



PERSONALITY INCULTURATION: STAGES, MECHANISMS, AND THE EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF CULTURE

Nasimjanova Makhsuma Majidovna

International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

Abstract

This article examines the phenomenon of enculturation as a continuous process of an individual's integration into culture and assimilation of values, norms, and traditions in a modern digital society. Particular attention is paid to theoretical approaches in American cultural anthropology, particularly M. Herskovits's concept, as well as the relationship between the concepts of "enculturation" and "socialization." The article analyzes the main mechanisms of enculturation (imitation, identification, shame, and guilt), its primary and secondary stages, and the role of upbringing, education, and play in shaping an individual's cultural experience. The importance of enculturation for maintaining cultural continuity and simultaneously for the creative renewal of culture in the context of digitalization is emphasized.

Key words: enculturation, culture, socialization, digital society, cultural values, upbringing, education, mechanisms of enculturation, primary and secondary enculturation, personality.

In the modern world, culture is the most important sphere of human existence and has an increasing influence on the formation of the moral components of individual and social mentality. With the development of digital society, the creation and processing of information is reaching an unprecedented scale. Therefore, in the context of a developing digital society, the role of educational activities and the enrichment of education with cultural material are increasing, facilitating the process of enculturation, which represents the individual's entry into a culture and the assimilation of that culture's values and traditions.

Enculturation continues throughout life. The end result of enculturation is the intellectual, not the individual, as in socialization. The intellectual is the sum of acquired cultural norms. The term was introduced by the renowned American cultural anthropologist Melville Herskovits in his work "Man and His Work [1, p. 62]. The Science of Cultural Anthropology" (1948). Around the same time, Kluckhohn introduced the similar term "culturalization," as The term "socialization," which existed at that time, did not encompass the process of assimilating the cognitive aspects of culture (knowledge, beliefs, values, etc.).

American cultural anthropology, unlike English social anthropology, placed "culture" rather than "society" at the center of its study, and the term "enculturation" was more natural for it. At the same time, this term had the same meaning as the concept of "socialization"; a clear distinction was not made between them. Enculturation denoted both the process of cultural acquisition and the result of this process. In a narrow sense, enculturation denotes the assimilation of cultural norms and values by a child; in a broad sense, enculturation is understood as a process that is not limited to early childhood and includes the process of



Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 3, Issue 12 December 2025

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

Open Access| Peer Reviewed

 This article/work is licensed under CC Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0

assimilating cultural patterns by an adult. In the latter case, the term can be applied to immigrants adapting to new cultural conditions. [2, p. 306]

The concept of enculturation has been criticized due to its vague meaning; furthermore, it essentially duplicated the much more widely used term "socialization," and its origins were directly linked to a not entirely legitimate attempt to contrast society and culture. [3, p. 156]. Foreign literature has yet to clearly distinguish between the similar concepts of enculturation and socialization. The concept of enculturation has not gained widespread acceptance and has been used primarily in American anthropology. [4, p. 130]

Enculturation occurs in several ways, the most common of which is imitation, when a person observes (as if spying) the behavior of others. In this way, even the simplest procedure that we perform repeatedly every day, such as eating, has a certain value from the perspective of enculturation, as it consists of certain postures and gestures that have different meanings and significance in different cultures. In other words, culture teaches what, when, and how to do something. In addition to the positive mechanisms of enculturation, such as imitation and identification, which contribute to the formation of certain behavior, there are negative mechanisms—shame and guilt—that prohibit and suppress it. The feelings of shame and guilt are closely related, but not entirely identical. A person experiences shame when caught in the act of committing a crime, exposed, and humiliated. This creates a sense of oppression and humiliation. Guilt is associated with the same experiences, but it doesn't require exposure; rather, it is triggered by the voice of one's conscience, which tells you that you have acted badly, and you will be tormented by the knowledge of your wrongdoing. In this way, a person punishes themselves.

Enculturation is usually divided into two main stages: primary (initial) and secondary (adult). The primary stage, beginning with the birth of a child and continuing until the end of adolescence, represents the process of raising and educating children. During this period, children assimilate the most important elements of their culture and acquire the skills necessary for normal sociocultural life. Enculturation processes are realized primarily as a result of targeted education and, in part, through personal experience. According to the renowned American cultural anthropologist Melville Herskovits (1895-1963), children, while not passive elements of enculturation, act more as instruments than players. Adults, through a system of punishments and rewards, limit their ability to choose or evaluate. Furthermore, children are incapable of consciously evaluating norms and rules of behavior; they internalize them uncritically. Children must adhere to the rules of the world in which they live. This leads them to see the world in black and white terms and are incapable of compromise. During this period, any culture has specific methods for developing adequate knowledge and skills for everyday life in children. This typically occurs through the following types of games:

1. Physical, training and developing physical activity;
2. Strategic, training and developing the ability to predict possible outcomes of any activity and assess the probability of these outcomes;
3. Stochastic, introducing the child to random processes, success (failure), uncontrollable circumstances, and risk;



Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 3, Issue 12 December 2025

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

Open Access| Peer Reviewed

 This article/work is licensed under CC Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0

4. Role-playing, during which the child masters the functions they will have to perform in the future.

Play develops personality traits such as intelligence, imagination, fantasy, and learning ability. Young children play alone, ignoring others; they are characterized by solitary, independent play. A little later, they begin to imitate the behavior of other children without interacting with them; this is so-called parallel play. Three-year-olds begin to learn to coordinate their behavior with that of other children; they play according to their own desires, but also take others' desires into account; this is cooperative play. From the age of four, children are capable of cooperative play, i.e., Coordinating their actions and deeds with other children. During the process of primary enculturation, a significant role is played by the acquisition of work skills and the development of a value-based attitude toward work, as well as learning to learn. At the same time, other values that shape a person's relationship to the world are also learned, fundamental behavior patterns are established—in short, a "cultural iceberg" is built.

Based on their early childhood experiences, the child acquires socially binding, general cultural knowledge and skills that are not professionally specific. During this period, the acquisition and practical mastery of such knowledge and skills becomes paramount in the child's life, taking place in preschool and school institutions, where the child spends a significant portion of their time. It can be said that during this period, the preconditions for the child's transformation into an adult capable of adequately participating in sociocultural life are established. The primary stage of enculturation contributes to the maintenance of cultural stability, as it is during this stage that existing patterns are reproduced and the penetration of random and new elements into the culture is controlled. However, the role of enculturation in preserving cultural tradition should not be exaggerated. Its outcome can range from the almost complete and unconditional assimilation of culture by the new generation, with only minor, barely noticeable differences between parents and children, to a disruption of cultural continuity, when children grow up completely unlike their parents. The secondary stage of enculturation concerns adults, as a person's entry into a culture does not end with reaching adulthood.

An adult is considered to be a person possessing a number of important qualities, including:

1. attainment of physical maturity, typically slightly exceeding the developed capacity for reproduction;
2. mastery of life-support skills in the sphere of household management and the social division of labor;
3. acquisition of a sufficient amount of cultural knowledge, skills, and social experience through practical activities within various sociocultural groups;
4. membership in one of the social communities consisting of adult participants in the division of labor system.

Enculturation during this period is fragmented and concerns individual cultural elements that have emerged recently—*inventions and discoveries that significantly change a person's life, or new ideas borrowed from other cultures*. In the second stage of enculturation, individuals develop the ability to independently navigate the sociocultural environment within the



Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 3, Issue 12 December 2025

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

Open Access| Peer Reviewed

 This article/work is licensed under CC Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0

boundaries established by a given society. They are able to combine acquired knowledge and skills to solve their own vital problems, make decisions that can be significant for both themselves and others, and have the right to participate in actions that can lead to significant sociocultural change. Adults are able to consciously evaluate their own and others' actions, as well as the values and norms of culture. Furthermore, they are able to compromise, and a "gray" color appears in their worldview. The second stage of enculturation assumes that members of society accept responsibility for experimenting with culture and introducing changes of varying magnitude. In other words, individuals can accept or reject what culture offers them. They gain access to discussion and creativity.

Having studied the works of renowned anthropologists, we see that M. Herskovits considered the assimilation of the active, behavioral aspects of culture, as well as various aspects of spiritual culture, to be the core element of his concept of enculturation. At the individual level, the process of enculturation is expressed in everyday interactions with others—relatives, friends, acquaintances, or strangers from the same culture—from whom a person consciously or unconsciously learns how to behave in various life situations, how to evaluate events, greet guests, and respond to certain signs of attention and signals.

Thus, enculturation involves teaching a person the traditions and norms of behavior of their native culture. This occurs through a process of mutual exchange between a person and their culture, in which, on the one hand, culture determines the fundamental personality traits of a person, and on the other, the person influences their culture. Enculturation involves the development of fundamental human skills, such as types of communication with others, forms of self-regulation of one's own behavior and emotions, ways of satisfying basic needs, an evaluative attitude toward various phenomena in the surrounding world, etc. As a result of enculturation, a person develops emotional and behavioral similarities with other members of a given culture and distinctiveness from representatives of other cultures. The process of enculturation is more complex than the process of socialization, and the assimilation of social laws occurs much more quickly than the assimilation of cultural norms, values, traditions, and customs.

Bibliography

1. Пирназарова М. М. Особенности процесса инкультурации в детском возрасте // Психология и педагогика: методика и проблемы практического применения. 2013. №30. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/osobennosti-protsesssa-inkulturatsii-v-detskom-vozraste> (дата обращения: 17.12.2025).
2. Херцковиц М. Культурная антропология. - М.; 1955, с 306-334.
3. Культурология XX век. Энциклопедия. Том первый. СПб.
4. Кравченко А.И. Культурология: Учебное пособие для вузов. - 3-е изд.- М.: Академический проект, 2001