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Identity and Citizenship in the Contemporary Context: A Philosophical–Sociological Reading of the Transformations of Belonging

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Abstract:

Identity is understood as a relative and problematic concept that is not based on permanence but rather formed as a social and historical construct resulting from continuous interaction among individuals and groups. It is an ongoing process grounded in shared symbols and meanings that ensure social cohesion and distinctiveness. However, this cohesion has been affected by the transformations of the modern nation-state and by colonial cultural penetration, which generated tensions within historical identity. With globalization and the accelerated flow of information and ideas, the complexity of the identity question has intensified, making identity a subject of continuous redefinition.

Keywords: Collective Interaction; Cultural Penetration; Globalization; Identity; Social Construction;

I. INTRODUCTION

Discussing the philosophical concept of identity, beyond the problems that the concept itself raises, remains a relative and problematic undertaking. Identity, by its very nature, is not a completed entity that either exists or does not exist; rather, identities are constructed by their own bearers. From this perspective, one may assume the existence of a minimal level of presumed agreement concerning a particular identity, in a manner that allows for the formation of an independent human entity and for consensus regarding the general symbols of that entity. While we acknowledge that the historical and civilizational identity of the inhabitants of any region of the world was settled centuries ago, the emergence of the modern nation-state under conditions of colonial cultural penetration has threatened—and continues to threaten—that historical civilizational identity of the entity in question. This situation compels us to raise, with urgency, questions about this identity, despite the factors of threat we observe and witness affecting major national identities. These threats are generally based on the increasing penetration of geographical and cultural boundaries, as well as on the expansion of means of communication and cultural, media, economic, and commercial exchange among peoples. This is further reinforced by an unprecedented flow of information and ideas across the world, a development that renders the element of citizenship—closely linked to the concept of identity in its various manifestations and forms—particularly significant.

Study Problem

The problem addressed in this study is defined by an attempt to understand the nature of the transformations that have affected the concept of identity in the context of the emergence of the modern nation-state and the acceleration of the dynamics of globalization and cultural penetration. Identity is no longer a fixed given or a final accomplishment; rather, it has become a field of contestation and reconfiguration under the influence of transnational cultural and symbolic flows. Within this context, a central question arises concerning the extent to which national identity is capable of maintaining its coherence in light of the erosion of traditional cultural boundaries. The study also raises the issue of the dialectical relationship between identity and citizenship, considering them as two organizing frameworks of individual and collective belonging. Accordingly, this study seeks to deconstruct and analyze this relationship in order to understand how belonging is reconstructed within the contemporary context.

The following sub-questions fall under this problem:

- How can identity be understood as a historically variable social construct in light of the transformations imposed by the modern nation-state?
- To what extent have cultural penetration and globalization contributed to the reconfiguration of national identity and generated tensions within its symbolic and civilizational structure?
- What is the nature of the relationship between identity and citizenship in the contemporary context, and how is this relationship affected by transformations in forms of belonging amid the accelerating flow of information and the transcendence of cultural boundaries?

Study Objectives

- To analyze the concept of identity from a philosophical–sociological perspective as an incomplete historical social construct, formed through symbolic interaction and collective consensus within the framework of the nation-state.
- To deconstruct the impact of globalization and cultural penetration on the reconfiguration of national identity through examining the transformations affecting symbolic and value structures, as well as collective affiliations in the contemporary context.
- To explore the dialectical relationship between identity and citizenship, considering citizenship as a legal and symbolic embodiment of belonging, and to analyze how it is influenced by transformations in the global sphere and the transcendence of traditional cultural boundaries.
- Significance of the Study:
- This study contributes to deepening the sociological and philosophical understanding of identity as a dynamic construct and reveals the transformations in the relationship between identity and citizenship in the context of globalization.
- It provides an analytical framework that facilitates an understanding of the challenges of national belonging and supports the formulation of cultural and educational policies aimed at strengthening social cohesion in the contemporary context.

1. The Philosophical Framing of the Questions of Identity and Citizenship

1.1. Citizenship

The Encyclopedia Britannica indicates that citizenship is a relationship between an individual and a state, as defined by the law of that state, together with the duties and rights embodied in that relationship within that state. Britannica also affirms its understanding of the citizen by noting that citizenship generally confers upon the citizen political rights, such as the right to vote and to hold public office. The World Book Encyclopedia states that citizenship is full membership in a state or in some units of government. Like the Encyclopedia Britannica previously referred to, this encyclopedia does not distinguish between citizen and nationality. It further affirms that citizens possess certain rights, such as the right to vote and the right to hold public office, and are likewise bound by certain duties, such as the obligation to pay taxes and defend their country. Collier's Encyclopedia similarly defines the term "citizen" and the term "nationality" without distinction, as the most complete form of membership in a political community. These three encyclopedias suggest that, in democratic states, every adult of full legal capacity who holds the nationality of the state enjoys the rights of citizenship therein. This situation is not the same in non-democratic states, where nationality is merely a form of subjection (Manzur, 1968, p. 451), and does not necessarily entail political rights of citizenship, assuming such rights are available at all to anyone other than the rulers, and perhaps exclusively to the absolute individual ruler himself.

In Arabic, *muwāṭana* (citizenship) and *muwāṭin* (citizen) are derived from *waṭan*, meaning the home or place in which one resides; it is "a person's homeland and place." One says *waṭina* a place, meaning to reside in it; *waṭṭana* a country, meaning to adopt it as a homeland; and *tawaṭṭana* a country, likewise meaning to take it as a

homeland. The plural of *waṭan* is *awṭān*, referring to the place of a person's residence, whether or not he was born there. One also says *tawaṭṭanat nafsuhu ʿalā al-amr*, meaning that the self has been disposed toward or committed to a matter. The plural of *mawṭin* is *mawāṭin*, meaning one's place, homeland, or one of the sites of battle. God Almighty says: "Indeed, Allah has given you victory in many battlefields." A *muwāṭin* is one who was raised in a homeland or resided in it; one also says *awṭana al-arḍ* or *istawṭanahā*, that is, he took it as a homeland. *Muwāṭana* is the verbal noun of *wāṭana*, meaning to share a place in terms of residence and birth, since the verb follows the pattern *fāʿala*. Terminologically, *waṭaniyya* denotes love of homeland, in a clear reference to feelings of love and attachment to the homeland and the emotional responses that arise therefrom. Citizenship, by contrast, is the quality of the citizen through which his national rights and duties are defined. The individual comes to know his rights and performs his duties through national education. Citizenship is distinguished by a particular kind of loyalty on the part of the citizen toward his homeland, by his service to it in times of peace and war, and by cooperation with other citizens through institutional and individual, formal and voluntary action in pursuit of the goals to which all aspire, for whose sake efforts are unified, plans are drawn, and budgets are allocated. In international law, citizenship denotes nationality. Hyde argues (Siyam, 2007, p. 07) that "the distinction between citizenship and nationality is a product of national law; citizenship refers to the rights that the state deems it appropriate to grant to certain individuals who are also among its people."

It becomes clear from the foregoing discussion that the principle of citizenship, as established in contemporary political thought, is a comprehensive and complex historical concept with several diverse dimensions: some are material-legal, some are cultural-behavioral, and some are either means or ends that may be attained gradually. Accordingly, the quality of citizenship in a given state is affected by political maturity, civilizational advancement, the beliefs of societies, and the values of civilizations. The concept of citizenship across the ages is likewise shaped by political and social development, by the beliefs of societies, by the values of civilizations, and by major global transformations. Hence, it is difficult to formulate a comprehensive and fixed definition of the principle of citizenship (Batfield, 1994, p. 14).

I read an article by the Moroccan thinker Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, which can be summarized in the phrase he used in that article to describe his feeling in terms of what psychology refers to as "affective ambivalence" (Ould Dib, 2010, p. 35).

Citizenship in language. Since language constitutes the vessel of thought, it is necessary to examine more closely the linguistic meaning of citizenship. The triliteral root of the term "citizenship" derives from *watan* (homeland). According to the Arabic electronic researcher, among the meanings attributed to *watan* are: the dwelling in which one resides, the place one adopts as a seat or abode, and the places to which animals retreat. Another meaning refers to preparing oneself to undertake a certain matter. It is easy to observe that none of these definitions resemble what is currently intended by the term *homeland*. Al-Jabri states that he did not encounter the word "citizenship" in any of the Arabic dictionaries or classical heritage texts. His search yielded this word only in a single work by Imad ad-Din al-Isfahani, where the term "muwatana" appeared once with the meaning of companionship. As for the word "muwatin" (citizen), it contains nothing authentically Arabic other than its morphological form. He further argues that within the linguistic—hence intellectual and emotional—repertoire of the Arabs there exists nothing that conveys what is today

meant by the terms “citizenship” and “citizen.” It is therefore appropriate to state that the terms *watan* (homeland) and *muwatin* (citizen) are the product of a civilization that has taken shape in modern times.

This perhaps recalls the title of the book by Khaled Mohammed Khaled (Bashir Nafi, Beirut, pp. 36-40). The citizen, as a concept or a value, had not yet fully emerged. This condition is not limited to Arabic. It is widely recognized that throughout past societies human beings lived as subjects of temporal authority. The concept of the citizen—and likewise the homeland—did not take shape until later periods. Thus, both the term *homeland* and its associated meaning are relatively modern.

Citizenship as a concept. In terminological usage, citizenship denotes a condition of belonging to a single community that shares a set of social, cultural, and political bonds within a single geographical territory known as the state. According to the theory of the social contract advanced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the citizen possesses a set of rights and is bound by a range of duties and social responsibilities that must be fulfilled in order to safeguard those rights. From the concept of citizenship, Rousseau derives the notion of the “active citizen,” defined as the individual who participates in elevating the civilizational level of his society through the official work to which he belongs or through voluntary activity. Owing to the importance of the concept of citizenship, many states today endeavor to define it and to highlight the rights that citizens must possess as well as the responsibilities they must fulfill toward society, in addition to instilling the value of the active citizen within the minds of learners.

Citizenship did not emerge in such a manner instantaneously. Like all major human phenomena, it is the product of the cumulative layering of experiences, events, ideas, history, geography, ethnicities, wars, and revolutions. All these factors have contributed to the formation and development of the relationship between the state and the individual. This relationship seeks simultaneously to realize both the selfhood of the individual and that of the state through the acquisition of rights and the imposition of duties. It constitutes the most effective means of consolidating the values of peaceful and tolerant coexistence among the members of a single homeland, establishing the foundations of equality and justice, and combating exclusion through the institutionalization of the principle of equal opportunity.

1.1.1 Dimensions of Citizenship

Citizenship encompasses multiple dimensions that are integrated and interconnected in complete harmony, functioning as the foundational pillars upon which it is constructed. These dimensions of citizenship can be summarized into four main categories (Al-Anzi, 2005, p. 128):

a. **The Legal Dimension:** This dimension regulates the relationship between the individual and the state on the basis of a charter that harmonizes individual interests with those of society. It allows individuals to pursue their personal interests without harming the interests of the community, while the welfare of society is realized through the fulfillment of the interests of its members. In essence, the legal dimension is fundamentally a political one, as it refers to political rights and the responsibilities that derive from them. The development of this dimension occurs through knowledge of political systems, the strengthening of democratic attitudes, and the teaching of skills related to political participation. These include engagement in civil society institutions, understanding electoral processes and how they are practiced, familiarity with

party laws, comprehension of press and media freedom, support for fundamental human rights, and participation in institutions dedicated to the defense of human rights, among others.

b. **The Social Dimension:** The concept of the social dimension refers to the system of interaction between individuals and society, and it is based on processes of loyalty and solidarity among members of the community grounded in their sense of belonging to it. The social dimension is developed through combating social isolation, exclusion, and marginalization; protecting human rights; integrating different ethnic groups and minorities; opposing discrimination and favoritism; and working toward the consolidation of social rights. It also involves ensuring the minimum requirements for a dignified life for those unable to provide them for themselves, such as housing, food, clothing, and employment suited to their capacities.

c. **The Economic Dimension:** The economic dimension aims to preserve the dignity and humanity of the individual by satisfying basic material needs and ensuring the minimum level necessary for their fulfillment. These essential needs include food, clothing, housing, education, and medical care. This dimension also encompasses the right to work and the right to a minimum standard of living in the absence of employment opportunities.

d. **The Civilizational and Cultural Dimension:** This dimension refers to awareness of the cultural heritage of the components of society and is grounded in respect for individual particularity and for cultural and civilizational identity. It rejects attempts at assimilation, marginalization, or homogenization. The civilizational dimension can be developed through knowledge and study of cultural heritage, familiarity with history, mastery of local languages in both reading and writing, combating discrimination, and preserving the environment.

1.1.2 Citizenship Rights

Both private and public rights, such as the right to security and safety, health, education, employment, public basic services, freedom of movement and expression, and political participation.

1.1.3 Duties Citizenship

These include respect for public order, the preservation of public property, the defense of the homeland, solidarity and unity with fellow citizens, and contributing to the construction and prosperity of the nation. They also include participation in the public sphere, engagement in political decision-making (through voting and candidacy), the management of public institutions, and involvement in all matters related to the governance and destiny of the nation. It is easy to observe that all these meanings do not contradict identity; however, they are not directly related to the concept of citizenship. From this emerges the problematic relationship linking the nation, the homeland, and identity. This problematic encompasses several dimensions within our reality, two of which may be highlighted.

The first is the ethnic dimension. We speak of the Arab nation and assert that it extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf. Yet are all the peoples described as Arab truly Arab? We are well aware that the discourse on nationalities has led both the Kurdish nationality in the northeastern part of the Arab nation and the Amazigh

nationality in its western part to mobilize and demand recognition of their distinct status within the region (Al-Dawood, 1985, p. 28).

The second is the religious dimension. When discussing the Islamic nation, this discourse may not generate significant problems in the North African region, given the relative absence of religious and even sectarian plurality. However, the situation differs in countries where religious and sectarian diversity is pronounced, such as Egypt, the Levant, and Iraq.

Therefore, it is not possible to speak of the Arab nation within the framework of a homeland characterized by ethnic diversity, nor can we speak of the Islamic nation within a homeland marked by religious and sectarian plurality.

The State: We may not be mistaken if we resort to another concept capable of resolving this problematic, namely the concept of the state. One of the notable features of the state concept is the principle of alternation of power, that is, the peaceful transfer of authority, or at least as it is presumed to occur—without being inherently tied to ethnicity or creed unless it is explicitly constrained by them. The state thus constitutes a legal framework at the apex of which stands what is known as the social contract, or the constitution. The social contract (Adam, 1999, p. 99) is founded upon equality in rights and duties for all members of society, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or sectarian affiliations.

1.2. Identity

The linguistic meaning of identity is derived from the pronoun *huwa* ("he"). The expression *"huwa huwa"*, composed of the repetition of the pronoun *huwa*, becomes a noun defined by the definite article *al-* and denotes unity with the self (Muqlid, 2011, pp. 10-11), together with the suffix represented by the intensified relational *yāʾ* and the feminine *tāʾ*. There is no root for the word *identity* (*huwiyya*) or for the word *huwa* in Arabic lexicons. For example, the electronic Arabic Researcher, which uses *Lisān al-ʿArab*, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, and *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* as sources, when employed to search for the word *huwa* or the word *huwiyya*, returns the phrase: "No matching or related words or expressions exist." Therefore, the prevailing belief is that the term *identity* is not originally Arabic but rather a derived term coined by early translators from the copulative particle *huwa*, which among Arabs indicates the linkage of the predicate to the subject, as in the statement "the camel is an animal," extending beyond this grammatical function to the philosophy of existence and the question of consciousness (Al-Mallah, 2009, p. 211).

Identity is defined as the totality of characteristics that distinguish something from something else, a person from another person, or one group from another. Each entity possesses several elements within its being, and these elements or characteristics collectively constitute its identity. These elements are dynamic: some may become prominent at a certain stage while others emerge at another stage. Thus, the concept of identity refers to that by which a thing is what it is, or is itself. Many scholars maintain that identity is the container of the collective consciousness of a particular human community; this container includes a set of values, customs, and fundamental components. These components shape the community's awareness and its will to exist and live, and they function to preserve its entity (Schnapper, 2016, p. 91). From this definition, it can be inferred that identity is not merely a means of distinguishing the self but also a means of defending it.

Aristotle defined identity as "the unity of a being, or the fact that a single thing is identical with itself." This Aristotelian conception did not change among philosophers

of the Enlightenment; they all agreed that identity is the thing itself. Contemporary philosophical encyclopedias have conveyed the same meaning of identity, considering it a category that expresses the equality and sameness of a subject or a phenomenon with itself. Muslim scholars, however, went further in defining identity. Al-Jurjānī defined it as "the absolute reality that contains all realities in the manner that the seed contains the tree" (Ould Dib, 2010, p. 35).

Al-Jurjānī's concept of identity operates on two levels: the individual level, represented by the singular self (the seed), and the collective level, represented by human communities that share a set of fundamental characteristics over which they have no choice (the tree). Rather, these characteristics emerge with them into the world of existence—such as color and language—and through them they are distinguished from other human groups that may sometimes share with them the same geographical space and even historical memory, yet differ from them in color or language (Al-Tawwab, 2011, p. 12).

From a linguistic perspective, identity is a compound word derived from the third-person pronoun *"huwa"* (he), to which the suffix of attribution (*yāʾ al-nisba*) is added. The term thus denotes the essence of the person or thing concerned as it exists in reality, with the characteristics and distinguishing features by which it is recognized. In this sense, identity refers to the designation of an entity or existence as it truly is—that is, the existence of a person, a people, or a nation according to specific foundations, attributes, and characteristics that enable the precise recognition of the bearer of that identity without confusion with others who may resemble it. Identity is therefore defined as a "composite" of selected referential, material, and subjective elements that allow for a specific definition of social interaction. This interpretation is presented by Turki al-Hamad in his book *Arab Culture in the Age of Globalization* (Al-Najjar, 2008, pp. 34-35).

From a philosophical perspective, dictionaries indicate that identity is an attribute assigned to a being, a category, or an object by which it is known. When one thing resembles another in every respect, they share the same identity, as in the case of twins or the similarity of names and subjects; in such instances they are identical in terms of identity. As a philosophical principle, identity expresses a specific logical necessity: it affirms that what exists is always itself and is not confused with what does not belong to it; it remains identical to itself, as expressed by the principle of identity, according to which a person remains himself regardless of the changes he may undergo (Mucchielli, 1993, p. 15).

From the perspective of psychology, identity refers to the condition in which a thing remains the same or identical to itself in all respects, characterized by continuity, stability, and the absence of change. The identity of any nation consists of the attributes that distinguish it from other nations and that express its civilizational personality. Identity invariably comprises three principal elements: belief, which provides a vision of existence; language, through which expression takes place; and a long-term cultural heritage. Language follows religion as a distinguishing factor separating the culture of one people from that of another, while history and the various components of culture subsequently contribute to the formation of identity. Among the most important elements of identity is religion, for in times of war identities composed of multiple elements often dissolve. Identity is of paramount importance, as interests proceed from

it; people cannot think or act rationally in pursuing their particular interests unless they first know themselves (Hanafi, p. 15).

Therefore, the automatic function of identity is to protect the individual and collective self from forces of erosion and dissolution. This functional conception of identity enables us to distinguish between two interpretations of its meaning:

- The static or essentialist conception of identity: which regards identity as something complete and finalized in the past, realized within a specific historical period or within a particular social model, and considers the present merely an attempt to perceive and realize that model (Ghassan Taha, 2010, p. 15).

- The historical and dynamic conception of identity: which views identity as something continually acquired and modified rather than a fixed essence. Identity is therefore capable of transformation and development, since the history of any people is a continuously renewed history filled with events and experiences.

- Among the most important factors contributing to the reshaping of identity are the following (Hammoudi, 2005, p. 135):

- Neighborhood or shared geographical space: when two identities coexist in proximity and the extent of spatial interaction between them expands as a result of ongoing activity, various forms of attraction arise between them, some negative and others positive (for example, European identity).

- Shared history: the presence and recollection of the past (for example, Arab identity).

- Firm religious belief: in this regard the late scholar Muhammad al-Ghazali stated, “We are Copts whom Islam has Arabized.”

- Popular culture: harmony in the shared popular cultural heritage and coherence with common myths and folklore (as in regional identities).

2. The relationship between Citizenship and Identity

The concept of citizenship refers to the geographical affiliation of members of society through their attachment to a specific geographical space represented by the city, the state, and the homeland in the present era. Identity, by contrast, refers to cultural affiliation—that is, belonging to a set of beliefs, values, and norms defined by the social culture to which the individual belongs and which he or she acquires through birth and through the process of proper socialization experienced throughout life.

Identity is therefore indispensable to citizenship, since citizens necessarily require a political system, economic and social relations, and laws that regulate these relations. All of this is built upon beliefs, values, and norms—in other words, upon a particular identity. It is not the homeland to which citizens belong that determines the type of identity to which they are affiliated. A single homeland may successively experience different, even contradictory, systems. Identity thus functions as the lens through which citizens perceive what is appropriate or inappropriate, beneficial or harmful, for their homeland. If the lenses differ, the evaluations of observers regarding what they perceive will also differ, even if they agree on empirical facts. Regardless of the sincerity of citizens’ loyalty to their homeland and their concern for its interests, they cannot view those interests solely from the standpoint of citizenship; rather, they

inevitably interpret them through the framework of their identities. Some individuals, however, assume that citizens of a given country can resolve their problems merely by virtue of their national affiliation. Citizens must therefore possess an identity and a culture that serve as the lens through which they interpret reality.

It is not possible for the economic system within a single country to be both capitalist and socialist simultaneously. Nor can a market economy be capitalist—permitting usury—and at the same time Islamic—prohibiting it and imposing almsgiving (zakāt). Similarly, a political system cannot be Islamic, adhering to divine law on the basis that legislative authority belongs to God, and democratic, granting this authority to human beings who legislate as they wish. Particularly in the contemporary era, in which interests have become intertwined in an unprecedented manner in world history, the concept of the nation-state has begun to diminish, giving way to alliances or unions among multiple states. However, such alliances succeed only when they are founded upon shared identities. A notable example is the European Union, which encountered little difficulty in incorporating countries possessing, to some extent, a European identity (Huntington, 2005, p. 35).

Citizenship, therefore, constitutes a geographical affiliation, whereas identity represents a cultural affiliation. Identity is indispensable to citizenship, since citizens necessarily require a political system, economic and social relations, and legal frameworks that regulate these relations. All of these are grounded in beliefs, values, and norms—in other words, in a particular identity. Identity is generally considered an internal matter within a given homeland; however, reality demonstrates otherwise. The relationship between the homeland and identity is far from being one of complete correspondence. This situation gives rise to numerous problems. Just as the multiplicity of identities within a single homeland may lead to its fragmentation, the convergence of identities across multiple homelands may result in an expansion of national boundaries, either through the incorporation of certain states into others or through close cooperation among them that effectively renders them as a single homeland, as is currently the case in the European Union (Huntington, 1999, p. 359).

The duality of citizenship and identity represents two forms of belonging, or, more precisely, two synonymous expressions of belonging. Viewing belonging as an innate and instinctive sentiment, disseminated through national songs or religious chants, constitutes an oversimplified understanding of this fundamental relationship. The sense of homeland forms the basis of both belonging and citizenship. Yet the sense of homeland is neither sacred nor immutable; rather, it is subject to change. Human experience across various parts of the world confirms that belonging is not determined by birth certificates but by what the country provides. Citizenship therefore necessitates openness toward multiple identities. Consequently, every identity must allow openness toward other identities; it is inconceivable for identity to remain closed upon itself. Instead, it must remain flexible and capable of positive adaptation—an adaptation that respects origins without compromising fundamental principles—so that evolving judgments remain responsive to the authority of reality and the necessities of circumstances. Any ethical issue encountered by citizens, by virtue of their national belonging regardless of their backgrounds, constitutes a matter that directly affects their lives. Nevertheless, they may differ in the methods through which they address such issues. Religious individuals, regardless of their particular faith, will regard religion as a lens through which solutions are perceived, encouraging the virtues of moral values and discouraging practices that undermine their foundations.

3. Conclusion

Identity is not a closed structure; rather, it is a structure in constant transformation, albeit around an axis of continuity. It is a concept that reflects itself under the lens of time and its criteria, within the context of a reciprocal relationship founded upon interaction—whether realized or suppressed—with the givens of existence and the components of the surrounding environment. Consequently, it cannot be approached in isolation from an awareness of the ways in which it is affected by the temporal authority of history, by the dynamics of life and the aims of movement, or by cultural, social, economic, political, and legal conditions, whether active or static.

In this light, identity is not a completed cultural or societal reality; rather, it consists of essential values that unfold within a reality continually renewed through human understanding, perception, and dynamism, as well as through humanity's capacity to confront the problems of life and of its era, to transcend the necessities that govern it, and to overcome the constraints that limit the scope of its freedom. These essential values may also become susceptible to losing their essence if they stagnate or perish, or if the continuity of their being within the absolute in whose expanse they have been essentially realized is lost. This occurs when they cease to be capable of realization within the reality of human life, or when human beings cease to read the messages of existence.

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