



## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In his book entitled „Man's Problem”, Martin Buber discusses the anthropological status of our times mentioning two factors, which have considerably influenced the comprehension, existence, identity and man's future; both of them exhibit traits of crisis. The first one can be identified in terms of sociology. Previous organic forms of direct contact between humans are collapsing rapidly. Man, through the continuously appearing variety of institutions, associations, parties, through globalisation, enters the world of anonymity, which excludes the possibility of direct relations in small groups, in communities that gave him the sense of safety, peace at heart. These communities, first of all, refer to the family, but also to the craft guild, the village and town commune, as well as other associations. In these, living tradition was cultivated and the history was recollected; therefore, they became the place where the sense of one's own identity could be felt. Today, however, when the form of human and social relations has decidedly individualised and, in a way, closed to the other person, we have to deal with the phenomenon of man's isolation in the world of anonymity and indirect relations. As Martin Buber claims, the situation is grounded on the French Revolution, which „created a free man” and civic community. And although contemporary political parties, various institutions, associations, labour unions engage man and „fill” his life, in consequence, man feels lonely when he enters the reality and quietness of his life.

The second significant factor mentioned by Buber is the history of human spirit, human psyche. For two hundred years, man has plunged in the growing crisis of his identity. The thing is about the position of man towards his creations, i.e. his culture as well his being a subject. The arising crisis can be described in terms of man falling behind with his creations. It appears noticeable in three spheres: firstly, in the world of technology. Man creates machines, which cease to be the „extension” of his hand,

and, on the contrary, they get out of control and, sometimes, it results in man serving them. The second sphere refers to the world of economy: despite the development of technology, man did not manage to share the goods necessary for a dignified life, to provide their amount and quality appropriate for the growing number of people in the world. As a consequence, conflicts arise, wars break out and terrorism spreads. The third dimension is politics: man is left to his own fate, to inconceivable powers, which, though seemingly independent of each other, get stronger and destroy human aims and desires.

Thus, the man had to face a horrifying fact that he is the father of the powers he cannot manage. If so, there comes a question about the essence, the identity of human being, his fears arising from the present, and concerning the future. Who is man? Nowadays, this question takes on a current meaning and necessitates the answer.

In the fourth issue of „The Horizons of Education”, we, together with our readers, want to pose these questions and consider our human being. Is there a full coherence between the spiritual and physical spheres of man, which would determine his unmistakable identity, taking into consideration changeability and passing by?

To begin any discussions on the subject, the grounds have to be defined. Zbigniew Mirek states that this ground assumes a vertical dimension – relation to God, Transcendence as well as the horizontal dimension – another man, nature and the creation of man's reasonability – culture. In these spheres two essential dimensions constitute a starting point for reflecting on man's identity. German theologian, Gottfried Bitter, dealing with Christian identity, suggests a return to the very sources, to the times of the first Christian communities. Tadeusz Ślipko, one of the most prominent philosophers – a specialist in ethics, depicting the concept of identity from the point of view of Christian ethics and morality, observes that the essence of man's identity is based on his freedom understood in the moral sense. It ascends to transcendence, aiming for perfection as an objective order of values included in human reason. Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that human identity is a process, since it is constantly to develop moral perfection, on which it is based.

According to Sigmund Baumann, cotemporary world does not provide an explicit answer to the question „who is man”, since everything is changing. Comparing the past and the present, the accent of comprehending identity as „I” is shifted onto „We”; therefore, the questions: „who am I for other people” and „what do I mean in their lives” have to be asked. In the developing process of globalisation, it is justified to ask about the role of identity in educating younger generations. This issue is taken up by Katarzyna Olbrycht, who emphasises the indispensability of an extended pedagogical reflection in this sphere and the necessity of making specific anthropological-philosophical assumptions. It is common knowledge that human identity is dependent on his psyche. What happens to identity in the case of mental illness? Bożena Grochmal-Bach touches upon these issues, analysing the relationship between man’s identity, his consciousness, and its disorders. Also in this sphere we can talk about identity crises, which do not necessarily have to lead to negative results. Zenomena Płużek shares this reflection, arguing her stance with theory and empirical investigation. And one more major issue connected with identity: the relation between man and the creation of his mind, i.e. between the artist and his work. Stanisław Rodziński, recalling outstanding artistic figures, considers the way in which the artist’s work shapes his identity. He concludes that good art is seeking the truth, the search for the Invisible through the visible. The reflections on identity and anxiety caused by searching for identity end with a conversation with Archbishop Józef Życiński about the shape of contemporary understanding of mutual relations between Christian and human identity, as well as the new related contexts of religious and social experiences.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The subject touched upon in this issue of „The Horizons of Education” proves highly complex, since, so far, no one has ever defined man in a complete and exhaustive way. On the other hand, it appears intriguing because everybody wants to know himself better and fuller. man’s identity is not a stable entity, it is dynamic, it is constantly „being created”. Therefore, it cannot be defined once and for all towards humanity as a whole, or towards man as individual. And this fact may seem distressing. Ne-

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vertheless, it does not mean that we remain anonymous in an anonymous world.

Perhaps the reading of the reflections made by various specialists will help us better understand: who we are and what is our identity in the global world. We would be very glad to see these issues stimulate a widespread discussion.

Wishing peaceful reading

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