

## The formation of sensory life discourse in the conditions of “Other” sociocultural experience

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### ABSTRACT

The article discusses the study of discourse related to sensual life within the context of a different sociocultural experience. The formation of this discourse is said to be influenced by legitimizing the horizontal principle in social relations, which is mainly constituted by research and developmental epistemic and discursive influences on the social, political, and cultural situation in society. The author employs a methodological procedure to differentiate between sensory perception and sensory understanding at the level of emotional intellect, highlighting the individual contributions of each in shaping the discourse on sensual life. It is concluded that the request for the constitution of the existential meanings of the organization of life is growing under the influence of the growth of the degree of individual freedom of human beings and the formation of an open communicative space of life. They are formed in the field of voluntary horizontal actions, prompting the person to self-activation and sense finding. Sense is associated with human sensation, sensitivity and perception “at the level of the senses” and physicality “at the level of intelligence”. Meaning at the “sense level” is manifested by “common sense” and the right direction in life, and “at the intellectual level,” meaning is determined by reflective thinking, relevant discursive ethical practices and worldviews as well as cognitive orientations.

### KEYWORDS

*experience, sense, meaning, sense perception, sensory understanding, discourse, communication, community, responsibility*

### Introduction

Today, a significant number of Ukrainians found themselves in a situation of sense-losing, as sensory-bodily of ones suffered a devastating impact from the actions of Russian aggressors on the territory of Ukraine. The feeling of uprooting Ukrainians leads to metaphorically “subsidence of being”, which requires significant efforts to reduce the effects of sense-losing.

Despite all the tragedy caused by the military actions in Ukraine, Ukrainians are trying to restore their self-identical self by looking for the basis of the unity of their life meaning and personal sense. Thus for the sake of “subsidence of being”, the uprooted person is called to learn again to collect their being into a heap, identified as sense-for-yourself. Simultaneously, the total uprooting is considered today as a thematically layered phenomenon that does not allow oneself to leave their place of residence, even to save their and their childrens' lives. The total uprooting does not contribute to deepening of ones worldview horizon, critical thinking and human authenticity.

This research aims to study and demonstrate the contribution of sensory perception and understanding in the formation of sensual life discourse.

### Research methods

First of all, by “other” sociocultural experience we mean the experience formed in the conditions of non-classical philosophical approaches. The mechanism of constituting the sensory life discourse in the context of “other” sociocultural experience is described with the help of the methodological principle of distinguishing between

sensory perception/sense and sensory understanding/meaning both at the level of senses and at the level of intellect. The distinction between sense and meaning is complicated by the connotations of similar but inconsistent terms. In the research programs, we trace the contamination of different meanings of “sense/meaning”: (1) potentially a single semantic flow (for French, and later Italian and German) because in these languages “sense” has an additional meaning “direction”; (2) it is confirmed that in languages there are one or more ways of conveying one of the meanings of “sense/meaning”, which “creates a philosophically useful distinction”, for example between Sinn and Bedeutung (sense and meaning correspondingly); (3) it is possible to combine sensation and intellect, which “generates a transitional complex”, going from conscience (sense interne) to moral consciousness (sense moral) through sensibility and sensitivity (sentiment) and which is always revealed in various ways, due to different language network (sense, sentiment, feeling) (*Brugère, 2011: 205*). In this article, we not only focus on the combination of sensation and intellect but also distinguish between sense and meaning both at the level of senses and the level of intellect. Distinguishing similar but not convergent philosophical terms (sense-perception and sense-understanding, Sinn and Bedeutung, sense and meaning) deepens any research discourse, in our case the distinction also clarifies the complex mechanisms of forming sensory life discourse.

Thus, the word “sense” is primarily associated with nonverbal thinking (sensation, sensitivity and perception), then we describe sense as a phenomenon rooted in the

sensory-bodily component of human nature. Sense outlines the uniqueness and originality of individual and collective human experience. The word "meaning" is associated with verbal thinking, so sensory understanding is conditioned by reflexive thinking with its sign and symbolic mediation through the involvement of the transcendental communicative community.

## Results and Discussion

### Sensory perception

Sensory perception/sense "at the level of the senses" is based on sensations, sensitivities and perceptions that do not require additional reflexive work. The most significant existential example of sensory perception "at the level of the senses" is the wisdom of life. Life wisdom is an example of a unique understanding of the meaning of life. It is the motive for the enduring of all the troubles and breakdowns of life. In addition, *Emmanuel Levinas* also calls *conscience* the "organ" of sense (*Levinas 1999: 16*). Conscience keeps a person in the space of conscious sense of life, protecting them from reckless actions. At the same time, *Viktor Emil Frankl* (1988) believes that conscience sometimes disorients a person, because he can not always answer the question of whether he was able to realize the sense of his life. Nevertheless, V. E. Frankl is convinced that there is no freedom without responsibility, so a man is responsible for the sense of his life (*Frankl, 1988: 43*).

Non-reflective sense perception is not devoid of intellectual activity. However, a valid question arises as to how much a person rules over his understanding, "since he is only a part of the experience and understanding of the general" (*Karas, 2003: 78*). Moreover, the experience of sense precedes human self-consciousness. The danger of non-reflective thinking is that it constitutes vertical models of understanding life. Vertical models of understanding life are metaphysical constructs that introduce a totalizing function in thinking, provoking a situation of inability to individually constitute existential meanings and create their life senses. Of course, not all vertically oriented models deserve contempt. In general, the Divine Principle is a model of supporting a vertical model of life with appropriate discourse and mostly non-reflective sense perception. Metaphysical thought protected a man from fears of death and oblivion, loneliness and disappointment, the unknown and the sudden. The divine principle instilled faith and gave hope.

However, naive instruction does not protect a person from losing sense, because sense is inherent in the self-escaping nature. The self-slipping nature of sense is that people identify it with meaning. Vital meaning cannot guarantee a person fundamental sense, because it has a contextual nature. That is why the naive instruction, which is based on descriptive knowledge in general, cannot be trusted unconditionally because people's understanding of the essence of phenomena and the structure of the world is quite abstract and much less detailed, less specific than it seems to them. Descriptive knowledge, in general, should be accepted neither psychologically nor empirically, but phenomenologically, for the sake of revealing the essence of not only descriptive but also any knowledge as a pure experience.

### Physicality

Sense "at the level of intellect" is formed based on physicality, participating in the generation of sensory life

discourse. Physicality contributes to the fact that pleasure, suffering, thinking, birth, dying, death, sex, trembling, crying and laughing become events. Events happen, are fulfilled and take place in being. They are sense treasures, where meanings intersect, multiply, contributing to the development of different interpretations of life. Jean-Luc Nancy points out that physicality is our bare concern today (*Nancy, 2013: 29-30*).

The needs of the body contribute to the fact that senses become the meanings that a person attaches to his actions in everyday life. *Jan Andrzej Kloczowski* believes that "need is a turn to oneself"; it "is the fear of myself, selfishness, the primary form of identification, assimilation of the world" (*Kloczowski, 2013: 70*). Satisfaction of life needs brings a person pleasure and satisfaction. J. A. Kloczowski notes that selfish pleasure "deepens the process of identification, which is of dynamic nature" (*Kloczowski, 2013: 71*). At the same time, some things bring pleasure to a person, but he cannot appropriate them, for instance, love, eros, health, fatherhood. Man cannot tame even death, which brings confusion to him. No earthly wealth can be secured by immortality. According to E. Levinas, pleasure is always selfish, "always my joy", "pleasure is involution, inwardness" and "my" need is selfish because I am closed towards the Other (*Levinas, 1999: 70*). Hence, a person is dependent on the world around him, "I am burdened with the need to hold out" (*Kloczowski, 2013: 69*).

Although the need keeps a person in the grip of materiality, "supports the subject in existence", the thirst for existence seems to take a person beyond himself. Need is always my need! There is no doubt that pleasure, joy and happiness increase the meaning of life because emotion stimulates my reflection. Body technique demonstrates the physical and psychological state of the subject, the way he "enters" the social space. Everyday life reveals body technique the most. Marcel Mauss (2002) describes body technique as a set of traditional actions that are different from religious and symbolic acts. Body technique is how people look, walk, sleep, run, eat, talk, make love, and so on. In fact, all these patterns of movement are caused by our social upbringing. Every culture has its own allowed and forbidden, natural and "unnatural" movements. Body performance is always a way of intellectual communication. The ancient man applied signs and symbols to the body and that served as a written message. In the modern world, tattooing largely performs a semiotic, symbolic or status function. Human physicality is always sought to record, cultivate and formalize. The body is an apparatus of classification, a metaphor of a structured system. Different types of identification numbers and documents identify the body. All these tools are part of the symbolic social code. The "social rule" in some way structures the human worldview, prompting obedience to the "social rule".

Man understands the value and significance of his body for the law and uses it as a means of protest. Man's ultimate freedom is the ability to do something with his body. Sacrificial action is always a way of bodily expression of freedom. The body, having become the limit of thinking, the limit of modern Western cultural tradition, does not become something metaphysical, supernatural, but "ectopic". Anything "utopian" for the body ceases to make sense. J.-L. Nancy (2013) shows that body is not a place of the embodiment of the ideality of sense, but its breakdown, realized by existence. The place of the body is the place of finding sense... " (*Nancy 2013: 156*) which

... does not precede the senses as their dark prehistory or pre-ontological declaration. J.-L. Nancy sees the senses generated by the body as an opportunity for "dissent". The thinker is concerned that modern European democracy does not constitute the sense of dissent (*Nancy, 2013: 101*) because the commonwealth does not promote it. At the same time, it can be concluded that fears of J.-L. Nancy is futile since nowadays dissent prevails over the desire to show solidarity in the world at large. Namely, the current Russo-Ukrainian war and political and economic instability are destroying established social ties and altering the lives of hundreds of millions of people, revealing deep contradictions between the civilizational values and imperial endeavors of terroris-states; values of survival and self-expression. Hence, we are on the verge of creating the "other" way of life that does not guarantee peace, prosperity and stability. That is why the world community needs to make every effort to preserve the principles of coexistence.

### Sensory understanding

Sensory understanding/meaning at the "sense level" is based on "common sense" and the right direction in life. "Bon sens" means the right direction and common sense at the same time, which is associated with each other. "Common sense" is affiliated with "common sensation" and "common understanding". These three concepts ("common sense", "common sensation", "common understanding") are different aspects of one multifaceted English concept of "common sense". *Alfred Schütz* and *Thomas Luckmann* (1989) comprehend the discourse of "common sense knowledge". "Common sense knowledge" is in particular created by a community and it is harmful to question. Legitimation of this knowledge helps to solve practical problems of everyday life. At the same time, each person creates his stock of "common sense knowledge". The body of common sense knowledge is not stable, because it changes under the influence of life events.

Sensory understanding/meaning at the "level of intellect" articulates the understanding that there is no meaning of mine without the meaning of others. At the same time, to establish a sense of understanding "at the level of intellect" a person needs additional argumentation, which is possible by the reflective nature of human worldview, due to verbal thinking and logical procedures. Sensory understanding based on knowledge allows the formation of creative and innovative ideas that unfold into the valuable notion horizon. The discursive method transforms the problem of the meaning of life into a logical and semantic space because a man is also a discourse that he extrapolates to the world (*Foucault, 2002*). According to *Anatoly Karas* "... it is the discursive certainty of relationships between people that gives them different colours, tones, expressiveness, emotionality, it encourages silence or openness" (*Karas 2003: 438*). Discourse is the basis for choosing and prioritizing one value over another. Procedures of constituting meaning contribute to the intellectual clarification of events and phenomena, thanks to which a person lives his life "with meaning" and "with the thought". Conscious sensory understanding helps to substantiate and motivate the position of life, to communicate to others worthy examples of sensory perception and understanding. Patterns acquire social representativeness when they are recognized by other participants in

social discourse. Socially representative semantic patterns are rooted in the form of socio-cultural artefacts and objectification, which are reproduced each time in interpretive schemes, acquiring stable features.

Scientific activity is one of the examples of meaningful human activity. Education and literacy, in general, contribute to the rooting of a man in life, as it is rightly pointed out by *Simone Weil* (2001, 33), and according to *Paul-Michel Foucault* (2002), it is the centre of "self-culture", contributing to the understanding of human life. The advantage of scientific culture is that it is one of the "organizing principles" of human existence. A person with reflective thinking skills avoids quick emotional judgments and biased decisions. Thus, *Phillip H. Phenix* believes that the skills of the semantic constitution can be learned. Different structures of knowledge constitute various semantic structures (*Phenix, 1964, X*). During the learning, a person learns the procedures of constituting semantic patterns. The main task of education is to expand and increase the meaning and constitutive skills and abilities. Due to scientific activity, the meaning of life becomes clear to a human through concepts. Thus, a man gets his own, sovereign world, the "rooted formation", the opportunity to be beyond the empirical situation. Effective learning and education, in general, contribute to the fact that a person manages his life more responsibly.

Hence, the sensory understanding of the general depends on discursive practices as systematic knowledge of objects. Discourses enable the combination of feeling and intellect in the process of forming a sensory understanding. In general, a person who does not constitute discourses (sensory understanding) perceives the meaning of life supralogically and suprasemantically, i.e. metaphysically. Metaphysical discourses are authoritarian discourses, which forces us to be attentive to what is said and by whom they (discourses) are uttered.

*Currently, communal sensory perception is undergoing radical changes as threats to the existence of humanity prompt a rethinking of the essential foundations of human communities. Sensory understanding outlines the way of life, from a conscientious attitude to life to the moral motivation in life, which contributes to motivating life behaviour.*

*Layering of sensory perception/sense and sensory understanding / meaning in a current existing situation*

The instability of a man in promoting the fact that culture in general in a globalized world acquires the shape of a mosaic. *James Lall* points out that contemporary culture "drifts between local and global, between collective and individual, direct and media-mediated forms of experience" (*Lall, 2002: 17*). In a situation of flowing existence, the discourse of the meaning of life loses its universal demand. *Charles Taylor* states that a modern man is more likely to "slide" on the surface of existence, "levelling moral horizons" (*Taylor, 2013: 14*). The spatial construction of the modern world depends more on the functioning of electronic networks than on physical parameters. Time is no longer flowing and temperate. It runs incessantly or turns to the point of being. We live in an instant culture, that is, we strive to have everything immediately, without delay. That is why *Manuel Castells* puts forward the idea of "supra time" and "floating space" (*Castells, 2009: 15*). Media culture, fashion, fast food establishments contribute to the formation of the "other" type of person, a "semantic mosaic" person. *Thomas Peters* describes the

perceptions of a person who is in a hurry to live and needs a constant change of being: "Both the bomb and the information give the secret pleasure of a possible apocalypse, intoxicating modern people (accustomed to the shocks of the new) with a sense of contemplation of self-destruction. The computer marks the most important moment in history, and the bomb marks the last one." (Peters, 2004: 35).

A modern man plays with his identity. Simulation and games are a space for creating existential semantic mosaics. A person can hide or "change" his or her gender, age, nationality, image, relationships or social status. Network communication contributes to the fact that a modern man, as it is aptly put by Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis (2013), creates a demand for himself, transforming Descartes' Cogito into "I see, therefore, I exist". Blogs and pages in social networks perform the functions of self-presentation, self-promotion, self-reflection and self-knowledge. That is why Z. Bauman (2009) asks how ethics can survive in modern consumer society. The identity of a modern man is formed more and more intimately. A person surrounds himself with a community of "his own", to exclude from it all those who have other political beliefs, preferences or images.

Judith Butler (2006) points out that identity narrowing is prevalent among immigrants, religious fundamentalists, queer communities, political rivals, and others. Closed cultural circles are like mosaic structures, each of the mosaics is based on the exclusion of those who have different views. This situation raises complex social problems. Some social groups feel comfortable within "their" ones and do not need to communicate with other social groups, and the state in this case may be perceived as hostile. They sometimes break up with their former group identity, not acquiring a common or any other identity. The danger of closed groups is that they become radicalized. J. Butler (2006) emphasizes that today in most northern European countries there is a stratification among feminists, queer communities, gay lesbian human rights activists, anti-racist movements and movements for freedom of religion. Within the Ukrainian community, blurred identity poses significant vulnerability, especially in the face of challenges, threats and dangers from hostile aggressive neighbours. Joseph Dominick notes that the narrowing of identity in a paradoxical way coincides with its expansion, as technological communications allow a person to identify himself with geographically remote communities, and carriers of different cultural, gender and social status. Internet communication contributes to the consolidation of people in their struggle for rights and freedoms. More online communication eliminates racial, gender, age, and external differences, so "anonymity can serve to promote equality" (Dominick, 1999: 333). In general, J. Butler does not share the passion for digital culture and warns that addiction to various gadgets can turn an individual's life into a prison; moreover, individual freedoms and private interests are destroyed under the pressure of electronic surveillance (Butler 2006: 126). Today, authoritarian regimes are demonstrating a model of fairly successful electronic surveillance of so far unstable civil society structures.

As a result of the Russo-Ukrainian war, Ukrainian society may experience various mental, psychophysiological, and social stratifications, but these "rifts" are not fundamental, as the sense of meaning and sensory perception of Ukrainians are on the side of truth.

Thus, in the conditions of "other" socio-cultural experience, there is a change of habitual contexts, which is called the process of "dispersal". In today's world, a man is more influenced by non-reflexive sensuality, which is layered over sensory understanding. Hence the person "stops before the insurmountable contradictions of feelings, which form the basis of the contradictions of understanding" (Karas, 2003: 286). The intellect of a person with uncontrollable feelings does not reach the level of sensory understanding necessary for balanced (rational) activity. Modern types of instrumental thinking and opportunities of scientific and technological progress contribute to the construction of "relatively dangerous and favourable for the individual environment" (Taylor, 2013: 115), although they do not always contribute to the formation of sensory understanding "at the level of intellect". Sensory understanding "at the level of intellect" implies "a tendency to the common good". In particular, the new challenges and threats of civilization draw attention to the fact that a man is called to care not only for their good but for the common good as well.

The expression "common sense" is ambiguous, because it contains several semantic dangers, which presuppose that being in this discourse, a person worries about their identity and authenticity. At the same time, the concept of "propensity for the common good" takes a person beyond the personal discourse of the "good life" and transforms the human Self to the scale of ancestral ability. Concurrently, being in the space of "common good" guarantees a person a "good life", which is impossible without "common good". It is obvious to us that the postmodern project is free from all kinds of common notions of identity, classically reading the discourse of morality and forms of standard behaviour, as it is aimed at the possibility of individual freedom. However, this does not contradict the fact that "common sense" implies the possibility of creating adequate ideas about the public space of society.

### Conclusions

The sensory life discourse described in the context of "other" sociocultural experience is determined by the legitimization of the horizontal principle in social relations, which are largely constituted under the sign of scientific and educational development and epistemic and discursive influence on the social, political and cultural situation. The methodological procedure of distinguishing between sensory perception/sense and sensory understanding/meaning at the level of the senses and the level of the intellect shows the difficulties of the process of human comprehension of one's life. As a result of such methodological actions, we see a separate contribution of sensory perception and sensory understanding in the formation of sensory life discourse in general.

The sensory life discourse described in the context of "other" sociocultural experience reveals a person's way of life, namely, from a conscientious attitude to life-based on common sense and wisdom of life to moral motivation in life, which involves discursive and ethical practices of "responsible life", promoting substantiation and motivation of a person's life position. On the other hand, today we are witnessing the loss of the meaning of life of its fundamental significance. The person of instant culture not only wastes his sense of life but also doubts the appropriateness of common sense. On the whole, the sensory meaning of life discourse in the context of non-classical philosophical approaches is an integrative basis of sense

perception and understanding with relevant discursive-ethical practices and worldview-cognitive orientations which help a person to organize the content of his consciousness, integrating feelings, reflections and actions into a single experience of the semantic flow. Despite all the difficulties of constituting the sensory meaning of life discourse in the conditions of the “other” socio-cultural experience, its establishment is a guarantee of the fullness of life and stability of the man’s being.

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## Формування чуттєвого життєвого дискурсу в умовах «іншого» соціокультурного досвіду

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Стаття присвячена дослідженню чуттєвого життєвого дискурсу в контексті «іншого» соціокультурного досвіду. Показано, що формування такого дискурсу визначається легітимацією горизонтального начала в соціальних відносинах, які значною мірою конститууються під знаком науково-освітнього розвитку та епістемічного та дискурсивного впливу на соціальну, політичну та культурну ситуацію в суспільстві. Авторка вдається до методологічної процедури розмежування чуттєвого сприйняття/відчуття і чуттєвого розуміння/сенсу на рівні почуттів і на рівні інтелекту, аби показати окремий внесок чуттєвого сприйняття та чуттєвого розуміння у формування чуттєвого життєвого дискурсу загалом. Висновується, що запит на конституювання екзистенційних смислів організації життя зростає під впливом зростання ступеня індивідуальної свободи людини та формування відкритого комунікативного простору життя. Вони формуються у сфері довільних горизонтальних дій, спонукаючи людину до самоактивації та пошуку смислів. Почуття асоціюється з людськими відчуттями, чутливістю та сприйняттям «на рівні почуттів», а фізичність – «на рівні інтелекту». Значення на «рівні почуттів» проявляється «здоровим глуздом» і правильним напрямком життя, а також «на інтелектуальному рівні» значення визначається рефлексивним мисленням, відповідними дискурсивними етичними практиками та світоглядом, а також когнітивними орієнтаціями.

**Ключові слова:** досвід, сенс, значення, чуттєве сприйняття, чуттєве розуміння, дискурс, спілкування, спільнота, відповідальність.

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