

Theory of the development of the psyche of Wilhelm Ament

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Abstract. There are presented ideas about the mental development of an outstanding German scientist in the article who advocated the need to acquaint people with the peculiarities of the mental development of the child Wilhelm Ament. Key positions of the scientist in relation to mental development are revealed. Factors and mechanisms that influence mental development are indicated. The primary indicators of mental development and their interrelationship are identified. The scientific idea of W. Ament according to which the highest mental abilities with which a person is born are the need to study everything that surrounds him, the need to imitate everything, as well as the desire to live in society with people, is presented.

Keywords: *psyche, psyche development, heredity, abilities, movements.*

Introduction. Mental functioning begins from the moment a person is born. The need to get acquainted with a wide range of people with the importance of the initial stage of mental development for the future life of a person, the culture to which he belongs and the functioning of the state of which he is a citizen, is no doubt, moreover, today more urgent than ever. Multiple flows of information and their accessibility open up unlimited opportunities for people to develop and realize, but we dare to suggest that only if dialogue with themselves and communication are maintained.

An important point in the mental development of a person is the reasonable construction and further support of the immediate environment of this process in a key age period – from the moment of birth to seven years. It is the age period that is indicated by prominent German psychologists of the last quarter of the XIX century as the most important in the process of mental development and new mental formations. These include Wilhelm Ament, whose conceptual provisions on mental development will be presented in detail owing to a detailed study of the theoretical provisions of the scientist.

The purpose of the article is to reveal the scientific concept of W. Ament regarding the features and main points in the mental development of a person.

Materials and methods. The material of the study was the work of W. Ament, which reveals the problems of the peculiarities of the psyche and its development. During the study, the following **methods** were used: systematic structural, scientific interpretation, complementarity of historical and logical approaches regarding penetration into leading research issues.

Results and discussion. Wilhelm Ament was born in 1876 in Germany. His father Andreas Ament was a colonel, and his mother Lilly Buchner was the daughter of the owner of a large publishing house. W. Ament studied philosophy and psychology at the University of Würzburg. There he received the degree of doctor in 1900. His scientific interests focused on the problem of mental development and its correct organization. The scientist insisted that future parents, and especially the mother, have knowledge about the features of mental development, considering this an important moment in the upbringing of a cultural and strong nation.

W. Ament expresses the idea that a newborn person is already capable of the simplest forms of activity, for ex-

ample, to move and feel. Even in the womb the ability to feel pressure, various kinds of irritation, taste, touch, sense of smell and ability to move are formed. By the moment of birth, the child is an organism with a variety of abilities of physical and mental functions inherited from parents. From the moment of birth, the child has impulsive and reflexive movements and the ability to distinguish temperature. In the future, with the normal care of the child, the further development of mental manifestations, for example, sensations and perceptions the emotional sphere, takes place.

The period of breastfeeding in a person's life, states W. Ament, is the most important time of his life, because during this period the foundation is laid on which the whole spiritual life of a person is built. His inherited movement abilities and sensations continue to evolve and pave the way for more complex functions. Perceived impressions by sensation remain in the child's psyche and stay there for a long time. Thus, a new ability is born – memory. Impressions that affect the senses in a certain sequence, and all of them that have similarities with each other, are combined into one whole. And this new ability is called an association. Saved and related impressions are memories. While the child prepares for complex life functions, he gradually gains the ability to distinguish between more complex impressions, and thus he develops a new ability – the mind. Distinguishing complex impressions and putting them in different relationships with each other, the child acquires a new ability – imagination. W. Ament calls the mind and imagination two poles of a person's mental life.

Based on the data obtained from the work of thinking, on the one hand, and on the impressions of the senses, on the other, the scientist believes, a first, albeit limited range of ideas is created. At the same time, the child receives these experiences in the game. All these abilities, after all, contribute to the formation of self-consciousness, and at the same time, personality. The following statement of W. Ament is very important, which has not lost its relevance after more than 100 years: «The need to study everything that surrounds him and the need to imitate everything, as well as the desire to live, be close to society with people, are considered the highest tasks of the future person's mental activity» [2, p. 25].

The normal or abnormal course of mental development is evidenced by the mimic expressions of the child, their

adequacy, W. Ament considers. «All movements expressing a mental mood, – the scientist writes, – are based on principles inherited from parents, that is, they are given as if by nature itself to the child; he should not get used to them himself, although they are improved, thanks to constant exercises» [2, p. 38–39]. These include mimic movements expressing a mental mood, namely: pleasures, displeasures, attention, stubbornness, surprise, smile, laughter, crying. The inclination to merge with nature is also innate, so it is very difficult to keep the child at home on a bright sunny day, the scientist states. W. Ament refers the mental manifestations that are formed by the culture, the representative of which is the child, to gesticulation, shyness, joy, kiss, shame. After twelve months from birth, you can notice the child's expression of sympathy to the surrounding – with the help of laughter and antipathy to the unknown – with tears. In the first case, W. Ament claims, there are inclinations for mental manifestation – love, and in the second – for fear and hatred.

For W. Ament the relationship of memory and associations is recognized as the initial mechanism that promotes, triggers the development of a person's mental life. This relationship is the foundation on which the ability to think is formed. «Thanks to the fact, – writes Ament, – that a child becomes capable of more complex mental functions, he slowly learns to understand more complex perceptions, which are called cognition, and dividing them, to combine again in various respects; this is already called imagination» [2, p. 59]. Imagination reaches its highest development by the age of seven. But for this, W. Ament calls four conditions: 1) adult reading fairy tales until the child himself learns to read, 2) taking fascinating walks in nature, 3) attending various kinds of events and cultural places, and 4) promoting creative activities (drawing, sculpting, etc.).

The leading activity of the children's period – the game, is a prerequisite for mental development. W. Ament emphasizes that it is the game that occupies a central place in the circle of representations of the child. «First of all, there is pleasure here, – the scientist writes, – from the manifestation of movements, from the sound of rattling, at the sight of a moving object and its colors, from the touch of the latter, and insofar as there is a desire of the child to imitate the mother, the pleasure of this imitation, finally the pleasure gained from experimentation» [2, p. 63–64]. And all these movements, thus, get their further development, considers W. Ament, in the pursuit of the game: movement, experimentation and imitation, as well as sensory organs such as touch, hearing, vision. All these

manifestations of the psyche lead to the formation of a sense of self-consciousness and personality, the scientist is convinced, thanks to the ability to distinguish.

The main basis on which the child's assimilation of his native language is based, according to W. Ament, is an innate instinct – the desire for conversation. «With the help of it a baby becomes a «talking child» [2, p. 72]. The possibility of developing the imitation of speech by scientists is recognized as hereditary. A general condition for the development of the language by scientist is the achievement of a certain degree of mental maturity. «Before being able to learn speech, the child should already be able to think» [2, p. 73]. W. Ament takes a principled position, insisting on the relationship between mental development and mastery of speech. This new factor is beginning to develop more and more, and it is becoming important in the intellectual life of girls and boys. «Sex development, – writes W. Ament, – is a central phenomenon in a certain way, and sex maturity is the zenith or center around which all other development revolves» [2, p. 101]. At the same time, the scientist believes that puberty is like the root development of the body. It can be very easily influenced to interfere with its normal course, and therefore, it is a critical period of human life. In this context, W. Ament does not mean sexual ugliness, but disorders of mental life and sensations, especially their erotic nature.

Conclusions from the study. In the early years of the child's life sensory activity is the predominant function of his mental life. Gradual improvement of the sensory organs, for example, taste – the first gives clear ideas, entailing memories. Childhood memories of an adult are the result of those events that were marked by attention and feelings and therefore remained in memory. The development of imagination is a condition for the development of mental abilities. For its development, it is necessary to: 1) read tales by adults until the child himself learns to read, with further training to reading, 2) take fascinating walks in nature, 3) attend various kinds of events and cultural places, and 4) promote creative activities (drawing, sculpting, designing). The emergence of ideas about one's personality depends on the degree of memory development in the first and second years of life. The impact of physical development on human mental development is recognized. The scientist calls the ability of attention and memory the basis of mental development. After the last, one can determine its course. Mental development depends on mastering speech.

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