

# CULTURAL SCIENCES

## SPECIFICS OF ENCULTURATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL ENGINEERING

**Smolikova T.**

*candidate of cultural studies,*

*associate professor of intercultural communications and advertising department,*

*D. student at the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts*

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7495132>

### Abstract

The article substantiates the culturological essence of the enculturation process in terms of social engineering. The notions of "enculturation" and "social engineering" are considered from a culturological point of view. The author highlights the top mechanisms of "incorporation", along with the involvement of a person in culture through the mechanisms of enculturation. The author outlines the key methodological approach to the comprehension of the process of enculturation in a modern global society.

**Keywords:** enculturation, social engineering, immersion, transmedia, interactivity, geography of communication.

**Introduction.** The scientific and theoretical relevance of addressing the problem of enculturation and individual life strategy in modern society is associated with an ambiguous interpretation of the changes occurring within it, and, consequently, the strategic attitudes which guide a person in their life.

The relevance of a theoretical cultural understanding of the problem of enculturation in modern society is primarily due to the peculiarities of self-identification and adaptation of an individual to the modernized, technical, constantly changing socio-cultural environment, fundamentally different from its previous forms. The categories of "time" and "distance" have acquired a different meaning. The process of enculturation is being implemented under these conditions in two radically different but interconnected spaces – real and virtual. Modern spaces are subordinated to the processes of design and engineering. This project is related to social order, where it contains the idea, the problem and the social order, as well as the technology of implementation – algorithm-engineering, by means of which the goal will be achieved and the set of tasks will be solved. Social engineering (hereinafter SE) is a set of innovative technological developments aimed at transforming society in accordance with the political, socio-economic, cultural challenges of the time. Also, SE can be called "human hacking" – the use of methods to obtain the necessary access to confidential information of an individual.

**Main part.** Within the framework of the studied topic, SE is considered as technologies of the transformation of socio-cultural reality and an implementation of the enculturation process in these conditions.

The analysis of the literature on the topic of research has shown a subordination of terms, the functional definition of which is obvious. However, the conceptual apparatus of the process of enculturation and mechanisms of "inclusion" of an individual in the space of information and communication technologies is poorly developed in the literature. The purpose of this work is to analyse the process of personal encultura-

tion, adaptation to modern conditions through the relationship of processes and mechanisms of SE as a stage of modern civilization development, which is characterised by an increase and change in the role of information and knowledge in the life of modern society. Under the conditions of SE, a person creates not only new objects, but also uses new mechanisms and ways of building relationships and communications. Therefore, the peculiarity of the enculturation process in these conditions is the transition to the independent design of an individual's existence.

In scientific literature there are several terms used to characterise the processes of a person's assimilation of the socio-cultural experience in the society. These are "enculturation", "acculturation" and "internalisation" ("interiorisation"). The first indicates "the process by which an individual learns the traditional ways of thinking and acting, specific for the culture to which he or she belongs" [1]. The second refers to the process of mutual enrichment of two or more cultures, resulting in a change (transformation) of the underlying culture. The third term refers to the transfer of "external" forms of experience into the "internal" world of the individual.

In a broad sense, the terms "culturalisation" (K. Kluckhohn) and "enculturation" (M. Herskovitz) were first proposed in American cultural anthropology to describe the processes of social adaptation, which fix the change in the life of a "socially mature" ("adult") person – a bearer of the formed personal structures.

Enculturation can be defined as a process of imparting general cultural competence to an individual in relation to the standards of the society in which he/she lives. This includes mastering the system of value orientations and preferences accepted in society, etiquette in different life situations, along with common interpretative approaches to different phenomena and events. Furthermore, this concerns the familiarity in which the basics of social and political structure, certain knowledge of national and class traditions, prevailing morality, morality, world outlook, customs, rites, and everyday life erudition in social and humanitarian

knowledge, etc. Enculturation also pertains to the similarities with prevailing fashion, styles, symbols, regalia, informal status roles of national authorities, current intellectual and aesthetic trends, political and cultural history of the nation, main symbols of national dignity and pride, etc. [2, c. 147]. The means for an individual to acquire all of this knowledge are predominantly concentrated in the home upbringing and general education, as well as the totality of social contacts of an individual with his or her environment. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that an individual is not able to have regular contact with the whole society at once and receive the necessary cultural information from all social estates and specialised groups.

The component of the process of personal enculturation, as the level of assimilation with cultural norms, behaviour patterns, actualises the multifaceted nature of its socio-cultural character, being both the purpose of culture and a prerequisite for cultural progress. When considering the process of enculturation, it should be noted that SE today is a complex self-developing system, which operates in both real and virtual environments. Virtual reality, in one way or another, is a reflection of real reality. Virtual as a natural science concept became widespread in the 20th century when quantum theory was created. The concept of artificial reality was introduced by Myron Krueger in the late 1960s. At the turn of the XX-XXI centuries, the concept of "virtual" began to gain ground in psychology, pedagogy, art, etc. With the development of computer technology and networks the concepts of a "virtual machine", "virtual memory", and "virtual devices" appeared. The historical transformation of content from the concepts "virtual" and "real" conveyed all the many interpretations that led to the combination of "virtual reality".

Russian researcher N.A. Nosov, founder of the Laboratory of Virtualism [3], through whom a new interdisciplinary direction in science has emerged, combines the physical, social, technical, mental, and biological nature of a virtual environment's origin into the concept of "technical virtual reality".

The problems stated by the topic of the research has no detailed history and stable trends of study in scientific literature so far. The basic concepts which conditioned the content of the article (enculturation, social engineering, mechanisms of enculturation) have become the topic of scientific discourse in recent decades. At the same time, if each of the considered phenomena, taken as such, has a corresponding "literature of the question", the aspect of enculturation in the context of SE seems to be little developed.

With the emergence of virtual reality, complex software and hardware (computer programs, games, 3D printers, etc.), the new methods and mechanisms of implementing the process of enculturation have emerged. Moreover, modern information and communication technologies, technological tools created on their basis, and the Internet are becoming more and more popular in revealing the creative potential of an individual whilst implementing productive, collective cooperation to solve common problems.

Informatisation and the widespread introduction of innovative technologies have contributed to the emergence of flexible, non-standard forms of employment, such as remote work.

Professions that can work remotely include programmers, lawyers, journalists, editors, translators, when the professions of a salesperson and driver are gradually being replaced by robots.

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian language, the term "remote" means "performed at a distance". [4].

According to the established practice, non-standard forms of employment besides remote work include home-based work and freelancing (performing their activities on the basis of a civil-law contract, i.e. there are no labour relations with the customer and guarantees ensued from them which are provided to employees by the labour legislation).

The economic sphere of modern society has modernised the forms of organisations and increased the number of market participants with the use of the virtual space. As a direct result of this, virtual banks, business incubators, logistics centres, virtual institutes, help desks, advisory centres, virtual exchanges, offices, shops, etc. have emerged. Today, the foreign economic sphere in the virtual space is represented by such concepts as an electronic market, electronic commerce, virtual corporation, and virtual production, etc. [5].

In the modern media space, virtual goods and services, virtual wallets and money, (e.g. e-money), have emerged. This has changed the mechanisms of economic, banking and trade relations.

According to forecasts, by 2025 the economic effect of preexisting technologies will transform the foundations of the labour market. Many of the tasks performed by the typical human worker will be partially or fully automated by 2025. Technical devices today can already sort through vast amounts of information, interpret human speech and understand commands, along with perceiving people's actions and intentions. This will allow teachers, medical professionals, engineers, managers, financiers and administrators to shift a significant portion of their duties to computing devices, plus in some cases this could lead to the complete replacement of humans by computers. The introduction of new technologies will cut 85 million jobs but will be replaced by 97 million new openings. According to experts, they will be more adapted to the new technological realities in terms of interaction between people, machines and algorithms [6].

Nevertheless, one of the most actively developing fields for using innovative mechanisms, tools and technologies for the enculturation process is the sphere of education. Practice shows that the process of personal enculturation in the educational space, where SE technologies are actively used, not only improves the quality of learning material, but also helps to develop the following personal abilities: audiovisual perception, formation of critical thinking, mastering mass communication technologies (cinema and video, etc.), learning to distinguish the key item in an information message, to understanding the goals of communication, the direction of information flow, transform information,

plus modifying the information and the information flow.

Among the modern technologies and methods of education in the media space is the popular 'e-learning' – a distance form or informal methods which can include social networks, e-coaching/online coaching, corporate blogs, wikis/online libraries.

However, active informatisation and SE technologies can influence not only a person's consciousness and behaviour (perception of information, transforming a person's cultural and attitudinal orientations), but also offer new mechanisms of enculturation.

For example, one of the mechanisms used is immersion (from the Late Latin 'immersio' - immersion), which relates to the use of virtual reality and transmedia. Immersion is a complex unity of multiple media formats that form a single thematic "universe", capable of transforming ways of communication and thinking.

**Interactivity** as a way of interaction at a distance. The terms "interactivity", "interactive learning", "interactive methods and techniques of learning" started to appear in the late XX century as part of the studies of psychologists and educators. This could be found in the sections of textbooks describing the learning process as communication, cooperation, collaboration of equal participants (Badmaev B.Ts., Clarin M.V., Serikov V.V., Polat E.S., etc.).

Computer interactivity is the most developed form of technical interactivity because the very nature of computer technologies includes interaction with humans [7, p.18]. Interactivity is presented as a mechanism of enculturation, in which the interaction of a person within the media space takes place and the feedback mode in this interaction is of key importance. Due to interactivity, a person uses ways of self-expression and actively influences the content and direction of media processes, gets acquainted and learns new possibilities of media, whilst freely expressing their opinion, offering participation in the subsequent dialogue.

One of the spatial mechanisms of enculturation can be attributed to the **"Geography of Communications"**, a concept which implies the movement and compression of space-time, in which it is possible to communicate, travel, visit Internet libraries, museums and work without leaving your home. Clear boundaries between symbolic and material artifacts are being erased, which, according to J. Volkheimer and A. Jansson, justifies the relevance of the development of the geography of media communications as a new academic discipline [8, p.13]. The researchers outline their vision of the geography of communication in several dimensions:

- ideological and political dimension, where processes of the convergence of public and private spheres, global and local are observed;

- the technological dimension, where SE technologies are understood not as a cultural form or instrument of political influence, but as technical means of communication and technologies mediating experience and social interactions. The key role of SE technologies in the emergence and development of different communities (in the Internet space), new cultural and social

practices (through mobility and interactivity mechanisms), and the organisation of dialogue in online and real-time modes;

- the "textural" dimension describes the mechanisms and processes of the materialisation of space through culture [9]. A. Jansson introduces the notion of "texture", which contains a tripartite dialectic connection between spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces (the dialectic of the material, the symbolic and the imaginary). "Texture is a mediator not only between the material and symbolic aspects of space, but also between the spatial structure and the communicative agent; between rules and improvisations, between then and now" [10, c. 91].

It should be noted that the boundaries between these dimensions are very arbitrary. Interactive SE space can have both a physical geography and a "virtual" one, in which each user consumes, disseminates and produces information. The process of enculturation acquires a certain speed and mobility, the ease of personal involvement in a modern "technologised" culture.

**Conclusion.** Thus, the process of enculturation is a long and gradual assimilation by a person of the ways, norms, and practical recommendations of everyday life. A person obeys stereotypes, along with the procedures accepted in a group and in a culture. Enculturation presupposes the presence of such socio-cultural elements as value and meaningful orientations, procedures for the development of creative activity, and the totality of accumulated assets in culture. The most important in this process for the modern individual is the acquisition of knowledge.

Undoubtedly, some of the main SE technologies described are immersion, transmedia, mobility, interactivity, visualisation, etc., which are used in the process of enculturation as modernised ways (mechanisms) of modernity. "Geography of communications" – as a way of accompanying the individual in both the real and virtual spaces. The personality's mastery of convergent mechanisms and methods in the management of a virtual environment, can determine its attitude to the awareness of a socio-cultural being, the modernisation of impression culture, plus the creation of new ethical and artistic values. Without changing the essence of the enculturation process, the virtual environment offered new forms of communication, moved it to an interactive mode of interaction, whilst improving the mechanisms of learning, mastering, adaptation, familiarisation, distribution, formation, localization, broadcasting, etc. Overall, this has expanded the qualitative characteristics of the modern Belarusian media space. SE forms the environment of life, and the social and individual memory, whilst at the same time encapsulating the global sources of knowledge and information. Laws are being created to prescribe the main strategic directions for the implementation of state policies, legal fields, healthcare, education, culture, etc., relating to the program of development for information, information and communication technologies, telecommunications, and high technologies at the present stage of society development.

The contradictory nature of SE technologies is that, on the one hand, they expand opportunities for

self-development, access to knowledge and information through information and communication technologies, and introduce the concepts of "technological", "computer", "informational", "media", "audiovisual" literacy into the different planes of personal knowledge. On the other hand, SE technologies can be used in unlawful ways to influence and manipulate the personality.

### References:

1. Резник, Ю.М. Человек и общество (опыт комплексного изучения) / Ю.М. Резник // Личность. Культура. Общество. [Электронный ресурс]. – 2000. – Т. 2 вып. 4(6). – Режим доступа : [http://www.reznik-um.ru/lko/jur\\_reznik\\_2\\_3\\_00.htm](http://www.reznik-um.ru/lko/jur_reznik_2_3_00.htm). – Дата доступа : 18.11.2022.
2. Терещенко, О.В. Инкультурация / О.В. Терещенко // Социология. энцикл.: / сост. А.А. Грицанов, [и др.]. – Минск : Книжный Дом, 2003 – 1310 с.
3. Носов, Н.А. Психологические виртуальные реальности / Н.А. Носов. Рос. акад. наук, Ин-т человека, Лаб. виртуалистики. – М., 1994. – 195 с.
4. Ожегов, С. И. Толковый словарь русского языка: 80000 слов и фразеолог. выражений / С. И. Ожегов, Н. Ю. Шведова. – М., 1999. – С. 167.
5. Манюшис, А. Виртуальное предприятие как эффективная форма организации внешнеэкономической деятельности компании / А. Манюшис, В. Смольянинов, В. Тарасов. [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа : [http://vasilievaa.narod.ru/16\\_4\\_03.htm](http://vasilievaa.narod.ru/16_4_03.htm). – Дата доступа : 12.11.2022.
6. К 2025 году технологии изменят рынок труда до неузнаваемости [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа : <https://rg.ru/2020/12/15/k-2025-godu-tehnologii-izmeniat-rynok-truda-do-neuznavaemosti.html?ysclid=lakxq6czou582483485>. – Дата доступа : 17.11.2022.
7. Чичканов, Е.С. Интерактивность как форма диалога в пространстве цифрового экранного произведения: автореф. дис. ... канд. искусств.: 17.00.09 / Е.С. Чичканов; С-Пб. гумман. ун-т профсоюзов. – С-Пб., 2011. – 22 с.
8. Falkheimer, J., Jansson, A. Geographies of Communication: The Spatial Turn in Media Studies / edited by J. Falkheimer, A. Jansson // Göteborg: Nordicom, 2006. – PP. 9-22.
9. Jansson, A. Textural Analysis. Materialising Media Space / A. Jansson // Geographies of Communication: The Spatial Turn in Media. Göteborg: Nordicom, 2006. PP. 87–106.
10. Jansson, A. Touristic Communication in the Age of Hyper-Space-Biased Media / A. Jansson // Specialized Spaces [Electronic resource]: [http://www.hum.au.dk/ckultur/f/pages/publications/aj/specialized\\_spaces.pdf](http://www.hum.au.dk/ckultur/f/pages/publications/aj/specialized_spaces.pdf). Date of access: 20.11.2022.