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**PRACTICAL ILLUSION PHENOMENON AND ITS ROLE IN THE**  
**DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

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***Abstract***

The paper presents results of the study of "practical illusion" phenomenon, which has almost completely gone from the field of view of modern scientists. It reveals sources and nature of objectified illusory. The conditions for the emergence of illusory in public relations are determined. It has been shown that the necessary characteristic of many social institutions that represent "practical illusion" is their inconsistency with their own needs. The dominant structures of social consciousness are conservative and inert, which naturally reinforces illusory relations. The forms of illusiveness are interconnected - one gives rise to the other: the antagonisms of a civil society give rise to the alienated state as an illusory generic form of activity, and that causes the illusion of a person as a citizen. The illusory structures of the personality, therefore, are the basis for the functioning and evolution of the illusion phenomena in public relations. The objectified forms of illusiveness are in necessary connection with each other, since they are indispensable elements of the essential forces of a human. At the same time, such characteristics of an objective illusion as concealment of the actual content of human relations, the incompatibility of some institutions with their own needs are the result of knowing the illusion at the level of phenomenon. We can formulate its essential characteristics only by revealing the causes, determining the mechanism for a practical illusion formation. The article discusses in detail various forms of fetishism (practical illusion). The mechanisms of practical illusion emergence are revealed.

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**Keywords:** Civil society, fetishism, illusivity, practical illusion, social institutions, substitution operations.



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## 1. Introduction

One of the paradoxical phenomena of social life, discovered by philosophers in the eighteenth century, but almost completely out of the field of view of modern researchers, will be discussed in this article.

This refers to the so-called "practical illusion", which plays a meaningful, system-forming role in the development of a social structure, human nature, the formation of various historical types of personality.

One can distinguish illusory of individual social relations and institutions because they are realized in traditional spheres of a human life: economic, political, spiritual. In conditions of universal alienation, they radically change their content, not corresponding to the ought, which is usually associated with them on the basis of social and historical experience. It is necessary to emphasize that this illusory nature is not the product of a distorted, inadequate reflection of reality by the individual. It exists in reality, arises objectively, regardless of the consciousness and will of a person, is a side of reality, but at the same time, inadequate expression of real social relations. Therefore, we are dealing with a special form of discrepancy between the essence and existence in the real spheres of social life.

In matters of civil society formation, there is also illusiveness phenomenon, starting with the very definition of "civil society" and ending with its postulates and values.

## 2. Problem Statement

Illusory in social relations is an inadequate expression of the essence of the real "social basis" in the derived spheres of human activity, which do not correspond to their own duty, but, nevertheless, exist.

The general condition for the emergence of illusory social relations is the rupture of the social basis due to the isolation of individuals in the production of material life, the need to preserve social integrity. Illusory social institutions hide the actual basis of its appearance do not correspond to the obligations, though, provide the specified integrity. For example, production turns out to be opposed to economic relations as a "pure form", since the latter inadequately reproduce the actual production relations.

Deployment of essential human forces, the process of their identification includes as a necessary element the formation and reproduction of illusory social connections. Moreover, the illusory phenomenon acts as an element that creates a real opportunity for the individual to develop the fullness of his/her relations and to oppose them to himself/herself as independent social forces.

The necessary characteristic of many social institutions and relations, which are a "practical illusion" is their discrepancy to their obligation.

We should understand the obligation as the objective laws, tendencies of social formations change, their nature and the purpose of development. We also add that obligation should be determined from the standpoint of the developed social unit. It should be borne in mind, however, that practical illusion is the same as the generation of objective social and historical laws, as well as those social formations, the reality and actuality of which coincide.

Naturally, objective necessity is reflected in public consciousness, it is represented in it. However, some features of social consciousness make it difficult to detect the discrepancy of social institution due to the fact that some social structure hides the content of its real social basis (there is such a variant of objectified illusion). Public consciousness is heterogeneous, an important place in it takes the ideology of the elite, the dominant social groups, it less intensely reflects than the developed individual consciousness, and the main thing is that some ideological forms objectively (less often - specifically) cover the practical illusory: an example of functioning of ideas of freedom and equality in the bourgeois consciousness.

Mechanisms of an objective illusion formation, undoubtedly, are a part of mechanisms of human activity and can be fully revealed only through an analysis of its holistic development, insofar as the condition for improving these definitions, bringing them to the actual essential level is relating their content to the content of the concepts “subjective” and “objective”, “material” and “ideal”, which play a leading role in the in-depth preparation of activity as an integral system. It is within the framework of relations expressed by these categories that there is a practical illusion.

### **3. Research Questions**

**3.1. What are the forms of the emergence and functioning of practical illusion?**

**3.2. What are the causes, mechanisms for the emergence of illusory social and personal structures?**

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to identify the basic mechanisms of human nature evolution, to research "practical illusion" in this process, the definition of forms, causes and mechanisms for the emergence of illusory social structures.

### **5. Research Methods**

The methodological basis of the research is dialectic logic, which gives an idea of the general laws of development; a systematic approach associated with the idea of the world-historical process as an emerging integrity, the concept of the symbolic nature of cultural entities, mechanisms for an objective illusion formation.

### **6. Findings**

The emergence and functioning of the ideal in all forms are associated with the "operation of substitution". As K. Marx emphasized: “Thanks to this quid pro quo (manifestation of one instead of another), the products of labor become commodities, things sensually-supersensible or social ones. Thus, the light effect of a thing on the optic nerve is perceived not as a subjective irritation of the optic nerve itself, but as an objective form of a thing outside the eyes” (Marx & Engels, 1974, p. 82).

The "substitution operations", ensuring the existence of the ideal, are associated with the emergence of practical illusions. A widely spread and well-studied form of the latter is fetishism. Ilyenkov (1974) believed that the ideal in itself is an objective basis of fetishism of any type from real to "commodity". It should be noted, however, that the ideal, at the same time, is the only form in which it is presented in reality. In other words, it is necessary to be able to distinguish the real and the illusory in the structure of the ideal, whether it is an image or the relation of objectively existing objects involved in human activity.

Nevertheless, it is the ideal that can become the basis of fetishism. It happens as follows. While acting a human transforms external things, and his own body, turning natural matter into a means and organ of his/her life. He considers nature to be the material of his goals realization, i.e., as something that is somehow involved in the process of appropriate activities. However, he/she has to reckon with the objective properties of this material.

The ideal objectively reproduces and simultaneously generates both real and illusory connections and although illusory at all stages of human history participated in the structuring of social relations, it was a necessary element of the latter, nevertheless, the objective content of the real in the ideal allowed a human activity to maintain expediency, up to a certain period provided a person with the opportunity to properly navigate in the social environment, to build their activities adequately to its actual content.

However, the situation has significantly changed in the conditions of commodity production, alienation, developed to such an extent that certain areas of human activity themselves have become organic systems, functioning under their own laws, which have gone out of collective control and opposing the social unit. Various forms of fetishism (practical illusion), ideological, commodity, political and social have emerged.

Let us try to understand the generating mechanism more precisely. As an example we are going to discuss the state as one of forms of "surrogate collectivity". As a certain form of the ideal, it represents the universal nature of civil society relations. In a sense, this nature is already represented by the fact and nature of the alienation of the state.

However, it is assumed that the political system should, first of all, embody the universal interest of a civil society, or at least, the universality of egoistic interest.

Of course, the real state in any age has not performed fully its destination on the exercise of universal interest. The very fact of the existence of a state is evidence of the existence of a civil society, which should level its flaws, give an opportunity for citizens to "confront" legal coercion by the state on a legal basis. Moreover, in the Russian case, when the state is given the task of forming civil society institutions, there is an unjustified replacement of its values and fundamentals: civil society institutions are a priori opposed to the values of the state, civil society, taken in its pure form, is a set of selfish interests of each individual.

So-called "inalienable" rights of citizens create a certain illusion and expectations of modern citizens. However, obtaining rights is always associated with the rejection of some freedom and endowment of responsibility as well as state responsibility. False ideas about the existence of these rights, which cannot be realized due to the very nature of things cause only disappointment, acquire a negative coloring.

However, in the Greek Polis, the feudal city Republic, or even in Eastern despotism, the interest of the whole was a major concern of the political bourgeois system.

In the bourgeois society there is metamorphosis with the state: now the corporate interest of the red tape and bureaucracy is mainly represented in it. Moreover, the organization of administrative activity is such that even part of the official, being within the political system, subjectively, fully, may not represent the degree of corporate government.

In a mediated way, the state also presents the interest of the bourgeois elite. The interest of others (also egoistic) is represented, of course, in the law, but profaned in the real activities of the state.

The fact is that there is no real universal interest in the society of this period (with the exception of the fight against crime, national defense, etc.), and there is, as already noted, the universality of selfish interest, curbed by the illusory universal interest.

Thus, in the state, as an ideal entity, there is also a second "replacement", also, of course, expressing the nature of civil society relations, but expressing it in an invalid form. That is, it seems that there is (the ratio of commodity production), through what is not (General interest). There is a fetishization of the state, and the illusory, abstract content of the state acts as a result of "double" replacement, double quid pro quo. In general, this is, the nature of "surrogates of collectivity".

A similar situation occurs in other cases of the emergence and functioning of a practical illusion, for example, in the case of the well-known "commodity fetishism".

Goods and their movement are a real ideal process, developing on a material basis. In this case, we are dealing with several consecutive "substitution operations". The first gives us the product of labor as a form of human activity (the ideal plan of material activity), the second gives it additional ideal properties, turning it into a product, the third provides it with non-existent "human" properties that hide its real social basis. Thus, there is no "doubling" but "tripling" of the substitution operation. "Double-triple" substitutions take place in the event of any fetishism (any form of practical illusion) from the commodity to the fetishism of the word, language, symbol, sign.

The presence of practical illusions in the political sphere is a source of political fetishism.

The possibility of fetishization of any relations of reality, illusory ideas and objectified illusion is already being laid down by the role, functions of the ideal in the system of public relations. We mean, first of all, the value of the symbolic aspect of the ideal, researched by Ilyenkov (1974), Cassirer (1988), Losev (1993) and others.

On the one hand, symbolic systems are a necessary moment of rational organization of a human activity, increase the level of its order, give it conceptual forms. On the other hand, symbolic mediations generate various forms of fetishism, which are of course "removed" by personal structures in the process of socialization.

Schopenhauer (1988) was one of the first who adequately assessed the situation. He remarks that "peoples (classes, races, social groups of various kinds), strictly speaking, are empty abstractions; only individuals do exist" (p. 678), testifies not to the fact that the concept of social existence is not available to him, but, on the contrary, to his ability to resist traditional ideas and to assess correctly the actual state of social realities of that era. It is the growing discrepancy between the goals of social action and its results that led Schopenhauer to the denial of historical progress, and the historical movement in general.

The constant use of A. Schopenhauer's concept of "abstraction", "false", "nightmare", etc. indicates not only similarity of it with the attitude of the representatives of different and even opposing philosophical fields, but also on the adequacy of his understanding of the world the actual content of social relations.

One of the manifestations of alienation of people, constant deception of their expectations, inadequacy of their goals, the results obtained is militant individualism, selfishness, tough competition, developing beyond any moral foundations. The behavior of the people of the bourgeois society is untrue, unreal, social activity is a continuous play of comedy.

Here it will be appropriate to recall the ideas of Hegel (1990) and Marx (Marx & Engels, 1974) concerning the universality of egoistic interest and the need to curb the antagonism of private interests by illusory universal.

Moreover, A. Schopenhauer considers not only the social world, but also the whole world, i.e. the area of existence of natural things, as a set of abstractions and illusions. However, the world for him is the will and the idea, in which the object and the subject merge into a unity, excluding any objective existence, so the conclusion of Narsky (1992) is that "... Schopenhauer denies any truly objective existence of matter and the meaning of Kant's "thing-in-itself", which corresponds to the materialistic trends, the world of natural phenomena was considered as a kind of illusion, a Mirage, a Fata-Morgana" (p. 16), it seems clear.

It was important to analyze those aspects of A. Schopenhauer's theoretical views that relate to the problem under study and to show that they have a completely objective basis and are within the framework of the tradition of European social thought, which included I. Kant, G. Hegel, K. Marx and other outstanding scientists.

Schopenhauer (1988) described very accurately the real situation of a man in the industrial European society, which is not only forced to act in public structures, created by practical illusion, but also becomes a carrier and source of illusory relations, constantly reproducing them in their life.

Alienation, the nature of the division of labor, the level of specialization in social activities, the method of inclusion of the individual in the cultural process, especially the socialization of the individual in the conditions of domination of exchange value, gave rise to the phenomenon of a partial person (Teilmensch), fixing for a long period of history the discrepancy between the essence and the existence of a person, divided within himself/herself.

It is necessary to emphasize the role of practical illusion in the formation and functioning of the mechanism of development of the cultural process. This type of illusion also mediates the processes of interiorization and exteriorization of the individual.

Although a partial man of the bourgeois society is deprived of the opportunity to really participate in all forms of generic human activity, allocated in a relatively independent spheres of life and served, for the most part, professionals, nevertheless, he has certain attitude to these areas. He relates, for example, his own real interest to the illusory universal, represented by the state, leads, as noted, "heavenly" life, acting from time to time as the alleged bearer of national sovereignty.

Directly or indirectly, the individual is involved in other forms of surrogate collectivity, in the reproduction of the relations of the latter, transferring them in a given form to themselves and including them in the structure of their personal qualities.

So, the creation of views on the world, in turn, is involved in the construction of the world. Therefore, for example, in order to form a social class, it is not enough that it has an objective basis in the social structure, the class also needs to be created, i.e. built with the help of political work. And this process is more successful if the political work is carried out on a theoretical basis.

The construction of the agent's views is carried out under "structural pressure", i.e. determined by objective social laws, but then the views are included in the structure of activity and create new social structures - real and symbolic. The institutionalization of social entities is impossible without their legalization in various ideological orientations, public opinion, etc.

There is a social phenomenon which Bourdieu (1994) has identified as "symbolic capital" – "form", which take different kinds of capital, the perceived and recognized as legitimate. Symbolic capital can be economic, political, cultural, etc. Thus, with unconsciously created symbolic structures, there are created consciously or semi-consciously, partially consciously. This is one of the sources of constant complexity of social relations, the increase in their practical illusionism.

Details of fetishization of social relations and activities are explored by representatives of phenomenological sociology Berger and Lukman (1995) in their book "Social Construction of Reality". It is about creating sectors of institutionalized activity and legitimization that justifies the institutional order, giving a normative character to its practical imperatives. "Institutionalization," they argue, "takes place wherever the mutual typification of habitual actions by actors of various kinds is carried out. In other words, any such typification is an institution" (p. 105).

One of the consequences of the developing symbolism and illusory public relations is the decrease of subjectivity of individual and collective activity, the discrepancy between its results and goals, the increase of its irrationality. This process has acquired a global character, deforming social relations, causing the phenomenon that F. Nietzsche called nihilism.

Each society has a sector of institutional order, covering a part of social relations and, naturally, its presence in combination with legitimation greatly increases the danger or, more precisely, the possibility of the appearance of an objective illusion.

## **7. Conclusion**

The practical illusion phenomenon is associated with the mechanism of production and functioning of the ideal, arising through quid pro quo - "substitution operations", with the need to compensate for lost connections that in the past ensure the integrity of society, the ethnic group, etc. It should be emphasized that substitution operations can "double", "triple", etc., hiding their actual basis and determining the emergence of social institutions that do not correspond to their duty, their essence.

This mechanism of the emergence of illusory social and personal structures operates, practically at all stages of human history, but until the end it works only in certain favorable conditions, among which the phenomenon of alienation is the most important. At the same time, the "phenomenon of alienation", expressing a certain motivation of labor activity, at the same time characterizes the aggregate structure of the way of life, because it expresses, in essence, the mutual relation of various forms of the individual's life, i.e. various lifestyle components. Naturally, alienation, permeating all spheres of human activity,

based on ideal structures, at all levels of society's existence, is capable of generating and gives rise to practical illusion.

Identifying the phenomenon of a practical illusion, its functions in the structure of a social whole is a complex and impossible thing not only at the level of everyday consciousness, but also as part of a scientific analysis of social relations that ignores historical, philosophical and systemic aspects of the study of problems of social development. It is for this reason that after Karl Marx, the practical illusion actually disappeared from the field of view of researchers.

The process of forming a civil society is also accompanied by the presence of illusiveness. The presence of citizens in a state does not mean at all that there is a civil society in it, just as there is no "inalienable" rights of citizens in well-organized social systems (Saglie & Sivesind, 2018).

Meanwhile, the relations of practical illusory nature mediate almost all social ties, the activities of public institutions and institutions, they are structure-forming elements in the process of separating the generic forms of human activity and highlighting them in special spheres of life. Having no idea about the practical illusion, its forms, functions, not distinguishing in the "real" "real" and "illusory" people in principle have no opportunity to exercise their subjectivity, to achieve the real expediency of their activities.

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