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**SOCIO-CULTURAL SPACE
OF CHILDHOOD AS THE CONDITION OF
FORMING SELF-ADVANCED PERSONALITY**

**САМОСТІЙНИЙ СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНИЙ
ПРОСТІР ДИТИНСТВА ЯК УМОВА
САМОУСВІДОМЛЕННЯ ДОРΟΣЛОЇ
ОСОБИСТОСТІ**

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The research is devoted to the eternal problem of definition, self-determination and self-realization of person in the process of maturation. It is proved that only in the canvas of the culture of childhood, especially of childhood structured and limited socio-cultural conditions, constantly rising to the surface of the figure of a truly adult self. The secret phenomenon plays a key role in this process. It is argued that the current situation of the present, pushing a person to early maturing in a childhood and delaying the transition to a truly adult state, forms an entirely new space of socialization that determines the face of modern society. The subject of the study is the paradox of consistent absence, the emergence and transformation of the phenomenon of childhood in the socio-cultural space. Methodological approaches and research methods – systematic and structural-functional scientific approaches; biographical, cultural-historical, sociological, psychological, mythopoetic, semantic-symbolic methods; An important place in the methodology of research is the cultural approach. The scientific novelty of the article is an attempt to find a universal expression of contradictions and problems of mass culture in the essential transformations of childhood as a period of personality formation and conditions of maturity.

Keywords: childhood, maturity, upbringing, socialization, culture.

Дослідження присвячено одвічній проблемі визначення, само-визначення і самореалізації людини в процесі дорослішання. Доводиться, що тільки в полотні культури дитинства, особливо дитинства структурованого і обмеженого соціокультурними умовами, постійно піднімається на поверхню постать дійсно дорослої самості. Феномен таємниці відіграє в цьому процесі ключову роль. Стверджується, що поточна ситуація сучасності, що штовхає людину на раннє дорослішання у дитинстві і відтягування переходу у дійсно дорослий, стан формує зовсім новий простір соціалізації, що визначає обличчя сучасного суспільства. Предметом дослідження є парадокс дослідованих відсутності, виникнення і трансформацій феномену дитинства у соціокультурному просторі. Методологічні підходи та методи дослідження – системний та структурно-функціональний науковий підходи; біографічний, культурно-історичний, соціологічний, психологічний, міфопоетичний, семантико-символічний методи; важливе місце в методології дослідження займає культурологічний підхід. Наукова новизна статті полягає в спробі віднайти універсальне вираження суперечностей та проблем масової культури у сутнісних трансформаціях дитинства як періоду формування особистості та умови дорослішання.

Ключові слова: дитинство, дорослішання, виховання, соціалізація, культура.

(стаття друкується мовою оригіналу)

The qualitative difference of a human from other biological species, which is a basic of its evolutionary development, lies in the first place in its cognitive abilities. This is primarily due to the fact that the amount of information recorded in the mind is much larger than that of animals. This is the objective reason behind the formation of an extremely long period of childhood in humans.

The idea of personality formation organically includes a projection of the childhood period. The study of childhood as a subject of social and philosophical problematic reveals in its content the value-ontological aspect of the formation of a child's personality. In this regard, childhood ceases to be an abstract concept and becomes an objective reality.

Nowadays, the problem of understanding childhood as an integral and unique period of human life has become significant, which makes it necessary to study this phenomenon by integrating knowledge of the natural, genetic, biographical, social and historical components of a child's life. Philosophical understanding of the value of the childhood period is the process of understanding the goals and meanings of the beginning of human existence. The child as the «potency» of an adult person is subject to the universal laws of development. However, this range of questions is often ignored by modern science.

So, the aim of article is to analyze the current state and status of childhood in the context of modern mass culture. First of all, it is necessary to address the emergence and subsequent transformations of childhood as a social phenomenon.

Certain aspects of childhood have been studied by many scientists: A. Adler, A. Maslow, I. Khon, G. Kraig, G. Mate, G. Newfield, L. Hiell, K. G. Jung, E. Erikson, B. Ananov, A. Arsenev, A. Asmolov, L. Bozhovich, L. Venger, L. Vyigotskiy, S. Deryabo, I. Zagarnitska, D. Zigler, M. Zinoveva, T. Kochubey, S. Kryimskiy, V. Kudryavtsev, V. Kuznetsov, I. Kulikovskaya, A. Leontev, M. Lisina, N. Menchinskaya, T. Muhina, F. Mihaylov, V. Simonov, S. Smirnov, V. Suhomlinskiy, T. Popkova, D. Feldshteyn, R. Chumichova, N. Shumakova, D. Elkonin, but the general philosophical conceptual understanding of childhood in the context of the transformations of modern mass culture hasn't been formed yet.

As a beginning step of research, we should think about the question: was there a childhood as a necessary social phenomenon from time immemorial, can we divide the history of mankind into two stages: before the child is isolated and after? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to determine with what criteria it is necessary to determine the childhood as a special condition.

At the end of the nineteenth century, S. Freud and J. Dewey summed up a complex set of ideas about childhood that was formed in the realm of philosophy, pedagogy and psychology at that time. Having overlooked, though important, but narrowly specific details and differences, we note the general features of the image of the child, which became dominant for the twentieth century:

– firstly, the principle difference between children and adults is recognized;

– secondly, it is argued that the child should make efforts to become an adult;

– thirdly, the responsibility for the cultivation and upbringing of children is categorically reliant on adults;

– fourthly as a summary in a certain sense, a person manifests himself most fully by cultivating children,

since the adult shaping the future image of the child, in essence, reveals everything about himself [5].

Thus, the paradigm of childhood from the beginning of its conceptualization is formulated as additional in relation to the paradigm of adult age.

These formulated prepositions lead us to understanding the formation of the phenomenon of childhood in the context of human development. So, as N. Postman notes, Antiquity did not know childhood, as a special age social category. It is curious how so?

All epic or mythological images, where one can find the descriptions of childhood, do not allow interpreting this image as unambiguously and specifically childish. Most of the characteristics given are more descriptive of children based on the valuable qualities of future men and women. For example, it was close to the IV century BC in ancient Greece, there were no moral or legal prohibitions on the kill or murder of children, practiced and approved the selection of «unfit».

However, with the advent of ancient democracy, the idea of education began to cultivate (the variety of ancient schools is known). Although the Athenian or Spartan schools had little in common with the modern view of the institution, the very fact of their presence shows that the original idea of the uniqueness of childhood began to form in the ancient Greeks.

The Roman tradition makes the subject of childhood much more categorical than Greek and much more closely develops the idea of the necessity of education for the younger generation. In addition, in the Roman culture, the separation of the age group of children begins to be realized through the assertion and dissemination of the concept of «shame» in society. Thus, the childhood begins to separate as a period of time during which a person must be protected and separated from all overtly natural, physiological, intimate, etc. This whole sphere of adulthood should be covered by the veil of secrecy.

With the decline of Rome Empire and the onset of the Middle Ages, the social vision of childhood undergoes tangible transformation. Parameters that ensure the allocation of children as a departed social category disappear from public practice. These parameters are: ability to read and write (literacy) and a sense of shame. The reasons for reducing social literacy in the Middle Ages can be indicated differently – from the development and complication of calligraphy, which made the letter difficult to perceive, and the rise in the cost of materials for writing to the influence of the church, which affirms the monopoly on the written word – but the result of the decline in literacy is one and obvious: the priority of verbal culture transmission of information. Written way of transferring information and literacy as such allows a person to independently expand his experience beyond what he has seen or experienced, provide access to secrets that are valuable in the eyes of society.

N. Postman agrees with the ideas of J.-J. Rousseau that «reading is a disaster of childhood», but extends it, arguing that it is through reading a child becomes an adult. In the Medieval world, where there was no social literacy, there were no reasons to divide children and adults. The age at which a person was

considered fully adult was seven years – the period of final mastery of basic language skills. Since there were no written skills in culture and the competence of the speech was biologically determined, there was no need for elementary school as a way of preparing for adult life. The age of seven years was considered an age when a person is already able to distinguish between good and bad, because he is able to speak fluently [5].

The book always conceals the secrets, and the ability to read is the key to them. The medieval world has abandoned the concept of concealment, cultivation and influence on human nature. So, living in the world of oral communication, the child had access to all forms of culture, the reverse side of which was the lack of rich forms of adult «household» behavior, which should assimilate the child in the process of maturing. In the Middle Ages, the behavior of children and adults was very much in common, mostly primitive and vulgar. That is why the later epochs, especially the age of Enlightenment, the world of the Middle Ages was seen as infantile and corrupted.

So, childhood as a specific phenomenon returns to society when reading is returned. Thus, the invention of a printing press in the middle of the fifteenth century essentially transforms all the symbols of European culture and laid the foundation for the concept of adult life and, accordingly, childhood. The printing press separates the text from its creator, and thus contributes to the creation of a single world of abstract thought, filled with secrets. On the one hand, it more and more attracted attention to reading and education, and on the other – negatively reflected on the natural needs and inclinations that were perceived as an obstacle to learning. In the Enlightenment, a gradual program of education begins to develop, which reflects the imaginary relationship between the child's age and the content of the educational material. However, in this process, as N. Postman observes, mankind soon invented certain stages of maturation, rather than reflecting the actual dynamics of childhood. Thus, the child instilled the features of intelligence that would be needed for reading well: the acute sense of individuality, the ability to consistent logical thinking, the formal attitude to cultural symbols, the ability to operate abstract concepts, to limit yourself to obtaining pleasure. Thus, the society gradually expanded the range of issues that the taboo was imposed on children, so that with such leverage as shame, to control the behavior of spontaneous and cultivate behavior is socially acceptable. Learning through reading thus became the main mechanism of maturity and actually separated childhood as a specific social phenomenon, because what to read and how to read dictated only to children. Gradually, childhood as a social phenomenon is complicated so much that it attracts particular attention, reaching the status of absolute social value in the second half of the twentieth century [1; 5].

What transformations does this phenomenon represent today? Let's recall that the middle of the twentieth century is the period of the final uprising of mass culture. Thus, the first in the 30's of the twentieth century, J. Ortega y Gasset expressed the most critical position regarding the culture of the contemporary

society. He notes that society today is a dynamic combination of minority and masses. If a minority consists of persons who are characterized by certain features, then the mass is a set of individuals that are not isolated. In his opinion, the «mass person» formed the urbanization and narrow professional specialization, which reduced the cultural potential and undermined the spiritual power of civilization. According to J. Ortega y Gasset all this leads to instability and the collapse of culture in general [4].

However, avoiding evaluative judgments, the collapse of one culture should mean the beginning of another, without comparison «better–worse». Development of means of information and communication, industrial and commercial type of production, distribution of standardized spiritual goods, questionable democratization of culture, raising the level of education of the masses against the background of a paradoxical decline in spiritual development and spiritual needs – about what culture does it all say.

Some call these processes – the processes of dehumanization. However, humane is what corresponds to the spiritual nature of humanity. Is this a changeable phenomenon?

Even in the nineteenth century, V. Solovyov noted that the excessive development of individualism in modern civilization leads to its own opposition – to universal depersonalization. Extreme tension of personal consciousness, not finding a suitable subject, passes into empty and petty egoism, which equates everyone [3].

Cultural scientist J. Huizinga also clearly demonstrates that the current crisis of culture has no comparison with the previous ones. In his work «Homo ludens» he observes: «It would not have been for anyone to be surprised if, for one day, the madness would suddenly escape the blind frenzy, which would leave this poor civilization opaque and intellectually quenched, as the motors would continue to rotate, flags – warp, but the human spirit would disappear forever» [2]. So he notes that everything that was groundbreaking earlier shook himself: truth and humanity, right and mind.

S. Franck notes that the crisis of culture is based on the breakdown of axiological priorities, the loss of faith in progress, and the continuous improvement, in a predetermined victory of light over darkness. So, disbelief in the dominant power of good S. Franck defines as a crisis of humanism and humanity.

The birth of mass culture marks the beginning of the twentieth century, although some researchers include one of its early forms of detective genre, which occurs in the 30's of the nineteenth century, and at once gained considerable popularity. At the end of the nineteenth century, weekly media began to publish works known as «the industry of dreams». At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a new form of mass culture appeared in the United States – comic books, originally intended for children, and then became an integral part of adult life. From the middle of the twentieth century mass culture becomes total and expansive.

Analyzing the relationships between the development and the flowering of childhood subculture and the invention of the printing press, N. Postman refers to the theory of H. Inis, who argued that the technology of communications dominating in a certain period defines the substantive sphere of thinking, the symbolic system that dominates in culture, and, finally, the arrangement of the society itself. The structure of human consciousness inevitably needs to change to fit the new invented means of communication – people must become what they have done themselves [5]. But consciousness – this is the human essence, all humanity, the concept of the foundations of humanism is concentrated in it, and all this must change, readjust.

It is obvious that the attitude towards childhood, the understanding of its self–worth, its secrecy, its defense and its separation from the world of adults is the quintessence of humanistic culture, which was based on the principle of the need for education as a gradual way of maturing. What is happening with childhood today?

Modern culture, as N. Postman notes, is culture post–«graphic» or «visual» revolution. Inventions in the field of telecommunications have radically changed the nature of the information being transmitted. The unit of information is now not a word, but a visual sign, moreover, predominantly advertising. Information is no longer provided as a sentence (it is not a proposal), but is presented as an image (it is representative). Everyone should agree with N. Postman's remarks on the consequences of such changes: the image can not be argued, refuted, proved, it exists outside the categories of truth and flaws, it is simply physically demonstrated.

The modern development of telecommunication systems and technologies has made both the audience and the person submitting the information as maximally anonymous, and the image does not require the logical work of the mind, it appeals directly to emotions and the ability to quickly recognize the patterns. So, in comparison, the culture of the Middle Ages was a culture of verbal tales, fables, rumors; the culture of modern times – the culture of writing and reading, the culture of the modern era – is turning into a culture of demonstration and presentation.

Mass culture presents everything that it has for the child as a consumer in an entertaining and entertaining form. All children's leisure is permeated with elements of adult life, and at the same time – the whole life of adults is as if the childhood is a permanent state. Age limits and the same age periods become nominal.

Instead of the traditional transition: «childhood – adolescence – youth – maturity – old age» – begins to dominate a specific triad: «infant – semi–mature (subadult) age – deep aging». So today, after a short childhood, a long age of a adult–child person – those who are constantly around 20–30 years, regardless of biological age. Such a person has intellectual and emotional capabilities, but they are fundamentally impossible to implement. This type has always been present in culture, but today it turns into a norm.

The very state of childhood also suffers from it. First of all, it is decreasing, as adults, who would

provide the necessary restrictions for the existence of childhood, is becoming less and less. Secondly, the childhood becomes lonely and filled with uncertainty and fear, as the childhood becomes associated with the experience of the failure of adults to organize the world and the formation of the impression that the world can not be fundamentally arranged. Thirdly, the subculture of childhood is fully accessible and permissive, that is, everything that needs to be perceived and understood gradually (violence, death, birth, etc.), everything provided for perception in the direct, visual form, also acquires the status of the norm. As N. Postman correctly noted, there is no childhood where there are no social «secrets». And fourthly, childhood as an age during which the personal potential accumulated and have to be relieved in lifetime, is essentially wasting away.

The new symbolic environment, called for a «visual» revolution, tirelessly destroys the social foundations on which childhood is based. In order to perceive the visual culture completely does not require additional knowledge: one who is seven years old and one who is forty–seven years old – are equal. In the visual culture there is no category of literacy, because this culture does not require serious and complicated requirements for rational activity of consciousness and forms of behavior. In addition, the culture of mass communications is primarily focused on universal accessibility, that is, the community that identifies itself with it, quickly loses its distinctive cultural features and becomes homogeneous and identical.

This is accompanied by the problem of the disappearance of such a phenomenon as childish curiosity. In the time of «adult mysteries» the sphere of the known and unknown was connected by a bridge of curiosity. The world of modern information is extremely dynamic and changing, and adults for this modern child cease to be authoritative leaders in it: only information coming from «from nowhere» is left.

However, as a conclusion in agreeing with N. Postman, it is worth stressing at once on the fundamental inappropriateness and impossibility of over–moralization the modernity. If we observe that the main mechanism of social differentiation has always been shame, it becomes obvious that today most of life practices of this category are no longer regulated, and their discussion is made to the general public almost without limitations.

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