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**MYTH IN THE STRUCTURE OF MASS CONSCIOUSNESS OF
THE DIGITAL ERA SOCIETY**

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Abstract

Mass consciousness is a relevant subject for science. The task of studying the connection between mass consciousness and myth retains its importance. In recent decades, these concepts have been at the center of philosophical discussion, which is due to the novelty of interpretations and new scope of application of these concepts. The problem of the impact of the process of informatization of society actualizes this task. An essential feature of setting such a task is the consideration of the specifics of mythologization of mass consciousness. The dynamics of information technology is accompanied by the emergence of new aspects of it, which, in turn, leads to the specifics of the connection of mass consciousness and myth. Myth and mythmaking are the characteristics of both the information and communication space and the modern mass consciousness. The field of myth-making extends from the practice of interpretation of concrete facts to the model of being. By problematizing reality, mass consciousness forces its bearer to reckon with what is non-obvious but imaginable in it. Imagination reveals the content of existence, which is always greater than the everyday (myth). Myth-making is a way of influencing reality. Creating its own model of the world, myth in the mass consciousness gives reality a meaning, demonstrating its ability to be an ideal motivating force of social behavior. Socio-philosophical analysis of the genetic, functional features of mass consciousness and myth allow us to conclude that the nature of mass consciousness is myth-consciousness.

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1. Introduction

Man anthropologically lives in myth. Through myth the possibility of access to both remote in time and the way of perception and processing of information, as well as to the characteristic of modern culture, is provided. And, therefore, there will be the possibility of effective adaptation of the subject of mass consciousness to the changing conditions of the social environment, taking into account past experience. Recently, the use of these concepts in the relationship in one context or another is quite common: politics, art, advertising, media, websites (Kirillova & Danilova, 2019).

Myth in the mass consciousness has traditionally attracted the attention of domestic and foreign specialists. In this aspect, we can distinguish the main areas of research on mass consciousness: a) mass consciousness and digital technology; b) factors that determine the mass consciousness; c) trends in the mass consciousness depending on social and political conditions; d) modern myth-making; e) social myths in the mass consciousness; f) mythomania; g) the methodology of the study of the relationship of myth in the mass consciousness: ways of perception and processing of information by mass consciousness; h) the specificity of the mythological picture of the world in the "picture of the world" of mass consciousness; i) the features of the functioning of myth in mass consciousness in the aspect of the possible and realizable; j) the relationship of utopia and myth in mass consciousness; k) myth as an image of everyday life.

1.1. Difficulties of analyzing the stated theme

Some of the research problems stem from the very nature of mass consciousness. Mass consciousness is a subject of interdisciplinary interest (Zlotnikova, 2020). Accordingly, the task of studying the connection between mass consciousness and myth becomes particularly relevant.

Speaking of myth and mass consciousness, researchers usually use the following wording: mythologized mass consciousness or myths in mass consciousness. If the former refers to the dominance of the mythological level of reflection of the world by mass consciousness, the latter is a statement of the fact: myth, like other types of social consciousness (utopia, religion, and so on) is part of mass consciousness. The simplest and most common solution to the question of the relationship between myth and mass consciousness is the statement: myth is an element of mass consciousness, just as individual consciousness is. In this regard, the concept of a mythologized person can have two meanings: the individual and people en masse (Ivanov et al., 2020).

The mere fact that a myth exists in mass consciousness raises many questions for researchers. Can mass consciousness be free of myth? What role does myth play in mass consciousness? What determines the long-term existence of certain myths in mass consciousness? What explains the degree to which myths are rooted in the mass consciousness? Can myths be included among the structural components along with others? How does myth influence the targeted choice of an image of reality? What are the nature and ways of demanding a myth in conditions of incomplete information about the essence of real problems? Answers to these questions will bring us closer to understanding the nature of mass consciousness. The most explicit detection of mass consciousness in myth requires us not to limit

ourselves to stating the presence of myth in mass consciousness, but allows us to raise the question of their relationship in a different way: is not mass consciousness myth-consciousness in its nature?

1.2. The practice of recent decades clearly confirms the process of transformation of former mythological images and the formation of new ones

Modern myths, with all the understanding of their continuity with previous experience, contain such features and traits that are difficult to fit into traditional concepts. The simplest justification for the problem of "myth - mass consciousness" is in the use of mythological models of reality by the bearer of mass consciousness. This understanding of the place of myth in the content of mass consciousness does not exhaust the structure of the latter. But in modern mass consciousness mythological images have become conscious, became a means and a structure precisely because they combine ideas about the freedom of the individual and its connection, the universal connection with the whole. This whole can be nature, history, its own being (Najdysh, 2017).

2. Problem Statement

Myth is a formula, so it reveals its possibilities of generalization when confronted with concrete facts. Given this, it can be assumed that one of the research tasks is the task of explaining the modern techniques of myth-making. Myth is not the only means of creating a picture of the world in the mass consciousness. And to identify the mythological content of mass consciousness with delusions, false perceptions, illusions is a deliberate simplification.

Finding and explaining the concreteness behind the myth is a condition for a realistic assessment of mass consciousness, free from extremes. And this requires a constant analysis of the facts, unbiased generalizations, objective data on public opinion and mindset of people (macroforms of mass consciousness). The evaluative approach simplifies the attitude to the myth in the mass consciousness and does not lead to the multiplication of knowledge about it. This leaves unanswered a number of questions that seem important in this problematic. The main of them, we believe, is the following question: the specificity of the influence of information and technological culture works to preserve the myth or to destroy it in the mass consciousness?

3. Research Questions

A non-judgmental attitude to myth and mass consciousness is the most constructive approach to the analysis of these phenomena. In its framework it is possible to:

- to reveal features of mythological thinking;
- to reveal manifestation of mass consciousness in myth.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to raise the theoretical problem of the connection between myth and mass consciousness in the aspect of their common nature. And also definition of possible ways of

consideration of this problem. It takes into account the specificity of the influence of the information field and information culture in the digital era.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the work is: (a) socio-philosophical analysis; (b) systematic approach, taking into account the interdisciplinary significance of the subject under consideration.

6. Findings

The emergence and functioning of myth in the mass consciousness is an objective and subjective process; controllable and spontaneous. And these features have a special effect on the content and functioning of mass consciousness. Therefore, it is necessary to characterize mass consciousness "from the inside" both in terms of the regularities of its social genesis and in terms of its immanent properties (Lee et al., 2017).

6.1. Features of Mythological Thinking

Myth-consciousness is a type of consciousness, always inherent in man at all times. What characterizes the essence of mythical consciousness? We can distinguish the following features.

a) Mythical consciousness is directly naive. Myth is not an idea, not a concept, but an image perceived as reality. Myth is not only a mediator between man and reality. It reveals itself as an independent reality that creates both a man himself and his world. Therefore, myth can be made a model for understanding many human phenomena.

(b) Life in myth carries its own truth. Myth rests on facts, on being, understood absolutely, dogmatically. For mythical consciousness scientific experience, scientific evidence is irrelevant. Therefore, hope for rational arguments from a bearer of mass consciousness is untenable. Mass consciousness, being realized in everyday life, turns questions into premonitions, and answers into dogmas. The interest of its bearer is not so much in the choice as in the mechanism of adaptation in a particular place and in a particular time (Habibullina, 2018). Even under the condition that the established way of life he considers unreasonable in terms of common sense, the algorithm of which comes into conflict with the practical side of the present. Therefore, the mythical subject cannot be convinced of anything. Truth is directly perceivable and commonly understood. Only myth can be fought with myth. One myth can create another, but it can also supplant it.

(c) For the bearer of mass consciousness, the nature of the spiritual and social criteria he accepts as his criteria is of fundamental importance. Mythic detachment is the detachment from meaning, from the idea of fact for the sake of a new meaning and idea. Divergence from everyday reality does not prevent myth from being reality. Reality in a myth remains in its usual version, only its meaning and idea change. Myth is a sensually created reality containing varying degrees of detachment.

(d) Myth is an image of being personal. Personal perception permeates all consciousness, personal being lies on every thing. History is becoming self-consciousness, that is, nascent, mature and dying self-consciousness. Actively expressed self-consciousness is the word. The functioning of mythic

consciousness is words about historical facts, the narrative of a person's life (Ivanov, 2019; Shnirel'man, 2018).

6.2. The manifestation of mass consciousness in myth

(a) Questions about the emergence and historical existence of mass consciousness are among the debatable. Is mass consciousness a phenomenon of the modern era, the era of the massization of public life, or a phenomenon that has always existed at all times? Even if we assume that myth and mass consciousness do not arise at the same historical time, they will never meet. Myth, having ceased to be the only type of thinking at a certain stage of human existence, was preserved thanks to its merger with existence, with action. Myth as a form of thought is irreplaceable (Strel'nik, 2018). Consequently, initially vital intuition (mythological perception of real things) by virtue of its universality cannot but be present in the mass consciousness. Myth is the only possible foundation of private and public existence.

b) In mass consciousness, the "picture of the world" is created by different levels of reflection of reality. Many researchers argue that in the consciousness of the masses the analytical work of the mind does not exclude but is combined with a deliberate simplification of the vision of the world, with a craving for simple solutions, simple explanations. And this part of mass consciousness, as a rule, is identified with delusions, false ideas, prejudices, illusions, stereotypes. Myth is the result of direct, naive, comprehensible operation with real objects, with the most concrete phenomena. The experience of the bearer of mass consciousness is no place for experimentation. It may need changes in information, but not in the quantity or at the pace currently set by digital technology. So, the question arises: what is mass consciousness in the information world?

(c) Syncretism of myth and mass consciousness explains their informational and communicative nature. The presence of this property (the inseparability of object and subject) makes possible the identification of oneself with others. When a person realizes his belonging to the mass in behavior, it is identical with the behavior of others in this mass (Gritsenko, 2019; Volokhova, 2020). The identification mechanism underlies mass behavior, just as it underlies the behavior of the mythical subject. The property of syncretism allows us to explain the regularly recurring situation in the crisis state of society. The real in mass consciousness is not only assertions of something as existing, but also assertions as something that does not exist. The latter acts in mass consciousness as a prohibition that asserts the possible boundaries of existence, and through this indicates the existence of non-existence. The world is presented as an image-sensual integrity. And at this level, there is nothing superfluous, nothing unnecessary. The most striking example of this thinking is mythmaking. Mass consciousness is both the sphere of myth creation and the sphere of myth existence. It is myths that serve the interests of protecting social identity, helping to spread a certain system of values, promoting reforms. And they do it effectively. Lack of information at the level of mass consciousness is usually compensated by rumors, assumptions, guesses, speculations, previous experience, intuition. People accept information to the extent that it is consistent with the myths they have. When there is a feeling of hopelessness, hopelessness of the future, when there are no reference points, clarity and precision of a myth makes people "work miracles". On the part of the masses, what is important is not faith in a miracle, but the readiness to believe that a miracle can happen. The feeling of a miracle or its proximity is a necessary condition as a motive for action (Losev, 2001).

The functional meaning of myth - the ability to rally people and motivate them to action - comes to the fore during the search for concrete solutions to vitally important problems (Heatherly et al., 2017; Plotichkina, 2020).

(d) The content of mass consciousness is determined by two criteria. The first is the average level of development of the consciousness of the masses in society: the boundaries of the cumulative "subject range" falling within the field of view of this consciousness. This characteristic includes not only cognitive moments - the volume of knowledge and the ability to judge the masses, but also the volume of their feelings and imaginations, abilities and skills, their ability to respond emotionally to reality, to operate with the material objects of the surrounding world. The second criterion is the needs, demands, interests that distinguish the life of the masses in different societies. Objects of reality that are directly or indirectly covered by mass needs arouse mass interest. Mass consciousness, possessing absolute syncretism, transcends the boundaries of modernity. Perhaps, this ability to transcend temporal boundaries explains the commonality of mythological motifs in the minds of people of different historical eras. It is likely that different reasons determine the possibility of entering the "subject" of reality in the mass consciousness. The main, in our opinion, is the ability of myth to be an ideal stimulus for social behavior. Therefore, it would be correct to assume that myth is the true beginning of human actions. Such an assumption looks quite logical. Recall that myth is not created by reason; it is brought to life by a certain affect.

e) Until recently, there was an opinion that mass consciousness is a product of institutionalized activity, which makes it an object of manipulation. However, over time, the ability of mass consciousness to "resist," to show independence, to be selective to the influence directed at it (Voronkova, 2018) began to be noted. The presence of myth contributes to the transformation of mass consciousness into an object of manipulation, at the same time defining the limits of this manipulation: the self-sufficiency of myth for the bearer of mass consciousness is absolute. Thus, myth acts as a resource of counteraction, being a matter of culture of the bearer of mass consciousness as an independent beginning of identification.

7. Conclusion

Mass consciousness is myth-consciousness at its core.

7.1. Aspects of the connection between myth and mass consciousness can be distinguished according to the following positions:

a) a myth is a nonspecific form of mass consciousness, its attribute; b) mass consciousness is an entity in which different in content, including opposite in content myths can function; c) mythological orientations, developed in the conditions of previous social experience, are preserved in new conditions; (d) myths born of mass consciousness are more persistent than myths introduced into it; (e) the destruction of any myth leads to the establishment of another myth; (f) myth denotes the tone and object orientation of mass consciousness, acting as a factor of activity, contributing to the repeated increase of people's energy (social myth).

7.2. In the nature of mass consciousness and mythmaking one can find common features:

a) archetype and collective unconscious; b) practical orientation; c) syncretism; d) self-sufficiency; e) antinomianism; f) sensually tangible reality; g) anthropologically understood language; h) trust in the authority of society.

Analysis of myth and mass consciousness allows us to understand the social, epistemological nature of mass consciousness, its basic properties and specificity as a form of social consciousness. Archaic language of consciousness, both individual and collective, under the influence of traditional and new types of media is significantly activated (Lisenkova & Tulchinsky, 2017). The study of this phenomenon is provided with an interesting and promising direction. This problem allows for the existence of various approaches and foundations for analyzing the connection between myth and mass consciousness. Its consideration can be effective in an attempt to outline a new cross-section of the theoretical view of the modern state of mass consciousness in the context of the dynamic development of information culture.

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