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INSTITUTE OF ECONOMY, MANAGEMENT AND LAW (Kazan)  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Moscow)

## **DIOGENES' LANTERN: THE HUMAN BEING IN DIVERSITY OF PRACTICE**

THE INTERNATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL JOURNAL

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### OUR AUTHORS

## FROM THE EDITORS

We start a new publishing project devoted to social and anthropological practices.

The program and conceptual strategy of this project is formed-up under the aegis of an ancient symbol, *Diogenes' Lantern*.

In the present-day world Diogenes' Lantern is needed more than in ancient Athens. The great cynic had only to distinguish the "human" from "scoundrels", but today there are plenty of different kinds of humans around us, an anthropological maze, which is much more difficult to look into. The human became pluralistic and extremely variegated, he/she can be actual or virtual, he/she is changed and continues to change, and makes plans to disappear turning into some kind of the post-human. According to some opinions, he/she has disappeared already. His/her contours are very vague since his/her borders with all his/her surrounding, with society, the world of technology, the world of nature, become changed and confused under our very eyes. Last but not least, he/she hardly imagines now who he/she is, he/she is not the "subject" anymore, but no one knows who, he/she adopts varied identities of all sorts and shreds of identities... Surely, it is impossible to see anything in such a muddle without a lantern.

Diogenes' Lantern is one of ancient cultural symbols of European civilization, a part of its basic fund. It has its own specific mission in this fund. This mission or message is to make the human problematic, to posit the problem of the human, and to do this in a flash, in a sharp form, and in paradoxical colors. The human appears at once as an acute question for him/herself. This mission of the symbol is maximally in demand nowadays because the present image of the human is disintegrated and obscure and virtually unknown. Diogenes' Lantern is a necessity for an anthropologist in such day and age.

Turning to the ancient symbol today we find that it still keeps its creative force. It can give us valuable reference points for our search for the human. Diogenes was a practical man! With his lantern he did not plunge in meditation, but "wandered everywhere" watching his fellow-countrymen in their trade. We find it necessary to learn this lesson of the philosopher. We believe that nowadays just as in Diogenes' times it is impossible to "find the human" basing the search on any "fundamental principles" or seemingly unshakeable truths and postulates on the human. It is impossible and hopeless to try to build-up speculative constructions of the old type based on essentialist notions. Following Diogenes who was looking for the human wandering everywhere we want to take practices and manifestations of the human as the subject of study. Generally speaking, we want to include all the manifold, all the spectrum of these practices into the field illuminated by our "Lantern". Social, political, cultural practices should also be in this field since they all are also practiced by the human. Borders between the Anthropological and the Social are changing today, they change both their position and their meaning, and we consider the elucidation and reflection of these borders as one of urgent tasks of our "Lantern".

According to our design, the pages of our journal should be a common ground, a place for meeting and dialogue of all active and creative trends in contemporary social and anthropological thought. The task of the initiators is to provide necessary conditions for this dialogue and give it the chance to become fruitful. To this end we shall draw upon the resources of synergic anthropology, a modern trend, which develops a new anthropological conception studying and re-interpreting the experience of ancient schools of self-transformation, spiritual practices and, in the first place, Eastern-Christian hesychasm. It was synergic anthropology that brought back the symbol of Diogenes' Lantern into the orbit of modern anthropological thought: it has produced two works with this title, in which the ancient symbol was applied to the present-day anthropological situation. Our new project will continue this line. The development of synergic anthropology shows that it can provide a wide enough platform and a free, nonrestrictive vocabulary for modern anthropological discussion. In many aspects it is close to

the conception of “practices of the Self”, which Michel Foucault elaborated in his last years, and we think that these two approaches offer some framework and open good prospects for modern study of the human in all the diversity of his/her practices. Embracing all the spectrum of anthropological formations and spiritual practices, synergic anthropology provides also a good conceptual platform for cross-cultural studies as well as for the promotion of the ideas of dialogue of religions and civilizations.

Along with these immediate goals, the project includes also a certain circle of further and more large-scale plans. In the modern intellectual situation, one of the most pressing needs is the cardinal reformation of all ensemble of scientific, humanistic and philosophical knowledge on new principles. Old structuring of this ensemble into academic disciplines and disciplinary discourses is now certainly obsolete. Inner form and structure of the ensemble should be made the subject of new and uncompromising reflection, which should give it new structure as well as new methodology and epistemology adequate to present-day social and anthropological reality. New studies of anthropological and social practices should provide the necessary ground for this radical renewal.

The composition and structure of the journal correspond to the general structure of the manifold of practices. In the “Diogenes’ Lantern” we plan to have the following thematic sections:

**Synergic Anthropology and Social Practices,**  
**Spiritual and Religious Practices,**  
**Political and Law Practices,**  
**Practices in Psychology and Psychotherapy,**  
**Cultural and Art Practices,**  
**Virtual Practices.**

Initial periodicity of the journal is one issue per year. In the future we plan to make it more frequent.