

## Formation of the collective personality in the information society

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**Abstract:** The paper focuses on the problems related to the development of the personality in the information society. The aim of the work is to show that the formation of a new type of collective personality occurs as a result of regular transformations in the socio-cultural sphere. The subject of the study is the evolution of the "collective personality" at the present stage, which is influenced by the information culture. The methodology of the research is based on the principle of an integrated approach to the study of the process of collective personality formation. The paper presents a socio-cultural analysis of the concept of the collective personality considered in the process of its transformation. The conceptual analysis of modern society makes it possible to put forward a hypothesis about the dead-end in the development of both an individual and a person dissolved in mass culture, whose needs are formed by the political and economic environment. The paper points to the urgency of the problem of interaction between the individual and society, which is presented at a new stage of development, under the influence of the latest information and communication technologies. The article analyzes the process of personality transformation in the information space and its opposition to mass society. It is noted that as a result of a regular process, a person in the information society does not dissolve in mass, but creates new forms of realization of individual creativity potential. It is assumed that the main factors that determine the positive socio-cultural dynamics of modern society include a conscious desire of the individual to get out of the total control of the mass consumption society. The novelty of the research is the assertion that a mass society and new communication technologies together contribute to the awakening of the collective personality. The work concludes that the modern personality is experiencing a state of crisis of "atomicity", followed by the realization of its collective essence. The field of application of the obtained research results is the theory of personality as part of social philosophy. **Keywords:** collective personality, socialization, information culture, information society, mass society, socio-cultural dynamics.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In modern society information is the main evolutionary factor. It has already become obvious that it is a mistake to connect the future only with the development of traditional social forms. The present stage in the historical formation of mankind has a number of tendencies, among which the progressive way of development (in the sense of the complication of the system, together with its ability to maintain the stability of its structure for quite a long time) is not only one of the possible, but the only clearly outlined. The purpose of the present research is to describe the most urgent issues arising at the transitional stage of the transformation of the personality from the individual to the collective. As the main problems arising here are the following: the problem of interaction between the individual and society at the present stage of development; the evolution of the personality through its opposition to mass society in the information space; identifying the main factors that determine the positive socio-cultural dynamics of modern society. Analysis of the problems named above requires the need to give a full description of a new type of "collective personality" and identify the main processes that hinder its development. The definition of the new content of the anthropological factor of evolution is essential for the modern understanding of personality. As one of the hypotheses, it is proposed to consider the idea that the main problems in the field of personal transformation are directly related to its transitional status.

In order to show the process of collective personality formation, it is necessary to identify and describe the main factors affecting the formation of a new type of personality. For example, gender changes can be considered as one of such factors. Gender changes suggest that the new personality, primarily in the social and spiritual terms, is oriented towards the "androgynous type". It seems that today it is already important to identify the consequences of such transformations both for an individual and for society as a whole.

The next factor is related to the direct influence of the information culture and the educational environment on the formation of a new type of "collective personality". For society, a serious consequence of such uncontrolled influence can be the strengthening of one of the traits of the transition period personality against the background of the general marginalization of culture - a tendency to unpredictable actions, which, above all, pose a danger in terms of spreading extremist ideas. As a result of such changes, extremism spreads in the globalizing world as a manifestation of the irrational behavior of a modern individual.

Obviously, today the most complex systems are created in the field of information technology and the functioning of knowledge. This requires increasing efforts of all socio-cultural structures that face a real prospect of their inability to face the challenges of information civilization (Mol', 2008). First of all, this problem is faced by a personality as a specific bearer of the fundamental values and characteristics of modern society.

The relevance of the research is related to the fact that the current situation is characterized by the transition from socially oriented development to the dominance of psycho-intellectual factors, on the one hand, and the discovery of new means and ways of self-realization, on the other. The evolution of the personality in the modern information society is at a new stage, which is characterized by a crisis of identity (Hesle, 1994). This transitional period impedes the formation of clear life goals, changes gender attitudes, defocuses the moral sphere, creates a favorable environment for cultural marginalization. It can be argued that at the given stage of its development the state of personality can be described by the principle of entropy, under the influence of which all the most essential personal characteristics change.

Overcoming the identity crisis is connected with the transition from the values of the modern society (with Eurocentric culture samples serving as benchmarks) to individualism, atomicity, to a new type of personality, based on collective values. However, the new "collective personality" is not a product of a totalitarian system with its ideological suppression of individual freedom, since the transition process in the development of the individual to the next stage is associated with new factors of evolution, among which, first of all, is the information factor being a great contribution to globalization processes around the world.

The main problem, which is in the focus of the present research, is associated with a noticeable lag in the most important social institutions responsible for the processes of socialization of the individual from the infocommunications evolution. As an example, it is possible to consider the institution of the family (and gender in general), which has now been visibly transformed, the institution of education (which is being restructured more difficultly and slowly) and the overall socio-cultural environment that forms a new value system. In the modern world, the meaning and sense of the anthropological factor of evolution is changing, which is manifested in the change of all key ways of human interaction, especially in the field of communications, as well as the basic worldview principles, benchmarks, needs.

### *1.1 Synopsis of the current studies on the issue*

We must admit that at the present stage of the development of science, there is already a wide variety of studies of the personality, including in the field of philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, etc. Classical works in the field of psychology (although acquaintance with them is mandatory), which contain the analysis of the structure of the personality,

behavioral characteristics, etc., is excluded from the analysis deliberately, since philosophical approach to the evolution of personality has a slightly different methodological basis, which changes the consideration of key concepts that describe the state of the modern personality.

At present, scientific literature is dominated by a significant number of research works related to specific aspects of studying the personality as a static phenomenon. At the same time, the issues of its evolution are often associated with a negative perception of its future in the light of the latest contemporary social, political, and cultural trends. Therefore, most of the research is focused on the problem of identity crisis beginning with classical works in the social and psychological field (Maslow, 1954, Erickson, 1968, et al.).

The ideas of V.I. Vernadsky, who claimed the possibility of an evolutionary leap of an individual and of humanity as a whole (Vernadsky, 1991, 2012), are of special significance for the understanding of the evolution of personality as an organic part of universal evolution.

Various problems of interaction between society and the individual are widely represented in now classical works of Western European scholars (Maslow, 1954; Cassirer, 1945; Tard G. 1998; Fromm, 1998; Baudrillard, 2015; Baudrillard, & Sioran 2015; Markuze, 2002; Jaspers, 1991; McQuail, 1987; Habermas, 1994).

Informatization of social processes and the influence of technogenic factors on various spheres of social life have become the object of study for modern researchers (Hesle, 1994; Zins, 2007a, 2007b; Isazadeh, 2004; Mohammad, 2013; Lukina & Samokhina 2015; Ariely, 2012).

The issue of information as a specific type of public good, its impact on the sphere of consumption and, in general, on the economic and management environment, has been most developed in studies of recent decades (Hallgren, & McAdams, 2000).

The transformation and the establishing of the information society are considered in the socio-cultural ideas of the twentieth century thinkers (Bell, 1976; Castells, 2003; Castells 2009; Daizard, 1986; Drucker, 2001; Erikson, 2006; Giddens, 1991; Habermas, 1994; Martin, 1995; Hallgren, 2000; Masuda, 1983; Mol', 2008; Norman, 1993; Stonier, 1983; Vernadsky, 1991; Webster, 1975; Bauman, 1994).

At present, there is an urgent need to conduct systematic studies that take into account the diversity of new factors affecting the evolution of the personality and describing it as an integral phenomenon.

### *1.2. Scientific novelty of the study*

The novelty of the research consists in the proposition to analyze the evolution of the personality and its gradual transformation into a "collective personality" under the influence of several (in fact, some factors have already become the subject of discussion in scientific circles, but attention is mainly focused on issues related to the identity problems of the modern personality) factors: globalization, information, gender, socio-cultural, etc.

The urgency and novelty of the problem of interaction between the individual and society is due to the fact that in the current decade the new stage of development has taken place under the influence of the latest information and communication technologies. As a result, there is a need to comprehend the process of personality transformation in the information space and its opposition to mass society that blurs the boundaries of its social and cultural identity.

The present paper puts forward a hypothesis about the existence of a regular process, due to which the personality in the information society does not dissolve in mass, but creates new forms of realization of the potential embodied in individual creativity. It is assumed that the main factors that determine the positive socio-cultural dynamics of modern society include a conscious desire of the individual to get out of the total control of the mass consumption society. Mass society and new communication technologies together contribute to the

awakening of the "collective personality". It is assumed that the modern personality is experiencing a state of crisis of "atomicity", followed by the realization of its collective essence.

### *1.3. Expected results of scientific research and their scientific and applied significance*

The expected result of the research is to work out the main provisions of the concept of "collective personality"; to describe the current situation in the modern information society, affecting the evolution of the individual; to show the features of the modern stage of the formation of the collective personality; to expand the use of methodological principles and research methods through an interdisciplinary approach.

Particularly relevant today is the study of factors that affect the identification of conditions that enhance the irrational behavior of the individual.

## **2. METHODS**

The concept of personality in modern science is the subject of research in various fields of knowledge. Due to the diversity of personality theories, the methodological base that has developed to date is quite complex and covers practically all known methods in the field of humanities and partially natural sciences.

The peculiarity of our research is the use of an interdisciplinary approach. At the same time, the methods of system analysis, the historical and genetic method, the dialectical, diachronic method, the socio-cultural approach and the evolutionary approach are mandatory. The principle of integrity and universal interconnection is considered to be the basic principle of the research. It helps to regard the phenomenon of personality as an integral system interacting with other systems necessary for its evolution and organization of life activity (information, cultural and natural environment, etc.).

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Collective personality as the main element of the development of modern society*

The traditional understanding of the individual is connected with the concept of the "atomic individual", that is, the fundamental properties of the personality, its value and status are directly determined by the ability for autonomous self-realization, the manifestation of unique, individual properties and activity. The basis for such autonomy and atomicity is inalienable freedom, manifested in "freedom of moral will" and in "freedom of legal will".

On the other hand, the concepts of "collective mind", "sobornost" (the Orthodox idea about communal solidarity), "symphonic" or "sophia" personality in the system of social and legal values of the present have been regarded as irrational and mystical. A bright example is the collective (symphonic) personality in the work of the Russian philosopher L.P. Karsavin, which in the future should become the true subject of history (Karsavin, 1992, 153-154). The information realities of the last decades have shown that the super-individual or, more precisely, the "network" mind (intellect) is possible and, moreover, that it already functions. Concerning global information networks, one can speak not only about the existence of network intelligence, but also about the formation of a "network personality" capable of responding to external information, accumulating internal memory, and, most importantly, capable of internal dialogue - the main parameter of a person's mental fullness.

If this phenomenon is considered as an evolutionary system-forming factor, then the transformation of an individual into a collective personality is not an anti-rational process, but, on the contrary, is an objective and logical movement toward a certain mode of existence. Analogous to this process is the "Neolithic revolution", as a result of which the biological stage of human evolution was replaced by a social one.

Personality in the information society cannot remain static (i.e. self-sufficient and indivisible substance, a kind of self-contained psychophysical continuum). Its essence and the method of implementation are inseparable from the intensive receiving, exchanging and using of various kinds of information. As a result, the life activity of a person acquires a new functional significance, which is noticeably expressed already today in the change in the mode of communication, the radical reorganization of the sign system, etc.

It was a landmark in evolution when a human ceased to be the single and only carrier of knowledge and therefore the expression "knowledge is power" now refers not so much to the capabilities of an individual as to the ability to monitor and maintain artificially created information systems. Man still remains the main generator of the creative process, but spontaneous creation gives way to planned, programmed actions, and the discoveries themselves become a matter of technique. In modern society, we see a loss of conscious control over information, as a person becomes dependent on technology and other benefits of civilization, originally aimed at serving his needs. When the humans lose priority in this area (when the machine masters the technologies of discovery), then humanity will make another leap - move to collective mind through a stable system of the information society (Lukina & Samokhina, 2015).

The main factor in its development will be the "collective personality", no longer striving for absolute freedom and opposition to others, since the main incentives - creativity and the desire for autonomous expression - will no longer be its privilege. Unity of goals will be achieved through going beyond the "human" in general. These goals are as unachievable and alien to the modern man as the ideal of communism to the Neanderthal.

Here, new perspectives are opening up for the individual and for humanity as a whole. We can call this the evolution of the "collective personality". The meaning of the existence of such a person is a "collective cause", while free self-expression and creativity serve as the comprehension of this cause. At the present stage, the goal consists in development in itself, that is, the formation of a perfect entity capable of functioning under new conditions (therefore, it is a matter of cause, not good; good as the ultimate goal remains beyond the limits of rational understanding and, especially, experience). In such a concept, the man does not represent a dead end of evolution or its crown. According to F. Nietzsche, the man is a "rope taut over the abyss" on the eve of global changes.

The special feature of the new "collective personality" consists in the method of relations with oneself and with society: on the one hand, such a personality needs to overcome the desire for isolation and absolute self-sufficiency (this development trend so far dominates in modern civilized society); on the other hand, it strives to overcome alienation in the process of realizing those abilities and qualities that are purposefully cultivated in it by the society, and, thus, go beyond one's own interests.

One of the problems of modern society is the constant confrontation of interests of an individual, on the one hand, whose freedom and independence often become an end per se, and, on the other, of the interests of the majority, forced for the common good to restrict the individual's freedom. Any theoretical and practical attempts to reconcile these trends have so far encountered insurmountable obstacles. At this stage of social evolution, this opposition of interests is unsolvable for a number of objective reasons. However, the very process of forming a "new person" as a "collective personality" in the information society may eliminate this problem, but in return will inevitably give rise to new difficulties and obstacles in the pursuit of the ideal.

The creation of "collective mind" and its constant reproduction as a more stable system is one of the tasks of the existence of a new personality. This understanding of historical development inevitably brings humanity back to the idea of "transformation of values." To

make the emergence of a collective personality possible, not only accumulated internal changes are needed, but also an external stimulus that, in the spirit of dialectical development, on the verge of opposition, will cause the birth of a new form of human existence.

H. Marcuse suggested that to change the consciousness of a person so that he turned directly to his Self and his self-reflection started working in a different direction, is possible provided that the person is completely disconnected from the modern media system. Such ideas were voiced by E. Fromm, who, reflecting on what really could change the consciousness of modern man, wrote: "Suppose that in our Western culture movies, radios, television, sports events and newspapers ceased to function for only four weeks. With these main avenues of escape closed, what would be the consequences for people thrown back upon their own resources?" (Fromm, 1998, 141-142). E. Fromm is convinced that as a result of such information isolation, most people will be disoriented and will suffer from mental disorders. Although this situation at the society level is considered only as a theoretical experiment, at the same time at an individual level such actions are quite realistic and can give a certain spiritual experience necessary for the evolution of a particular person (Fromm, 1998).

Thus, it is obvious that modern information media of communication create patterns of behavior, set ideals and form values. As a result, the person creates stable mythological images (simulacra) replacing reality and in every way supported by official structures. J. Baudrillard very accurately characterized this state of mass consciousness: "We live, therefore, under the cover of signs and in negation of the real" (Baudrillard, 2015, 10). A person is capable of experiencing a real existential horror if deprived of habitual information impact, as the person will have to think independently, learn to discover new things even in everyday life. Creativity can be for the individual a vital necessity, and not one of the possibilities offered as an option for free choice. Goals and attitudes will acquire a deeply personal meaning and each one will have the opportunity to immerse oneself in one's own world, perhaps even more mystified than the modern world. An example of this mystification is described by H. Marcuse in the work "One-Dimensional Man", where he emphasizes the special state of modern total consciousness and the processes of democratization in society. Any mystification, according to him, is more vital in the consciousness of the masses than a rationally described and explained reality (Marcuse, 2002, p.495). Due to modern means of communication, the collective form of social life not only generates, but also constantly reproduces the universal, standard elements and contours of the life world in which the individual feels "cozy". The mystification, carried out in the media space, allows to manipulate the consciousness of large masses of people at the highest level, forming their needs, subordinating their thoughts and feelings (Marcuse, 2002, p.453).

At the present stage, socio-cultural dynamics, on the one hand, is determined by the tendency to self-organization of society, order and, consequently, to total control over the individual and, on the other hand, presupposes the presence of conflicts and the constant replacement of old forms with the new ones. Within this dynamic process, the society gives a comprehensive assessment of the individual from the standpoint of its identity to existing social structures. What is important is that it is not the results of human activity that are evaluated, but rather the adequacy and loyalty of the individual to members of the community. Repression towards the individual on behalf of society is indirect, and therefore often is not connected by the individual with certain communication processes. The modern man is convinced that specific social institutions, organizations, departments or even certain officials are responsible for control, while the information environment only allows them to implement methods of total submission. However, information power is more universal and total than we could imagine a century ago.

G. Tarde proposed a law on the ratio of various components in power, in which there is a clear tendency to keep the same proportions between the increasing inert mass on the one hand and minimizing all those who control it informationally. According to his idea, the number of managers will continue to decline all the time, while the mass of information-dependent people will constantly grow. All this takes place against the background of the information boom, technological growth and the spread of illusions. Speaking about the properties of the crowd, G. Tarde points out: "Intellectually, they can only reach an extreme degree of fall .... But in contrast to the collective manifestation of insanity and stupidity, examples of which we cite, is it possible to indicate collective acts of genius? No"(Tarde, 1998, 366). Perhaps the reverse process occurs when moving from the collective to the individual. Personality is not suppressed, not absorbed by the masses, but on the contrary, is striving to break out of its autonomy to a genuine unity with other personalities, and acquires new qualities of a more perfect person who is not in opposition to others.

The manifestation of the sense of collectivism is expressed in the desire to constantly exist in the information space, contacting in various online communities. Virtualization of the basic parameters of the personality allows it to be present in different dimensions simultaneously, to be flexible, easily transformed, to appear immediately in several qualitative varieties of its "I", but not to be represented as something specific. Thus, in the information space there is the possibility of disappearing in one place and appearing in another in a completely new quality that is not experienced literally as the "death" of the "I", but only as a transition from one state to another. The lack of rationality makes the presence of a person in the virtual world even more attractive. Rational communication and the masses, according to Jean Baudrillard, are incompatible (Baudrillard, 2015, p.20). Personality as it is represented by Western culture, aspiring to the idea of freedom, isolates itself, deprives itself of the content, turning into an empty sign or symbol. J. Baudrillard described this state as critical, bordering on death: "Personality" as an absolute value, with its indestructible traits and specific meaning, such as the whole Western tradition has forged in the organizational myth of the Subject, with its passions, will, character or ... its banality, this personality is missing, it is dead, swept out of our functional universe" (Baudrillard & Sioran , 2015, p.82).

In the information society, personality is, first of all, constructed by the information environment, through its inclusion in the process of using objects, meanings and signs, the meaning of which is fixed in the surrounding socio-cultural space. As a result, the dominant values and norms are learned, subsequently automatically modeling the boundaries of a standard, easily adapted personality in given social conditions. The values formed by society create the illusion of freedom of choice, while defining the goals and forming the life plans of the individual. In the behavior of the individual there is a unity of the information environment and attitudes of the personality. The social environment creates potential opportunities for a limited diversity in people's behavior. However, within the framework of the information culture, these personality possibilities are substantially corrected, on the one hand, offering broad prospects for the development of the information space, and on the other, severely restricting the patterns of behavior. A. Mol' noted that education has lost priority in terms of knowledge communication, it is mainly determined by the mass media, therefore it loses its systemic character, completeness and increasingly loses its connection with real experience. This is the basic principle of "mosaic culture," which is a reflection of our eclectic, fragmentary consciousness. According to the concept of A. Mol', the "Screen of Culture" no longer represents an ordered system, but rather is formed chaotically, by random information flows (Mol', 2008, p.54). However, culture under the influence of information technology is rapidly evolving and the collective nature (super intellectual, not mass!) will bring the element of harmony and system into the overall picture of the world. Culture is realized through the

individual and collective presence of man in the world, conditionally represented at different poles of being (Mol', 2008, p.47). However, in reality a person cannot distinguish and fully realize his social collective essence and his individual presence in the culture separately, as his activity unites these two poles, emphasizing either the creative nature or the more rigid adherence to the canons and rules established by this society. A. Mol' believed that in the mass culture the personality cannot exist in isolation. Each time entering the process of communication, it immerses itself in the "social field", which in turn determines the perception of any information transmitted within this field (Mol', 2008, p.130).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In the process of forming a new type of personality, its programming is carried out simultaneously by different socio-cultural structures and on several levels at once so that meanings overlap, and the formula of the atomic personality, despite all the efforts of sociologists and psychologists, remains elusive, which cannot be said about the collective personality. Thus, it can be assumed that in the course of the evolution of the information society, the future will not be for a separate individual and not for an impersonal mass that has absorbed a specific "living personality" but for a new form of human being - a collective personality capable of developing the shortcomings of the modern social world and moving to the next stage of development.

The main factor that sets the positive socio-cultural dynamics of modern society is the conscious desire of the individual to get out of the total control of the mass consumption society. There is a point of view that makes it possible to regard the future development of the interaction between the individual and society in a positive way. Thus, a person with a high level of information culture is likely to have a more tolerant perception of the world. It is assumed that, at the present stage, the formation of a certain level of the personal information culture can help smooth out the contradictions in the field of preserving the national culture and the processes of globalization.

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