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## **SYMBOLICS IN THE NARRATIVE: ONTOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS**

**Summary.** *The aim of the article is to study the content of the main intentions of the interpretation of the symbol in the context of anthropology of culture and philosophical anthropology and their correlation with the functioning of the semantic field of culture. The methodological principles of the article are the guidelines of philosophical anthropology, hermeneutics, philosophical symbolism, as well as elements of conceptual and phenomenological analysis. The article considers the concept of ontological turn related to philosophical anthropology, as well as epistemological and ideological views on the representative approach, functionalism and relativism on the concept of symbol. The correlation*

*between narrative ontology and performative as a type of speech act, forms of human description of oneself and reality is outlined. It is revealed how exactly the stated tendency in cultural anthropology claims to create a new interpretation of ontological and epistemological problems in the context of philosophical anthropology. The cognitive potential of the concept of narrative ontology and its connection with the problems of philosophical anthropology are emphasized. Emphasis is placed on the ontological interpretation of the symbol in its functioning in the modern communicative space. **The scientific originality** of the article is represented by the study of the relationship between the aspect of nature and the specificity of the symbol in the symbolic self-description of man in philosophical projects (including narrative ontology), representing these cognitive positions and the current state of the communicative field of society. nature of the symbol. **Conclusions.** Virtual culture and philosophy of the XXI century postulate an ontology of virtual reality, within which symbols are able to actualize the conditional thesaurus of phylogenetic civilizational memory in the context of the horizon of human meanings. An ontologically interpreted symbol means not only its reality but also the creation of specific semantic space.*

**Key words:** *symbol, auto-description, philosophy of education, philosophical anthropology, functionalism, representational approach, relativism, narrative.*

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## СИМВОЛІКА В НАРАТИВІ: ОНТОЛОГІЧНИЙ ТА АНТРОПОЛОГІЧНИЙ ВИМІРИ

**Анотація.** Метою статті є вивчення змісту основних напрямів інтерпретації символу в контексті антропології культури та філософської антропології та їх співвідношення з функціонуванням семантичного поля культури. **Методологічними принципами статті** є настанови філософської антропології, герменевтики, філософського символізму, а також елементи концептуального та феноменологічного аналізу. У статті розглядається концепція онтологічного повороту, пов'язана з філософською антропологією, а також гносеологічні погляди на репрезентативний підхід, підходи функціоналізму і релятивізму щодо концепції символу. Окреслено співвідношення між наративною онтологією та перформативом як типом мовленнєвого акту, формами людських автодескрипцій та опису реальності. Виявлено, як саме заявлена тенденція в культурній антропології претендує на створення нової інтерпретації онтологічних і гносеологічних проблем у контексті філософської антропології. Підкреслено когнітивний потенціал концепції наративної онтології та її зв'язок із проблемами філософської антропології. Наголошено на онтологічній інтерпретації символу в його функціонуванні в сучасному комунікативному просторі. **Наукова новизна статті** представлена вивченням взаємозв'язку ролі та специфіки символу в символічному самоописі людини у філософських проєктах (включно з наративною онтологією), які представляють ці когнітивні позиції та сучасним станом комунікативного простору, власне природою символу. **Висновки.** Віртуальна культура та філософія XXI століття постулюють онтологію віртуальної реальності, в межах якої символи здатні актуалізувати умовний тезаурус філогенетичної цивілізаційної пам'яті в контексті горизонту смислів людини. Онтологічно інтерпретований символ означає не лише його реальність, але і створення специфічного смислового простору.

**Ключові слова:** символ, автоопис, філософія освіти, філософська антропологія, функціоналізм, репрезентативний підхід, релятивізм, наратив.

**Formulation of the problem.** In the context of understanding the dynamics of transformations of human auto-description, attempts are made to rethink the so-called “temporal mode” of the sensory-generative matrix for modernist and postmodernist searches (Assmann, 2014), according to which the procedure the proposition is a covert judgment of efficiency according to the performance hypothesis of J. Ross and A. Vezhbitskaya) occurs in the present (constant “now”) ontologically described universal time of human subjectivity. This means going beyond any metaphysical superstructures and the above-mentioned Foucault’s Grand Narrative – if semantics within a correlation of major fields of semiotics can be included in pragmatics, then propositions or sentences or words are not “objects, functions, or qualities, but types of linguistic Act” (Barker, 2004). According to the following approach, syntactic notions cease to be a set of logical forms disengaged from the pragmatic content. Essentially, exactly semantic, conceptual aspect of the description of reality under such conditions is not paramount. Speech acquires the status of not just a marker of being (in quam, ergo sum) – it is a being itself. Hence, the project of narrative ontology appears. The myth and the glossolalia return to the authorized discourse of philosophy and science, sparing nature reserves (or ghettos) of genre specifications in fiction and stylistic constructions in the discourse. Namely, it refers to the model of the worldview, which is extremely close to the open nonlinear complex system. The choice of the theme is also connected with the relevance of the question of the nature and the mode of functioning of the symbol and the mental structure which captures the correlation the thing – the symbol – the philosophic concept of the symbol that form a new peculiar “semiotic triangle” (C. Ogden, I. Richards) as an epistemological construct and a cognitive model for the cognitive field of modern humanities, and in a broader sense – in the dimension of ontology that constitutes this field as a whole.

**The purpose** of the study is to examine and analyze the changes in the interpretation of the symbol in the context of the ontological turn in the anthropology of culture and philosophical anthropology and their correlation with the functioning of the semantic field of human consciousness and culture.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The relevance of the topic is due to modern research on symbolic and social anthropology (Balibar, Miller, 2017; Keesing, Haug, 2012), social philosophy (Ross, 2009), the symbolic philosophy of culture, language and theology (Barash, 2008), and problematic description of the situation of «ontological turn» in various anthropological approaches to the interpretation of concept of the symbol in ontological, communicative, functional, representational, and relational contexts. The importance of this is determined, first of all, by the need for search and creation of a modern worldview model that would harmonize the intentions of contemporary philosophy, fundamental science within the forms of consciousness established by them and correlations between these forms.

It is noteworthy that the mentioned correlation to a certain extent is foreseen in the significant texts for the postmodern paradigm of the late 70's and early 80's of the previous century, one of these texts belonging to the tradition of the Frankfurt school of German social philosophy, and the other to the French post-structuralism – we are talking about “Criticism of the cynical mind” (1983) by P. Sloterdijk and “Ego sum: corpus, anima, fabula” (1979) by J.-L. Nancy that was recently published in English translation in 2016. Sloterdijk and Nancy interpret the crisis of the subject of traditional metaphysics in different ways: the former dreams to see “<...> the tree of the dying philosophy blossoming again – in a blossom that does not disappoint, full of spectral flowers of thoughts, red, blue, white ones that radiate colors of the beginning when during the time of the Greek spring when theory arose, and incomprehensibly and suddenly, like everything clear, understanding has developed its language” (Sloterdijk, 1987, p. 38).

The latter argues that “I say I am, and this is the same thing – to be, in order to speak at least”, he thinks about the verb “to be” as transitive, transitional which means that “human «Dasein» is found in it, it transitively exists in its own essence, and this transitivity is given only in a statement or in a word” (Nancy, Morin, 2016, p. 8). As it may be here admitted, this is all about a performative judgment, about speech which acquires the ontological status of an event, an object and things. (Demarcation of such meanings is inherent in the conceptual structure of the language). For instance, in the common

Greek dialect, the Koine, used for the New Testament, the terms “logos” and “rhema” as the expressed word (in the meaning of the sentence, judgment) and the word being spoken (in the sense of the event, act) are definitely distinguished. It could be noted that both thinkers emphasize the necessity of a semantic generative glossolalia (perceived as a certain sacramental “revelation” of the language through speech) for philosophical discourse and space of thinking against the background of tragic unspeakable lack of expression within the impassable categorical system of some previously existing metaphysical visions, overcoming the schematics which had formed the basis for the project of the phenomenology of E. Husserl, and the fundamental ontology of M. Heidegger in the early twentieth century.

V. Rudnev in his work “A New Model of Reality” (2016) proposes an epistemological model which is the basis for a new ontology as well, which the author himself defines as a narrative one. At the center of his rational constructions lies the long-standing author’s thesis of the “contradistinction” of reality, moving in time towards entropy and text which moves in time towards the accumulation of information”. Thereby the scientist compares the reality of the perceived “objective” world and the reality of the plot in its storyline and linguistic dimensions (Rudnev, 2016, p. 4). The explicit schematic view of such a model is removed by the researcher due to the intuition that these many-sided motions have a general tendency to merge. To illustrate this, the philosopher, the psychologist and the literary critic uses the classic metaphor of the «Möbius stripes» which is a direct appeal to the algebraic and geometric topology (we should mention a classic example with a bagel and a cup, a Klein bottle, a Borromeo node, Maurits Escher's structures, Penrose’s mosaic and etc., up to the self-similar fractal structures in general) and demonstrates incompleteness, openness and decentralization as the defining features of the project of narrative ontology: “Since the internal and external processes on the Möbius strip always change places, the elements of the new model of reality “resist” (G. Deleuze’s expression) in constant transformation, penetration into each other and identification with each other” (Rudnev, 2016, p. 5). The researcher almost claims that since the narrative appears as a conceptual myth (O. Freidenberg) then in modern conditions it is a concrescence of all possible

ways of describing the reality and methods of interacting with it. Moreover, the situation gets complicated by the extreme problematic character and complication of the notion of communication due to the challenging issues of AI and digital culture and civilization (if the concept of digital communication in its distinctiveness with the analogue of P. Vatslavik is accepted as a general one). So, we are dealing not only with the syncretism of the archaic myth but with the new integrity that claims to be all-encompassing, refusing it at the same time. The infinite number of personal narratives, life stories and collisions, motives and storytelling, phrases and narratives form a peculiar rhizome (G. Deleuze) but it has a new order and new properties, going beyond the notions and symbols of rhizome, and the metaphor of the fold of the symbol which envelops the reality while emerging from it, in which the outer and inner surfaces cannot be separated, as in the classical object of the topology. Undoubtedly, fractal structures come to mind. It should be noted that the researcher manages to circumvent one of the central stumbling blocks of the postmodern paradigm – the problem of the subject in its relation to the problem of thinking. J. Derrida's questioning about staying inside or outside philosophy or Foucault's lamentation over the subject's death on such a model lose their meaning; another matter is that the fundamental grounds on which such an ontology can rely on is not being clarified. It may not definitely rely on thinking (Early Modern and Contemporary paradigms), neither on the descriptive verbal picture of the world (analytical philosophy, philosophy of language), so the agent of the narrative (accepted within the limits of cognitive science in humanitarian knowledge as an expanding replacement of the notion of the subject), the "one" or the "it" (a person loses the privilege of the narrator by default; for example, he may be a supercomputer (S. Lem, "Golem XIV", 1973) or larvae of bark beetles (J. Barnes, "The History of the World in 10 and a half chapters", 1989), he who is narrating or who is participating in a narrative, being involved in action and inseparable from the procedure, not involved in architecture but in the texture – elastic, conformal, fragile structure of reality which, in fact, is a chaos imitating a structure. Consequently, any description and the worldview picture based on it are quite close to the narrative, and hence to the newest myth. Yet Wittgenstein's attempts to

construct a grammar of the description (in the “Treatise”) of reality which predetermined the development of the theory of speech act had latently retained a certain moment of mythology as a hypostasized narrative. Moreover, these considerations refer to the humanities and to the language of science in general, since a holistic model of description-understanding-experience of the world by a man is based on the following understanding of the speech and also the possibility of forming both autonomous and heteronomous variants of ethics as a practical philosophy according to modern American researcher (Meretoja, 2014). The linguistic description, therefore, comes to end, whereas the narrative, predicting the final end, doesn’t necessarily mean it, furthermore it can be cyclical or recursive; in other words, the narrative is an endless fairy tale of Scheherazade in which Self is both the sultan and the slave. In addition, modern hermeneutics of the text does not deny the pathos of fragmentation and nihilism of the negation of postmodernism, protecting the relevance of “narrative understanding” as a model of the present (Owen, 2011), which relies on the “personal voice” of an individual who opposes schematic footage and generalization, uniting in the sense the narrative “phenomenology and aesthetics, the traditions of continental and Anglo-American philosophy founded on L. Wittgenstein, J. Austin, I. Kant, S. Kierkegaard and M. Heidegger” (Kenaar, 2005). Therefore, it should be noted that if there is no logical valence in the content of propositional guidelines according to G. Frege (since it exists only in itself, within the structure but not in the content, syntactic notions prevail over the semantics), then within the narrative, interpreted ontologically, in case syntactic features and semantics are extremely close to pragmatics against general background of the performance judgment as the major model of the formation of the meaning (Barker, 2004), “reality has nothing to do with truth or falsehood” (Rudnev, 2016, p.7), and it is precisely so because reality is conceived within (which is not really the limit – let’s recall the Mobius strip) the narrative semantic model of reality. The thing within the narrative ontology discharges connections of its conceptual and categorical certainty, since its continuity is not determined in the static coordinate system of metaphysical concepts and categories. In the speech which implicitly is a performance act, any “categories of being” in linguistics



or in philosophy of language are regarded as rationalized constructs of some other “meta” language and notional recursive terms. Thus, the subject of philosophical anthropology becomes now a narrative ontology of a man as his symbolic auto-description.

As far as basic concepts are regarded, that of representational approach means the traditional notion of the so-called naive realism in epistemology, according to which the experience of human consciousness is not identical to reality as such, but only is its representation. Paying tribute to the theme of the article, our writing makes start with the concept of functionalism established in the late twentieth century philosophy (N. Goodman, R. Rorty), the concept of symbolic nature of constructing reality in mind: that relates not only the reality of religion and art, but also the scientific picture of the world. Functionalism is comprehended in the tradition of contemporary philosophy of consciousness (H. Putnam, D. Dennett), according to which functional interpretation of reality being dependent on the “mental dictionary” which is not explained through phenomenal qualities of the objects of the world of consciousness or physical events of the external material world, postulates algorithmic structure of functions of mental information processing within consciousness. Therefore, functionalism hypothetically challenges distinction between consciousness and matter, since functional states and models can be implemented in the material substrate (brain structures) and in the strictly ontological conceptions as well, i.e. those ones that presuppose the existence of the spirit, the autonomous ontological space of consciousness etc. Finally, relativism is to be interpreted as epistemological one that denies the absolute (closed and immutable) character of philosophical categories within scientific picture of the world for empirical perceptions and sensory representations. In this sense, the starting point is the concept of “ontological relativity” by W. Quine in which theory is stated as a formulated system of language, and objects implied by the theory, are interpreted as the referents of language, thus the reality is what the language asserts of it, and vice versa, the referential notions of the language terms are the objects of the ontology of this language.

It should be pointed out that in relation to all three mentioned theoretical positions the notion of a symbol turns out to be relevant – this can be said about the symbolic interpretation of the representation

of reality and the symbolism of functional series (for instance, in the most radical version of functionalism within the philosophy of consciousness – the modular concept of consciousness by J. Phodor), and the symbolic interpretation of the object (referent), which is nearly identical with being and existence in the relativism of W. Quine and D. Davidson. That is why the philosophic sense of the symbol seems to be not merely a unifying concept, but a meaning-generational model (A. Losev), or a rhizomatic object for the formation of meaning for the culture (G. Deleuze), an original “matrix of meaning” that heuristically allows to employ the available cognitive field of philosophical anthropology. Hence, the stated tendency in cultural anthropology claims to create a new interpretation of ontological and epistemological issues in the context of philosophical anthropology. But if to take for a major definition not the modern interpretation of metaphysics as a strictly intelligible discipline that is devoted to the study of being as such, but as a science with main purpose to describe the human conceptual structures, then this tendency also applies metaphysical knowledge, the one, not briefly investigated within the framework of the contemporary British-American analytic paradigm in philosophizing, but taken in general – that is, the entire Western tradition, including Platonic (ontologizing) and Aristotelian (semiotic) intentions in regard to the essence of the sign, the Augustinian doctrine of the symbol (“*De doctrina christiana*”), the modern, primarily, Kantian intentions for the interpretation of the space between the object or the subject of indication, the symbol and the designator; or to the meaning in general being produced by symbolic epistemology. If the sign (symbol) and the thing are not necessarily different entities, and we are not aware how one thing is perceived through another (either through a logical conclusion, or through examining the relation between the referent and the sign, or through mere substitution of the referent by the sign – A. Losev devoted a whole section in his book to distinction of a symbol and cognitive structures which are similar to each other, but are evidently not a symbol) (Losev, 1995). If dare to draw analogy, inspired by the contemporary philosophical trend marked as “neurophilosophy”, between the already mentioned Ogden-Richards semiotic triangle genetically derived from C. Pearce, and the Holy Grail of cognitive neurophysiology – interaction within

the triangle “neuron-axon-synapse” in the so-called trigger zone, then it becomes clear that the complexity of defining mechanism of cognitive activity is not exclusively descriptive at the level of neurophysiology, but from the point of view of ontological and semantic problems.

On the other hand, M. Sheler’s tradition of philosophical anthropology as a study of a human being – a special type of reality in the context of the philosophical problems of the anthropic principle in non-classical and post-classical science refers to the possibility of a new synthesis in humanities in general, on the basis of systematic knowledge and discursive constructions (descriptiveness of reality) of fundamental science.

**Conclusions.** Symbolic auto-description for a modern man under rapid socio-cultural dynamics and against technogenic background of development of human civilization is a relevant modus of formation of the existential identity, as well as the fundamental basis of preserving a person's own self. For this purpose, modern humanities which actually give description to the problem of these phenomena actualize among others the project of narrative ontology, as a synthesis of achievements of neurophysiology, cognitive psychology and linguistics, culture studies, philosophy of education and philosophical anthropology.

The concept of the symbolic landscape is acquiring a new significant status in regard to the social philosophy and philosophical anthropology under modern conditions of information society and the impetuous changes in the socio-cultural background, connected primarily with the new intensive forms of producing, perception and processing information. The situation that brings information to instantaneous dissemination, so the content cannot be critically analyzed by the recipient (because of its volume and its rigorous anonymity) results in that reality ceases to be symbolic as a mere logical predicate, though the symbol turns into a reality, approaching the philosophic sense of a thing and an object.

Representationism, functionalism and relativism described the article indicate a triangulation scheme for defining the concept and phenomenon of the philosopheme of the symbol in contemporary philosophic thinking, since these cognitive models capture the symbolic aspects of the phenomenological, formal-logical,

linguistic, cultural, hermeneutical dimensions of the explanation of reality by a man and his place in it, the construction of a picture of the world, being scientific and personally-holistic that provides a person with self-awareness and ensures his self-positioning.

In the modern philosophy of culture and philosophy of science a certain paradox could possibly be found: the symbol, being given ontological meaning, is interpreted as an object or a thing, but still is further operating as a conceptual symbolic construction (or conceptual metaphor (Joseph Campbell)). Hence, the symbolic reality appears no longer to be secondary, though the circle of infinite self recursion is never closed up (since so was symbol regarded by postmodern criticism). Therefore, the twenty first century virtual culture and science postulate the ontology of virtual reality, within which only symbols are able to return a person the thesaurus of phylogenetic civilizational memory, and to root it, because symbols, being ontologically treated, make evidence (and proof) of a person's self, and not just bring the individual through endless multiple levels of semantic ranks, nor ever they refer to something which they are not. A symbol ontologically treated means not only its being real, but its creating a specific type of reality.

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