



MEANINGS OF IDENTITY¹

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ABSTRACT

The text is an essay on philosophical anthropology. Its aim is to present a critical survey of modern views on topics which are marked by such words as identity, self, I, person and similar. The conceptions are classified in several groups and subgroups (psychological, historical, sociological, culturological, anthropological and akin reflections on identity, a philosophical class). The comparison of such a huge spectrum of views is rarely done, but it is nevertheless needed, because it is one of the principle goals of scientific activity to establish general claims. The main findings and conclusions that the author finds correct are the following: A topic, which occupied (Heidegger) and still occupies (Taylor) an important part of philosophy of man, is authenticity. One of the great merits of Martin Buber is that he showed that a successful philosophical anthropology can be, for purely fundamental inherently philosophical reasons, neither individualistic even less collectivistic. Man and a person are in a certain sense functional concepts. Further, we cannot comprehend persons and their unities independently from some narrative. A man is a story-telling animal. Antiessentialism goes hand in hand with some kind of pragmatism, which can be positive in a certain measure. A contemporary pragmatist refutes the grounding and justification of ethics or morality respectively. A moral stance is not a matter of rationality. This is acceptable till the moment when this pragmatism does not become in fact a dogmatic demagoguery which, with its talking about the irrationality of morality covers, hides a possibility of a rational explication or demonstration of (certain) implications or consequences of the position in question. Here the ethics is a very rational matter and eo ipso so also is the philosophical anthropology.

KEY WORDS: man, person, identity, anthropology, philosophy

¹ The text presents some results of the research in the framework of the project »Contemporary approaches to motivation and competition in self-concept models: cross-cultural study <J5 3322-0553-01>« which is financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

THE PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The birth of modern philosophy is by some thinkers (Arendt, 1998) characterised as a special consideration of self, subjectivity, existence and related topics initiated in a crucial way by Kierkegaard. It was an attempt to save subjectivity, individuality, particularity from (Hegelian) the general. It was the birth (or rebirth (Sloterdijk, 2000)) of the philosophy of non-identity, which has found its adherents in the 20th century in philosophers like Ernst Bloch, Theodor Adorno and the controversial Peter Sloterdijk (Žalec, 2000).

Who am I? What are my starting-points, directions, principles? What and which are my views: political, ethical, national, religious, metaphysical, scientific, aesthetical? What is my self-image, my self-esteem, my evaluation of my capacities, potentials, my moral self-evaluation, my psychological self-image? Is it possible to articulate me, you, human being in concepts? What are my origins? What do I really think about the meaning of life, about transcendence of human nature, about the mystery of life? About the value of survival, of being compared to other values? About hedonism, sensuality? About freedom, about love?

The above questions are crucial and most important and have to be actualised and (re)answered again and again even if we have accepted the thesis that our culture is a post-modern culture, a culture that rejects generalising views, big narratives, which claims that there is no ground and no centre of man or world respectively, which strives for pluralism. Maybe as a starting-point could serve the point on which many thinkers, and people I am sympathetic to, agree: to be honest is the greatest welfare, benefit. Thomas Aquinas has written that we must carry out and love the good (*Quaestio disputata de virtutibus in communi* 6). That is the basic sentence of preconsciousness (Pieper, 1999; 90; Pieper, 2000; 15). The fundamental criterion of ethics for France Veber in his *Ethics* (1923) is conscience. The central axiom of ethics states that we must act according to our conscience. If we act so, we feel pleasure; otherwise we feel regret, which is a kind of discomfort, uneasiness, pain. We could formulate the question »Who am I?« in the form »What is my conscience? What does it say to me about the above questions?«

Very important is our attitude towards the question: Is the human being transcendent? This question has two aspects, two meanings: dynamic/active/subjective and static/passive/objective. The first is the question about our experience or knowledge respectively of transcendence. The second is principally about the limits of our knowledge of ourselves or man respectively. The awareness of transcendence questions is especially important in our age of outstanding, decided and conspicuous dominancy of the scientific form of consciousness. Naturalists and in particular some theologians are in their way declaring the nontranscendental nature of man or his nonmysteriousness respectively. While on the other hand several confessionals and nonconfessionals stress the transcendental nature of man, his principal nonintelligibility, his mysteriousness.

Philosophical anthropology offers a manifold reflection of the human condition. What does it matter to this manifold reflection for its bearer and for others, for the society? We must realise that it is in a way impossible to give a decisive answer to those philosophical questions which are concerned with a person, human nature and the similar. That is not true for the question of what the benefit is and to whom it pertains, no matter which answer

we take for granted. If we accept for instance that a man is by his nature a competitive being, this has great implications for our practical views and actions.²

The concept of man is a concept of contingent and historical being, not of abstract and atemporal entity (e.g. as mathematical entities are). For such entities we do not have perfect definitions in the sense of necessary and sufficient conditions. The human being can be split into different parts surely only mentally, methodologically, because of a simpler reflection upon some things, and not de facto.

The Slovene philosopher Veber has defined philosophy as a science which investigates man as such. Natural sciences investigate a specific natural point of man, whereas social sciences and humanities already presuppose man, since they investigate those entities which would not exist without man: language, history, law (Veber, 2000 <1930>). It is an old and insistent idea that it is the self-knowledge which is the highest aim of the philosophical research. In the oppositions among different philosophical streams this has remained undenied. All new conceptions have had the purpose of opening new ways to the knowledge of man and in the history of thought scepticism has been often only a counterpart of determined humanism (Cassirer; 1970;1).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT ON MAN AND PERSON

The thought about man is as old as culture, which is true also for the West, where the first to be mentioned is Heraclitus. He puts forward as a condition for appropriate understanding of the Universe the understanding of man, although his thought is partly still (naturally) cosmological. The second milestone represents the philosophy of Socrates who however has not left behind himself to us a definition of man as such, but only a definition of man's qualities. The essence of man consists in his putting forward questions about himself and in his trying to answer them, in his dialogical nature. Stoicism has also stressed the knowledge about ourselves. The way to happiness is constituted by self-knowledge, in penetrating our own depths. Augustine and with him the whole of Christianity has, contrary to stoicism, put in focus the knowledge of God and proclaimed a dependency of man's knowledge of himself on his knowledge about God. Modern thought has stressed mathematical knowledge as a paradigm also for the knowledge of man (Descartes, Galileo, Leibniz, Spinoza). This attitude was sharply criticised by the mathematician Pascal, who has stressed the oppositions in human nature which is inaccessible to the geometrical mind which is governed by the top principal of excluded contradiction. What is relevant is religious thought full of mysteriousness, which is the only proper thought about man. Only the thought or the religion which articulates mysteriousness is appropriate and only the thought which gives reason to that mystery is informative. Copernician cosmology has represented a new challenge for philosophical thought. It was seen by many as a liberation of knowledge of man, not only as his dethronement. Darwin's theory has placed on the throne the investigation of the contingent, empirical data about man, and it outshone mathematics as an ideal of knowledge about man. Yet a mere collecting of data and facts is not enough; we

² Mostly, the thesis that competition is a part of human nature is supported by people who would like to preserve the status quo (cf. Kohn, 1992).

must classify and hierarchize the data. That has led to a discentred situation regarding the view on man. Theologians, politicians, sociologists, biologists, psychologists, economists, ethnologists,..., all consider man from their own standpoint or aspect respectively. The personal factors, individual temper etc. are more and more important. This is the situation of the modern philosophy of man (Cassirer, 1970;1-22).

There is little agreement about the answer to the question: What are persons? Such a situation could be interpreted as mirroring the conceptual confusion or indeterminacy respectively, or maybe the fact that there is still a possibility, task or need in front of us to develop a satisfactory understanding of a person. The term person has its history in the legal and in the theological contexts. Apart from that, it is often used as a synonym for human being. Hence the history of the thought on persons is the moment of changing legal, theological, social trends and of more general reflections on the nature of a human subject or I respectively. Some questions from this field could be traced deeply in philosophical history. Some other questions, as for instance the question on personal identity, have arisen only from the Renaissance on. Pace Cartesian dualism a human being is essentially a conscious being, and by consciousness is meant the reflexive kind. John Locke and other thinkers of the 17th century are worthy of the prominence of viewing the nature of human thinking as a reflexive one. Lockean as well as Leibnizian philosophy reflects an at that time arising liberal conception of an individual, which is not only the centre or a substance of mental states, but also the subject of merit and blame and the holder of rights. The tendency in the theory on persons, to prescind physical facts about bodily existence as well as the placement of humans in their social, historical etc. contexts has contributed to a special position of the individual: 18th century Kant conceived it as an autonomous and free being, 19th century utilitarian and liberal theories of Bentham and Mill as a possessor of a complicated web of desires (Brennan, 1991). Scepticism about one self, which stretches through our entire life, is represented by the Humean account that persons are no more than bundles of perceptions. Hume touched an important philosophical nerve by following, so dedicatedly, his sensationalism. However, his account should not entirely satisfy us for we must bear in mind that not all sentences using the first person pronoun »I« could be without loss eliminated from our talk about our psychosocial life (Chisholm, 1994; Žalec, 1995).

The aim of this essay is to present a critical survey of modern views on topics which are marked by such words as identity, self, I, person and similar. Let us classify the conceptions for the sake of a better overview into several groups or subgroups respectively. The first group of views I will call in short psychological, despite the fact that I am aware, that in many respects this is not appropriate. Here belong the theories of James, Mead, Freud, Jung and more recent psychological theories of structures that constitute the structure we call (our)self. In the following I will not consider these theories. The reason lies not in their philosophical lack of attraction or in their small importance. The fact is rather the contrary. One of the reasons is rather that they have been treated or developed respectively by several Slovene philosophers and psychologists (cf. for instance Musek, 1996; Kopal, 2000). I called them psychological not only by virtue of the fact that most of their creators were psychologists or of a discipline somehow akin to psychology (or both), but also because we find the more or less brief outline of these ideas in almost every psychological textbook on the above mentioned topics. However, the Jamesian distinction between empirical me and nonobjectual I is well known in philosophy long before James (for instance by Kant) and developed in detail in phenomenology, of which Scheler is an

important representative. The ideas of social construction of self-image, identity etc. are present and elaborated in contemporary theories which I consider more closely in this article. But Taylor and MacIntyre, neopragmatists like Rorty and also modern culturologists have added to them an important component of a (more developed) historical perspective. Freudian ideas enjoy a high respect in poststructuralist circles at one hand, but on the other hand some authors from the present text (Scheler, Taylor) have articulated a though general, yet also very principled and decided criticism of his psychoanalysis. It is my impression that the Jungian approach is not very alive and present in modern theoretical efforts, though the ideas of Jung and his followers (for instance Erich Neumann (Neumann, 2001)) enjoy a status of somehow classic reference (for instance in the work of Walter J. Ong (Ong, 1981)). The second main class is constituted by historical, sociological, cultural, anthropological and akin reflections on identity. Whoever we are (or think we are), our identity is constituted and formed by many equalisations. Their genesis, history, changing of their importance, dominance, and their reproduction is extensively studied by the social sciences. It is needless to add that there is also a lot of philosophy at work (often implicitly). The first members of the third group, a philosophical class in a narrower sense, are modern analytical philosophers and their debates on a personal identity. The second class I will consider comprises the ideas of modern continental philosophers on man or person respectively. By modern continental philosophers I mean the continental philosophy in the 20th century. The ideas of neoscholasticism, Max Scheler, France Veber, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Nicolai Hartmann, Martin Buber and Ernst Cassirer will be considered. The third philosophical subgroup embraces the views of two representatives of what we may call new Anglosaxonic historicism. Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre are the thinkers I have in mind.

MODERN CONTINENTAL THEORIES OF MAN

These could be importantly regarded from two aspects: 1) are they actualistic? 2) are they monadic or relational? (Nosbüsch, 1998). What makes a human being human is, according to neoscholasticism, the spirit, which is however individuated by matter, hence it is an individuated entity. Max Scheler also thought that the *differentia specifica* of a person is spirit <Geist> and not, for instance, intelligence. Spirit is a qualitative difference, intelligence only a quantitative one. A spiritual being is not bounded to the organic, to instincts and to the world that surrounds it. It is »open into the world«. The spirit is able to »lift« the centers of the resistance and of the reactions into the objects and to grasp principally the whatness of the objects itself. In that sense an animal does not have any objects in the narrow sense of the word. The essential feature of the spirit is broadening of the surrounding world into the dimension of the world and objectifying of the resistances. Because of the spirit, man is capable of objectifying his own physiological and psychological (psychological is not spiritual) whatness. The capability of intending the essences is a foundation of almost all other characteristics of the spirit. Intending essences means to grasp the essential whatness of the world and its forms of becoming. This grasping is independent from the content and number of observations, from inductive reasoning, performed by intelligence. The knowledge acquired in that way is valid for all entities of a particular essence, not only for the actual world, but also for every possible world. This knowledge is a priori

knowledge. What is essential for a human is not knowledge, but the fact that it is capable of reaching a priori essences. The core of such an intending is an act of abolishing of the character of reality of the thing and of the world, and only a spirit in the form of pure will is capable of depriving things of their realistic »power«. Nevertheless, there is no constant organisation of mind; this organisation is in principle subjected to changes; only the mind and its capacity to build new forms of knowledge by functionalising essential insights is constant. However, the spirit itself is not capable of being objectified. A person exists only in her acts and through her freely carrying out of her acts. She is pure actuality. We could only collect ourselves toward our center, our person. The real object of love is for instance a person, not something else. In that sense Scheler refers to Goethe's words that he loved Lili too much to observe her.³ Scheler repudiated two basic theories of the origin and power of the spirit. The first type of theories, so called classical theories, maintains that the spirit possesses its own power, whereas the second, so called negative theories (Freud, Schopenhauer, Buddha's doctrine) assert that the spirit itself and all the activities creating the human culture originate exclusively from repression or hindering of the instincts, drives and the like. Scheler on the one hand stressed that the spirit does not possess any energy of its own, but on the other hand he accused the negative theories of already assuming what they would like to explain. The only »effect« the spirit is capable of is hindering and liberating of the instincts and their directing by presentation of the idea and of the value that are subsequently carried out by instinct and drives. The spirit could not increase any energy. It is the core of sublimation and therefore could not itself originate from sublimation.⁴

Despite some of Hartmann's criticism of Scheler's doctrine of man, his view on person is very similar to Scheler's, only that it is somehow more static, but above all the gap between the person and other layers of the human being is firmer and in a sense unbridgeable. A person belongs to a spiritual layer and is grounded on anorganic, organic and psychological layers. The spirit lets the lower layers working according to their own structure, yet they must serve to the spirit (Nosbüsch, 1998; 24-25).

One of the central terms of Heidegger's (early)⁵ philosophy is Dasein. Roughly and inexactly we can say that it is Heidegger's term for a man, a human being. A better formulation is that it is Heidegger's term for us. Dasein is a being that is in relation to its own being. Heidegger's question in *Sein und Zeit* is Who a Dasein every time <je>is (Heidegger, 1963 (§25): 114) and his answer is that in a certain sense the self-evident answer is that I am who every time a Dasein is (ibid.: 115). But he warned us to be careful in our understanding of this last sentence. According to Heidegger we are the existence, or our goal (Nosbüsch, 1998. 28) is to exist respectively. An existence is an individually proper way of being of Dasein. Being with others is also only in the function of existence. The existence is momentary: we could lose it and we could fall into mediocrity. Existence is our own proper way of being. The »essence« of a Dasein is his existence (Heidegger,

³ The Slovene philosopher France Veber articulated very similar views on the person in his book *Filozofija. Načelni nauk o loveku in njegovem mestu v stvarstvu*. (Philosophy. A principal doctrine about the human and his position in creation) (Veber, 2000).

⁴ In his *Das Problem des Menschen* (Buber, 1998) Buber mistakenly ascribed to Scheler a belief that the spirit is created by sublimation. Buber thought that the idea of sublimation is a result of the pathological state of our culture. Similar refutation of the idea of sublimation we find in the work of Simon Weil (Weil, 1998).

⁵ Sentences in this text about Heidegger take into account only his earlier thought, in the first line his ideas from his most famous and in a sense main work *Being and Time* «*Sein und Zeit*» (1927) (Heidegger, 1963). They are probably rather not completely appropriate for his later philosophy.

1963 (§9): 42). We can not ask What is a human?, we could only ask Who is a human? Characteristic of Dasein is that it is considered with its own proper mode of being. This fundamental structure Heidegger called care. The being, which a Dasein cares for, is existence.

All these three theories are more or less monadic. They do not regard a human being in relation to other beings, or else they define or articulate, respectively, her essence or her characteristic in principle without a relation to other humans. Neoscholastic theory is, contrary to Scheler's, not actualistic (also young children and mentally retarded humans are persons) and the same could be said for Heidegger's hermeneutics of Dasein, though we should be aware of its precision.⁶

Cassirer thought that there are many characteristics of man that make him different compared to other beings: myth, religion, language, art, history, science. Which of them is sufficient or necessary for man is hard to say. On the one hand Cassirer writes that there is no common, universal and unifying characteristic of man. Man is not a substance, but rather a dialectical unity, a Heraclitian harmony of bow and lyre. He is a dynamic hidden unity which is a result of the contest of oppositions (Cassirer, 1970: 223). Man is, in contrast to animal, not limited to eternal repeating of patterns of life. His further characteristic is that he is capable of spreading his achievements to other people and human generations. Man cannot live his life without expressing it (Cassirer, 1970: 224). Different forms of this expression constitute a new world, they live an independent, their own life. Characteristic of this sphere are the opposing tendencies from which Cassirer has particularly exposed the tendency between preserving, stabilizing elements and changing or creating factors respectively. On the other hand Cassirer nevertheless husked a common feature of all otherwise heterogeneous forms of culture. Pace Cassirer a unity of man is functional (ibid.: 222). The forms of culture are not similar by identity of their nature, but by being adjusted to the same task (ibid.: 223). We can describe human culture as a progressing self-liberation. Through different forms of culture man creates a new world, an »ideal« world. Forms of culture are phases in that process. Each opens a new horizon, represents a new aspect of human nature. Philosophy seeks a unity in these forms, but it cannot overlook tensions between them. But these tensions are not mutually exclusive, but mutually dependent (ibid.: 228). The definition of man that we can nevertheless discern is that man is the only known (terminal) being who (can) liberate himself. He liberates himself precisely through the above dimensions, which differentiate him from the rest of the world. The meaning of self-liberation as Cassirer used the word is axiologically neutral. Man's own world, which he has built, can enslave him and can become a real hell. Hence this self-liberation does not necessarily have a positive meaning and quite often that self-liberation is not liberation at all.

Martin Buber argued relatively influentially against individualism in philosophical anthropology: We cannot understand a (human) individual solely by virtue of what is happening in him but only by regarding his relations with things and beings. An individualistic

⁶ Hannah Arendt ascribed to Heidegger an attempt to deconstruct human beings into group of modes of being and she regarded it as an implicit functionalism (Arendt, 1998: 44). She saw in Heidegger's philosophy an effort to put a human in the place of God. The abandoning of a definition of a (human) being as given in advance is an effort to regard a human not as being similar to God, but as being godlike, divine (Arendt, 1998: 41). This ambition of being God is also reflected in the tension of Heidegger's philosophy: Dasein is in the world, but it is impossible to become self, the god of traditional ontology, in the world among »equal« beings. The only exit is separation, isolation, death. Every individual represents the whole of humanity, thought Kant. In Heidegger the self as a conscience has entered the place of humanity, and to be a self the place of being a human (Arendt, 1998: 39-52).

anthropology in essence considers only the relation of a human being to himself, relations between his instincts, tribes and between the spirit in him etc. (Buber, 1999: 119-20). But not only individualism, collectivism, which does not see man, but also society, is mistaken as well. They are a result of the same process: of cosmical and social homelessness, and of fear of the world and life, which flow one into another, thus constituting a state of existential loneliness, which in such a measure has probably not been ever known before our times (Buber, 1998; 121). However, a fundamental fact of the human existence is neither an individual nor a community as such. They are both only abstractions. An individual is a fact of existence only in as far as he establishes a living relation with other individuals; on the other hand a community is a fact of existence only in the measure in which it is built from living relational units. A fundamental fact of the human existence is human with human, man with man.

What characterises the human world above all is that here is happening between being and being something, which could not be found anywhere in nature and which makes a human being human. It is rooted in the fact that one being thinks of the other being as the other, as that particular being in order to communicate with him in an area that is common to both of them, but which stretches over the areas that are owned by each of two persons. This area, restored by the existence of a man as a man, Buber called an area of mutuality <das Zwischen>. This is pace Buber a pre-category of human reality, though it is actualised in very different degrees. From this area the real third something must originate (ibid.: 125). A true conversation, a true lesson, a true hang; the essential thing in all these events happens neither in the first or the other participant, nor in the neutral world that embraces both of them and all other things. It happens between both the persons, in a dimension that is accessible only to the two of them. It is a zone where souls end and the world has not started yet (126). This fact could be found also in very short moments, which we are almost not aware of: the looks of two strangers in an air-raid shelter, a basic dialogical relation between two people who do not know each other in the darkness of an opera house, who with the same intensity experience the music, and which ended long before lights were switched on. Beyond subjectivity, on this side of objectivity, at the thin edge where you and I meet, is the kingdom of mutuality. Buber thought that the knowledge of this, the third, will crucially contribute to mankind, with great effort, regaining an authentic person, and to the founding of an authentic community. This reality represents the starting-point for philosophical anthropology from which it could on the one hand progress in the direction of a changed understanding of person, and on the other hand in the direction of changed comprehension of the community. Its central subject is neither individual nor collective, but man with man. Only in this living relationship can we directly acquire the knowledge of a peculiar, special essence of man (ibid.: 127). If we regard a human being with a human being we always see a dynamical twoness, which is the essence of a man: what he gives, what he gets, offensive and defensive force, the nature of exploring, investigating and the nature of giving answers; always both in one, mutually supplemented, completed. Now, being aware of these facts, we can turn our attention to the individual and as a human we recognize him by his capability of existing in a relationship; we can now turn to a community and we recognize it as human by its fullness of relation. We can come close to an answer to the question of what is a man only if we learn to understand him in his dialogics in which the mutually present attitude of two together <Zu-zweien-sein> is every time realised in an encounter of one with the other (ibid.: 128).

NONESSENTIALISTIC CULTUROLOGY

An important part of culturology has found its philosophical basis in the rejection of essentialism. Essences are a class of attributes or constituents which x could not lack without ceasing to be x. Antiessentialism is in culturology comprehended as a view that there are some constant, nonchangeable essences of objects or meanings of the concepts or terms respectively, as for instance »Slovene«, »woman«, »white«....

Many culturologists are using the poststructuralist theoretical apparatus (Stankovič, 2002: 51-59). Probably the most influential poststructuralist is Jacques Derrida. Poststructuralism has accepted many principles of structuralism, but has rejected some of its central claims as well. One of the beliefs of structuralism was that meaning is stable and clear. The poststructuralist culturology has accepted the claim that the meaning of a sign is not fixed even at its denotative level; it is polysignificant, nontransparent and changing. Poststructuralism is significant for culturology because it allows the use of »softer« terms and makes possible the problematising of unjust hierarchies. The second point directly concerns identity. Poststructuralists see little difference (or importance of it) between language and thought. We enter the culture through our language. Contrary to the western humanistic tradition, people are not free choosers, claim culturologists; from the very beginning they are placed in some subject positions, which language allows to us. We are »imprisoned« in language or cultural relations respectively. In language the relations of power are inscribed. Several chains of designators, discourses, form our subject, I, in the games of power. For instance, the binary opposition man/woman. This biological difference could be interpreted in many ways. Different interpretations are cultural constructions, that offer or allow man or woman some subject positions. The central aim of poststructural culturology is a deconstruction, elaboration or replacement of some identities that reflect or establish some unjust hierarchy; the theoretical foundation of this enterprise is the thesis of instability, changeability, nonessentiality, of the construction of identity (ibid.: 53). In culturology by identity are meant the positions we occupy and with whom we identify. They are not arbitrary, they are shaped by discourses we are subjected to or which are at our disposal in our culture respectively. Identity is essentially relational. It is always formed in opposition to something different, to something else. Identities are not static; they are points of connectedness with subject positions that discursive praxises offer to us (Luthar, B., 2002). The poststructuralists claim that our identity is usually understood as nonchangeable, eternal essence. Antiessentialism asserts that identities do not refer to any essences in us. Antiessentialism provides a firm basis for problematising of the existing social hierarchies. The poststructuralist culturologists stress that new identities are also only constructions, constructed by philosophers and intellectuals. They are no more real than some other identities. But they should be more just. Insisting on the universal, eternal truths leads to unbearable reductionism. The poststructuralist emancipatory theory is important, claim many culturologists, because it allows us to criticise the existing hierarchies of power without falling into reductionistic universalistic totalitarianism. If one identity is not useful for justice, not just enough, we could replace it by some other at any time (Stankovič, 2002: 55). In the focus of the poststructuralist culturology are primarily gender, racial and national or ethnical identities. We can notice a certain component of pragmatism in the view of the poststructuralist or nonessentialistic attitudes toward identities. Nonessentialism, denying of any good use of the ideas of objective truth, rationality, human nature, maintaining of

historicism and relativism are central claims of one of the most famous contemporary philosophers, who declares himself to be a pragmatist, namely Richard Rorty (cf. for instance Rorty, 1982, 1988, 2000).

ANALYTICAL PHILOSOPHY

The nature of the personal identity is of great practical significance. That question is related to the question of the possibility of the survival of bodily death, which is the central idea of almost all religions. The concept of personal identity is connected with our concept of personal responsibility for our acts and our praxis of paying respect and disrespect. Our own pasts and futures are the objects of many of our central emotions and attitudes. If we really abandoned the concept of a unified continuous person, it is hard to imagine the entire impact this would have on our picture of the world and on our emotional and moral reactions. So it is not a surprise that also analytical philosophers pay so much attention to the personal identity. Let us look a little bit closer at their main accounts and arguments.

BODILY CRITERIA IN THE WIDER SENSE

A bodily criterion in the narrow sense is the following: person P1 at t1 is identical to the person P2 at t2 if and only if P1 has the same body as P2. An objection that repudiates convincingly the above criterion is the possibility of a transplantation of the brain into some other body. This leads us to the brain criterion: P1 at t1 is identical to P2 at t2 if and only if P1 has the same brain as P2. There is a possibility of dividing of the two brain hemispheres of the same brain (person). Not both of the hemispheres are necessary for survival.⁷ So we can imagine a possible case of a person surviving a destruction of one of her hemispheres. So there would be the same person, but without brain identity. If we transplant her remaining hemisphere to some other body, we get the same person, with neither bodily neither brain identity. But this case still does not force us to accept that personal identity does not consist in the persistence of some physical entity. We could still resort to the so called physical criterion (Noonan, 1993: XIII-XIV): P2 at t2 is identical to P1 at t1 if and only if enough of the brain of P1 at t1 survives in P2 at t2 to be the brain of the living person. An objection to that criterion was put forward by Bernard Williams (Williams, 1970, 1973). The ground premise of his argument is that it is possible to remove the information from the brain into some storage device whence it is then put back into the same or another brain. This information constitutes a psychological identity. But the implicit premise in the position of the defender of the physical criterion is that (part of) the brain carries with it the psychological identity. Hence the removal of information from the brain and putting

⁷ The human brain has two very similar hemispheres, each of them has its own role. In a normal adult the two hemispheres are connected and communicate by a bundle of fibres – corpus callosum. In the treatment of some epileptics those fibres were cut. That led to the discovery of an independent functioning of the two hemispheres. When the patients were tested the leading investigator on the field and one of the surgeons described his observations as follows: »... two independent spheres of conscious awareness, one in each hemisphere, each of which is cut off from the mental experience of the other ... each hemisphere seems to have its own sensations, perceptions, concepts, impulses to act ... Following the surgery each hemisphere has its own memories (Sperry, 1986: 724, quoted by Noonan, 1993: XII.)« For more data about the literature on split brains cf. Nagel, 1993: 90-91.

it back into the brain makes possible the psychological identity without identity of the brain or part of the brain, for a man should be counted the same if this has been done and in the process he were given a new brain. To accept above argument means that we ought to abandon the bodily criteria, which leads us to alternative accounts of personal identity. One of them is the position that personal identity is constituted by psychological factors (Noonan, 1993; XIV ss).

PSYCHOLOGICAL CRITERIA

According to the memory (Lockean) criterion, the crucial factor in personal identity is an experience-memory of the person about her own experiences and acts, as she reports about them in her first person memory statements. Between a person now and a person ten years ago there exist direct memory connections if the person now can remember that she had some experiences or done some acts that have happened to her or that she had performed ten years ago. Even in the case that there are no such direct memory connections we can still justifiably talk about continuity of the memory in the last ten years if there exist overlapping chains of direct memory. If for instance person P remembers her experiences from the previous year and P remembered a year ago her experiences from the year before ... and she remembered nine years ago her experiences from ten years ago. The Lockean account of the personal identity could be formulated in the following way: P2 at t2 is the same person as P1 at t1 only if P2 is connected with a continuous chain of the experience-memory with P1. This is the memory criterion of the personal identity. Many modern philosophers who are otherwise sympathetic to the Lockean idea maintain that there are still other psychological factors, not only the experience-memory, that must be taken into account in our definition of the personal identity. Besides direct memory there are still several other kinds of direct memory connections: a connection between intention and the later act in which that intention was carried out, connections which hold when a belief or a desire or some other psychological features persist. Psychological continuity consists of such direct psychological connections. P2 at t2 is the same person as P1 at t1 if and only if P2 is psychologically continuous with P1. This is a psychological continuity criterion of personal identity (PCC)(Noonan, 1993; XIV). This proposal is not without problems.

There are two main lines of objection: the circularity objection and the reduplication argument. The first argument (*ibid.*: XIV-XV) was originally brought against Locke by Bishop Butler. Memory cannot account for the personal identity for it already assumes it. We distinguish without difficulties between veridical and apparent memory: people can seem (to themselves) to remember that they have experienced or done certain things, but in fact this has never been the case. Shoemaker (Shoemaker, 1993) offered as a refutation of that objection a concept of quasi-memory, which he thinks is not subjected to the objection, though in all other important respects it is similar to our usual concept of memory. Whereas the fact that one remembers some events implies that she was aware of this event at the time of its occurring, the quasi-memory requires only that somebody, whoever, was aware of it at the time of its occurring (*ibid.*:25). All veridical quasi-memories in our world are memories. Hence the veridical memory is a good criterion for personal identity since it, as a quasi-memory, does not imply or assume respectively personal identity. Quasi-memories in our world are accidental memories. If the state of the person who remembers does not

correspond to the state of a person who was aware of the event at the time of its occurrence, they are nonveridical (only apparent). We do not need the concept of the same person to define the difference between apparent and veridical memory just as we do not need it to define the quasi-memory. It is an unnecessary, accidental, contingent fact that in our world the quasi-memory is a memory. We can define personal identity in our world in terms of the quasi-memory: P2 at t2 is the same person as P1 at t1 if P2 is in the quasi-memory connection with P1. Because in our world every quasi-memory is a memory, a memory performs in our world all the functions of the quasi-memory including that of providing the criterion for the personal identity. But neither the concept of the quasi-memory, nor distinguishing between the apparent and veridical quasi-memory, includes the concept of the same person. Therefore our definition of the same person in terms of the quasi-memory is not circular. In a world in which there would be the quasi-memory - which would not be a memory (in a world where a fission of the brain hemispheres would be something usual) - also the concept of personal identity would not be of such a significance or importance as it is in our world.

The second main objection to PCC (Noonan, 1993: XV ss) we find in Williams's text »Personal identity and individuation« (Williams, 1956-7). Williams imagined an example of a man, Charles, who in 20th century claims that he is Guy Fawkes. All that he claims corresponds to the data accepted by historians. He told also the things that fit into the entire story in such a way that we are inclined to say that these are the things that only Fawkes could know himself. So it could seem rational to assert that Charles is a reincarnation of Guy Fawkes. Yet Williams maintains that one is not obliged to do so, moreover, it would be vacuous to do so. It is possible that another person would appear, called Robert, who would be an equally good candidate for Fawkes. Since two persons could not be the same person as Guy Fawkes, argued Williams, none of them could be him. But if we could not identify Charles with Guy Fawkes in the case of existence of the Robert, nor should we do so in the case of his absence, since the identity is an intrinsic relation and it does not depend on external circumstances. Whether the person P1 is identical to person P2 does not depend on the facts about people other than P1 and P2. Williams' arguments do not represent objections only to reincarnation but also to cases that should be taken by every partizan of PCC as undeniable examples of personal identity. Let us take a Brown/Brownson example, where one hemisphere (together with all the memory traits) of the Brown has been transplanted into Robinson's body. We get the Brownson for whom the partizan of PCC ought to maintain that he is properly speaking Brown. If we transplant the other hemisphere into the body of Smith, we get the Browth, who is an equally good candidate for Brown. The Williams challenge could not be ignored by defenders of PCC. The reactions to it represent the core of the current debate on personal identity in analytical philosophy (Noonan, 1993: XVI ss).

Wiggins (Wiggins, 1976) offered an answer by applying the concept of real possibility. It is a necessary, albeit *a posteriori* truth that the person does not undergo fission, because the concept of a person is (akin to) a natural kind concept. The last assertion meets several difficulties (Robinson, 1985). Some philosophers reject Williams' argument by repudiating its premise, called the only x and y principle. If we abandon this principle then we can assert the following: P2 at t2 is the same person as P1 at t1 only if P2 is psychologically continuous with P1 and there is no rival candidate P2* at t2 who would also be psychologically continuous with P1. Most of philosophers who repudiate Williams'

argument by rejecting the only *x* and *y* principle do not argue for the no candidate theory, but for the best candidate theory: P2 can be identical to P1 even in the case of an existing P2* providing that P2 is the best candidate (Shoemaker, 1970; Parfit, 1971a, 1984; Nozick, 1981). Whether this position can be sustained is a matter of current controversy (Perry, 1972; Noonan, 1985; Coburn, 1985; Johnston, 1989; Garrett, 1990). An objection to the revised PCC can be brought out by reflecting on the split-brain transplant case (Noonan, 1993: XVI-XVII). Let us imagine that I was told that my brain would be split on the left and the right hemisphere and transplanted into two other bodies. Let us imagine that I accept PCC: I think that I won't survive the fission. But if I succeeded in persuading somebody, a nurse for instance, to destroy for instance my left hemisphere, then I would survive, *pace* PCC. At this point we hit upon the intuitive unacceptability of PCC: how could I contribute to my existence by destroying one of my parts and how could be my existence logically dependent on the nonexistence of somebody else?

Some contemporary philosophers (Perry, 1972; Lewis, 1976) have asserted that we can retain the only *x* and *y* principle and still reject the thesis that postfissional offshoots are new persons, persons who did not exist before the fission. It makes sense to affirm that the two persons have existed all along but have only become spatially distinct (Noonan, 1993: XVII). What determines that the two persons are at the certain time *t*₁ two may be facts from some other time *t*_n, facts extrinsic to *t*₁. This view is known in the literature as the multiple occupancy theory. Williams thinks that the reduplication argument repudiates psychological theories and it seems that he has concluded that the personal identity demands some form of physical persistence. But, if there is any cogency in the reduplication argument, then it repudiates also every theory of the bodily view. Such a position serves to some philosophers as a (partial) justification for the thesis that the personal identity is a simple, nonanalysable fact, different from anything that we could experience and which could provide an evidence for it. Persons are separately existing entities, different from the body and from experiences. They are spiritual substances (Swinburne, 1973-4, 1984). Parfit (1984) called this position a simple view. Can we imagine that in some circumstances it would be indeterminate whether I still exist or not? If so, with whom was I then identical? Can we imagine a situation in which it would be the only cogent thing to do for me to ask for the answer to these matters in a law court? The defenders of the simple view insist that we must answer negatively to these questions (determinacy thesis) and that only the simple view allows such an answer.

Very famous and influential is the view of the Oxford philosopher Derek Parfit (Parfit, 1971a, 1971b, 1982, 1984, 1986) that our continuous existence is of no special interest to us. Contrary to our usual belief there is no basic and nonconstructed, noninferred interest for our future persistence and well-being. What is of a fundamental interest to us is that in the future there would exist people who would be connected with us, as we are now, with the chains of psychological continuity, so called Parfitian survivors. In the actual world the only way to have Parfitian survivors is that we ourselves survive. But with the transplantation of the brain, Star Trek technology and the similar it would be possible to have Parfitian survivors without personal survival. To have Parfitian survivors surely does not request (logically) my own survival. There is no reason, *pace* Parfit, to prefer a future in which we ourselves exist, instead of the one in which there exist only our Parfitian survivors. To many people this sounds quite unacceptable. We think that, contrary to the most of all other entities, we ourselves are not replaceable in that sense. In our case, it is the

identity of a token, not the identity of a type that matters. Yet, Parfit advanced an argument that many have found convincing (Noonan, 1993; XIX-XX). He starts with a description of the fission, transplantation of the hemispheres of one brain into two bodies. Then he asserts that the original donator of the hemispheres ceases to exist after the fission and that she would continue to exist if there existed only one hemisphere (revised PCC). But it would be totally irrational if we were so concerned about fission as we are concerned about our death, or if we begged somebody to destroy one of the hemispheres to make possible our survival. If we accept the above claims, then we must pace Parfit accept also the thesis that our basic desires, concerns and interests are not those that we think they are, and that they do not include our noninferred desire for our continuous existence and for our well-being. According to Parfit this is the only acceptable explanation of our apparently inconsistent intuitions. The position described above, thinks Parfit, also enables us to successfully defend a revised PCC against Williams' reduplication argument. This argument builds upon the only x and y principle. A plausibility of this principle rests on the supposition that it is the personal identity which matters in survival. Parfit's argument represents a strong challenge to those philosophers who accept the common sense thinking that the personal identity matters in survival and who at the same time refuse the simple view.

»... no consensus has yet emerged as to the proper response to Parfit, but it is certain that this work has brought about a radical change in recent philosophical debate about personal identity. Whether, when the dust has settled a consensus will emerge remains to be seen (ibid.: XX).«

A STORY TELLING ANIMAL AND AUTHENTICITY

As a starting-point of this brief consideration of Alasdair MacIntyre's philosophical anthropology can serve Prior's argument against the Humean view that we cannot validly infer ought from is: He is a seacaptain. He ought to do what a seacaptain ought to do (MacIntyre, 2000: 57). A father ought to do, what a father ought to do, a philosopher ought to do, what a philosopher ought to do ... According to MacIntyre, a man and also a person are functional concepts like for instance a clock: to their whatness belongs their function, from what they are it follows what the things of these concepts (ought to) do. I can only understand what a clock is, when I understand its function, what it does (ibid.: 58-9). MacIntyre's central claim regarding the concept of a person is that its nature is narrative (ibid.: 216-18). A person is a character in a drama (of her life). It is practically very important to know to what or which story I belong, since I could not know what to do. MacIntyre understands a person's act as an abstraction from the whole narration. The lack of seeing oneself as a character in a drama of one's own life, of one's proper role, could have very drastic consequences, including suicide.

It is obvious that MacIntyre opposes the existentialists' (Sartrean) views on self, freedom, spontaneity, nonessentiality and similar (ibid.: 217). But he disagrees also with the approach and accounts of analytical philosophers. Empiricists have tried to give an account of personal identity in terms of psychological states. Analytical philosophers have wrestled, and still do, with those states and strict identity according to Leibniz law. But they both

omitted what is necessary to account for personal identity: a narrative character of it. A person is always a person of some story, a character of some narrative, a subject that constitutes a story that makes sense, and it is therefore cogent to treat her as identical, one person of a particular narrative. And these narratives are discussed by me and you: I am asking you, you and you, myself about my character, my narrative, your character, your narrative and so on. That too is a part of the answer as to why our identity is dialogical. Man is in his action and practice as well as in his fiction is essentially a story-telling animal. We must account by telling a sensible, intelligible narrative how it is possible that x is through all his changes (psychological, physiological, situational) still the same person. Without such a character there is no subject to whom personal identity could be ascribed.

Charles Taylor (Žalec, 2000) thinks that our culture is a culture of self-fulfillment. There is a strong ideal at work in it. It is an ideal of being faithful to myself, with other words being authentic (Taylor, 2000: 14). It means carrying out a potentiality that is only mine, my own, proper originality. To articulate it means to defend myself. We are not dealing with some form of hedonism, of irresponsibility, not dealing with a feature of spoiled, egocentric generations, as some critics of modern individualism, of the 60s etc. tend to think. To be authentic is something that I must achieve, that I must desire to desire, even if I do not desire it factually: it is a value or an ideal respectively; it is something that I must reach to exist on a higher level. An articulate and cogent discussion about ideals is possible. This discussion can have positive effects. We must reflect an ideal of authenticity, we must detach it from its degraded forms and on the basis of such a cleaned ideal try to develop our society in a proper direction.

The formation of our identity is a dialogical and not a monological process. Our identity is built in relation to the important others. It also could not be formed without important entities, which are independent of us and which are called horizons by Taylor (*ibid.*: 35). To resign our bounds with others, with the past, history, God, nature etc. would mean eliminating all the candidates for important matters, and a nontrivial definition of me, you, him, her would be impossible. But, without such self-definition we cannot, *pace* Taylor, live authentically. Authenticity on the one hand includes creativity, construction and investigation of originality, quite often also an opposition to social rules; on the other hand the authenticity requests a regard of horizons, which constitute a background on which things could be important, and it also requests a dialogical definition of oneself (*ibid.*: 60). On that basis Taylor repudiates a set of views that accept only the first component of authenticity: Nietzsche's doctrine, several cults of violence (for instance futurism), postmodern neo-freudian doctrines of deconstruction (Derrida, Foucault), talking about self-determining freedom. These views, which are, at least some of them, attractive because they give a feeling of freedom and of power, are in their core anthropocentric or even less than that and as such *pace* Taylor they result in a loss of the meaning of life. A tension between both the elements of authenticity, the onesided, anthropocentric conceptions and pressures of an atomised and atomising society push the culture of authenticity into subjectivism.

The value of authenticity is that it demands of us a more responsible way of life and it makes possible a life, which is more manifold, more adjusted to every individual (*ibid.*: 66). We cannot ignore the power of the ideal of authenticity in our culture. The attempts to eradicate it do not make sense. We must shell out the best from that ideal and try to bring our praxis up to that level (*ibid.*: 68). We cannot expect a final solution. There is and will be a contest between the lower forms of authenticity, bureaucratic society and their

opposition. On that foundation Taylor rejects the too pessimistic and also the too optimistic views on the development of a modern society (Žalec, 2000; 133-136).

CONCLUSION

Maybe somebody might complain of this essay that it should be an essay only on identity, not on the question What is a man? But we are human beings. And it seems obvious to me that part of the answer to Who or what am I? is constituted by our relation, our attitude to the philosophically anthropological question about man. The latter crucially determines the former. Our attitude towards the possibilities articulated by relevant philosophy⁸ is a part of our nontrivial identity. Last, but not least, we may use words of Richard Rorty, with whom, as with Hegel in *Phenomenologie des Geistes*, we often find more than one text in one: everything is relational.

The topic, which occupied (Heidegger) and still occupies (Taylor) an important part of the philosophy of man is authenticity. It seems to me that Taylor has importantly deepened the discussion on that topic and that he has hit upon the real nerve of the contemporary problem of authenticity, individualism and relativism. He has offered an explanation as to why authenticity is like its bigger brother individualism: we can no longer do without it, but it demands a great effort of us to find a proper way to live it.

One of the great merits of Martin Buber is that he has succeeded in helping us essentially to see that philosophical anthropology cannot be successful for purely fundamental, inherently philosophical reasons, nor can it be individualistic, even less collectivistic. It could be such neither as a discipline which seeks or collects *differentia specifica* of man, nor as a visionary, if you like utopian, hence morally and politically anthropologically grounded philosophical thought. As such it actually oversees the potentials of human beings that are crucial for forming and creating a more acceptable world. We cannot outline important possibilities to throw light upon essential values and state-justified norms if we are blind to the things Buber has illuminated. But if the (idea of) mutuality starts to pervade us or our world, respectively, then the possible world of which the description starts with the words »Let's imagine the world in which mutuality plays a dominant role...« is a source of energy and a bright goal from which we cannot turn away anymore (despite the eventual utopicity), in short a full, efficacious, dominant, all-pervading value. A philosophy and its anthropology are, if not very poor, then still utopian and counterfactual. As such anthropology is, whether we like it or not, also a practical philosophy (it suggests to us what to do) and of an axiologically-moral nature. When we see a certain thing, even only in imagination, developed and clearly intuitively graspable depicted, we take, independently of our intention or will, also an axiologically-moral attitude to it.

⁸ (Historically) relevant philosophy is far from being detached from life, but represents an articulation of the problems, interests and intuitions of several social groups. In that sense relevant philosophy is practical and it is not arbitrary (compare MacIntyre, 2000). There is an analogy with politics. We often tend to think that politics is detached, alienated from us. But there is a sense in which our politics is our mirror: we have the politics we deserve: in Hitler's Germany, in Milošević's Serbia, in U.S.A., in our Slovenia, ...

A man and a person are in a certain sense functional concepts, as became clear also due to the credit of Cassirer and MacIntyre. And it seems to me evident that we cannot comprehend persons and their unities independently of some narrative.

Nonessentialism goes hand in hand with some kind of pragmatism, which is in a certain measure positive. A modern pragmatist refutes the grounding and justification of ethics or morality respectively. A moral stance is not a matter of rationality. If the moral »taste« is only a construction, all right. If it is something more »basic«, all right, too. About taste we cannot and we won't discuss. This sounds fine to me till the moment when this pragmatism becomes in fact a dogmatic demagoguery that with its talking about the irrationality of morality covers, hiding the possibility of a rational explication or demonstration of (certain) implications or consequences of the position in question. Here the ethics is a very rational matter and eo ipso is such also the philosophical anthropology. Again, »everything is relational«, as Rorty has written in trying to articulate the nerve of pragmatism.

POVZETEK

Gre za razpravo s področja filozofske antropologije. Njen namen je kritičen pregled sodobnih pogledov na teme, ki jih zaznamujejo besede, kot so identiteta, sebstvo, jaz, oseba in podobne. Pojmovanja so razvrščena v razne skupine in podskupine (psihološka, zatem zgodovinska, sociološka, kulturološka, antropološka in sorodna pojmovanja identitete ter filozofski razred). Primerjava tako obsežne pahljače pogledov morda ni tako pogosta, vendarle pa je potrebna, saj je eden od temeljnih ciljev znanosti ugotavljanje splošnih dejstev. Najpomembnejša dognanja in sklepi, ki so po avtorjevem mnenju pravilni, so naslednji: tema, s katero se je ukvarjal (Heidegger) in se še ukvarja (Taylor) pomembnen del filozofske misli o človeku, je pristnost. Ena od velikih zaslug Martina Bubra je, da je pokazal, da uspešna filozofska antropologija ne more biti, že zaradi čisto temeljnih, inherentno filozofskih razlogov, niti individualistična, še manj kolektivistična. Človek in oseba sta v določenem smislu funkcionalistična pojma. Nadalje, ne moremo razumeti oseb ali njihovih enotnosti ločeno od kakšne pripovedi. Človek je žival, ki pripoveduje zgodbe. Antiesencializem gre z roko v roki s pragmatizmom, kar je v določeni meri lahko dobro. Sodobni pragmatisti zavračajo utemeljevanje in upravičevanje morale oz. etike. Moralno stališče ni stvar racionalnosti. To je sprejemljivo do trenutka, ko ta pragmatizem ne postane dogmatična demagogija, ki s svojim govorjenjem o aracionalnosti morale zakriva, prikriva možnosti racionalne eksplikacije in demonstracije (določenih) implikacij ali posledic zadevnega stališča. Tukaj etika postane zelo racionalna zadeva in eo ipso tudi filozofska antropologija.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: človek, oseba, identiteta, antropologija, filozofija

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