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OBRANA DOKTORSKOGA RADA

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*NARATIVNO JASTVO U SUVREMENOJ
FILOZOFIJI UMA I NJEGOVE GRANICE*

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Sažetak

Tema je ove disertacije narativno jastvo, pojam koji su, u različitim oblicima, razvili filozofi kao što su Alasdair MacIntyre, Marya Schechtman, Daniel Dennett, David Velleman, Charles Taylor i drugi. U disertaciji se pokazuje kako uvođenje pojma narativnog jastva rješava neke od problema vezanih uz osobni identitet, autonomiju, praktično rasuđivanje te odnos jastva i mozga. Pritom se izlučuju glavna obilježja narativnog jastva. Prema narativističkom shvaćanju, ljudsko je jastvo entitet protegnut u vremenu. Ono nije statičan i epizodičan entitet, nego dinamična konstrukcija. Jastvo ne obuhvaća samo prošlost i sadašnjost osobe, nego i skup planova, projekata, namjera i težnji koje se odnose na njezinu budućnost. Odgovor na pitanje „Što sam ja?“ može se razumjeti samo u narativnoj formi. Prema strogoj verziji narativizma, kakvu zastupaju prije svih MacIntyre i Schechtman, to ne znači samo to da je opis sebe moguće dati jedino u narativnoj formi nego i to da je moje ja u doslovnom smislu narativno samokonstituirani entitet. Jednostavnije govoreći, ja sam određena vrsta priče, a moje samorazumijevanje nije ništa drugo nego razumijevanje te priče i sposobnost njezina pripovijedanja.

U disertaciji se pokazuje da čak i ako prihvatimo pojam narativnog jastva kao iznimno važan i dalekosežan pojam te čak i ako prihvatimo da je jastvo svake zrele osobe u osnovi narativno, pojam narativnog jastva u važnim je pogledima ograničen. Tvrdi se, kao prvo, da postoji donja granica narativnog jastva, a to je takozvano minimalno jastvo. Nadalje, postoji i gornja granica narativnog jastva, a to je jastvo koje preostaje ako osoba izgubi narativnu kompetenciju koja omogućuje samokonstituciju i samorazumijevanje. Naposljetku, narativno jastvo možemo shvatiti i kao ograničeno i tijekom njegova punog postojanja. Naime, minimalno jastvo nije nešto što čovjek u nekom trenutku izgubi ili što se jednostavno pretvori u narativno. Minimalno je jastvo stalno prisutno kao nekakva osnova za razvijenije oblike narativne svijesti. Prema tome, zaključuje se da čak i ako ljudsko jastvo jest u osnovi narativno, ono ne može biti u cijelosti narativno.

Summary

In the first part of the Thesis, I discuss the notion of the self. My discussion concentrates on

three problems concerning this notion. First, there is no agreed conception of the self: the term “self” can refer to various things, and philosophers use it in a wide variety of ways. Second, it is not clear which approach to the notion of the self should be preferred: historical or nonhistorical. Third, there are a number of philosophers, both in the past and today, who believe that the notion of the self is deeply flawed or even that the self does not exist. In the first part of the Thesis, I discuss these difficulties and try to show why the notion of the self is nevertheless a meaningful and useful notion.

In a nutshell, my idea is this. Instead of trying to answer all the objections to the notion of the self individually, or to find a generally agreed notion of the self, it is better to ask, do we really need the notion of the self? There are several reasons why the answer to this question must be affirmative. Most importantly, the notion of the self is widely used in psychology and psychiatry, even in the neuroscience, where it proved to be very useful. It is used, for instance, in explanations of various mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, autism and dissociative identity disorder. In these explanations, the working concept or the working definition of the self is used, and not some definite or agreed definition. Hence, there is no reason why the same method cannot be used in philosophy, especially when discussing the notion of the narrative self.

In the second part of the Thesis, I discuss the notion of the narrative self. Just as there is no single notion of the self, so there is no single notion of the narrative self. Philosophers who develop the notion of the narrative self are guided by various interests, put emphasis on different things and consequently come to the various notions of the narrative self. One thing they have in common is the background: most of them develop their views on narrative self by thinking about the problem of personal identity. In this part of the Thesis I discuss how the notion of the narrative self developed from thinking about personal identity in authors such as Marya Schechtman and J. David Velleman. I also discuss Daniel Dennett’s conception of the self as the center of narrative gravity and the critiques directed at him by Velleman and Lynne Rudder Baker. Finally, I discuss the externalist or hermeneutical conception of the narrative self as developed by Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor.

The views of these philosophers differ greatly in some important respects: some consider the self to be real, while others claim that it is an illusion; some emphasize the phenomenology of the self, while others insist on its socio-historical conditioning; some identify selves with human beings or persons, while others insist that they are different, etc. Most importantly, some of them, notably MacIntyre and Schechtman, develop a very strict

notion of narrativism, according to which not only I can describe myself in narrative form, but my self is literally a narratively structured entity.

According to narrativists, human self is a complex entity extended in time rather than simple and momentary. As such, it is dynamic rather than static. It is an entity that encompasses a person's past and present, and a projection of his or her future. It is the bearer of the identity and autonomy of each person. Most importantly, the human self is narrative. This means, especially for the strict narrativists, that my self, as an entity extended in time, has a narrative structure. To put it bluntly, I am a certain kind of story. To understand myself—to understand myself as an autonomous agent, a person who as identical endures through time, and who has a certain set of characteristics that make me this particular person—I need to understand that narrative structure. If I am not able to do that, then it can mean two things. First, it can mean that I have no identity at all, that is, that I am not a person at all in the usual sense of the word because my self is fragmented, incoherent, unconnected, or simply—most likely for some pathological reason—non-existent. Second, it can mean that I am alienated from my own identity because it is basically unknown to me.

In the third part of the Thesis, I discuss the limits of the narrative self. I argue that even if we assume that there is such a thing as narrative self, and even if it is true that each of us, as a mature person, is, or has, a narrative self, there are important boundaries to it. Its lower boundary is marked by the so called minimal self, a kind of immediate pre-reflexive awareness of one's own experiences. I discuss several versions of minimal self as developed by Dan Zahavi, Shaun Gallagher and Richard Menary. I argue that there is also the higher boundary of the narrative self. For, the narrative self can be lost before a person's death—a person can lose narrative competence before death for various reasons. The narrativists cannot agree with the idea that the loss of narrative competence entails the loss of the self, as this would commit them to some otherwise unacceptable criteria of human death (such as higher brain criterion of death). Therefore, they are obliged to admit that even after the loss of narrative ability, a human being has a self, even though the nature of that self must, at least for them, remain unclear.

The narrative self is limited in yet another way. For, the minimal self is not something that a person loses at some point or that simply turns into the narrative self. It is rather constantly present as the pre-linguistic and experiential basis for higher forms of narrative consciousness. While the narrative self is an achievement, the minimal self is an ineliminable aspect of human consciousness that cannot be assimilated into the narrative structure of consciousness.