

Conceptualization of Conceivable Worlds of a Person in Altered States of Consciousness

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ABSTRACT

The article describes the ways of conceptualizing the conceivable worlds in altered states of mind at the example of the main character's conceivable world in Chuck Palahniuk's "Fight Club". From the conducted analysis it can be seen that the world of people in altered states of consciousness can expand significantly. This hypertrophied expansion goes along the axis of space and time. This expansion of the mental world goes along with the expansion of the moral and legal boundaries of what is permissible. The main character is trying to change the social order.

Keywords: *Concept, Conceivable world, Altered states of mind, Etymological analysis, Semantic analysis.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The problems of being and non-being have long occupied the human mind.

An important aspect of this dichotomy in the modern world is the problem of real and imaginable worlds due to the fact that modern life in general and especially the intellectual and spiritual life of a person is becoming more and more multifaceted and multilevel in connection with progress.

Not only the virtual world exists in the minds of modern people, but also other worlds that are less studied.

In the humanities, there is no clear definition and classification of conceivable (possible) worlds, and their characteristics are described very fragmentary.

At the moment the terminological apparatus of the designations of the conceivable worlds themselves and their characteristics has not been developed at all.

It is obvious that the conceivable worlds are "opposed" to the real world. Conceivable worlds can be: the virtual world, the world of dreams, the afterlife, the world of the future, the world of space,

the underworld, the world of altered states of consciousness, etc.

Let's turn to the concept of "world" in general.

2. ETYMOLOGICAL AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF THE KEY WORD OF THE CONCEPT "WORLD"

In the "Concise Etymological Dictionary of The English Language" by Walter W. Skeat there is the following article, describing this word: "M. E. *werld*. A. S. *wco ruld*, *weorold*. + Du. *wereld*, Icel. *verold*, Dan. *verden* (where -en is the article), Swed. *verld*, G. *welt*, M. H. G. *werlt*, O. H. G. *weralt*. ft.

Th lit. sense is 'age of man' or 'course of man's life,' hence a life-time, course of life, experience of life, &c. The component parts are A. S. *wer* (Icel. *verr*, O. H. G. *wer*, Goth, *wair*), a man; and A. S. *eld*, an age (Icel. *old*, Goth. *aids*, an age)" [1] ⁶¹⁵.

In "Online etymology dictionary" we find: "Old English *woruld*, *worold* "human existence, the affairs of life," also "a long period of time," also "the human race, mankind, humanity,"...a word peculiar to Germanic languages ... with a literal sense of "age of man," from Proto-Germanic

**weraldi-*, a compound of **wer* "man" (Old English *wer*, still in *werewolf*) + **ald* "age" (from PIE root *al-* "to grow, nourish").

The original meaning of "life on earth, this world (as opposed to the afterlife)," extended to "the known world," then to "the physical world in the broadest sense, the universe". In Old English gospels, the commonest word for "the physical world," was *Middangeard* (Old Norse *Midgard*), literally "the middle enclosure", which is rooted in Germanic cosmology. Greek *kosmos* in its ecclesiastical sense of "world of people" sometimes was rendered in Gothic as *manaseps*, literally "seed of man." The usual Old Norse word was *heimr*, literally "abode" (see home). Words for "world" in some other Indo-European languages derive from the root for "bottom, foundation" (such as Irish *domun*, Old Church Slavonic *duno*, related to English *deep*); the Lithuanian word is *pasaulis*, from *pa-* "under" + *saulė* "sun."

Original sense in "world without end", translating Latin *saecula saeculorum*, and in "worldly". Latin *saeculum* can mean both "age" and "world," as can Greek *aiōn*. Meaning "a great quantity or number" is from 1580s. *Out of this world* "surpassing, marvelous" is from 1928; earlier it meant "dead." *World Cup* is by 1951; U.S. baseball *World Series* is by 1893 (originally often *World's Series*). *World power* in the geopolitical sense first recorded 1900. *World-class* is attested from 1950, originally of Olympic athletes." [2].

"Oxford English dictionary" provides the following forms:

OE. *weorold*, *worold*, *world* str. f., rarely m., corresp. to OFris. *wrald*, *ruald*, *warld* (EFris. *warld*, WFris. *wrôd*), OS. *werold* (MLG. *werlt*, *warlt*, LG. *werld*, MDu. *werelt*, Du. *wereld*), OHG. *weralt* (MHG. *werelt*, *werlt*, *welt*, G. *welt*), ON. *veröld* (Sw. *verld*, Da. *verden*): a formation peculiar to Germanic, f. *wer-* man, WERE *n.*¹ + *ald-* age (cf. OLD *a.*, ELD *n.*²), the etymological meaning being, therefore, 'age' or 'life of man'.] [3].

E. Partridge in his "Short etymological dictionary" notes that: worldly (whence worldliness and the neg. unworldly, unworldliness).

- Worldly comes, through ME worldlich, from OE woroldlic the adj (-lic, -like) of worold, contr of weorold, whence, through ME weoreld, weorold, werld or world, the E world: and OE weorold. worold, is related to OFris world, OHG weralt, MHG werelt, werlt, MHG-G welt, OS werold, MD

warelt, werelt, werlt, welt, D wereld, ON veröld: the wer, man, that occurs in werewolf+the OGMc forms of old, e.g. OHG-MHG-G alt, Go altheis, OE ald, cf Go alds, age: lit, therefore, '(the) man-old' or 'man-age', i.e. mankind's age, the age of the earth inhabited by mankind.

- Welt occurs in such words as Welt-politik, world policy, international politics, esp. Germany's pre-1939 imperialism, and Welt-schmerz, world-pain, a romantic pessimism about the world's present and future state [4]³⁸¹⁸.

In "Chambers's Etymological Dictionary of The English Language" it is stated that: "World, wurld, n. the earth and its inhabitants; the system of things: present state of existence: any planet or heavenly body: public life or society; business; the public a secular life: course of life: a great quantity: in B., the ungodly. [A.S. Worth werold, worold, world; Ice. *veröldd*; from *öld*, age, course of time, lifetime, and *ver*, A.S. *wer*, a man, and so = age or life of man.]—World without end, eternally [5].

From the given data of etymological dictionaries, it is clear that the lexeme "world" has a common PIE root *al-*. Its origin goes back to such words as "to grow, nourish", "man", "age" and "bottom, foundation". This word is represented by a variety of meanings, such as:

- 'age of man', 'course of man's life,' 'a life-time', 'course of life', 'experience of life'
- "human existence, the affairs of life," "a long period of time," "the human race, mankind, humanity,"
- "life on earth, this world (as opposed to the afterlife)," "the known world," "the physical world"
- the universe", 'world without end', eternally, 'cosmos'
- "world of people", 'the earth and its inhabitants'
- "bottom, foundation", "under sun."
- "to grow, nourish"

To consider the notional features of the concept under study we can address a number of explanatory dictionaries. "Collins Online Dictionary", a very popular and trusted online dictionary, provides the following definitions of the word "world":

- the planet that we live on.

- all the people who live on this planet, and our societies, institutions, and ways of life.
- particular group of countries or a particular period in history
- the life people lead, the people they have contact with, and the things they experience.
- the state of being alive or a state of existence after death (this world, next world)
- a particular group of living things (the animal world, the plant world, and the insect world).
- a planet [6].

The dictionary by Merriam Webster is America's most trusted online dictionary for English word definitions, meanings, and pronunciation. Here we find more comprehensive definitions of the word "world":

- the earth and all the people and things on it
- a part of the world and the people and things that exist there
- human society
- the earthly state of human existence
- life after death (the next *world*)
- the earth with its inhabitants and all things upon it
- individual course of life (career)
- the inhabitants of the earth (the human race)
- the system of created things; universe
- a division or generation of the inhabitants of the earth distinguished by living together at the same place or at the same time (the medieval *world*)
- a distinctive class of persons or their sphere of interest or activity (the academic *world*, the digital *world*)
- human society
- a part or section of the earth that is a separate independent unit
- the sphere or scene of one's life and action living in your own little *world*
- an indefinite multitude or a great quantity or distance makes a *world* of difference a *world* away
- the whole body of living persons; public
- Kingdom (the animal *world*)

- a celestial body (such as a planet) [7].

"Macmillan Dictionary of the English language" gives the following definitions of the word "world":

- the planet that we live on
- any other planet
- a particular group of countries
- the state of being alive [...]

Thus, the analysis of entries from explanatory dictionaries of the English language allows us to distinguish the following series of meanings of the word "world":

- the planet we live on and everything that exists on it including countries;
- the people (human society, public, institutions) and their life (areas of interest and activity);
- individual course of life (career); the sphere or scene of one's life and action living in your own little world
- the state of being alive opposed to the state of existence after death;
- any planet (celestial body), universe
- an indefinite multitude or a great quantity or distance
- kingdom [8].

For our purpose it is especially interesting to note that etymologically the word "world" derives from the words with the meanings 'age of man', 'course of man's life,' 'a life-time', 'course of life', 'experience of life'.

And from the data of explanatory dictionaries we can see that this word has the meaning "individual course of life (career); the sphere or scene of one's life and action (living in your own little world)".

It shows that the meaning of the word "world" is connected with the signification of the inner spiritual self-perception, sense of a person's self.

It is interesting to consider the mental worlds of people in altered states of consciousness.

M. V. Fedorov says that today the interest in altered states of consciousness is especially great, since it is in them that people see the key to awakening the reserves of our psyche and activating the creative capabilities of a person. Various magical techniques are associated with

them. In altered states of consciousness it becomes possible to turn on other mechanisms of perception of reality. The researcher defines altered states of consciousness as such states of consciousness that are not included in the circle of habitual for a member of this socio-cultural group, qualitatively different from them and not regularly passed by them in the course of everyday life.

Various altered states of consciousness are united by the general principles of the organization of existence and manifestation of human activity.

A fairly complete classification of altered states of consciousness has been compiled, which combines derealization phenomena; sensations of the passage of time; phenomena of depersonalization; exteriorization reactions with a split personality, accompanied by active and verbal contact with an imaginary world; concentration on a limited range of emotionally colored events and representations; dominant ideas; personification of animals and objects; emotionally conditioned memory changes.

Moreover, the transition from one state of consciousness to another can be smooth (almost imperceptible), or it can be abrupt, sudden. In the case of "getting stuck" in any state, or too easy "slipping" out of it, not to mention more complex cases of "hanging" between states, characteristic unpleasant or unusual sensations and emotions arise [9].

Laing talks about the importance of a person feeling himself in this world, that we can be ourselves only in and through our world, and that "our" world will die with us, although "that" world will be. A person does not exist without "his" world and his world cannot exist without him.

In schizoid and schizophrenic cases, there is a verbal and conceptual split of the wholeness of being-in-the-world.

R. D. Laing also notes that existential phenomenology tries to characterize the nature of a person's experience of his world and himself. At the same time, specific objects of his experience, specific experiences of an individual are placed in the context of his entire being-in-the-world. The insane statements and actions of a schizophrenic should be analyzed in their existential context.

R. D. Laing in his famous book "The Divided Self. An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness" describes split consciousness as follows: "The term schizoid refers to an individual the totality of whose

experience is split in two main ways: in the first place, there is a rent in his relationship with his world and, in the second, there is a disruption of his relationship with himself. Such a person is not able to experience himself 'together with' others or 'at home in' the world, but, on the contrary, he experiences himself in despairing aloneness and isolation; moreover, he does not experience himself as a complete person but rather as 'split' in various ways, perhaps as a mind more or less tenuously linked to a body, as two or more selves, and so on [10]¹⁷.

K. G. Frumkin, explores the phenomenon of detached introspection, which he understands as the ability of a person to observe himself as if from the outside ("as an outsider"). At the same time, the function of self-observation is hypostatized, which turns into a special subject "inside" human consciousness; this subject is often called an internal observer.

K. G. Frumkin examines how the phenomenon of detached introspection is interpreted in various cultures. In many discourses of a different nature, there are often claims to "pull away", get into a position "out of the situation", "over the fight" and so on. In claims of this kind, one can see a direct imitation of individual, "psychic" contemplation, and the very fact of such imitation indicates a certain — and quite high - prestige of the contemplative position in culture [11].

That is why many modern writers describe the phenomenon of detached contemplation.

Yu.S. Stepanov identifies the opposition "world" - "worlds" in the Russian national consciousness. The world is mastered by a person "from himself", in the direction from the nearest space to what exists "outside of himself". Yu.S. Stepanov comes to an interesting conclusion "about the mental expansion of the primary concept, i.e. the concept of "The world as a habitable place", and about the parallel formation of two concepts – "Mental world" and "World - Universe, Universe". In the language itself, obviously, there are mechanisms for entering the mental world of a person [12].

3. EXPANSION OF THE MENTAL WORLD OF THE PROTAGONIST SUFFERING FROM A SPLIT PERSONALITY IN CHUCK PALAHNIUK'S "FIGHT CLUB"

Chuck Palahniuk's "Fight Club" describes the hypertrophied expansion of the mental world of the protagonist suffering from a split personality.

A thirty-year-old young man is prone to insomnia, which gradually drives him crazy.

At first, the young man led a respectable lifestyle, working for a car company. He was assessing the damage to the company from defects in the machines. The young man flew a lot in airplanes, changing time zones and living in hotels. Initially, his world was not small.

The young man tried to make his life cozy by decorating his small apartment with IKEA things. In the future, he dreamed of getting a dog.

However, one day on a nudist beach, he met his second self in the image of Tyler Durden, who expands his mental world to a huge size.

Let's consider in which directions this expansion takes place.

With the first appearance of the second "I" in the image of Tyler Durden, the main character comes up with the idea of moving to another place and another time.

If I could wake up in another place, at another time, would I be able to wake up as a different person? [13].

3.1 Spatial Expansion of the Mental World of the Protagonist Suffering from a Split Personality in Chuck Palahniuk's "Fight club"

As the mental illness develops, there is a spatial expansion of the inner world of the protagonist, as it becomes more and more cramped for him to live in a limited place.

In the mind of the protagonist, an image of the bottom appears, to which he must reach in order to then climb to the top of the world.

Tyler says: *I'm nowhere near the bottom yet. And if I don't fall to the end, I can't be saved. Jesus did this with his crucifixion. I shouldn't just give up money, property and knowledge. It's not just a weekend getaway. I have to run away from self-*

improvement, and I have to run towards disaster. I can't just play it safe anymore. "If you lose your temper before you hit rock bottom," Tyler says, "you'll never really succeed."

Only after a catastrophe can we be resurrected [13].

The main character commits suicide on top of the tallest building in New York.

This is the tallest building in the world, and at this height the wind is always cold. It's so quiet at this altitude...[13].

The main character blows up his small cozy apartment, being sure that it was not he who did it, but Tyler and rents a spacious old house.

The main character composes a haiku:

A bird flies downwind.

I'm writing a little haiku in my head.

Without a single nest

A bird can call the world its home [13].

The main character protests against the restriction of his movement in space. Tyler - the second self of the main character, working as a waiter at parties for rich people, does small dirty tricks for the rich, expressing his protest against social restrictions, while uttering ironically the words:

"We shouldn't go into this part of the house," Tyler says [13].

Then one of the waiters exclaims:

Leslie says maybe Tyler went too far [13].

The main character in the image of his second self, Tyler, who hates the society of the rich, says that he is doing everything right.

The main character continues to work in his company, but he understands that his ordinary life is very shallow.

Tyler hasn't been home for a long time. I'm doing my little job. I drive from airport to airport to look at the cars in which people died. The magic of travel. A tiny life. Tiny pieces of soap. Tiny airplane seats [13].

The author uses "small and tiny" to emphasize the main character's dissatisfaction with his real life.

The main character in the image of his second self creates a network of fight clubs, which involve

young people who are also dissatisfied with their lives and the existing order.

The geography of the main character's activity in creating fight clubs is gradually expanding, but the main character is still sure that he does not carry out all this activity, but Tyler.

Tyler kneels down next to the bed and whispers "Last Thursday you fell asleep, and I got on a plane to Seattle to watch a little fight club. To check the bounce numbers, something like that. Look for new talents. We also have a "Mayhem" project in Seattle.....

"We have a "Mayhem" project in Los Angeles and Detroit, a large "Mayhem" project continues in Washington, D.C., in New York. We have a "Mayhem" project in Chicago that you won't believe." [13].

The consciousness of the protagonist expands to cosmic proportions as the network of fight clubs created by him increases. He calls the members of these fight clubs space monkeys.

At any time of the night, space monkeys from some slaughterhouse return home with bags of blood meal to increase the iron content in the soil, and bone meal to increase the phosphorus content.

Teams of space monkeys plant basil, thyme, lettuce and begin to grow witch hazel, eucalyptus, artificial orange and mint in the form of a kaleidoscopic pattern. The window is a rose of all shades of green. And other teams come out at night and kill...[13].

As the second "I" in the image of Tyler gets the upper hand over the personality of the main character, his mental expansion of space occurs. The main character thinks on the scale of the whole real world, thinking that he can change the world.

That was the goal of Project Mayhem, Tyler said, the complete and immediate destruction of civilization.....

"We're going to destroy civilization so we can make something better out of this world." [13]

3.2 Temporal Expansion of the Mental World of the Protagonist Suffering from a Split Personality in Chuck Palahniuk's "Fight club"

Also in the mind of the main character there is a gradual expansion of time boundaries under the influence of his second self.

The consciousness of the main character turns to the story. The second "I" of the main character invented the Chaos project, in which the main character wanted to take control of the story.

The goal was to teach each participant in the project that he has the power to control history. We, each of us, can take control of the world [13].

The main character's goal is to clear the earth of waste.

For thousands of years, people have screwed up, trashed and shat on this planet, and now history expected me to clean up after everyone. I need to wash and flatten the soup cans. And consider every drop of used engine oil.

And I have to pay the bills for nuclear waste, buried gasoline tanks and buried toxic sludge thrown out a generation before I was born [13].

The main character imagines a world of the future, free from the consumer society, where a person will not have more than he really needs.

"Imagine," Tyler said, "how you're sneaking on moose past department store windows and smelly shelves with beautiful rotting dresses and tuxedos on hangers; you're going to wear leather clothes that will last you the rest of your life, and you're going to climb the wrist-thick kudzu vines that wrap around the Sears Tower. Jack and the beanstalk, you'll make your way through the wet forest canopy, and the air will be so clear that you'll see tiny figures pounding corn and laying out strips of venison to dry on an empty car lane of an abandoned superhighway stretching eight lanes wide and hot in August for a thousand miles." [13].

The second "I" of the main character strives for eternal life.

Tyler gets me a job as a waiter, after that Tyler puts a gun in my mouth and says that the first step to eternal life is you have to die.

"It's not really death," Tyler says. "We will become a legend. We won't grow old."

"This is our world now, our world," Tyler says, "and these ancient people are dead." [13].

In the mind of the main character, the foundations of the real world are being loosened. The consciousness of the protagonist resists the actions of his second self, the protagonist thinks that it is not he who commits malicious and malicious acts, he exclaims:

It wasn't me. It was Tyler [13].

At the conclusion of the work, the protagonist realizes that he must kill his other self to stop the atrocities and kills himself.

4. CONCLUSION

Etymologically the word "world" derives from the words with the meanings 'age of man', 'course of man's life,' 'a life-time', 'course of life', 'experience of life'.

And from the data of explanatory dictionaries we can see that this word has the meaning "individual course of life (career); the sphere or scene of one's life and action (living in your own little world)".

It shows that the meaning of the word "world" is connected with the signification of the inner spiritual self-perception, sense of self of a person.

It is clear that the inner world of people in altered states of mind can be much different from the inner world of people in normal states of mind. We have shown the phenomenon of expansion of the inner world of a person suffering from split self on the example of the main character in Chuck Palahniuk's "Fight Club".

R.D. Laing expresses points out that Freud claimed that our civilization is repressive.

In our civilization there is a conflict between the demands of society and the demands of our instinctive energies, obviously sexual. Our civilization suppresses not only "instincts", not only sexuality, but also any form of transcendence. Among people living in one dimension, there may be someone with an experience of other dimensions that he cannot simply forget. This person risks either being destroyed by others or betraying what he knows.

In the context of our current pervasive insanity, which we call normality, sanity, freedom, all our frames of reference are ambiguous [10].

The main character in Chuck Palahniuk's "Fight Club" is undoubtedly a person who knows about the existence of other dimensions and is unable to squeeze into the framework of "sanity and normality".

Thus, from the above analysis it can be seen that the world of people in altered states of consciousness can expand significantly. This hypertrophied expansion goes along the axis of space and time. This expansion of the mental world goes along with the expansion of the moral and

legal boundaries of what is permissible. The main character is trying to change the social order.

The study of imaginable worlds existing in the minds of people in altered states of consciousness will allow us to understand the existential context of the behavior and feelings of such people and will help treat various mental disorders.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Aigul Bakirova is responsible for the analysis of definitions of the word "world" in etymological and explanatory dictionaries.

Yulia Pogrebnyak has analyzed the text of the book "Fight Club" by Chuck Palahniuk and contributed to revising and editing the whole article.

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