



# Identity and Personal Development

## A Short Overview

# What is „Identity“?

Personal identity deals with questions that arise about ourselves by virtue of our being people (or, as lawyers and philosophers like to say, *persons*).

Many of these questions are familiar ones that occur to everyone at some time:



# Some Questions:

- ⇒ **What am I?**
- ⇒ **When did I begin?**
- ⇒ **What will happen to me when I die?**
- ⇒ **Others are more abstruse. ..**



**Personal identity been discussed since the origins of Western philosophy, and most major figures have had something to say about it.**

**Eric T. Olson Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophie,  
online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-personal/>**



**“Personal Identity“ is developed in a process of negotiation and renegotiation of a personal narrative within a physical and mental context.**

**This work is to be done taking into account on the one hand the personal demands of the person and on the other hand the expectations of society.**

# Personal Identity

“Representation and Beliefs of a Person about his/her uniqueness as an singular individual“ – is an often used definition.

Lucas Derks gives 6 examples of how to express personal identity:

## 1. Synonym:

z. B. „Ich bin ich.“

=> „I am I.“

## 2. Ueber den eigenen Namen:

z. B. „Ich bin Max Mustermann.“

=> with a name: „I am Ulrike.“

## 3. Ueber eine Metapher,

z. B. „Ich bin ein Elefant.“

=> with a metaphor: „I am an elephant!“



# Some more Examples

4. Ueber eine persönliche Eigenschaft:

z. B. „Ich bin sportlich.“

=> with a quality: „I am sporty!“

5. Ueber einen Namen für eine soziale Kategorie:

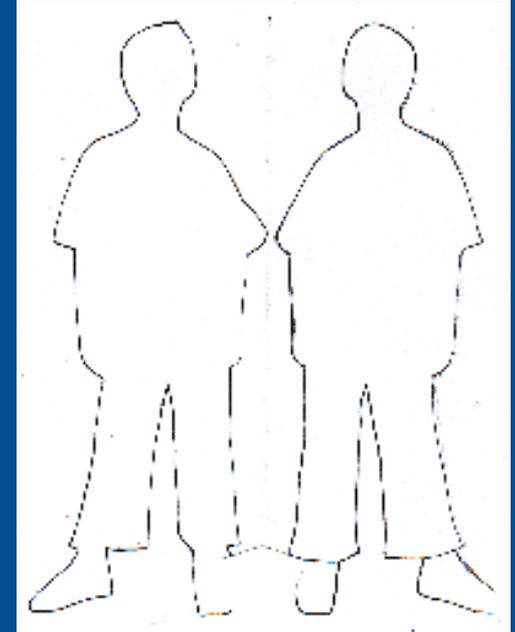
z. B. „Ich bin ein Lehrer.“

=> with a social category: „I am a teacher.“

6. Ueber eine bewertete Eigenschaft in sozialen Kategorien:

z. B. „Ich bin ein guter Lehrer.“

=> with a rated quality in a social category: „I am a good teacher.“



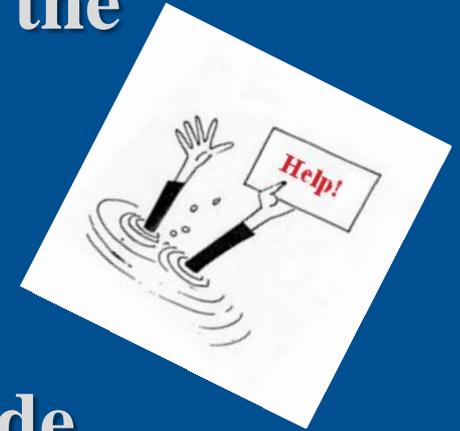
# Personal Identity ↔ Social Identity

The individual has to manage to keep the balance between the

⇒ their own view of themselves

and

⇒ the social (foreign) view from outside.

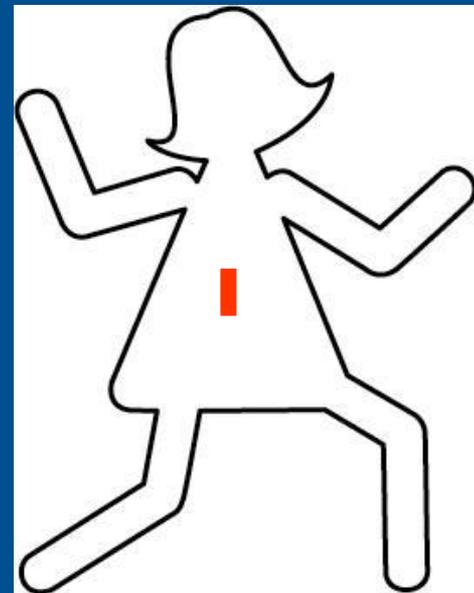


This has already been explained by MEAD, who speaks about „I“ and „ME“ to show the two sides of a person.

# I

**The „I“ is all that a person thinks about himself / herself.**

**All the wishes and desires in oneself and all the potential a person has.**



# ME

**This is everything that is conveyed to the single person from the outside i. e. family, school, friends, society in general.**

**The individual person is asked to react to these demands and expectations somehow.**





**Dr. Ulrike Kurth**

**Cyprus 2009**

# I ↔ ME

Now the main task is to bring both sides together. A person should not neglect the „*I*“ – the own wishes and hopes and ideas, but the „*ME*“ has also to be paid attention to, because the individual person lives in a social context and he/she has to take into account the fact that the people around are also important for his/her future life and further development.

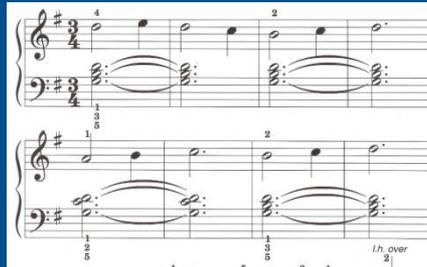
# SOCIETY has many forms

Now we have to get aware of the fact that not only do the people living around us have a certain amount of influence on us, but also „products“ that have been passed down from previous generations:

Literature



Music



Arts





# Literature

- We come into contact with books very early:**
- ⇒ parents read stories to their children,**
  - ⇒ we read children`s books when we are able to read for ourselves,**
  - ⇒ we are asked to read books at school – „national writers“ that we are expected to know,**
  - ⇒ we get used to reading and reading becomes a hobby.**

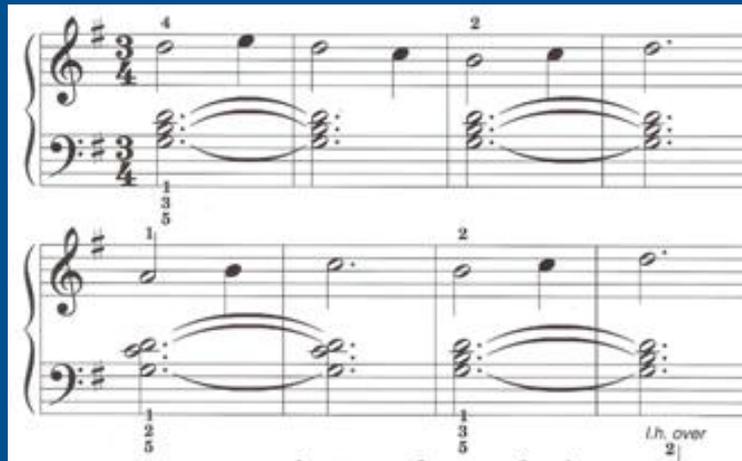
# Music

It appears that children are already aware of music even before they are born.

Music accompanies us our whole life:

- ⇒ children`s songs,
- ⇒ songs at special festivals or holidays  
(Christmas / Easter / Birthday),
- ⇒ hymns in church,
- ⇒ music for entertainment.

We are aware of national composers and some of us learnt how to play instruments when we were younger.



# ARTS

Even before children have learnt to read they look at pictures.

Even before children have learnt to write, they express themselves in „hieroglyphics“.

A picture is a compact form of information.

A lot of words can be expressed through a picture, as well as feelings, which can be conveyed through pictures.

We get also come to know national artists because we find their work on calendars, on postcards and sometimes even on sweet boxes or cups.



# All this is influencing us:

Since we are surrounded by all these influences during our lives, we get used to them almost without being aware of it.

We have to renew our consciousness of

⇒ tones

⇒ colours and

⇒ letters

which are important for our self identities.

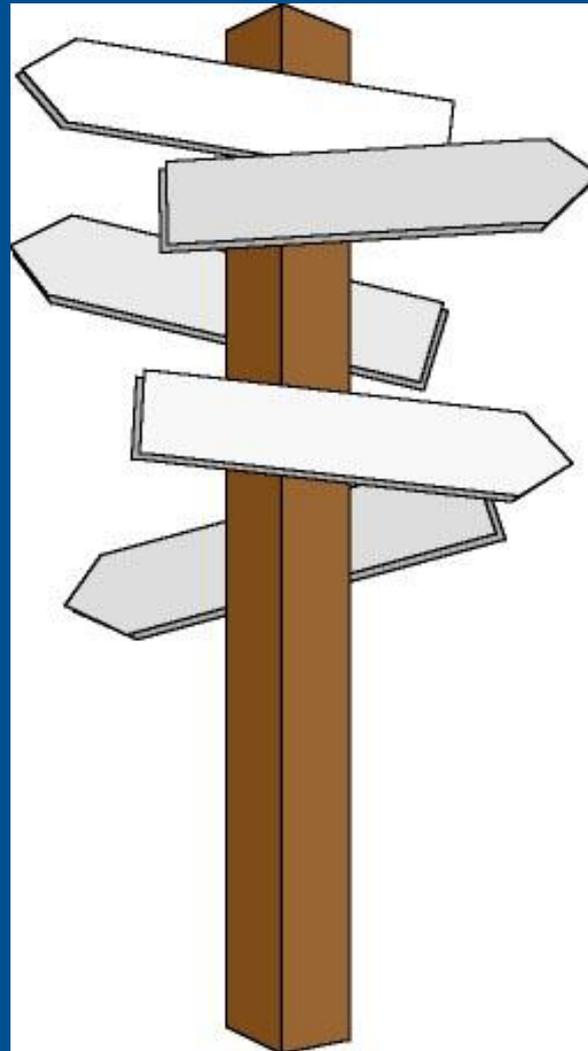
And it is even more interesting to make comparisons.

So let`s see what is happening around us.

For example in **EUROPE!**



# Are We Aware of I and Me???



IVAN STEIGER

