

## Philosophical Anthropology in the Context of War: The Evolution of Conceptual Ideas about Humans, Mortality, and the Phenomenon of Heroism

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### ABSTRACT

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The turn in philosophical anthropology that took place in the twentieth century intensified humanistic tendencies concerning the idea and understanding of human nature, presenting man as the primary creator of the history of civilization. However, life during wartime actualizes and brings to the surface collective experiences related to the vulnerability of human existence and its violent termination. This, in turn, alters the structure of habitual human life and transforms the category of death into a symbol of social unity, thus acting as a unifying factor. The purpose of this article is a theoretical study of the anthropological transformation of the modern idea of the human being, as well as of the phenomena of death and heroism in wartime. The relevance of this study is determined by the realities of the Russian-Ukrainian war and its influence on society. The results indicate that war is an integral phenomenon of civilization, which transforms the philosophical and anthropological meanings of social life during wartime and reshapes both personal and national identity through traumatic experience. The article argues that the identity of the Ukrainian nation is undergoing a rapid phase of existential and cultural metamorphosis, expressed through the perception of such phenomena as trauma, solidarity, dehumanization, and heroism. Together, these form a unique national and cultural code of resistance of both society and the state. This code is based on sacrifice as an act of conscious civic responsibility, on solidarity and partnership, on the sense of heroism, and on the humanization of life through the comprehension of personal and national death, as well as through a deepened awareness of freedom and the value of life. Death is characterized as the beginning of a new stage in the identification of both the individual and the people during wartime, while heroism is interpreted as the possibility of preserving life, protecting society, and establishing peace. Prospects for further research include a deeper exploration of the symbolism of the category of death in the life and folklore of the Ukrainian people.

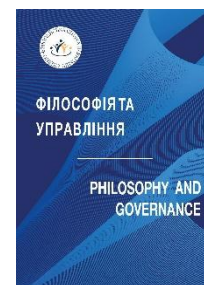
### KEYWORDS

homo militaris, homo patiens, militarization, low-intensity conflicts, hybrid war, era of military-terrorist pandemic, modern Ukrainian philosophical anthropology, transformation of national identity.





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## Філософська антропологія в умовах воєнних реалій: еволюція концептуальних уявлень про людину, смертність та феномен героїзму

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## СТАТТЯ

## АНОТАЦІЯ

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Поворот в філософській антропології, що відбувся у XX столітті, призвів до посилення гуманістичних тенденцій щодо уявлення та розуміння людської природи, зробивши людину головним творцем історії цивілізації. Однак, життя в період воєнного часу актуалізує й виносить на поверхню колективних переживань проблематику, пов'язану з вразливістю людського буття та його насильницького завершення, що певним чином змінює структуру звичного життя людини й трансформує категорію смерті в символ соціальної єдності, постаючи тим самим в ролі чинника, що впливає на формування національної ідентичності. Саме тому метою даної статті є теоретичне дослідження антропологічної трансформації сучасного уявлення про людину, а також властиві їй життю явища смерті та героїзму в умовах воєнного часу. Актуальність якого обумовлена реаліями російсько-української війни та її впливом на суспільство. Результати дослідження вказують на те, що війна є невід'ємним явищем цивілізації, що трансформує філософсько-антропологічні сенси суспільного життя під час воєнного часу й змінює ідентичність людини й нації через травматичний досвід. В статті зазначено, що ідентичність української нації проходить швидку фазу екзистенційно-культуральної метаморфози, що розгортається через сприйняття таких явищ, як травма, солідарність, дегуманізація, героїзм, що формує неповторний національно-культурний код опору суспільства й держави. Який ґрунтується на жертвовності, як акту свідомої громадянської відповідальності, міцного партнерства, відчуття героїзму та посиленні гуманізації життя на основі розуміння власної та національної смерті, а також на поглибленні усвідомлення свободи й цінності життя. Автори характеризують смерть в якості початку нової ідентифікації людини й народу в період воєнного часу, а героїзм розглядають в якості можливості збереження життя, захисту суспільства й встановлення миру. Перспективи подальших досліджень полягають у поглибленні розуміння символізму категорії смерті в житті і фольклорі українського народу.

## КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

homo militaris, homo patiens, мілітаризація, конфлікти низької інтенсивності, гібридна війна, епоха військово-терористичної пандемії, сучасна українська філософська антропологія, трансформація національної ідентичності.

## **1. Introduction**

The transformation of social views on the perception of human nature continues its evolution, which is reflected in the period of the XX–XXI centuries within the framework of the emergence and development of the humanistic paradigm of world perception. According to this, the idea of a person who is not only a carrier of socio-biological constructs, but also achieves the features of a free personality, as a carrier of his own unique experience of being, begins to assert in the public consciousness. The concept of man of this period manifests his discovery to the world, and also indicates the creative ability to go beyond the boundaries of his inherent material and biological nature. Continuing the analysis of human nature, philosophers such as M. Scheler and G. Plessner supplement the definition of the openness of human nature to the world with the criterion of not any ability to transcend oneself (going beyond one's own limits) in the process of activity and active generation of cultural and historical heritage of civilization [5, p. 22; 7, pp. 82–86]. However, according to S. Freud, the personality of a person manifests itself as an arena for the struggle between the instincts for life and death, which leads to a certain limit of human existence in the philosophically anthropological dimension, where a person plays the role of not only the creator of the history of civilizations, but also becomes a destroyer of the planet's resources by trying to establish a “new world order” [1, p. 22; 10, p. 194–198]. The tragedy of the First and Second World Wars is a reflection of such socio-political changes, the consequences of which continue to have a destabilizing effect on the process of human development and personify the war as a tragedy of a global scale, which includes forced migration of the population, changes in state borders and genocide [9, p. 84–86].

Thus, the war in the dimension of philosophical anthropology appears as an urgent socio-political problem. However, the author interprets war as extreme, or, in the words of K. Jaspers, a “marginal situation”, which in emergency circumstances catalyzes the release of the hidden possibilities of human nature, opening up space for the process of self-knowledge through contact with confrontation, the source of which is responsibility, death and the disappearance of any security guarantees [10, p. 194–198]. Therefore, when the opportunity to continue the usual form of social existence is lost, a new philosophical-anthropological level of the survival dimension arises, which determines the development of heroism and sacrifice [10, p. 197–198]. Since life during wartime, world and hybrid wars or low-intensity conflicts expose the problem of human vulnerability, the value of life and the significance of the need for freedom, this leads to a gradual deviation of the vector from totalitarian regimes to the strengthening of humanistic ideals through the motivation of the social search for new meanings, paying more attention to the categories of death and heroism, as a basis for the transformation of the national identity of citizens.

It should be noted that the category of “death” within the framework of modern anthropology occupies a significant place, which has undergone social displacement during peaceful life. However, life during wartime actualizes and brings to the surface of collective experiences the problems related to the vulnerability of human existence and its violent completion, which in a certain way changes the structure of the usual human life and transforms the category of death into a symbol of social unity, thus appearing as a factor influencing the formation of national identity [14, p. 228–230]. However, it should be noted that the war also raises the issue of perceiving heroism not only as a manifestation of valor, but mainly as a discovery of existential responsibility, as a moral response of the national community to military challenges and the birth of new meanings of life [14, p. 230–234]. Thus, the experience of the Ukrainian war combines individual dimensions of survival and sacrifice with a global rethinking of human existence in the twenty-first century. After all, war as an anthropological phenomenon highlights fundamental questions about man, his nature, mortality and heroism, and the modern Ukrainian situation makes these issues especially relevant: it shows that in the “war for survival” new value and semantic horizons are being formed, which will determine the face of not only Ukrainian, but also pan-European humanism [5, p. 22; 14, pp. 300–304]. Thus, the transformation of the idea of a person during wartime is an important part of social existence, the study of which is an important stage in understanding the development of society and the national identity of the people.

## **2. Literature Review**

Exploring the problem of transformation of ideas about a person through the direction of philosophical anthropology, V. I. Aksonova concentrates in her work on such a criterion of civilizational

development as “human dimensionality”. This allows the researcher to point out the fundamentals of focusing attention on the values of freedom and human life, as fundamental needs of society in extreme and crisis conditions [1, p. 17–23]. V. M. Lavrinenko and M. M. Loginov point to the argumentation of the causal and semantic criteria of the war as a consequence of the influence of historical features on the identity of society, which determines the formation of the idea of such categories as “heroism”, “death” and “dignity of the individual” [9, p. 82–87]. T. Bukina and P. Yampolets characterize modern trends in the development of the philosophy of war, considering the information confrontation and new models of its conduct from the ideas of information confrontation to the development of models of heroism as a response of the globalization society to the process of transformation of the military meanings of our time [3, p. 19–23]. At the same time, O. O. Bazaluk characterizes war as a category of evolutionary-cosmological approach, which arises as a result of the violation of harmony between the social and cultural development of society and embodies a way of changing the scenario of socio-political development [2, p. 239–250].

Such researchers as O. G. Danilian and O. P. Dzoban have characterized the place of development of philosophical anthropology in the system of modern philosophical knowledge, which has become a significant basis for analyzing the transformation of modern ideas about man, death and heroism in the context of philosophical anthropology of wartime [4, p. 176–182, 302–328, 331–335]. An equally thorough philosophical and anthropological analysis in his works is carried out by N. V. Hamitov, who also considers such categories as “responsibility” in the context of wartime, “freedom”, and “death”, emphasizing the importance of the role of collective and individual patterns of meaning-making and survival within society. And the works of N. V. Hamitov are characterized by integration into global contexts of the military experience of our state and our society, which thereby appears in the form of a demonstration of a change in the perception of the value and heroism of a person [5, p. 13–68; 6, p. 91–94; 7, p. 81–91]. The material of the monograph by L. Safonik is interesting, which also characterizes the categories of “responsibility”, “freedom” and “death” through the system of being and the creation of meaningful life guidelines, which changes society’s idea of the value of life, thus motivating the generation of new forms of solidarity or the creation of acts of heroism in wartime periods [14, p. 290–308]. A researcher such as O. Panych analyzes the role of the philosopher’s personality as a wartime thinker, emphasizing him as a witness or interpreter of the catastrophe and violence, thereby pointing out the ethical issues raised [11, pp. 75–88].

Meanwhile, K. Honcharen was engaged in the definition of Ukrainian civilizational subjectivity through the analysis of archetypal symbols. Such researchers as O. O. Rafalskyi et al. explained the determinism of the influence of historical heritage on the modern perception of heroism and the value of life of each person [13, p. 404–412]. L. Tarnashynska investigates the features of the moral and ethical ambivalence of war, within which love and hate play a fundamental existential motivating role in the development of heroic behavior of a person and society [15, p. 3–14]. Thus, it should be noted that to understand the transformation of ideas about man, death and heroism in wartime, the authors paid special attention to the study of the influence of historical determinism on personal meaning-life orientations, which make up the vector of development for the presentation of the above categories as such factors that form a new Ukrainian identity.

### 3. Problem Statement

The purpose of this article was to address the need for a theoretical study of the anthropological transformation of the modern idea of man, as well as the phenomena of death and heroism inherent in his life in wartime. The authors of this article set the following tasks:

- To characterize the transformation of ideas about man within the framework of concepts regarding the features of modern and classical philosophical anthropology;
- Analyze such definitions as “death” and “heroism”;
- Identify and describe the main challenges that a person faces in wartime and characterize their impact on the psycho-emotional and ideological nature of a person.

### 4. Methods and Materials

For the preparation of this article, the authors widely used historical-philosophical, as well as comparative, existential, anthropological and phenomenological methods in order to analyze and

prepare the material for publication. Thus, through the synthesis of several classical concepts of philosophy with the anthropology of the socio-cultural realities of everyday life, the synergy of systemic and interdisciplinary approaches was additionally applied to integrate scientific achievements from such fields as sociology, law, psychology, cultural studies, political science, philosophy and history, which in turn made it possible to comprehensively analyze and reveal the peculiarities of the transformation of today's social ideas about man, as well as the impact of death and heroism on the Personality in wartime as a predictor of transformational changes in Ukrainian identity. It should also be noted that for the construction and analysis of tables and figures, the authors used comparative analysis to classify, compare and compare, systematize, as well as organize the arrays of the studied information and create blocks and reconstruct to minimize the loss and distortion of the content of the material using content analysis.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

War is a factor that has a powerful impact on the generation of profound changes in the structure of socio-cultural reality, social identity and psychophysiological state of people who find themselves in an extreme, marginal situation of being. In such circumstances, the response of society to civilizational challenges steadfastly leads to the destruction of stable traditional orientations, state metanarratives, with a further increase in the need for the transformation of fundamental values and meanings that make it possible not only to live, but also to give one's life for the creation of a humanistic horizon of Ukrainian national existence, which is reflected by respect for national interests and the establishment of humanistic-democratic values on Ukrainian land [7, p. 81; 9, pp. 82-85; 14, pp. 300–304]. However, the struggle of Ukrainians in the Russian-Ukrainian war takes place not only from the position of liberation from the violent actions of the invader, but also from the position of their right to establish true European values, which are built on respect for freedom of speech and respect for human rights [9, p. 82–85; 10, p. 194–200].

However, the problem of warfare and human life during wartime continues to exist along with the existence of humanity, but delving into scientific research of its nature began only in the XVIII century. And although views on the definition of the nature of war have evolved, today this problem remains relevant for research and further analysis in the paradigm of philosophical anthropology [5, p. 263]. It should be pointed out that the understanding of such a phenomenon as war within the framework of the anthropological approach consists in analyzing a person as the most significant object and significant value of the development of civilization, which is due to the humanitarian "anthropological turn" of the middle of the XX century, as a result of which it is the personality of a person with his inherent problems that appears in the center of historical knowledge and socio-cultural life [13, p. 22–27]. Table 1, which is located below, presents the evolution of the idea of human nature, death and heroism within the concepts of philosophical anthropology of wartime based on the analysis of literature.

Therefore, we can say that today's philosophy of anthropology is a dynamic interdisciplinary science that investigates the features of the moral-ethical and cultural-psychological transformation of a person in various historical and political aspects of existence. It should be noted that, as can be seen from the materials presented in the table, the idea of man and his nature for the modern Ukrainian philosophy of anthropology is characterized by the search for a balance between existential and essential approaches, which makes it possible to realize the national-spiritual, Ukrainian and universal human landmarks in the conditions of military-terrorist challenges of civilization. This is quite clearly reflected in the traditional Kyiv anthropological school of V. Shynkaruk, pointing to the transformation of man within the framework of social militarization and determining the need to comprehend the idea of man and his being through the existentialism of the dichotomous system of war and peace [7, p. 85–86; 9, p. 206].

Therefore, continuing to analyze the essence of such a concept as war, it should be pointed out that according to the scientific views of F. Nietzsche, war is a manifestation of the realization of the "will to power". Meanwhile, it is interesting that N. Machiavelli adhered to the concept that "war is a just phenomenon only for those who need it to achieve their own goals", and R. N. Angell criticized the appeal to the position of war as a rational political choice, pointing out that the confrontation between the ethics of coercion and the ethics of mercy leads to the need to create "psychological laws of warfare" [15, pp. 3–4]. Continuing the theme of defining such a phenomenon as war, K. Schmitt considers it as the so-called

ontological dimension of the political life of the state, pointing out that war will remain the ultimate form of existence during the entire period of the existence of political confrontation. Which, in his opinion, necessitates the establishment and implementation of clear rules for the conduct of hostilities in the socio-political dimension, which include the following criteria:

- the use of only professional military and armies in war;
- ensuring the complete inviolability of the civilian population;
- establishing and observing a ban on certain types of weapons;
- compliance with the formalization regarding the procedure for declaring martial law or war;
- regulation of the process of intervention of other parties in military processes [10, p. 195].

**Table 1. Comparative analysis of the evolution of the idea of human nature, death and heroism within the concepts of philosophical anthropology**

Author	Characteristics of the main concepts	The concept of the idea of a person	The concept of attitudes towards death	The concept of heroism
<b>M. Scheller</b>	Man acts as a "spiritual being".	Open attitude to the world.	Death as the ultimate experience	Heroism is an act of self-overcoming by a person.
<b>G. Plessner</b>	"Eccentric positionality".	Getting out of one's own boundaries and limitations.	Death is a reflection of the awareness of the finiteness of being.	Heroism is a form of human authenticity.
<b>N. Khamitov</b>	Metaanthropology, which is realized in the categories of being.	The transcendence of human nature.	War is a challenge to humanity, and death is the ultimate test of existence.	Heroism is a form of value consolidation.
<b>E. Cassirer</b>	Creation and perception of the world through symbolism.	The creator of the symbolic universe or man as a symbolic animal.	Death is reflected through symbolic forms of perception and interpretation.	Heroism is an act of creating meaning.
<b>J. Ortega y Gasset</b>	Life in the paradigm of the project and categorically "I and the circumstances of the self".	A person as a person who makes a choice.	Death is the end of a person's life as a project.	Heroism is the act of free life choice of a person who resists circumstances.
<b>K. Schmitt</b>	The dichotomous political concept of "friend and foe".	Personification and understanding of man as a political being.	Death as an expression of the inevitable personification of political conflict.	Heroism appears as a degree of readiness for sacrifice for the sake of the state.
<b>M. Van Creveld</b>	The concept of "low-intensity conflicts".	Personification of a person as a participant in the war without division into "army-people".	Death is a mass phenomenon without dividing into civilians and military.	Heroism is an act of resistance for survival.
<b>Kyiv School</b>	Anthropological turn in Ukraine and understanding of man as a creator of meanings through sacrifice, dignity and will to freedom.	A person is a living and thinking, communicative creature who is a bearer of dignity.	Death is an act of sacrifice for the future.	Heroism is the personification of sacrifice in order to protect the dignity and survival of the nation.

Source: Aksyonova (2020) [10], Hamytov (2023) [5], Oharenko (2024) [10], Rafalskyi et al. (2020) [13], Safonik (2016) [16].

Delving into the legal aspects of military operations, it should be pointed out that the 1974 Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly emphasizes the observance of the principle of proportionality in responding to enemy challenges from the enemy army during wartime, leaving open the problem of determining "proportionality" and the commissioners to define it during military conflicts. It is this issue that is relevant today for the Ukrainian people, who live under the unlawful

pressure of the Russian Federation, which violates the laws of war according to legal and psychological criteria, violating the idea of death, heroism and the value of human and national life, and turning the life of the people during wartime into attempts to survive in civilian life, in a certain way erasing the boundaries between military and civilian representatives of the Ukrainian state. Therefore, the Russian-Ukrainian war, according to the concept of M. van Creveld, orients Ukrainians to the problem of survival of the Ukrainian nation, and heroism in this case leads to sacrifice as a necessary condition for preserving the life and dignity of representatives of society and national identity [10, p. 194–202; 14, p. 228–304].

Thus, Ukrainian society, which was in the position of “homo ludens”, is turning from a creative creature into “homo patiens”, that is, a person who is forced to endure distress, shock, material and emotional losses for years, as well as daily contact with death through the media or in his own civilian or military life. However, it should be noted that this is exactly what a person is like in a marginal situation, which is accompanied by regular violence, existential crises, trials and pain, creates a new identity of the Ukrainian nation, which is based on the birth of a citizen-defender who lives with the idea of responsibility not only for his own life, but also for the future of society, transforming into “homo militaris” [9, p. 204–206; 14, p. 228–304]. Below, the authors have provided a table in which the influence of philosophical anthropological challenges of wartime on the psycho-emotional and ideological nature of a person is systematized, which determines the formation of a new identity of the Ukrainian nation.

**Table 1. Anthropological challenges of wartime and their impact on the creation of a new identity of the Ukrainian nation**

Phenomenon	Manifestation	Philosophical reflection	Consequences
<b>Dehumanization</b>	Loss of awareness of the enemy's human traits and identification of him as the “other”.	The concept of the “other” (According to E. Levinas).	Destruction of habitual moral orientations, tolerating violence.
<b>Solidarity</b>	Formation of a sense of “we” and stimulation of collective national identity.	The concept of the “anthropological code of culture”.	Deepening identity through the consolidation of society.
<b>Trauma</b>	The change in consciousness is determined by the traumatic experience of war.	The concept of existential anthropology which is the ultimate experience that leads to changes in the perception of oneself and of being.	The emergence and development of a new type of historical memory which determines the development of national identity.
<b>Heroism</b>	Service and willingness to sacrifice.	The concept of metaanthropology of heroism and the metamarginal dimension of a person as the ability to go beyond the boundaries of one's own dimension.	The experience of war is transformed into symbolic capital and becomes a part of national identity.

Source: Bazaluk (2016) [5], Hamytov (2023) [5], Oharenko (2024) [10], Rafalskyi et al. (2020) [13], Tarnashynska (2019) [15].

Thus, as can be seen from Table 2, the anthropological challenges of wartime affect personal changes and contribute to the creation of a new identity of the Ukrainian nation, which increasingly integrates the features of “homo militaris” as a person who fights for survival, protects his personal and national borders, as well as the cultural and national identity of the people [7, p. 82–86; 9, p. 204–206; 10, pp. 194–202; 14, pp. 228–304]. Thus, war as a phenomenon of the extremity of existence appears as a dichotomous radical that frightens, traumatizes, divides and devastates, but at the same time unites, creates crisis conditions in which there is a rethinking of everyday meanings of life and can lead to a sense of deep involvement and significance in national interests, which can serve as a certain compensation for war traumas and serve as a basis for creating a new identity.



## 6. Conclusions

Wars are integral phenomena of civilizational development in relations between states, remaining one of the most tragic and interesting topics of scientific research, being one of the basic personifications of the source, which makes it possible to determine the essence of the idea of a person and the transformations of being inherent in his nature during an extreme crisis provoked by war and life during wartime. The purpose of this article was to address the need for a theoretical study of the features of the anthropological transformation of the modern idea of man and such wartime phenomena inherent in human life as meeting with the categories of death and heroism. Within the framework of the tasks, it was determined that the identity of a person, which is transformed in the philosophically anthropological semantic regimes of wartime, undergoes dichotomous changes that develop through the phenomena of trauma, solidarity, dehumanization and heroism, creating its own unique national code of resistance, which is based on sacrifice, as an aspect of public responsibility and strong partnership, a sense of heroism and strengthening the values of cultural and national heritage, humanization of life on the basis for understanding one's own and national death, as well as deepening understanding and respect for freedom and the value of life. Thus, it can be noted that the identity of the Ukrainian nation is to some extent undergoing a rapid phase of existential and cultural transformation, which leads to the renewal of patriotic values of the young independent state, thereby forming a stable understanding of the parallel "we are others". Such a deepening of national-patriotic identification intensifies the movement towards the preservation and acquisition of European values, as well as the creation of one's own cultural authenticity of Ukrainian statehood and culture of the XXI century, within the framework of which the idea of a person acquires from one greater movement towards militarization, and on the other – the nurturing of humanistic values and freedoms. Thus, we can say that death appears in this case as the beginning of a new identification of the people, and heroism is the goal of preserving life, protecting society and the state, and establishing peace. The authors see prospects for further research in deepening the understanding of the symbolism of the category of death in the life and folklore of the Ukrainian people.

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