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ON ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF INFORMATION SOCIETY

Karavaev N.L.

In article, the author envisages the anthropological problems of the modern information society. There is a new definition of information society, the main factor of which is the automatization of information processes. Different types of information technology impacts (informational and technological impacts) on human being are considered. In addition, the author shows the primary transformation of human being due to modern information technologies, based on computer and telecommunication technique.

Keywords: man; person; information society; information technology; information process; informational impact; technological impact.

ОБ АНТРОПОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ПРОБЛЕМАХ ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО ОБЩЕСТВА

Караваяев Н.Л.

В статье рассмотрены антропологические проблемы современного информационного общества. Предложены новые определения понятий информационного общества и информационных технологий. Рассматриваются различные виды воздействия информационных технологий на человека. Показаны изменения человека, связанные с использованием современных информационных технологий, основанных на компьютерной и телекоммуникационной технике.

Ключевые слова: человек; личность; информационное общество; информационные технологии; информационный процесс; информационное воздействие; технологическое воздействие.

Introduction. The emergence of modern information technologies, based on computer and telecommunication technique, changed not only the informational environment, in which a person interacts with the other members of society, but also influenced on a person, his or her way of life, mind, values and world view. At the modern stage of society these changes are grand problems, required a holistic scientific and philosophical reflection. The goal of the article is to give a brief of the anthropological problems of the modern information society.

Information society. Before discussing the problem of human being in information society, it is necessary to define the notion “information society”. Today there are many approaches to interpret this notion. The most complete characteristics of the main approaches were given by British sociologist F. Webster in his book “Theories of Information Society” [3]. He identified the five main criterions, on base of which information society is defined:

1. *Technological criterion.* The main characteristic of information society is information technologies and the development of the industry of information products.

2. *Economical criterion,* which heeds the growth in economic worth of informational activities and the prevalence of it over the activities in the fields of agriculture and industry manufacture.

3. *Occupational criterion.* The decline of manufacturing employment and the rise of informational work, where the raw material is information.

4. *Spatial criterion.* “Here the major emphasis is on information networks which connect locations and in consequence can have profound effects on the organisation of time and space” [3, p. 25].

5. *Cultural criterion*, which states informational saturation of modern society, the most information value of the current culture in comparison with the previous cultures.

None of these criteria reflects adequately the key factor of the new type of society because they overlook the impetus for its appearance. The essential feature of the information society is the automatization of informational processes, which is operated by information technology based on computer and telecommunication technique. Thus, information society is an *informatizational* society, i.e. the society where informational processes are automated. In this sense, the main semantic element of the concept of information society is not information, but automatization of informational processes. Proceeding from this understanding of the information society, there is a regular explanation of the economical changes of the new type of society, transformations of culture, the process of globalization of social space and many other social and cultural manifestations of the new era.

Information technology and its impact. Information technologies, by which the information environment of society is automatized, are the main reason of the changes of human being and society. It is quite significant that J. Lanier, American scientist and programmer, one of the pioneers in the development of virtual reality systems (and the author of this term) said the following: “The most important thing about a technology is how it changes people” [2, p. 2]. Lanier considers that the one of the major problems of this interaction is the process of fixing of scopes in which there are phenomena of the world. He calls this process “lock-in”. Lanier does not give a clear scientific definition of this notion in his book, but we can define lock-in (in our opinion, the better notion is “determination”) as a fixing of the principles of the organization of social, technical, psychological, axiological and other phenomena of the world to such an extent that in the future they determine the form and content of new phenomena, which exist in the frameworks of these principles, and eliminate the phenomena, which are not fit into prevailing system of the approved principles.

In the context of information technologies, the signs of this determination are primarily in the principles of creation of the hardware and software. It is extremely difficult to withdraw from everyday life the programs and technical systems used for functioning of other programs and social systems. The results of the determination by modern information technologies in a greater degree are not in relation to technical side of society, but to a person and his or her nature. Today information technologies determine not only communicative and cultural processes, social institutes and values, but personal features of man, his or her ideals, mind, needs, feelings and emotions.

Information technologies as technologies of the forming and managing of informational processes, means the presence of the informational component (information) and the technological instrument. The instrument is used for manipulating of information and is an external form of informational processes. On this basis, the impacts on persons and society are done by information itself or technological instrument. Informational and technological impacts are the main reasons of human being transformation, and are the essence of the main anthropological problems of modern information society. Let us consider these two types of impacts more closely.

Technological impact. Information technologies have an impact on the somatic (bodily) organization of the human being. At least they reduce the level of physical activity, and in particular, lead to a different kind of diseases, caused by a sedentary lifestyle. This kind of life is a common thing for office workers. And, if the first symptoms are headache, back pain, fatigue, irritability, etc (the so-called “office syndrome”), then in the case of ignorance of the symptoms more serious chronic diseases of the cardiovascular system, nervous and other systems are appeared. Long-term work with screens of computers, frequent use of tablet PCs, etc. affects the eyesight of a person (dry eye syndrome and others). In addition, there is a threat associated with the steady increase of the volume of electromagnetic radiation and its direct impact on the human brain.

Technological impact is also possible in relation to the cognitive abilities of the human being. In [1] there is shown that the development of these abilities is the development of information technologies. Language, literature, radio, television, computer and telecommunication technique are varieties of information technologies, which appeared gradually and reflect the socio-cultural development of the cognitive abilities. Thus, any cognitive processes are realized with the help of information technologies. Moreover, if the first information revolution (language and literature) were an impetus to the development of intellectual apparatus and became the major moments of the development of the human being, the latest information technologies have more negative than positive consequences of their use.

For centuries, we see that the better our instruments of labor are, the less efforts we need to do a concrete action. Today information technology is the most efficient instrument made by the human being. Information technology as a tool of determination limits a person's intellectual abilities, transforms his or her brainwork. As such, brainwork (thinking) assumes any difficulty, which our intelligence can call a problem. Problematic situation forces a person to switch from the mode of thoughtless experience to the mode of thinking. Most probably, that M. Heidegger means this aspect when he wrote that intelligence thinks only forcedly and reluctantly. This happens when intelligence encounters something that makes us think [4, p. 135]. Only problematic situation can have such coercive force.

With the use of modern information technologies, the problemacy of situations is disappeared: if earlier cognitive (informational) need reflected the question "How?" (for example, "How to do this?", "How to solve the problem?"), today it reflects the question "Where?" ("Where to learn how to do this?", "Where to find a solution of this problem?", or even "Where to buy a solution of this task?"). Therefore, mechanical (reproductive) look-up of problem solution has come in place of intellectual (productive) look-up. A person needs less efforts of intelligence for his activity as he or she does not need to solve tasks or problems; he or she just uses information that he or she finds for their solving. Information technologies have become the inter-

layer between our thinking and the world of tasks, so they do not develop our intelligence, but on the contrary, they primitivize it.

In addition, new information technologies makes us believe that everything can be algorithmized, programmed, formalized and transformed to digital form. We lose intuitive understanding of the world, we begin to look at the world like the structure, the model, we less and less believe in something ideal, sacred, that our life is not a program, but the freedom of will, the freedom of choice, the freedom of afflatus and intuition. Life is equilibrium between chaos and order. Information technologies transform our life to absolute, but imaginary order. Our world is transformed to a physical mechanism, in which there is no place for intuitive, vital and non-programmed thought. Moreover, we are being transformed into the same machines.

Informational impact. Information technologies affect not only a person's ability and his or her physiology, but also worldview, values and feelings through increasing volumes of information. Today the effectiveness of a person's activity directly depends on how favorable the information situation is and how quickly and successfully he or she can satisfy his or her information needs. Therefore, the presence of information becomes the main factor not only determining the success of problems solution, but the independence of a person and his or her non-susceptibility to crowd control. Knowledge, or being informed, is the power by which a person is able to act consciously, not just react to the circumstances.

At all times it was extremely difficult to gain access to the necessary information. In different epochs, votaries, priests or public officials possessed it. A strategy, in which a person is not informed and thus more vulnerable, is very effective at controlling the masses. However, the emergence of information technologies, which allow unimpeded information transfer in large volumes, made this strategy unrealizable. Therefore, the strategy of authority is changed. Instead of restricting access to information, unlimited opportunities for its creation and using are provided. The concept of hiding of information was replaced with the concept of information storm.

And, this strategy meets the same goals – not to give access to important information for broad masses of population and thereby to control people, to manipulate them.

Today the information situation is extremely unfavorable: information is accessible, but in most cases is useless, because it is distorted and not reliable, and destructive, because it imposes (programs) a certain way of life and thought. Monthly there are published thousands of new books, newspapers and magazines, numerous sites and new cable channels in the world. A person is simply bombarded by the avalanche of information and now it is very difficult to reveal the important information, because it is immersed to the general flow of information, which is increased many times during the last decades. Therefore, to find the necessary and reliable information is very difficult task now. In order to get worthwhile information, a person has to let through a huge amount of information, sorting and discarding unnecessary parts of it. A person is suffering from an excess of information as well as its absence, and the ability of information filtering becomes the necessary component of his or her informational and intellectual culture.

The saturation of the information leads to sad consequences. Similarly to gluttony, the results of which are increased body weight, cardiovascular diseases, etc., the glut of information becomes the cause of transforming the internal world of a person, his or her mind, thinking, needs and values. The modern man loses the abilities of self-reflection, the desires for self-improvement and thinking. A person's only desire is satisfy needs. He or she becomes indifferent to everything that does not corresponded to his or her desires. Moreover, the desires are so strong, that in addition to them a person sees nothing and does not want to see. And, it is very fearful that a man is ready to satisfy these desires any way.

Conclusion. Therefore, the informatization of the society in addition to positive has a huge layer of the negative aspects, which leads to irreversible changes of a person and society if we do not pay attention to these problems. Now the response to the challenges of information technologies are depends on us. We have to choose between improvement of technologies regardless of our internal world and improve-

ment of us, self-improvement, with regard to advantages of modern technologies. Technologies as means are neutral; they are neither good nor bad. Only we are responsible for what happens as a result of their use. We know that a hummer can be harmful if one uses it inappropriately.

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DATA ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karavaev Nikita Leonidovich, associate professor of Department of Information Technology and Methodology of Informatics Teaching, PhD in Philosophy

Vyatka State University of Humanities

26, Krasnoarmeyskaya st., Kirov, Kirov region, 610002, Russia

nikita.lk@gmail.com

ДААННЫЕ ОБ АВТОРЕ

Караваяев Никита Леонидович, доцент кафедры информационных технологий и методики обучения информатике, канд. филос. наук

Вятский государственный гуманитарный университет

ул. Красноармейская, д. 26, г. Киров, Кировская область, 610002, Россия

nikita.lk@gmail.com