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## The Phenomenon of Malignant Aggression in the Epoch of Postmodern

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*The problem of aggressive behaviour has been remaining an actual problem for all the way of the development of humankind. The person always opposes himself to other individuals and living organisms. There is no person who has never made an aggressive act towards the other individual nor has he wished or dreamt to cause any harm to the other person during his existence. There is a question: whether such behaviour belongs to the human nature or he gets it during his life.*

*Keywords: malignant aggression; the epoch of postmodern; destructiveness; violence; game-ization; virtualization; simulativization*

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### Point

The problem of aggressive behaviour has been remaining an actual problem for all the way of the development of humankind. The person always opposes himself to other individuals and living organisms. There is no person who has never made an aggressive act towards the other individual nor has he wished or dreamt to cause any harm to the other person during his existence.

There is a question: whether such behaviour belongs to the human nature or he gets it during his life.

There are different points of views on the problem of aggressive behaviour of the individual. Sigmund Freud considered that the aggressive behaviour is closely connected with culture which directs aggression to the needed paths and declares the certain taboos in the form of laws and moral standards. (Freud, 1990, 1998)

K. Lorentz considered that the human passion to violence is caused by biological factors and is not a subject to the human control (Lorentz, 2001). Aggression is necessary for continuing living; it promotes a survival of the individual and all his kind.

J. Dollard, N. Miller, R. S. S. being the authors of the theory «frustration – aggression», believed that occurrence of aggressive behaviour is always caused by the presence of frustration and on the contrary – the presence of frustration always leads to violence and aggression. Frustration was considered as impossibility to fulfill the desires and needs.

The theory of social teaching (B.F. Skinner) proves that the aggressive behaviour is assimilated by supervision of actions in the proper way. If the individual notices that someone performs severe, destructive operations, without receiving any punishment for this he also starts to behave in

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the similar way. A. Bandura considers aggression as the specific form of social behaviour gained and supported by all conditions of its social environment. (Bandura, 2000)

According to the theory of social influence (J. Tedeshi, R. Smith, R. Brown and others), actions which include certain restrictions of opportunities of other individuals and which the observer perceives as ill-intentioned or egoistical and as contradicting norms of morals can be referred to aggressive actions.

Our work dwells on E. Fromm's point of view who distinguished such types of aggression as: good-quality, malignant, conformist, pseudo-aggression, and defensive.

The author accepts the following point of view: on a modern way of humankind development all society is penetrated with malignant aggression. E. Fromm understands malignant aggression as ill-intentioned causing harm and pain to other individual.

Malignant aggression is a specific feature only of a human being. It is one of those passions which can dominate in some cultures or absent in others.

Fromm is sure that «destruction appears as the possible reaction to mental needs which deeply took roots in the human life; also it is the result of interaction of various social conditions and existential needs of the person». (Fromm, 1998; 287)

The modern epoch, postmodern in other words, pushes the person to fulfillment of various destructive acts and wickedness. The characteristic features of postmodern, such as pluralism, rhizome ideas, simulativity, and development of the game (game-ization), influence the person in the special way.

The mankind realizes instability of its existence and, having accepted all destroying ideas of postmodern, is being developed in negative dynamics.

The author puts forward the following hypothesis: during the epoch of postmodern malignant aggression has appeared the very element of mankind development which has become impossible to avoid.

Such phenomena of human existence as game-ization, simulativization and virtualization help malignant aggression to be transformed within society and get certain peculiar features of its development.

### **Examples**

Postmodernism criticizes principles of classical rationalism, interprets the processes occurring in the modern society, and develops some bases of new world outlook which will promote the overcoming of the crisis phenomena in the culture of the XX century. These crisis phenomena are considered to be the consequence of modernist projects. The following postmodernism concepts most adequately describe the modern condition of the society, transfer widely spread mood belonging not only to intelligentsia but also to broad mass.

It is impossible to treat the reality the way we want. We allocate those qualities of the reality which are necessary and important only for us but not for someone else. Thus unification leaves, individuals do not wish to have a homogeneous and identical reality, and they search for their own one. There is no truth, as there is no such a core against which everything can lean. The individual has the right and ability to choose such things which are desirable for him (at least he supposes that he wants them).

The epoch of postmodern makes the person lose the trust in ideals, in moral values. The life acquires such mosaic shadows that the pieces of this mosaic can make absolutely opposite concept and quality considering their importance and value.

It is obvious that the consciousness, mind and reason destroy the harmony of natural existence which belongs to all animals. The person understands that being the part of the nature he resists its characteristics. He is connected with vital bonds with the nature but at the same time feels without kith or kin with the nature. Having consciousness, the human being sees the weakness and finiteness of his existence. He never experiences freedom from reflexes and lives in eternal division: he is both the tsar of the nature and its slave.

The human being is looking for the meaning of life, trying to realize his potential. During his life story the person changes the world around himself and due to this process also changes himself. His knowledge grows, but the more he learns the more he understands about his ignorance. He feels not being only a part of his clan but also a certain individual, and his feeling of loneliness and isolation increases.

On the one hand a human being can reach some degree of freedom, but at the same time he possesses the fear before this freedom. His skills and abilities in manufacturing material benefits increase but simultaneously he becomes a greedy egoist, a slave of the things made by himself.

And every time with the broken balance he has to search for the new one. And the process which some people name the natural aspiration to progress actually represents some attempt to find a new and most convenient condition of balance.

Human existence is extremely inconsistent. The person displays various ways of satisfaction of his vital needs, such as love, tenderness, desire for justice, independence and truth, as well as in hatred, sadism, masochism, disruptiveness, narcissism.

The narcissism is the emotional condition in which the person really shows interest only to his own person, to his body, his needs, his thoughts, his feelings, his property and so on so forth. At

the same time the other things are not important for reality and do not represent even the slightest interest. Due to this the people-narcissuses are not capable to estimate adequately the outer world and commit serious mistakes in their valuations.

Though his self-estimation and feeling of his «I» are the vital values for a person-narcissus, but the threat to such ideas will be apprehended very aggressively. If such person feels restrained if being criticized, underestimated, caught on mistakes, he has indignation and anger, it is not even important whether it spills out or not.

The group narcissism is widely spread. It occurs when the individual fully realizes his belonging to collective ideology and openly expresses his beliefs. This tendency takes place when somebody affirms that his nation, his religion, or something else is the best. It can be referred as patriotism, assurance, loyalty.

The group narcissism carries out the important functions. Firstly, collective interest demands solidarity, and the appeal to the common values strengthens group inside and simplifies the manipulation of the group in general. Secondly, the narcissism gives the members of the group the feeling of satisfaction, especially for those who have a little value and have no special bases to be proud of himself. The degree of the group narcissism corresponds to real life dissatisfaction. Social classes which possess more pleasures in their life are less subject to fanaticism. The fanaticism occurs to be the characteristic feature of group narcissism.

The group narcissism represents one of the main sources of human aggression.

The person does not like everything that is not correlated with his system of coordinates. The individual will try to subvert in every possible way the given idea, to destroy its components. Such threats to the values are treated as violation of some ethical, moral values and norms. But it is obvious that our society is non-uniformed,

that there is a plenty of various groups of people with absolutely different concepts concerning ethics, morals. And consequently a lot of people extremely negatively treat each other as the bearers of absolutely different, sometimes opposite, values. And each of them considers that he has the right to protect his system of values, which is the most correct and vital.

The epoch of the postmodern enables each person with rights to protect his beliefs and values. It is considered to be the cornerstone in the process of mankind development. The person possesses rights, and the private freedom is believed to be more important than public freedom. The individual understands that he has all rights to protect everything that he or his group appreciates. Considering the epoch of postmodern one can see that it is characterized by huge quantity of terrorist actions in which some persons try to defend their violated rights.

Terror is the social phenomenon so long as without society this condition would not exist. Aggression is inherent to all individuals without exceptions; however, not all individuals are capable of breaking frameworks of human existence and purposefully intimidating people. The terrorism becomes apparent always on purpose, it cannot be sudden, or be any act of protection (good-quality aggression). This act can belong only to malignant aggression when the Evil outweighs the Good; and the person ceases to live according to human norms and acquires the appearance and character of a predator.

From the classification offered by V.I. Bukreev we consider it necessary to study its pathological type which personifies «dehumanized creature not submitting morals and laws which is directed to destruction of the world in the name of chimerical ideas» (Bukreev, 2007; 27). Bukreev names this person «the spiritual schizoid». The modern person «professes various forms of hatred of mankind and senselessness. There are no abilities

to select some cultural values, but admiring his own lacks and simulation in cultural imitation». The vital success is reduced to manufacturing and consumption of things, there are no more secrets in private life. The person has an irrepressible thirst for any forms of information, for games with various prizes. The individual is ruled not by the reason, but by passions, emotions.

The terrorism is not simply leaving the given society, it represents attempt to make it as loud as possible. The epoch of postmodern demands from the person some sort of certain exaggeration of his opportunities, original hyperbolization. Only to protest against something is not enough, it is necessary to exaggerate his sufferings in order the others be painfully sick. «The morals of people weakens, the law loses cleanliness, hence there is the growth of oppression» (Camus, 2000; 297).

«Our violence, delivered by our supermodernity is a terror» (Baudrillard, 2000; 112). The terrorism is frightening because all people's system of values changes, and all vital guidelines on which the individual lived till this time, cease to be norm. The terrorism bears the horror of violence and misfortunes which people project on themselves at a subconscious level.

The life is terrible. The reality frightens. The person tries to escape, or even hide from reality. And he starts to play. The game in life leads to perversion of culture which is understood not as something real but as imaginary, as the ability to claim both empty and insignificant as alive and significant. Instead of alive feelings the simulation is shown. Instead of information having general value, a person is offered insignificant event erected in the rank of the blessing. Real communication is replaced with real jokes. The alive life is substituted with the signs of life.

At the following stage such concepts, as simulativization, virtualization and game-ization can be introduced. It is considered that these

peculiar features of these phenomena can fully reveal the transformation of malignant aggression in the epoch of postmodern.

It is obvious that simulativization originated from the word «simulation». «Simulation is the concept of postmodernist philosophy fixing the phenomenon of total semiotization of life up to gaining the sign sphere its status of a unique and self-sufficient reality» (Mozhejko, 2009). The given concept works as the basic moment in theory of Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard, 1981).

Simulativization is the main, basic quality of the epoch of postmodern. The existed reality is replaced with the signs of reality. The life with its displays disappears. The opportunity to create its own reality shows up, as well as the ability to live and exist under its own laws.

Baudrillard considers that simulativization is a seduction, temptation. Simulative images capture the individual. The person loses the feeling of reality. The person is tempted with the seductive moments. There is no concept of good and evil, people are introduced with the images of good and evil. That is being virtuous for one individual can be unchaste for another person. The evil becomes an ephemeral concept which cannot be treated as the real one. Aggression does not exist, but its image and similarity exist. The aggressive basis is propagated as a virtue of the modern person who aspires to achieve various material welfare. Such displays of aggression as cruelty, malice, destruction become inherent in all individuals without exception.

The existence of the person itself is the simulation of life. For an individual it is difficult to understand where there is a reality and where there is a game in reality. Due to this a lot of criminals committing illegal actions cannot understand that they have killed or robbed someone. For them it was either game (according to the principle of computer games) or following the slogan «everything is allowed». People

show aggression neither to receive the blessings nor to perform the act of aggression. Cruelty is valuable not its consequences but the process of committing malice, the process itself and its consideration and creation.

Here the malignant aggression is found. Good aggression is not in need any more, it was exchanged for malignant aggression which came long time ago everywhere. People commit the actions of destruction not to protect themselves but because they want to do it. «Routinization of violence» occurs (Kardamonov et al., 2009; 129). Simulation of reality goes together with aggression. Aggression is propagated as absolutely normal development of the modern individual. Without aggression it is impossible to achieve any material welfare. The individual is rigid not to his nature, but he simulates life creating it according to the laws which are imposed by the epoch of postmodern.

The evil becomes a necessary condition for making the system of simulacres. There is the death of the real world and the celebration of the simulated one. The individual experiences aggression, and takes part in it in order to feel the part of existing system even for some time.

The person does not simply simulate the destructive actions, he starts to play them and with them. The person estimates his qualities, compares them with other ones. Images capture the person. He begins to play. (Not without reason the modern person is named *Homo ludens* – the playing person). It is not important what, it is not important how, it is important that he plays. The person can adapt to all changes which influence his existence. The peculiar features of development of the modern world are described with the concepts of a game. In the given article the author would like to rely on the terminology offered by S.A. Kravchenko and introduce the concept of «game-ization» (Kravchenko, 2002, 2006).

S.A. Kravchenko understands game-ization as following:

1) Introduction of principles of game, heuristic elements into pragmatical vital strategy that allows individuals with the help of a self-reflection to carry out the basic social roles, to adapt to inequalities of life.

2) A new, formed paradigm of rationality, characteristic for modern conditions of uncertainty, distribution of institutional risks;

3) The factor of designing and maintenance of a virtual reality of nonequilibrium type;

4) Sociological paradigm with the theoretic-methodological toolkit, allowing to analyze nonlinearity and uncertainty of a postmodernist society (without claims for reception of final, universal true) (Kravchenko, 2002, 2006).

It is possible to notice that game-ization is pragmatic and goes according to the reasons of benefit and advantage where the main thing is the receiving any prize. Also game-ization means breaking the rules in order to achieve the defined goals and helps to choose those means and principles which adequately correspond to the given epoch.

The person himself creates the certain field of action, his own rules. In the given context the development of malignant aggression is highly influenced with pluralism which subverts old ideas and creates new, mosaic ones. There is no more authority. There is no united center. The individual himself creates his field of action in which it is comfortable to live.

Game-ization considerably increases opportunities for people and expands borders of their knowledge. The individual starts to communicate with representatives not only his group (stratum), but also has to socialize with other strata. Owing to it the interlacing of various cultures, their ethical standards and values appear. However various disputed situations may arise here. The individual resists

to all unusual traditions for him. He starts to protect furiously his own beliefs about correct existence. Destructive ideas and feelings come to his mind. The individual cannot control himself. According to his ideas he is obliged to protect everything inherited to his own group. The boom of malignant aggression is obvious to be. The individual furiously protects his space and maliciously attacks others. However, due to game-ization the person loses his feeling of reality and cannot understand where the real life is and where the game is.

Aggression becomes not only the destructive act but some original game, some image. The person not only causes someone pain, suffering. He feels pleasure not only from the process but the main thing becomes the receiving result from his actions. The border between reality and irreality is erased. Changes in the system of values, knowledge, senses, and moral reference points occur. The individual experiences reality, however there are difficulties in understanding where the Evil is and where the Good is.

Manifestations of malignant aggression mean the action on voluntary basis, and game-ization is characterized by voluntary actions. Hence, the individual independently chooses destructiveness and cruelty toward the other individuals. The person realizes that he intentionally causes someone suffering and experiences even greater satisfaction from this act.

By considering the other characteristic of game-ization as following the reasons of benefit and advantage it is possible to note that malignant aggression is not a spontaneous action, it happens to be carefully thought over, weighed up, evaluated. The results which can be received by the finishing the given action are estimated and given their assessed value. Possible risks are weighed up. Aggression becomes inherent in cool-headed individuals who understand that they hurt other people,

but do it purposely trying to minimize possible losses for himself.

The individual develops his own world, his own artificial reality in which he dominates as well as creates his rules and laws. The number of direct contacts between people decreases, and the person starts to feel his loneliness. Creating these or those laws of life, he in some way includes other people in his living space in spite of their wish. If the individual feels unwillingness of other individual to obey his rules aggressive actions are inevitable. Having only his own direction of life, the person excludes another existence recognizing only his right for doing the given action. Being a narcissus the individual hears and sees only himself arranging the presence to his needs and requirements.

All postmodern tendencies of society development can be easily tracked in culture, the attitude to which has revolutionally changed. If earlier aesthetics of a beautiful body, the nature and harmony caused some admiration but now game-ization led art to ridiculous parodying itself. Not the work of art but its image is created. The creator performs some deconstruction, some manipulation of an image. Art is played out. During the epoch of postmodern various collages, performances, happenings become in demand. The artist plays in art, he cannot think stereotypical, he starts to play with a whirlwind of images and simulations. In order to become famous the artist should make something unimaginable, and creators start to combine various concepts which could not be fancy together earlier. Game-ization helps to create such creative products that the individual starts to doubt where he is: in the reality or in the virtual world. People are forced to think that to be the creator during the epoch of postmodern means to be a virtual father of everything which is neither clear nor ordinary. Everything is simulated in creativity – both individuality and originality.

Game-ization is an interlacing of reality and virtuality, it is impregnation of creative elements into everyday life, it is vital actions in art.

One more peculiar features of the epoch of postmodern is virtualization. A. Kroker and M. Wanestein consider virtualization to be the way to enslave all mankind by some group of people (Ivanov, 2002; 16).

D.V. Ivanov allocates three characteristics of properties of a virtual reality, such as non-material affect of influences (the depicted produces effects which are characteristic of material life); conventionalism of parameters (objects are artificial and changeable) and transitorism (freedom of an input / an output provides an opportunity of interruption and renewal of existence) (Ivanov, 2002, 19).

Noticeably, that virtualization is any replacement of reality with various symbols, images, that is simulation with applying the logic chain used in virtual reality. There is a replacement of institutional system of societies – economics, politics, and religion and so on. The mankind aspires to compensate the absence of social reality with the help of virtual reality expressed by computer simulations. The person of the epoch of postmodern not simply compensates the real life with the virtual one, he completely plunges into virtual reality, as it is the way he wishes it to be. In virtual reality dreams of mankind come true. People more and more begin to communicate between themselves with the help of images, representing and creating a specific new product.

Not only institutes of society are virtualized but also created by virtual reality person. The virtual person operates by the same principles of nonmaterial influences, reserves of parameters and ephemerality. The individual simulates real images and actions assuming absolutely different images in various moments of reality. The person becomes so diverse that borders of his life, his real

life and virtual life are erased. For the person of the epoch of postmodern is difficult to understand where he is at the present moment – in real space or he was absorbed with virtual reality. Having killed millions people in a computer game where he seemed so alive and real the individual cannot understand that such things do not happen in real life. The feeling of life in virtual space so really hangs over the individual that the real life seems unreal, uninteresting, and plain. In the virtual world aggression is welcomed, or on the contrary in order to win it is necessary to become a monster and to destroy everyone whom you meet on your way. Malignant aggression in virtual space gets features of necessity, importance, and significance. There is nothing bad in destruction also there are no bad emotions and remorse in this occasion.

The individual regenerates in the spiritual aspect. For the epoch of postmodern the threat of cultural spirituality of mankind becomes characteristic as on all levels of human life dehumanization occurs when the person loses his real appearance and plunges into some virtual reality.

The society during the epoch of postmodern from static institutes of marriage, family, politics and so on becomes the stream of numerous images as each of these institutes can be reproduced virtually. Now even virtual churches have appeared in which priests absolve sins on the Internet or it becomes possible to communicate to the God.

Virtualization of family takes place. If earlier the material component of marriage was the important point for creating a family unit, now individuals simply play marriage relations. Civil marriages, cohabitation, the homosexual unions destroy gravity of family. Constantly growing quantity of incomplete families convinces that social roles of parents became virtual. There is a game in family which actually is ephemerical

concept; images of parents are original simulacres of fatherhood and motherhood which lost their value during the epoch of postmodern.

The other spheres of human life such as science, politics and many other things spheres of vital activities are virtualized. For example, in politics there is not a struggle for idea but struggle for promotion this or that image of a politician. A lot can be reached by that who «has sold» himself more expensively, whose image has appeared more interesting, more quarrelsome, brighter. «Lost reality multi-party system and parliamentarism are simulated by experts-advisers and image makers as the convenient and habitual environment of competition of political images» (Ivanov, 2002; 53).

During the epoch of postmodern it is difficult to understand where the truth is and where fiction is. The playing person (*homo ludens*) more and more captures minds of individuals. The boredom is the key element of his existence which everyone tries to avoid. The individual is busy with constant search for different entertainments. After a while he finds himself in a circle: the more emotions (positive or negative) he has, the more desires he has to repeat them.

The person becomes easy for manipulating as he is a person from a society of «mosaic culture». (Kara-Murza, 2006) It is impossible to have only one common opinion; there are so many mosaic events, opinions, feelings. The person loses reference points of correct behaviour. It is possible to tell that there is no more such concept as correct and wrong behaviour. The modern culture lets people understand that all actions, all ideas are correct; they simply are displays of a person's creativity. Malignant aggression is an integral part of culture of new time.

### **Resume**

Hence, sociocultural development of the person influences his destructive behaviour.

Creation of malignant aggressive behaviour is a complex and many-sided process. A set of different factors influence the development of this kind of aggression. Various aspects of interpersonal interactions lead to occurrence of aggression and predetermine its forms and ways of working.

A lot of people are strongly influenced by such factors as public disapproval, irritability, the tendency to see animosities in other's actions, an individual's conviction that he remains the master of the destiny in any situation, and his habit to feel shame instead of guilt in many situations.

This or that individual's behaviour depends on his internal sets and moral restrictions. If something is perceived by the individual as taboo he will not try to achieve it. If moral borders of the person are expanded or lowered, he can undertake various actions up to destruction and cruelty.

There is no uniform understanding of the Good and the Evil. There is no uniform cultural reality, multiculturalism is growing. The thing for one individual is Good, for another can be Evil. «The individual can simultaneously serve the God and the Devil, combine in his soul high intelligence and demonism, be virtuous and indulged in temptations of vices. He shows not only steadiness, but extreme measure in judgments, unreservedness and unscrupulousness in selection of cultural values»». (Bukreev, 2007; 13)

During the epoch of postmodern there is no culture in that classical understanding which people have got used to. The culture ceased to be that sacral vessel which people worshipped with

great respect and love. At present, the more vulgar and more disgusting the more ultrafashionable and supercultural is considered. «We do not read them [product of arts] any more but only decipher using more and more inconsistent «keys». (Baudrillard, 2000; 25)

The person with great pleasure hurts as well as causes some sufferings to other people. The epoch of postmodern overturns norms of morals, morality such way that malignant aggression becomes the blessing instead of the curse.

Game-isation overcame frameworks of individual development of mankind and all institutes inherent in it and extended on all socialcultural reality. In the further with the means of various images, simulations game-ization created a new type of a reality, so-called virtual reality. Owing to all these processes the life of mankind came on the verge of madness as it is impossible to live simultaneously in both reality and unreality.

Considering the ideas of O. Spengler, it is possible to draw a conclusion that the epoch of postmodern is a dying culture and approaching the epoch of a civilization. (Spengler, 1998) The Civilization, in his understanding, is an intellectual old age, death of mankind in its moral aspect. The person himself creates the validity, the reality where he lives by his own rules. The given rules, conflicting with rules of other individuals, push the person on cruelty, destruction, aggression.

And the epoch of postmodern does not offer the mankind an output from the given situation.

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## **Феномен злокачественной агрессии**

### **в эпоху постмодерна**

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*Проблема агрессивного поведения остается актуальной проблемой на всем пути развития человечества. Человек всегда противопоставляет себя другим индивидам и живым организмам. Нет ни одного человека, который в течение своей жизни хотя бы раз не совершил агрессивный поступок по отношению к другому индивиду либо не пожелал в мыслях причинить какой-либо вред другому. Возникает вопрос: заложено ли такое поведение в природе человека либо он приобретает его в процессе своей жизнедеятельности.*

*Ключевые слова: злокачественная агрессия; эпоха постмодерна; деструктивность; насилие; играизация; виртуализация; симулятивизация.*

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