas, is embedded in the dialogical intention of discourse itself. The dialogue implies recognition of the Other as a worthy participant, recognition of his right to otherness <... > " (Rusakova, 2007: 21) [21]. The dialogue is carried out by the partners I and You, and the reflection acts in the form of an awareness by the acting subject of how he is perceived by the Other, i.e. from the point of view of the Other. As the Russian philosopher V.A. Lectorsky notes, "when I realize myself as Me with some peculiarities, <... > I also reflectively analyze myself in the light of this or that ideal of personality accepted by me, expressing the type of attitude towards other people, that is, socially mediating my attitude towards myself" (Lectorsky, 1980: 267) [14].

It should be remembered that out-door photography can have the effect of self-presentation, that is, it can significantly affect the behavior of those being photographed. Social researcher K. Bannikov defines two principles of penetration of the photographing individual into the field: entry and invasion (Bannikov, 2008) [1]. He says that the second principle (invasion) will not bring the proper result. According to K. Bannikov, the authors of photographs resort to this method in case when it is impossible to establish a dialogue of cultures, for example, due to the language barrier. Photographs obtained in bad faith, as a rule, have very low scientific value, their subsequent use in public demonstration is problematic, precisely in connection with ethics issues. The researcher recommends that if you have a choice: to spend six days studying a certain community or to take a photo immediately, then choose the first option. If we are talking about the principle of „entry“, then we should pay attention to the fact that it is often not possible to take a picture where the hero of the photograph appears authentic, as he is in real life. But from a theoretical point of view, much more is possible: to find out what a person would like

to look like and who he would like to seem like. This circumstance is also true for social networks, with the phenomenon of the prevalence of the attitude "not to be, but to seem".

Conclusions and directions for future research

The study of modern socio-philosophical works of the personal identity concept allows us to determine the following characteristics:

- variability related to the social context;
- procedural nature;
- structuring;
- reflexivity;
- categorization;
- choice.

A modern individual can be described as an individual of mass information consumption, whose decision of various kinds of social problems, accordingly, is transferred to the information environment – the Internet. We see dramatic changes in the information release and organization system. Modern communication technologies pay main attention to focus on illustrativity, where the main source of information is the screen. The being of the individual is subordinate to impress the "Others". As soon as a person has received recognition (in a virtual space it is a "like" in a photo), there is a need to correspond to a recognized image, but for various reasons, this turns out to be impossible.

Our research allows to acknowledge that the new communication system is implemented mainly in the Internet sphere and is significantly different from the previous one. Today we see a trend where the image dominates (Ouellette, 2014) [19], it becomes important how successfully the individual is guided in images, "switches" from one image to another, so he can transform, "change" personal identity like "masks". In our opinion, this trend (the primacy of the image) will develop and improve in the near future.

The variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to the interpretation of personal identity proclaims the multidimensional nature of this concept. The productivity of structural, semiotic and discursive approaches can be identified in studies of new visual practices, which include different self-presentations of individuals using information technology and social networks.

In further research, the problem of personal identity in the conditions of Internet communication will be considered by us in the context of the dichotomies "private-public", "I-Other", which will make it possible to understand how personal identity is formed and transformed in the modern Internet.

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