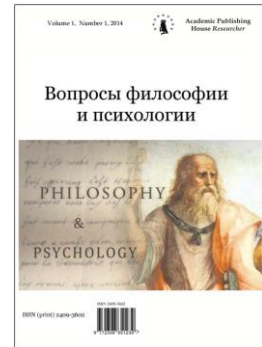


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UDC 1

### **On Reality of Virtuality: Nature and Classification of Sociocultural Illusions**

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#### **Abstract**

This is an attempt to give arguments for ontological nature of sociocultural illusions in this article. An accurate determination of sociocultural illusions is founded on the definitions of human illusions that were suggested by I. Kant. Experience of branching classification of sociocultural illusions is demonstrated.

**Keywords:** sociocultural illusions, personal psychological illusions, *reality* of virtuality, transformed form, utopias and ideologies.

#### **Introductory remarks**

In the introduction to this article we would like to remember one legend that was an incitement to our interest to researching sociocultural illusions many years ago.

Once members of one ancient tribe pleaded their gods about their liberation from the Evil that was personified by the representatives of the tribe in the image of “the spirit of Ngoro-Ngoro”. After long praying the gods heard the desperate request of the people and the evil left this tribe forever: no murder or theft occurred, the truth took over lies. Peace and quiet came to the earth. But some new problems accompanied it, depression and boredom. After “the evil spirit of Ngoro-Ngoro” left the earth, wine lost its heady properties, women couldn’t seduce any more, wealth lost its joy, power didn’t lure...

Psychoanalysts during the life of Freud referred to this legend when they wanted to illustrate what the unconscious was. In our work we took a risk to go further widening the idea of the *dual* “spirit of Ngoro-Ngoro” to the borders of the *reality* of the sociocultural virtual. F.M. Dostoevsky, *Russian* Freud and Nietzsche in one, gave us the way to this thought.

In “The Mistress” Dostoevsky describes “the life of a German” and the corresponding life of a Russian “at the German’s place” – a civilized life without “the spirit of Ngoro-Ngoro”, a moral one from the Kant’s point of view but simultaneously a boring one. The spell of any utopias is removed and the fire of sociocultural neuroses is put out in this life.

“The German’s life was monotonous and still. The German wasn’t balky; pretty Tinhen, not touching the morality, was everything - but the life seemed to lose its colour for Ordynov forever! <...>

Sometimes the previous thirst for science, the previous ardour, the previous images, created by himself, brightly appeared before him from the past but they only pressed and strangled his

energy. Ideas didn't materialize. <...> Probably, he could have realized a completed and original idea. Probably, he could have become the artist of science. At least he used to believe in it in the old days. Sincere belief is the earnest of what more to come. But now he laughed at his blind belief sometimes and – didn't move any further. <...> Something like mysticism, predestination and mysteriousness began to penetrate his soul...

The German's housemaid, an old churchy Russian woman, happily told about her praying lodger lying for hours like lifeless at the church dais. He would often sit in one place for hours forgetting himself, his ordinary life and everything else, lonely and gloomy..." [Dostoevsky 1972 I, 318–319].

According to Dostoevsky there is no future, there is no colour in it, it is not interesting without these "neurotic utopias". Leaving wider critics of this statement for our further works now we only notify that all the sociocultural illusions (from the victorious ideologies and starting their movement to the power utopias to a elusive social *idee fixe* representing the sociocultural reality itself) are finally the embodiment of the human imagination, or speaking the language of psychoanalysis, the embodiment of the unconscious, that "evil spirit of Ngoro-Ngoro", without which there would be neither the human, nor the culture known to us.

The greatest discovery of Freud turned out to be paradoxically simple. The overwhelming majority of traumatizing the mind of young people facts of "criminal seducing", "sexual perversion" and "harassment" that Freud's patients described as real facts from their childhood *were exposed* as "phantoms of their imagination". However, these virtual or imagined facts not only influenced the origin and character of the illnesses of Freud's patients but also more or less determined the whole their lives becoming quite a real part of its. Was it an involuntary suggestion from the psychoanalyst by his leading questions entering the patients into their "possible" (once again, imagined) "worlds" or the patients "came to that themselves" long before consulting the doctor, one way or another their fictional facts surely took place in a specific reality - the *reality* of the virtual.

It's this reality that turns out to be "more real than the reality itself". It's created by the *belief*, *desire* and *ignorance* that unceremoniously use the most powerful tool, given to the humanity. As it comes from the above-mentioned, we speak neither about consciousness nor sense. We speak about the human imagination.

Accepting this point of view as an example we can try to see the whole history of visual art as the vivid history of the human imagination. Hours spent by humans in front of picturesque canvases, lives spent by the artists for their creation, high cost of the masterpieces of visual art and finally even the thefts of them with all (quite real) consequences, all this facts prove that the imagination, fixed on in the canvases with the help of paints and lines, is really a part (according to Dostoevsky "the best part") of the human reality.

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In his book "From myth to logos" F. Kessidi wrote: "Cognition accompanies myth but doesn't form its primary nucleus: the essence of myth is not in the explanation but in objectivation of subjective impressions and experiences, when products of imagination as the result of this objectivation are taken for genuine realities of the outer world" [Kessidi 1972, 48].

In this article we introduce into the wide-spread opinion, expressed in this passage, the essential objection (introduce some "of the finer points"), which, frankly speaking, gives sense its appearance. That is we consider, that "products of imagination" in the situation of creating social myth are not simply *taken for* "genuine realities of the outer world" but *are* the faultless and genuine reality (the only one existing!) for those people who *want* to live in this reality, *believe* in its objectivity and *do not know* that they are mistaken. On the scale of this reality, in other words on the scale of the scope of a social (but not individual) subject, the subjective and the objective turn out to be identical.

For example, for the community of the scientists who believe that the picture of the movement of culture "from myth to logos" is the description of the genuine reality of "the establishment of Greek philosophy" and do not know (surely for absolutely objective reasons) that they are mistaken, the abovementioned picture (created by scientific thinking, from which it is impossible to eliminate the work of imagination) will be the genuine reality, in which people live.

So philosophy and science can't relieve people from sociocultural illusions but in a way provide them new nutriment. "It seems that there were no epochs in history which could not be

called mythomaking genic”, as the author of one of the latest researches of the myths writes [Khrenov 2011, 42].

**Sociocultural and individually-psychological illusions: generic difference and affinity.** Understanding of the nature of sociocultural illusions first of all involves the necessity of distinguishing sociocultural illusions, in other words illusions existing at the level of society and culture, from individually-psychological illusions. For the last we will take the illusions which haven't reached social and cultural significance, more or less remaining significant at the individual level. We are referring to all kinds of tricks of senses of a person which cause different sensuous illusions (perception of non-existing objects etc.) and also about mistakes, unique in their individuality, which are often quite important at the personal level but do not achieve general significance, in other words social and cultural significance. Thereby we can label as individually-psychological illusions such unusual pathologic delusive phenomena as hallucinations, visions, “voices” etc.\*

Dividing illusions into sociocultural and individually-psychological we would like to point at some affinity. The basis of this affinity is homogenous in three complementary aspects which we denoted as (a) the aspect of ignorance, (b) the aspect of belief, and (c) the aspect of desire.

*The aspect of ignorance.* The common basis for the genesis of both sociocultural and individually-psychological illusions is first of all incompleteness of knowledge of a person or a group of people about the reality in which they exist. We can say that illusions are brought to life by ontognoseological “holes” in the human reality, which are due to the lack of knowledge, necessary for the *exposure* of these illusions as such. This lack is compensated by the work of social or individual imagination and also the work of the foregone social and individually-psychological settings (determined by beliefs and desires) which make a person or persons have *advance* knowledge of things which, strictly speaking, they don't know.

It's important to emphasize that ontognoseological “holes” constitute a part of the reality in which a person lives far otherwise as holes in Dutch cheese constitute a part of Dutch cheese. Unavoidable ontognoseological “holes”, that bring to life different social and individual illusions, remind more of suitable and light clothes, the clothes a king wears with his proper royal merit until the knowledge of the fact that “he has nothing on at all” becomes wide-spread at the social and cultural level or captures individual consciousness.

*The aspect of belief.* As we have already mentioned, ontognoseological “holes” are filled with the help of the work of social and individual imagination and also the work of social and individually-psychological settings. But it is *belief* that plays the key role in compensating the lack of knowledge and, finally, the constituting role in making illusions. We speak about the unconditional belief in the reality of illusions, both individual and social ones, it makes no difference.

We understand the reality of sociocultural illusions, created with the help of unconditional belief, as the *reality* of the sociocultural virtual or the *reality* of the mythological. In the case of individual illusions we must surely speak about the *reality* of the individually-psychological virtual, not reaching the level of generally significant social myth.

Belief is the main constituting factor because it gives products of imagination and results of working of some unconscious settings the status of knowledge. But not only the status of some knowledge but of the final and absolute one. In fact, by stating this we admit that it is belief that turns the imaginary into the *reality* of the virtual.

*The aspect of desire.* And finally, the common basis for the genesis of sociocultural and individual illusions is possible (that doesn't mean necessary) divergence between human desires, dreams and ideals and the reality. So, human illusions may arise (or may not) at the moment when the reality begins to “resist” or “not stay within” senses that strongly prescribed for this reality by

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\* Cases, when pathologic illusions epidemically spread in a large community of people – cases of mass hallucinations, mass visions (e.g. of religious character), cases of mass psychosis, phenomena of mass panic etc. – all these cases, strictly speaking, are in the frame of the declared subject. But due to the economy of reader's attention and the room of this article we leave their consideration behind the frame of the given article.

desires, dreams and ideals of the community (or an individual) at the level of the society and culture (or at the individual level).

In other words, both sociocultural and individually-psychological illusions arise at the moment when a person or a group of people begin to see what they insistently want to see that is when they consider real something the existence of which by some reasons (solid for them) is categorically necessary, the only possible, morally right etc.\* Such a situation is fraught with not only the absence of estimate knowledge but as usual the absence of knowledge about the *absence of knowledge*.

As the common conclusion we repeat the following. In the case of both sociocultural and individually-psychological illusions we speak about the existence of a social group or an individual in some specific *reality* of the virtual. In the specific *reality* of, simply speaking, “wishful thinking” in the condition of the absence of the knowledge that crashes the illusions and in the condition of the constituent influence of the unconditional belief about the borders of desire and reality. However the fact, that in the case of sociocultural illusions we deal with the social and cultural reality and in the case of individually-psychological illusions we deal with the individual and psychological reality, dramatically changes the matter.

Existence of a separate subject in its special individual reality of the virtual can be easily qualified as a subjective mistake about “the genuine reality”. The easiness of such a qualification is connected with the fact that side by side with a strange and original reality of a somewhat eccentric person leading his “odd”, delusive, virtual life, there is always some social and cultural reality which is normal in its general significance. It is the standards of the latter which determine the manners of an individual as strange, his behaviour as deviant and his socialization and enculturation as unsuccessful. The problem arises only with the following question: what should we do if the community, that determines the standards and models of behaviour, lives in the sociocultural *reality* of the virtual?

**Practically reliable as absolutely false.** “As applied to ideological relationships, as M.K. Mamardashvili wrote in his article, devoted to *modified forms*, Marx interpreted a *modified form* as a kind of false conscience, not as a subjective individual mistake, but a socially necessary appearance of relationships reproduced in the impression of their agents. It is the *modified form* of actual relationships that is the contents of the motives, inducements to act the direct agents of social relationships” [Mamardashvili 1970 V, 389].

The opposition of the objective *false conscience*, discovered by Marx, to the subjective *individual misconception* corresponds with our opposition of *sociocultural* and *individually-psychological illusions* and also, of course, with the opposition of sociocultural and individually-psychological reality of the virtual. In the first case we speak about the valid human reality, in the second about an odd *form* of existence of an individual.

But we do not agree with M.K. Mamardashvili in his qualifying a “modified form”, “false conscience” and “socially necessary appearance of relationships” as only “semblance”, or at bottom doubtlessly “false”. From our point of view, the thing Marx called “false conscience” is the only accessible for a person kind of conscience<sup>†</sup>, and the necessary appearance of social relationships is the *essence* of it, and there is no other *essence* of these relationships. These conditions need explanations.

First of all, let’s remember the definition of a “*modified form*” given by Mamardashvili in the mentioned article:

“A modified form is the concept, introduced for philosophical usage Marx, characterizing the construction and the way of functioning of difficult systems; this concept lets us research apparent

\* The opposite statement is true as well. Sociocultural and individually-psychological illusions may occur at the moment when a group of people or an individual does *not* begin to see what they insistently do *not* want to see, in other words when they do *not* consider something as real, the existence of that they take as practically impossible, categorically undue etc.

† In the case of accepting of this statement it becomes clear, for example, why all later attempts of Marxists to explain an important thing in Marxism look so stiffly and unconvincingly. We speak about the attempts to explain by what miracle Marx, who lived together with his contemporaries in bourgeois society, that is, in the realm of “false conscience”, managed to secure his conscience of “not false, but true”.

dependences and effects, blooming out on the surface of whole as what Marx called “a form of its [whole. – P.P.] reality or a form <...> of the real existence”. Such a form of existence is the product of transformation of inner relationships in a difficult system, taking place at a definite level of it, concealing its actual character and direct connections by oblique expressions” [Mamardashvili 1970 V, 386].

Formally speaking, this definition is built on the basis that the attribution of the *divine* point of view, represented in it, shows on the “sacred figure” of Marx. The essence of this point of view is that a divine subject taking place of this point is able to see all the *inner* and *invisible* as genuine and everything *surface* and *visible* as false. At the same time false certainly remains false, no matter what it is. However as it is false in the necessary way that it is *objectively* false, it isn’t false “in some way”. Let’s try to understand this paradoxicality.

So, on the one hand, *quasi-religious* thinking represented by the abovementioned point of view rejects to see in the “surface of the whole” its inner essence and genuineness, and in the “form of the reality” of this whole – its final and real existence. On the other hand, this thinking puts itself into a false position, stating that inner relationships of a complicated system, “being the product and deposition of the modification of actions of the connections of the system, at the same time they exist in it independently as a certain, qualitatively complete phenomenon, “a subject” along with the others. In this “existence prevailing” lies the problem of the *modified form*, as Mamardashvili insistently stresses, which in its observed (and practically authentic) character appears as the final starting point during the analysis of the qualities of functioning of the whole system, appears as a specific, undegradable formation afterwards, as “substance” of the observed qualities” [Mamardashvili 1970 V, 386].

The conspicuous ambiguity consists in the fact that something of the *practically genuine* at the same time turns out to be *absolutely false*. Not challenging the fact of the significant achievements of Marxist philosophy in the field of the research of sociocultural illusions, we suggest developing these achievements, clearing the abovementioned ambiguity up to the end.

**The reality of the virtual and the whole natural-cultural reality of a human being.** In the frame of the matter in hand of *modified forms* the main mistake of Marx and agreeably Mamardashvili consists, from our point of view, in the fact that they spoke about not one but two realities. One reality – the reality of the modified forms, they explicitly researched and described. The other, the implicit, *unobserved, inner* reality that is *modified* into its *modified* forms, “was in their mind”. According to the logic organized by Marx, the latter reality was neither *modified* nor *perverted* or *irrational*. In fact, there was talk of the reality which is standard one in its metaphysical rationality.

The understanding of the problem of the modified forms as a problem of two realities, the reality which is to be modified and the reality already modified and perverted, adds to this problem a wide historical philosophical scale. The whole philosophy from Plato to Hegel tells about two realities – the genuine metaphysical reality and the “forms of its actuality”. We have articulated our position afore: the reality that Marx and Mamardashvili call modified or even perverted is the only human reality in which human beings live and act.

Please note that the given position *does not* give the whole human natural cultural reality the status of absolutely rational one. So the question about the human illusions isn’t removed from the agenda. We speak about another thing. That our position discomfits the sense (and makes absolutely uninteresting) of the appliance of such ominous epithets as *modification, perversion* and *irrationality* to the whole reality of a human being observed by us every day. Simultaneously, essentially important is the condition that a part of the whole and the only natural-cultural *reality* of a human being makes the reality of the virtual, in other words, *the reality* of sociocultural illusions.

“Fumbled” by Marx, after numerous preceding philosophers, divine, metaphysical, absolutely genuine in its final genuineness reality for many people still appears not in its gnoseological status (as an already waste, used, worked off sociocultural illusion of a religious, traditionalist, metaphysical or some other divine character) but as a genuine reality between two realities – genuine and non-genuine one. This way we speak about working religious, metaphysical and other sociocultural illusions in their ontological status.

Our dividing illusions into social and individual ones, the dividing that foresees, agreeably, the dividing between social and individually-illusory reality of the virtual, doesn't contradict our thesis about the unity of the natural cultural reality of a human being. As well as the society consists of single individuals, illusory thinking and behaviour of an individual make the whole socio-illusory reality. Having said so, we need to remember that parts, organically entering something whole, are inevitable to lose some of their qualities (for example, the qualities that are characteristic for thinking and behaviour of single individuals) and gain the other (for example, the qualities that are characteristic for thinking and behaviour of the social whole). Illusions characteristic for a crowd by all means differ from the illusions characteristic for an individual, who represents a part of this crowd, but it is the illusiveness of thinking and behaviour of an individual in the crowd that represents the transformed constituent of the illusiveness of the crowd. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to speak about the affinity of sociocultural and individually-psychological illusions. Here we come directly to the necessity of the definition of sociocultural illusions.

**The definition of sociocultural illusions.** We take as a basis of the definition of the concept of "illusion" its definition by I. Kant, given in his "Anthropology from the pragmatic point of view": "*Illusion* is such a mistake that remains even when it is *known*, that the fictive subject does not exist in reality" [Kant 1966 VI, 382; our italics. – P.P.].

The question is about one and the same subject – the subject of "such a mistake", but not about two different subjects, one of which would take an illusion for an existing in reality subject and the second would deny its existence and in such a manner would be free of this illusion.

For the purpose of clearance of further narration we introduce one more classifying dividing (after the dividing illusions into sociocultural and individual ones). We divide sociocultural illusions into (a) those existing at the level of mass society and mass culture (*spontaneous* sociocultural illusions or so-called grass-roots "social myths") and (b) sociocultural illusions, existing at the level of the elite of the society (deliberately *rationalized* sociocultural illusions – consciously formulated utopias and ideologies, first of all). At that we consider that any illusions should be referred to quite concrete communities, because in practice "the elite of the society" is represented by a number of communities, different from each other. The same refers to "mass society" and "mass culture".

Besides introducing this dividing, the productive talk about sociocultural illusions needs some extension of the formulated above definition of illusions. Once again we refer to Kant, who in his paragraph of the abovementioned work "About the inclination for the illusion as passion" gives the second definition of illusions like this: "Under *an illusion* as a motive of desires I consider the inner practical mistake – to take the subjective in its motivational reason for something objective" [Kant 1966 VI, 522].

Kant demonstrates the abilities of a keen psychologist by noting, for example, that nature "misleads a lazy by nature person in such way, that subjects of his imagination seem to him real goals (ways of gaining respect, power and money), that bring him, who reluctantly gets to work, enough troubles and make him do a lot at his idleness; and the interest shown in it is purely illusory; this way nature plays with a person and pushes him (subject) to his goal, while this subject is considered (objectively), that he puts this goal himself" [Kant 1966 VI, 522–523].

Despite the fact that the latter idea of Kant reminds of the well-known idea of Hegel about "the Slyness of the World Mind", and also the idea of Marx that "they do not realize it, but they do it", Kant does not exceed the scope of the philosophical psychology<sup>†</sup>. Because of this for us his second definition of illusions, as well as the first one, needs extension and clarification. For these

\* Once again, we offer to take this definition only as a *basis*. Actually, Kant gives the definition of only individually-psychological illusions, that later we will extrapolate, with the necessary reservations, to the field of sociocultural illusions, with due regard to the stated by us above affinity of these two kinds of human illusions.

† In the wider frame of social philosophy the thesis, offered by Kant, sounds like this: "We try to show not the way which people think in myths, but the way which myths think in people without their privity" [Levi-Strauss 2000 I, 20].

purposes we synthesize both of his definitions, trying to take into account the sociocultural status of the illusions, interesting for us.

The clarification of our synthetic definition, still being in process of producing, is in the fact, that we do ignore the phrase “to take the subjective in its motivational reason for something objective” in the second definition given by Kant. At the level of sociocultural illusions a social subject (a social group, a single community or the whole society) has to “take the subjective in its motivational reason for something objective”, because subjective and objective on the scale of a sociocultural subject turn out to be identical\*.

As for the ground for the possibility of extension of senses of Kant’s definitions of sensuous illusions, or illusions earlier defined by us as individually-psychological, to the level of sociocultural illusions, here we need to refer to the affinity of sociocultural and individually-psychological illusions determined by us above too.

Basing on the presence of such affinity and taking into account the abovementioned specificity of a sociocultural subject we finally get the following definition: “Sociocultural illusions are practical, efficient mistakes, having ontological status, which prevents taking them into consideration in their more accustomed gnoseological status”.

This definition, in particular, means that the existence of sociocultural illusions can (surely, only for some time) take over the possible and actual knowledge, exposing them as mistakes, over the knowledge, *accessible* in principle for a subject, which is determined in the reality of an illusive subject. Such kind of existence of sociocultural illusions contributes to the appearing and forming of their *rationalized* image, destined (with a reference to reason, logical argumentation, all kinds of dialectical sophistic) to add them legitimization.

#### **Mistakes (a) practical, (b) usual, (c) intentional and (d) mistakes about mistakes.**

Fundamental research of the phenomenon of sociocultural illusions in all ways proves their above-mentioned practical orientation. It proves, in particular, their claim for solving the problems taken and estimated by human communities as problems of a “do or die” kind.

However, as we have mentioned before, for being effective and actual sociocultural illusions have to stand against any *knowledge* that places in question their existence in the status of reality. That’s why sociocultural illusions are ready not only by means of untruth, but also by means of truth to fight with the knowledge that can destroy their illusive subject, generally understood as a subject including social utopias, political ideologies, systems of social values, forked systems of cultural senses etc.

In other words we can put it like this: although rationalized sociocultural illusions (utopias and ideologies, the realization of which, as it is known, never comes to fruition adequately) are the sources of various social and cultural innovations. These innovations, however are not only productive, but have also counterproductive character.

The pathos of resistance of both *spontaneous and rationalized* sociocultural illusions to the developing human knowledge is based on the absoluteness of the belief in the ontological essence of an illusive subject, the belief practiced in some culture by an appropriate community. At that this community determinately deflects any possible discussion about its illusive subject, because such a discussion turns this subject into a purely gnoseological format, and in this format *all* sociocultural illusions appear as delusions, *usual* mistakes.

So, there are sociocultural illusions as (a) practical actual mistakes, working in the culture and the society at solving the problems of the given culture/subculture and the given society/community.

(b) usual mistakes, to them we refer former, realized but worked off sociocultural illusions.

(c) intentional mistakes – false, to which refer in particular attempts of forced giving usual mistakes the status of working sociocultural illusions, in other words, in fact, the status of reality.

And a special variant (d) is a kind of an attempt of conscientious reanimation of *worked off* sociocultural illusions: the question is about the sincere mistakes about mistakes.

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\* Please note that speaking about the mistake that lies in “to take the subjective in its motivational reason for something objective”, Kant involuntarily takes the point of view of a *divine* subject, which, as mentioned before, is able to see the invisible as genuine/objective and see “only visible” as false/subjective.

For clearing out the latter point we need to notify, that under unconscionable reanimation we understand the case (c) when, for example, ideologists knowingly try to present *worked off* sociocultural illusions in the status of unalterable reality. Thus *conscientiousness* in case (d) turns out to be paradoxically connected with the absence of completeness of *consciousness (awareness)* of sociocultural illusions as illusions.

Sometimes fighting with the completeness of *awareness* of sociocultural illusions as illusions can be conscious. In theory, such a construction comes as conscious fight with *consciousness*, in other words as fight of consciousness *with itself*. In practice, however, we usually speak about the fight with some concrete *forbidden* knowledge. For example, in the frame of working, effective and actual, religious sociocultural illusions the given fight is traditionally interpreted as “fight with heresy”, in other words with *temptation* by unnecessary, dangerous, false etc. knowledge.

Let us take middle ages as an example. In the very beginning of this epoch Tertullian, as known, suggests the principle that is accepted to be formulated in brief as “believe as it is absurdly”. Believe even when my belief contradicts the obvious and proved knowledge. Moreover, the contradiction to the knowledge is the reason of my belief. But notice that in the different religious epoch Martin Luther repeats nearly the same. Contrary to the intellect itself and the testimony of the senses you need to keep to belief: “At that I stand and can’t do otherwise”. As we can see, sociocultural illusions (for being effective and actual) in any epoch seek to work contrary to the presence of knowledge that can destroy them.

Thus the middle state of sociocultural illusions in case (d) between their “life and death” doesn’t speak about their invalid existence. In the life of any generation (or even several generations) “neither dead nor alive” illusions can take quite a significant place.

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Though, unlike cases (b) and (c), in case (d) we do not speak directly about the exhausting of practical efficiency of sociocultural illusions, there is also some delicacy. Clearing it out can help us understand the general nature of sociocultural illusions better.

A perfect sociocultural illusion is obviously the one working as an intersubjective reality to which nothing can be more “neither add nor subtract”, i.e. a reality, so to speak, which is “perfect just as it is”. From this statement we can conclude that the intention to improve artificially, renew, revive, “reload” etc. sociocultural illusions only shows that the *revivers* of these illusions are not *fully* believe in what was once alive and now stopped working socio-illusive senses. The ideologists remember about the former pragmatic utility of some sociocultural illusions at solving problems of the society and culture. But these illusions for them are only illusions now, though they want to use them in practice. Unbelief of such ideologists realizes in their taking the *reality* of the worked off social virtual as some kind of a “computer program”, which can be “reloaded”. Though, poetically speaking, people do not choose the reality of their sociocultural illusions, they, as is well known, “live and die” in it.

To the case of false treatment sociocultural illusions as necessary and useful deception (see case c above) we refer the state of things when ideologists try to upgrade sociocultural illusions due to their imperfect, *falling*, illusive nature, taking no notice that *perfect imperfectness*, in other words, *constant falling* is the way of natural and the most steady existence of sociocultural illusions.

A period of life of a sociocultural illusion, i.e. a period of its transition into a *usual* mistake (case b), depends more on the rise or the fall of intersubjective need in this kind of sociocultural reality. That is why the artificial pumping, the violent ideological obtrusion of the worked off illusions to the society, i.e. the violent obtrusion of the illusions that lost its efficiency, and with it, its reality, looks as “falling into illusions”.

### Conclusion

From the above it follows that the “essence” of working sociocultural illusions is their peculiar ontological status. It means that sociocultural illusions must be considered first of all not in their gnoseological status, as it is accepted in philosophy since the ancient times, but in their *ontological* status, i.e. in the status of their *real* existence. Only due to this status working sociocultural illusions differ from *usual* mistakes that quite amenable to critics and refutation.



The first step to the destruction of the whole reality of sociocultural illusions, in other words to the destruction of their ontological status, is the implicit splitting of this reality, hidden in the act of its rationalization. In particular, this splitting can be represented as a *duplication* of the mentioned reality through its division into *sacred* and *profane* realities, *metaphysical* and *physical* ones, *internal* and *external* ones, *gaming* and *utilitarian* ones, etc.

The second step to the destruction of the reality of sociocultural illusions is the stage of their paradoxical dialectical *re-mythicization*. It is this stage that was described by K. Manheim in his famous work “Ideology and Utopia” [Manheim 1994]: when utopias come to power, *utopian game* turns into *ideological-utilitarian thing* in such a way, that both these moments are preserved in their identity.

We speak about the creation of a *new* unity of the reality of sociocultural illusions – the reality, that, however, in an inconvertible manner has come through the period of its preliminary *splitting/duplication*. This means that at this stage we find the unity, produced by the *identification* of something that has been split: “Mythmaking <of the XX century>, connected with the man of the masses, *returned* the esthetics from the break of the game with the utility to that stage of the esthetics in the history of the humanity when the game was the reverse side of the utility”, says a researcher of the esthetics of the XX century [Khrenov 2011, 65; our italics. – P.P.].

The third stage of the destruction of the reality of sociocultural illusions, the destruction of the senescent social myths, is, correspondingly, the critics and death of ideology, into which “the utopia that has come to power” has turned at the second stage. Researching this final stage of the whole ternary cycle, we need to take into account that it is the critics and death of ideology almost unavoidably becomes the agent of rehabilitation/reanimation of this ideology.

This way all the three stages of the destruction of the ontological status of sociocultural illusions, the three stages of the destruction of their reality, tell us that the nature of the sociocultural illusions can be defined as *falling* one. The fact that sociocultural illusions are able to stand the pressure of the modern rational knowledge, which seems as if the knowledge destroyed them long ago, shows their amazing stamina. At that the ways of the adaptive relation of sociocultural illusion to their awareness as illusions are quite different: from elementary ignoring this knowledge and religious-stoic opposing of its “press” to paradoxical usage of this knowledge in order to justify the existence of sociocultural illusions.

On the whole this paradoxical dynamic-conservative existence of sociocultural illusions can be illustrated by the aphorism of Friedrich Nietzsche, our great predecessor in the field of researching social and cultural illusions: “Push the falling”. The meaning of this aphorism at first sight is simple: if “the falling” is robust, nothing bad will happen to it. But if we speak about something “decrepit” – let it die as soon as possible. However the statement that needs additional interpretations and is not exact in advance, it’s easy for mistakes to hide in it. Actually, it is “the pushing” of the falling illusion that can vitalize it greatly for its survival and renewal. Nietzsche didn’t take into account that some phenomena (first of all, sociocultural illusions) are *falling* by nature. We can illustrate the nature of sociocultural illusions by the image of the falling Tower of Pisa, able to stand for ages, as you know.

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