

PUBLIC PROTEST AS A SYMBOLIC ACT: PHILOSOPHICAL AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS

The objective of the given research is to study the phenomenon of hybrid symbolism as both heuristic and counterproductive factor of a person's self-identification in a transitional society. The article studies Ukrainian experience of national self-identification reconstruction taking place in the times of profound socio-cultural transformation and the phenomenon of hybrid symbols as an ambivalent factor of person's self-identification. Complexity and variety of national self-identification realization in the space of the innovative symbols of the epoch is a relevant and not enough studied problem, which exists rather as a subject matter of publicistic writing than of scientific research. The research **methodology** is based on the use of analytical, comparative and hypothetical-deductive methods for revealing and explaining the symbolic nature of public protest. **Scientific novelty** of the results obtained in the course of the research consists in the use of the phenomenon of public protest as a problem field of formation of new cultural symbols of the era. Public protest as a reaction to social troubles, corruption dominance and dependence on other states becomes a powerful factor of making the process of national and ethnic self-identification more active. The symbols accompanying public protest remind an insight, and a certain public enlightenment that appears unconsciously, by impulse, and partly unwillingly. New symbols are not developed purposefully; they are a result of social crises and transformations. **Conclusions.** The creation of new national symbols is a long and complicated process, as the development of modern Ukrainian society itself, which cannot be based only on ethnic or national self-identification. Public protest is a ritual action, which presupposes national and ethnic self-identification, multicultural and multiethnic national character realization and political nation development. Ukrainian protest phenomenon has demonstrated that it is a symbolic action and an act of transgression, when the doer is being transformed and changed and when the transitional ritual, accompanied by the process of making its own history and modern identity, is taking place.

Key words: symbols, hybrid, self-identity, cultural self-identification, multiculturalism.

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Громадянський протест як символічне дійство: філософсько-культурологічний аналіз

Вивчення феномена гібридного символізму як одночасно евристичного та контрпродуктивного фактора національної самоідентифікації особистості у транзитивному суспільстві є основною **метою** дослідження. У статті аналізується український досвід реконструкції національної самоідентифікації, що відбувається на тлі гострих соціокультурних трансформацій. Здійснено дослідження феномена гібридних символів як амбівалентного фактора самототожності особистості. Складність та багатоманітність проявів національної самоідентифікації у просторі новітніх символів епохи є проблемою гостроактуальною та досить маловивченою, такою, що наразі перебуває радше у стані предмета публіцистики, ніж наукового дослідження. Виділення у ній нових кроскультурних феноменів, дослідження їх гібридної природи є запорукою подальшої актуалізації та всебічного наукового вивчення. **Методологія** дослідження базується на використанні аналітичного, компаративістського та гіпотетико-дедуктивного методів для розкриття і пояснення символічної природи громадянського протесту. **Наукова новизна** одержаних результатів полягає у використанні феномена громадянського протесту як проблемного поля формування новітніх культурних символів епохи. Громадянський спротив, що виникає як реакція на соціальні негаразди, засилля корупції та залежності від інших держав, стає потужним чинником активізації процесу національної та етнічної самоідентифікації. Символи, що супроводжують громадський протест, є чимсь на кшталт інсайту, певного колективного осяяння, з'являються невимушено, імпульсивно, почасти мимоволі. Нові символи не виробляються цілеспрямовано, вони є наслідком ефекту соціальних потрясінь та трансформацій. **Висновки.** Творення нових національних символів – тривалий та складний процес, як, власне, і формування самого модерного українського суспільства, в основу якого не може бути покладено лише етнічну чи національну ідентичність. Громадянський спротив – це ритуальне дійство, під час якого відбувається національна та етнічна самоідентифікація, актуалізується мультикультуральний та мультиетнічний характер народу та формується політична нація. Феномен українського протесту продемонстрував у чистому вигляді, що він є символічним дійством, актом трансгресії, коли трансформується та змінюється сам фігурант, відбувається ритуал переходу, що супроводжується процесом творення власної історії та власної модерної ідентичності.

Ключові слова: символи, гібрид, самоідентичність, культурна самоідентифікація, мультикультуралізм.

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Гражданский протест как символическое действие: философско-культурологический анализ

Изучение феномена гибридного символизма как одновременно эвристического и контрпродуктивного фактора национальной самоидентификации личности в транзитивном обществе является основной **целью** данного исследования. В статье анализируется украинский опыт реконструкции национальной самоидентификации, который происходит на фоне острых социокультурных трансформаций. Осуществляется исследование феномена гибридных символов как амбивалентного фактора идентичности личности. Сложность и многообразие проявлений национальной самоидентификации в пространстве новейших символов эпохи является проблемой остроактуальной и достаточно малоизученной, такой, которая

сейчас находится скорее в состоянии предмета публицистики, нежели научного исследования. Выделение в ней новых кросскультурных феноменов, исследование их гибридной природы является залогом дальнейшей актуализации и всестороннего научного изучения. **Методология** исследования базируется на использовании аналитического, компаративистского и гипотетико-дедуктивного методов для раскрытия и объяснения символической природы гражданского протеста. **Научная новизна** исследования заключается в использовании феномена гражданского протеста как проблемного поля формирования новых культурных символов эпохи. Гражданское сопротивление, возникающее как реакция на социальные проблемы, засилье коррупции и зависимости от других государств, становится мощным фактором активизации процесса национальной и этнической самоидентификации. Символы, сопровождающие общественный протест, является чем-то вроде инсайта, определенного коллективного озарения, появляются непринужденно, импульсивно, отчасти невольно. Новые символы не производятся целенаправленно, они являются следствием эффекта социальных потрясений и трансформаций. **Выводы.** Создание новых национальных символов – длительный и сложный процесс, как, собственно, и формирование самого современного украинского общества, в основе которого лежит этническая или национальная идентичность. Гражданское сопротивление – это ритуальное действие, в ходе которого происходит национальная и этническая самоидентификация, актуализируется мультикультуральный и мультиэтнический характер народа и формируется политическая нация. Феномен украинского протеста продемонстрировал в чистом виде, что он является символическим действием, актом трансгрессии, когда трансформируется и изменяется сам фигурант этого акта, происходит ритуал перехода, сопровождающийся процессом создания собственной истории и собственной современной идентичности.

Ключевые слова: символы, гибрид, самоидентичность, культурная самоидентификация, мультикультурализм.

Articulation of the issue in general terms. The issue of ambiguity and diversity of expressions of national identity in the space of new symbols of the era is on the front burner and has been studied rather poorly so far. Today it is more the subject of journalism than of scientific research. Identification of new cross-cultural phenomena and study of their hybrid nature is the key to their further foregrounding and comprehensive scientific investigation.

Analysis of the latest sources that start finding possible solutions to the problem. Numerous studies of the national identity issues are a common environment for philosophical, political and cultural circles. Anthony D. Smith [1], Charles M. Taylor [2], and Theodor Adorno [3] are considered to be the best-known researchers in this context. Among the researchers of diverse cultural transformations and national identity of the Ukrainian society that should be noted there are M.T. Stepyko [4], P.I. Hnatenko [5] and several other scientists engaged in the study of the Ukrainian socio-cultural realities. Some opinions expressed by Émile Durkheim [6] and Bruno Latour [7] with respect to interpretation of symbols as unifying social factors are of particular importance for the development of the author's research concept. However, the role of symbols in shaping the national and civic identity and their hybrid and transcultural character remain so far understudied.

Formulation of research objectives. The main purpose of this research is to study the phenomenon of hybrid symbolism as a heuristic and counterproductive factor of national and civic identity in a transitive society. The research methodology is based on the use of analytical, comparative and hypothetical-deductive methods for revealing and explaining the symbolic nature of public protest. Scientific novelty of the results obtained in the course of research consists in the use of the phenomenon of public protest as a problem field of formation of new cultural symbols of the era.

Presentation of the main material. The territory of modern Ukraine is a place and space where civilizational, cultural, linguistic and ethnic faults have run deep. A variety of cultural tendencies towards identity and identification, often contradictory, have dominated in these lands, deprived of nominal authentic nationhood, for long centuries. Different Ukrainian regions have different potentials and cultural traditions and throughout the course of history, these regions were parts of various states and differed in their languages, social and political status and religious life. That is why gaining independence was an extremely significant social and historical event, a marker of the unity of the Ukrainian society, which demonstrated the desire of the Ukrainian population to identify itself within the concept of “the people”. And the formation and preservation of real national identity, according to the historical logic, would have to be the most important task of the state after acquiring sovereignty.

Unfortunately, no purposeful work towards the development of new unifying symbols of Ukrainian civil society and political nation was carried out for a long time and Ukraine went on living in the symbolic space of the Soviet era, that is, we can say that we dealt only with the nominal concept of the people, but not with the concept of civil society or political nation.

An idea instead of the territory and quite conventional boundaries – the idea of Ukrainian multicultural identity on the basis of Ukrainian citizenship – should have become the main force able to unite the Ukrainian people after the country officially gained statehood. If a person, regardless of his/her nationality, acquires a full scope of rights arising from citizenship, it indicates the existence of a political nation and civil society that function without heed to any religious, ethnic or linguistic differences. Lack of a focused strategy for searching of unifying factors in Ukraine for many years has caused acute social conflicts within the country including those inspired from outside which became the driving force of fundamental changes in the socio-cultural paradigm and numerous public events in various regions of Ukraine starting from the end of 2013. For the sake of scientific impartiality, we qualify the events of the Revolution of Dignity and the processes of secession, separatism and irredentism launched later as social resistance.

After gaining independence Ukraine was in a kind of standby mode for quite a long time. Such state is also characterized by the fact that all this time the Ukrainians were hardly able to identify themselves among the symbols of the modern era, even provided that, for example, the communist ideology that used to prevail

in the Ukrainian territory during the Soviet era originated from the era of European modernism. Its hybridity in the Soviet territory consists in the fact that while having clearly labeled Western European origin it was presented as a new and unique path of a “new social generation – the Soviet people”.

The Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine became that powerful force which launched self-awareness of the Ukrainians – in G. Hegel’s terminology [8] – as a “historic nation”. It has already become an integral part of the Ukrainian ethnic culture and a landmark event in the formation of nationhood. A surface layer of its elements consists in a surge of respect and love for the national symbols, an iconic mass popularity of colors of the Ukrainian national flag and their wide use in decoration of cars, gadgets, clothing and outdoor advertising, gradual changes in the informational content of synthetic media (radio and television) in favor of the Ukrainian content awakening love for national dress and folk art and more. These are markers of changes in the structure of the Ukrainian symbolic worldview. Even the symbols that for a long time used to be significant only for specific social groups (such as football fans or members of military patriotic associations) become generally recognizable. In this sense, the new symbols of the era born by the transgressive social trends become involved in the relationships, which B. Latour describes as actor-network reality and “they have to be actors and not simply the hapless bearers of symbolic projection” [7, p.10].

A deeper layer that forms symbolic identity of the Ukrainians nowadays consists in glorification of the struggle for freedom and sacredness of sacrifice of the Ukrainian soldiers, identification of this struggle with the Primordial purpose and path of the Ukrainian people and its understanding as a process of joint struggle of the Ukrainians for their independence, a surge of interest in the study of their national history and literature, rebranding of images of great Ukrainians as modern fighters against evil. The last example, in the end, is illustrative in terms of dominance of hybrids in the modern era – graffiti of Taras Shevchenko wearing a respirator and holding a “Molotov cocktail” in his hand, for instance, is perceived as a hybrid, but at the same time heuristic and constructive symbol of protest and is associated with the ethno-cultural genetic code of the nation. And all these things become attributes of the formation of new stable national symbols. In general, when describing the current state of the Ukrainians’ symbol identification, it is worth mentioning the scientific works of É. Durkheim, who came to an understanding of symbols as useful unifying centers of any society [6, p. 230-231,233].

However, the logic of our research requires that we should make an emphasis on certain negative processes accompanying modern search of the Ukrainian identity and are directly related to the “symbolic” hybridization. Specifically, the situation with the language policy has scarcely changed recently. The shock from external aggression, loss of territories and the war intensified the feeling within the society that raising of the language issue might be dangerous. It is believed that this issue only stirs up hostile attitudes and so the term “Ukrainian identity” in the regions where the highly imperfect law on regional languages was applied for many years remains rather metaphorical. Government agencies, political management, public institutions and the media are in no hurry to start using the official language arguing that a Ukrainian patriot does not necessarily have to be Ukrainian-speaking. But constant researches of specialists in ethnology, anthropology, linguistics and semiotics prove that language is a symbolic sign system, a material expression of consciousness ideal in its status, and the latter is only able to express all the shades of cultural meanings when it matches the language component. In fact, when speaking about the language issue we are dealing with a certain social and philosophical unproductive hybrid, which, by all indications, inhibits formation of a political nation.

Tendencies to use only certain versions of the Ukrainian history as a national version of the historical destiny and historical truth of the people are also dangerous. The Ukrainian resistance of 2013-2016 is a story made rather by the political and civil Ukrainian nation than by the ethnic group. Therefore, the search for cultural landmarks in the multicultural space can lead to further deepening of splits and confrontations within the society, not to mention the fact that this issue easily becomes a subject of political manipulation.

Among significant negative factors that inhibit development of the consolidated Ukrainian society are the problems associated with the decommunisation process. Toleration toward the Soviet symbols by many citizens (even the younger generation) is an absolutely incomprehensible phenomenon. Arguments such as such as “respect for history” pose a significant threat to the society since they come into confrontation with smoothing historical traumas caused by totalitarianism and eventually lead to consequences quite opposite to what we should expect – to distortion of history itself. Hybrid tolerance in Ukraine in the decommunisation epoch has found its expression in rather bizarre manifestations, such as monuments to Lenin attired in embroidered shirts, Soviet stars painted in blue and yellow and so on. In the temporarily occupied territories, artificial hybridization of symbols of totalitarianism and symbols of orthodoxy is thriving. For example, we observe attempts to create a new symbology by combination of post-imperial colors in a configuration of the Confederate flag of the Southern states; the Soviet military symbols of World War II combine with symbols of military units and armies that fought on the side of Nazi Germany. These are typical hybrid symbols in the literal sense of the concept of a hybrid and they mark a newly created reality as entirely unproductive. Besides, the identity of population in these areas is mainly associated with the Soviet past, a system that levelled and suppressed ethnic diversity. That is why, in their search for identity, people are doomed to exist in the marginal “grey” zone, both in mental and in legal and status sense.

Finally, even the notion of the Revolution of Dignity that has firmly entered our vocabulary is also a hybrid symbol. The Euromaidan events were not a revolution either in political or in social senses. They have led neither to the change of the form of government nor to any changes in the social structure. They are a

national revolution even in a smaller sense, as a national or ethnic extremism was perceived totally negatively by an active part of the society. Its rare cases looked rather marginalized.

In fact, today's Ukrainian society is an arena for the embodiment of the following thesis of C. Taylor, one of the major world experts on multiculturalism: "A society with strong collective goals can be liberal provided it is also capable of respecting diversity, especially when dealing with those who do not share its common goals; and provided it can offer adequate safeguards for fundamental rights. There will undoubtedly be tensions and difficulties in pursuing these objectives together, but such a pursuit is not impossible, and the problems are not in principle greater than those encountered by any liberal society that has to combine, for example, liberty and equality, or prosperity and justice" [2, 59-60].

And, finally, there is one more significant issue in the context of our study that should be highlighted and it is a rapid commercialization of symbols of the Ukrainian resistance. Since it was a social protest, which was extremely well documented and finally aestheticized, it became extremely recognizable worldwide. So today the process of birth of the Ukrainian political nation involves what once was described by T. Adorno, one of the founders of the Frankfurt concept of "mass culture industry". It is based on the idea that a cultural process more and more looks like the industrial production put on the line. Simplified in their content cultural artifacts do not require a serious attitude and understanding, but satisfy the false needs of the consumer society [3].

Civil resistance that occurs in response to social problems, corruption dominance and dependence on other countries is a powerful driving motive for the activation of the process of national, cultural and ethnic identity.

Symbols that accompany a public protest is something like an insight, a certain collective lightbulb moment; they appear naturally, impulsively and somewhat involuntarily. New symbols are not created deliberately but emerge as a consequence of the effect of social upheaval and transformation.

Creation of new national symbols is a long and complicated process, as surely as the formation of the modern Ukrainian society, which cannot be based only on ethnic or national identity.

Conclusions. Against the backdrop of the Ukrainian civil resistance, only the hybrid symbols that initiated the launch of a powerful process of self-identification turned out to be the most meaningful while the symbols that were formed by combination of national and ethnic symbols and totalitarian ones are totally counterproductive and situational, and herein lies the apparent ambivalence of modern hybrid symbols.

Civilian resistance is a ritual action, during which national and ethnic identity is formed, multicultural and multi-ethnic character of the people is actualized and a political nation is born. The phenomenon of the Ukrainian protest has demonstrated in its pure form that it is a symbolic act, an act of transgression, when the doer himself transforms and changes by going through the ritual of transition, after which it is already impossible to be the same.

Public protest in Ukraine is accompanied by the creation of its own history, which is not fictitious and can lay a common foundation of modern Ukrainian identity, and we are the witnesses of the process.

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