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Depression of the Cities: Key to Healing

Abstracts: the problem of search of an authenticity of the cities looks very actual and draws attention of numerous researchers. In the article the analogy between the human person and the city in this problem is used. For the person, as well as for the city, awareness of own identity is necessary to resist depressive tendencies. It is shown that symptoms of depression of the person are similar to the ones for depression of the cities. The identity of the city necessary for opposition of a depression is offered to be looked for in two planes – historical and geographical (to be looked for in historical and geographical plane). The historical plane is made by local myths and legends of the city and its inhabitants. The geographical plane of identity is concentrated on features of relief, climate, flora and fauna of that region in which the city is located.

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INTRODUCTION

Authenticity of the city is necessary for the solution of a set of problems. It is necessary to the historical cities passing through themselves powerful tourist streams (for example, Istanbul) (Kaymaz, 2013). It is necessary to the young cities which are almost isolated from tourists (for example, the new cities in Iran) (Rahim, 2013). It is necessary for sustainable development (desired sustainability) (Zetter, Butina, 2008) and for ensuring mental health of citizens, etc. (Proshansky, Fabian, Karminoff, 1983).

From a certain point of view, the cities are similar to people. In any case, the question of identity is not less actual for the person than for the city. It may be even more actual – after all, the number of people is more than the number of the cities. If the city needs to find a difference from two and a half million other cities of the world, human identity has to be shown against seven billion other people.

Self-identity per se. Each human person is unique in something. By whatever standard, typical cover the person became covered by, at any shell he is hid, somewhere in a kernel of

his soul there is an originality spark. This spark makes the person relate with that God who is single inherently. The Vedic philosophy calls it Atman and identifies it with the creating beginning – Atman is the Brahman (Sarvepalli, 1923). The Buddhism and Abrahamic religions build the outlook on the thesis about potential similitude to the person Who Exists.

When God died, Carl Gustav Jung put Selbst, the true centre and a source of mental energy, in his place (Jung, 1991). The person vaguely feels this nuclear energy inside, but mistakenly looks for it outside, and in it the basis of painful character of the western civilization. Ontopsychology of Meneghetti put forward the concept “Onto In Se” (Meneghetti, 2011) – a kernel of true life, transcendental to ordinary, deficiant understanding of the person. Philosophers, from Parmenides to Sartre and Lacan, did not call in question the existence of uniqueness, immanent to each person. Each person and each city has an identity always but it is not so easy to make it out!

Irrespective of the level of philosophical abstractness, the way to disclosure and updating of a unique kernel of the personality looks difficult and labour-consuming. Thus the result is not guaranteed at all – even having lived a set of lives it is possible not to reach enlightenments of a nirvikalpa samadhi. And decades of work on himself can be useless to that Social and logical I became adequate In-Se. In any case, right now try to remember at least one personal property which would be unique. Answer yourself the question: who are you?”, but it should be the answer which isn’t neither a name, nor belonging to a certain group, not a designation of the property or the status belonging to you, and should concern to one person on Earth only – and this person is you. It is easy to be convinced, how God’s spark in our souls is closed from a rational look.

Self-identity vs. depression. However the movement of aspiration to awareness of the uniqueness is already the great value. After all, the alternative to such movement is the depression (Frankl, 2004).

The words “depression, depressive” often flash in a daily flow of information, and it isn’t by chance. According to World Health Organization data, the depression is regarded as the leading reason of disability and it is on the fourth place in an incidence rating (World Health Organization, 2005). The depression was called one of the leading problems of modern health care, and, according to forecasts of experts, it will take the second place by prevalence (Murray, Lopez, 1996). In compliance with the latest epidemiological data, the depression is distinguished by all countries and among all ethnic and racial groups (Weissman, Bland, Canino et al., 1996); incidence of a depression (data only for a big depressive episode) makes 10 to 15% for women and 5 to 15% for men (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

The problem looks especially heavy because that neither a reasons of developing of depressions, respectively, nor effective ways of treatment remain in many respects left unclear. Doctors write with alarm that quickly growing damage of depressions mostly connected with the increase of number of people for whom the traditional way of treatment became useless (Russell, Hawkins, Ozminkowski et al., 2004). “Today there are about 60–75% of patients with depressive frustration, have residual signs of depressive symptomatology, after treatment, and 5–10% of such patients have no treatment effect have absolutely, despite repeated attempts to be treated using antidepressants” (Bykow, 2009: 9).

Drugs which are in purpose is to help from a depression (antidepressants) are on sale in large quantities. The peak of sales in 2003–2005 made about \$15 billion a year, which is more than the state budget of the majority of the countries in the world. A bit later there occurred the disappointment and the market of antidepressants was reduced three times. However, after 2015 the analysts from Thomson Reuters predict the new growth of sales (Jago, 2013).

The spectre of depression wanders around the globe. But the depression of the person at least is realized as global threat. The reasons of the depression are investigated, the search of drugs is conducted. In comparison, the depression of the cities is studied much more weakly.

Do not think that the depression affects only in the small cities which were forgotten on a backside of a progress. According to Forbs following the results of 2013 of the twenty most depressive USA cities we can see not only notorious Detroit and St. Louis, but also Chicago, and cheerful Atlantic City, and even New York, “the capital of the world” (Detroit Tops, 2013).

The difference in points of view to a problem begins with the most fundamental question – what can we actually consider as a depression of a city? Experts of Forbs considered such parameters as a statistics of serious crimes, unemployment rate, taxes, the degree of a mortgage meltdown (loss of the right of real estate repayment), the prices in the local market, and also the average time of a trip from the house to working place, and the weather. The simplest models consider only three parameters: level of income of the population (in comparison to the neighbouring cities), unemployment rate, and rates of production decline (Dugarowa, 2003). On the other pole – the difficult models of a depression of the cities consider tens of parameters of character demographic, economic, social, political, etc. (Ukołowa, 2005).

Continuing the lines of analogy between a depression of the person and the city, we can try to compare medical symptoms with the corresponding symptoms of depressions of the territory. Diagnostic signs of two main systems – the American DSM-IV-TR and the European MKB-10 (ICD-10) – fortunately coincide almost literally (*International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems*, 2010).

There are two main symptoms of the depression. The first one is “the suppressed mood which is not depending on external circumstances”. That means that in the mood of a person (or a city) emotions of asthenic type like grief, disgust, shame prevail. The earlier publications provide the data of the emotional atmosphere of the cities inspection allowing to measure this parameter (Lidin, 2011).

The second major symptom is the anhedonia – loss of ability to enjoy the life, as far as enjoy those occupations which brought satisfaction until recently. In the life of the city usually there are holidays, concerts, sports meets and carnivals and so on. Anhedonia of the cities is expressed that all these events stop being joyful and interesting, become rare, boring, and formal and keep the atmosphere of burdensome “obligation”.

The most dangerous and obvious symptom of a depression is the aspiration to suicide. In case of a depression of the cities it means that hospitals and schools are closed, systems of warm and water supply, roads, the sewerage, information networks that is all infrastructure

of the city collapses and falls into decay. It lasts until life support systems, one by one, start refusing – till an infrastructure collapse is occurred. The city goes under.

In total there are nine symptoms of a depression, and it is necessary that there were constant signs of five of them or more, for the sure diagnosis. Symptoms of a depression of the person corresponding to the symptoms of a depression of the city depression are shown in the table:

Tab. 1. Comparative symptoms of a depression for the person and the cities

	Symptoms of depression of the person	Symptoms of depression of the cities
1	the suppressed mood which isn't depending on circumstances, for a long time (two weeks or more)	asthenic emotions in the psychosocial atmosphere of the city
2	anhedonia — loss of interest or pleasure from earlier pleasant activity	dying down of public life, formalization of holidays, passivity of inhabitants concerning city problems
3	expressed fatigue, the „breakdown” which are characterized by stability of this state (for example, within a month)	chronic budget deficit, shortage of resources even for urgent essential tasks
4	weight reduction and appetite (strengthening of appetite and increase in weight is possible)	decrease or degradation of the population (replacement of the most valuable population by less able-bodied)
5	sleeplessness (insomnia) or drowsiness (hypersomnia)	intensive night life and/or impression „the city sleeping in the afternoon”
6	psychomotor excitement or braking;	problems with a transport network, traffic jams, the unreasonable growth of number of individual transport
7	feeling of an otioseness and the lowered self-assessment or inadequate sense of guilt	self-identification problems
8	the slowed-down thinking or decline in the ability of concentration of attention	absence of the distinct program of the city development with arrangement of priorities
9	suicide tendencies.	indifference to the symptoms of infrastructure collapse

Data from (World Health Organization, 2005)

The analogy can be continued further. The monoamine theory of a depression of the person reduces its reasons to a lack of specific substances of an organism – Neurotransmitters: serotonin, dopamine, noradrenalin, etc. Respectively, treatment is adding missing substances into an organism from the outside. It is also antidepressants. Their role in treatment of a city depression is played by various guest performers and guest workers. It is supposed that they are capable to fill up the city with missing emotions of pleasure and interest, to introduce a holiday in city life, “to bring” money of investors into the city, to replace the decreasing efficient population... Even the meaning of city life and the program of its development should be made by the experts going on tours.

Obviously, treatment of a city depression by the forces of “visitors” shows the same shortcomings and the same low efficiency, as antidepressants for the person. The last hope

is psychology – on that its version which is rather close to abstract heights of philosophy to consider the city on an equal basis with the person. Such is the deep existential psychology (Lengle, 2000).

Problems with self-identification both for the city, and for the person, are expressed in the feeling of senselessness (otioseness), pessimistically underestimated self-assessment, identity of him/herself as something wrong and illegal, without any right for existence. The feeling under the motto “I am nothing and I have no name”, according to deep psychology, is the root reason of a depression. “In its basis, the depression – is failure which was suffered by the person in comprehension of any life value” (Lengle, 2010). Treatment of a depression consists in getting sensible to the value of my unique inimitable life.

Self-identity, the way to comprehension. Self-identification of a person (city) happens both in space, and in time. The history and geography cooperate to give a basis for identity.

Historical approach, as more obvious one, developed in more details. For some cities there is a developed reflection which reduces uniqueness into a compact formula. The charming book of Daniel Bell and Avner de-Shalit contains striking examples of such analysis (Bell, de-Shalit, 2011). Walking on streets of nine cities, authors felt and formulated “idea” or “ideal” of each of them. Here they are:

1. Jerusalem – religion, religious disagreements and search of various beliefs peaceful coexistence;
2. Montreal – the rough history of the conflicts between Anglophones and Francophones leading to understanding of a bilingualism value;
3. Singapore – the only large city-state in the world which solves problems of the state construction on the city scale;
4. Hong Kong – “special administrative area” as a part of China. Courageous experiment on connection of ideology of the free market with Confucian values
5. Beijing – the city which concentrates, in the highest degree, the political power and its symbols;
6. Oxford – the city of one of the oldest universities in the world, an embodiment of idea of training and professional development;
7. Berlin – the city of high level of indulgence and tolerance. Authors express their alarm: whether there will be Berlin as Mecca for those who look for a tolerance ideal during an era of new racism and violence?
8. Paris – the romantic city. Here it is intended not as the glamorous, bourgeois ideal of romanticism, but more difficult and intense option (authors call it “non-pasteurized romanticism”);
9. New York – the world capital of finance, individualism and a peculiar culture of ambitious immigrants.

The similar, but less fictionalized approach is used in the known essay of A. Sogomonov (Sogomonow, 2010). He suggests to take myths and legends as a basis for consciousness of the city, whether they are developed historically or were thought up now. G. Lyubbe, referring to Sartre and Husserl, offers history (more precisely, “stories”) as a basis of identity

awareness, in broader philosophical sense (Lyubbe, 1994). According to this subjective-historical approach, during the search of authenticity of the cities we have to address not to established historic facts (whatever meant these words) but to thought up or even to fantastic stories. Thus “the collective soul” of the city accepts or tears away myths, according to internal regularities. So, legends of Decembrists successfully got accustomed in the mythology of Irkutsk, but the history imposed in 2004 about the noble admiral Kolchak was almost forgotten, there is only a bronze monument left near Znamensky church. Sometimes those characters of legends are canonized without any official support, for example, Cossacks Yakov Pokhabov and his brother Ivan strongly entered a city pantheon as builders of the Irkutsk jail, despite doubtfulness of both figures.

However, the identification of the city in spatial sense looks more actual for architects and town-planners. After issue of basic Yu-Fu Tuan (Yi-Fu, 1977) works, properties and a form of space of the city, expression of the social processes filling the city and a level, came under the spotlight. The objects and structures which are traditionally symbolizing identity of the cities faded into the background (Zukin, 2010). “So, for example, authenticity of New York will be expressed now not by the Statue of Liberty or Empire State Building, but by a family bakery of Americans of the Italian origin as it accumulates the local community consist of people who are there not only for buy a piece of bread, but also to communicate to each other, etc.” (Musijezdow, 2013: 69)

City spaces, (first of all – public spaces) are closely connected not only with perception of the city inhabitants, but also with processes of historical places revitalization, with culture and religion (including cultures of immigrants), and even with “design of a thought pattern” (Casakin, de Fátima Campos Bernardo (Eds.), 2012).

The spatial structure of the Siberian cities was formed under powerful influence of roads. The largest cities of the region arose and grew up on the cross of the big rivers (flowing in the meridional direction) and the width overland roads. Advancing (in comparison with the European Russia) growth of the Siberian cities is closely connected with construction and operation of the Trans-Siberian Railway. By the beginning of the 20th century the town-planning structure of Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, Novonikolayevsk (Novosibirsk), Omsk was created in similar spirit of a rectangular lattice which main axis is directed in West east direction, along the railroad (Žurin, 2000).

Transit character of city space unites the Siberian cities, distinguishes them from Moscow and other concentric settlements of the European part of Russia. And the brightest and most peculiar projects of the Siberian architects are connected with a transitness, with ways and roads. Is it enough to remember? For example, the bridge through Yenisei (L. Proskuryakov’s project) which in 1900 together with the Eiffel Tower was awarded the Grand Prix and a gold medal of the World Fair in Paris “For architectural perfection and magnificent workmanship” (Owczinnikowa, 1990), or the Baikal Beam project (Voronezhsky), unique in scales and foresight (Lidin, Meerowicz, 206).

For an inattentive look the landscape of Siberia can seem monotonous throughout the Trans-Siberian Railway. However features of a land relief give to each Siberian city something unique. So, Irkutsk “is clamped” between sharp folds the Pre-Baikal ridges. That is

why there is a feeling of the close horizon, limited space. On the contrary, the plateau of the South of Krasnoyarsk region forms long prospect and wide, almost steppe sky. Therefore the spacious direct prospectuses removing a look for city borders are so relevant to Krasnoyarsk. Favourite or even cult reception of Krasnoyarsk architects – the organization of space in the way that streets became isolated not by a dominating building, but by a prospect of the hilly horizon. On the contrary, Irkutsk easily gets on with the confusion of curves and narrow small streets, and even from those points of the city from where we can see the long prospect, the slopes which are generally hanging over the city are visible.

The climate of Irkutsk and Krasnoyarsk is similar, but isn't identical. In Krasnoyarsk it same sharply continental, but without those extreme weather anomalies, which are not rarity in Irkutsk – winter rains and even thunder-storms, June snow, hurricanes and other “surprises”. Irkutsk is constantly ready to sudden whims of climate, and it is also affects on the identity of the city, adding to its uneasiness and concentration at the face of the feral Nature. Geologically the young region of Cis-Baikal continuously shakes – microearthquakes happen nearly each hour and nobody is surprised to nine-mark seismicity. In any case, even trees in Irkutsk look somehow shaggy and wild in comparison with Krasnoyarsk...

I am far from to formulate accurate and concrete recipes of authenticity for all Siberian cities within this article. More likely, I would like to offer a ways of search for such formulas – a way of cooperation of specialists in a landscape, climate, features of flora and fauna, historians and artists, specialists in folklore and authors of modern legends.

And, maybe, then it will turn out to find the identity and to cope with depressive tendencies in development of the Siberian cities.

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