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HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY OF DIGITALIZATION AS AN ANSWER TO THE MODERN SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Digitalization has brought a number of impressive innovations to the lives of the modern people, including scientific, technic, technological and industrial achievements. However digitalization isn't only a technical phenomenon, but also an economic, political, and socio-cultural one. The paradox of the present times is that, despite the great scientific and technological progress, it hasn't yet been the subject of special reflection. Forming strategic paradigm of social development in the digital age requires understanding its basic philosophical and methodological foundations. Humanities are the most effective instrument to analyze them fully and complexly. Humanities discuss the most actual questions of the human status in a changing world, of saving his real «human» face and essence, dangerous experiments on the biological side of human nature, the unity and interdependence of human life and the environment. Today all these problems have an unprecedented importance: they aren't only the theoretical objects of Humanities, but the basic imperatives of human survival. Modern Humanities have to explain the deep meanings of everything what is happening around us; to identify the prerequisites and consequences of the most significant events and phenomena, to find out the very essence of human existence in a rapidly changing world. They must also protect the digital society from the pressure of absurdity and destructiveness. Thus, the role of Humanities in the modern digital society is significantly increasing.

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1. Introduction

It's well known that the importance of philosophy, as well as of all the social sciences and Humanities, always intensifies and increases at the critical and problematic historical moments. This is due to the unique character of Humanities to explain the deep meanings of everything that is happening, to identify the prerequisites and the basis for the most significant events and phenomena, to find out the very essence of human existence in the rapidly changing world (Makhovikov et al., 2021). Therefore, it's quite obvious at the present stage of historical evolution that the digital era can't do without philosophical and humanitarian components, despite repeated many times provocative comments on this subject. Digitalization has brought a number of impressive innovations to the lives of modern people, including scientific, technic, technological and industrial achievements. However, the digital society doesn't need only them, but also a philosophic and, widely, humanitarian reflection of what's happening in connection with all these new trends and tendencies. Without this, society rolls down to technocracy, falls through the Net (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1999), follows aggressive scientism and relativism, and forgets the worldview and humanistic foundations of its own existence.

2. Problem Statement

In modern conditions it's very important to understand the need for the Humanities and then to form a humanitarian strategy of digitalization. It'll be a correct answer to the actual socio-economic challenges. Humanities must take their rightful place in the digital society. They must be completely integrated into the education system, in the field of scientific researches and even in the lives of modern humans. It's the Humanities that should help us to understand the prerequisites and essence of digitalization, to find the right way of development or to correct it. With a help of Humanities we can recognize and accept the global crisis that accompanies the triumph of technology and digitalization. We can also identify ourselves in the changing world; find out the humanistic meaning and the sense of our existence. These are the most important tasks of the modern Humanities. Shortly, they are an effective instrument to choose the right criteria of socio-cultural development in the world of technic and digital innovations.

3. Research Questions

The present research tries to give answers to a number of the related questions. They are the same:

1. What are the place and role of Humanities in the digital society?
2. What are the main problems of digitalization in the context of philosophical reflection?
3. What are the deviations of the modern science development?
4. What are the difficulties of the education system in the digital age?
5. Why naive relativism and knowledge pluralism are unproductive worldview tendencies?
6. Why the strategy of digitalization must be socio-humanitarian?

Thus, it's necessary to consider the problems of digitalization from the philosophical point of view, to overcome deviations of scientific knowledge and education system development, to form the correct socio-humanitarian strategy of digitalization, giving it the human-oriented sense and content.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out the place and role of Humanities in the digital epoch. The authors reject a widespread opinion about an absence of demand for humanitarian knowledge in the modern society. The last one is allegedly aimed at forming of highly professional, but narrow profiled specialists. This makes human «one-dimensional» and leads to the relational world vision. The last one is dangerous because it deprives the human of the worldview certainty. The present study proves the hypothesis that Humanities are able to resist relativism in the digital era. Philosophy plays an important role in this process. Its aim is to generate new ideas, to realize critical reflection, and to give the common sense to everything what is happening.

5. Research Methods

Several methods are used together to realize the purpose of the study. They are the methods of analysis and synthesis, prognostic method, comparative and dialectical methods.

1. Methods of analysis and synthesis are used to make a full and complex vision of the digital society development. This allows interpreting «digitalization» not only as a technical phenomenon, but as an economic, political, and socio-cultural one.

2. Prognostic method is used to construct a correct, human-oriented strategic paradigm of the future social development, to find out its main principles, problems and perspectives.

3. Comparative method is used to describe specificity of Humanities and philosophy during the pre-digital and the digital epochs. An attitude towards them in the higher education system has also varied depending on the historical time and the special world vision.

4. Dialectical method is used to illustrate the changing character of the social values and to prove the increasing role of Humanities in the digital world.

6. Findings

6.1. Problems of digitalization in the context of philosophical reflection

The paradox of the present times is that, despite the scientific and technological progress of the digital age, it hasn't yet been the subject of special philosophical reflection. It's one of the main worldview problems of the modern humanity. For this reason the digital society hasn't yet formed a general idea of its development and essence, the strategy and philosophy of digitalization. It's well known that social evolution depends on knowledge base: first – knowledge, then – actions. In the case of digitalization, the chain of events looks oppositely: the speed of innovative digital technologies development goes much faster than the development of scientific and ideological ideas about their essence, specifics and potential consequences in the social life.

Therefore, it may seem at the first sight that the main problems of digitalization are related only to different aspects of information and computer technologies functioning, to various mathematical methods and models. Really, digitalization isn't only a technological phenomenon, but also an economic, political, humanitarian and socio-cultural one. Such an extremely wide interpretation of «digitalization» is focused on its strategic tasks and problems, actual for present time and important for the future.

6.2. A strategic paradigm of social development

In order to correct the social development strategy we need at least to understand where we are going. This causes many difficulties due to the extraordinary speed and increasing dynamics of changes taking place in the modern society. Scientists and philosophers couldn't even foresee the scale and the power of the information waves sweeping the whole world. Caused by the fundamental innovations in the technological sphere, these waves have affected everyone. That's why the modern technological revolution seems to be closely related to the field of philosophical reflection. The last one helps to understand the place and role of the human in the world of technic and information, his impact on cultural, economic, political and other changing spheres of social development.

Forming strategic paradigm of social development in the digital age requires understanding its basic philosophical and methodological foundations. Philosophy must be treated specially and carefully for the reason that it's the most effective instrument to analyze the specifics of the present times – vital for the following evolution of the humanity, determining the new vector of its future development. Thus, the modern world needs science and technology to solve the most complex and difficult problems, but it also needs philosophy to consider the eternal existential questions of its being and development.

The main task of the modern philosophy is analyzing a number of debatable questions. Among them there are the questions about the human status in a changing world, saving his real «human» face and essence, about dangerous experiments on the biological side of human nature, the unity and interdependence of human life and the natural environment (Guryanova et al., 2020). Today all these problems have an unprecedented significance: they aren't any longer only the objects of philosophical reflection, but the basic imperatives of human survival. They are very actual in conditions of the global environmental crisis (Guryanova et al., 2019) and the increasing degradation of human spirituality.

6.3. Deviations of science and education in the digital age

It's obvious that technical sciences are developing rapidly in the modern world. Their heuristic potential is undoubted because of their vital importance for the modern humanity. Unfortunately, we can't say the same about the modern Humanities. At the first sight, they seem absolutely unnecessary in the digital realities of the modern scientific and technological progress. As a result, it's only the science that is called a universal productive force in the modern world. As for the Humanities, they are real outsiders. Moreover a systematic deconstruction of humanitarian ties and relations is taking place.

New areas and disciplinary branches of scientific knowledge are appearing quickly and multiply in the digital era. They need a special sort of participants – well qualified, but narrow-profiled. As a result, these specialists don't have even a stable and complex worldview system. Today there's no need to educate students to have a general scientific culture, purposefully cultivated in the previous higher education system. It seems all types of generalization have become unnecessary in the modern digital society. Not very long ago, well educated people and scientists were considered an intellectual elite, a kind of special spiritual community. But today, an increasing antagonism between the humanitarian culture, morality and the technical consciousness is taking place. It can be proved by the latest innovations in the field of higher education, for example, by reducing a number of humanitarian subjects and the time for their studying. This is an alarming tendency because it's the Humanities that are aimed to

develop the best spiritual qualities of the person, to form his civil position and to teach him the way of critical thinking. Unfortunately, all this remains almost unclaimed in the modern digital age.

Without the necessary socio-humanitarian basis, science and technology can't create anything better than a limited and a highly technical person. Certainly, such «one-dimensional» person may be highly professional and even technically universal. But he inevitably becomes a representative of naive relativism in the field of morality. This form of relativism expression is derived from the pluralism of knowledge prevailing in the modern society. It's necessary to mention that knowledge pluralism is ineffective because it can't help us to understand and even more to solve the most complex problems of scientific and technic development and of socio-cultural life as a whole.

6.4. The place and role of Humanities in the digital world

The main «disease» of the modern philosophy, according to Popper (1971), is an intellectual and moral relativism. It affects all spheres of social life, including the sphere of interpersonal communications, individual and mass consciousness, scientific researches, philosophical worldview, and so on. The relativism and its socio-cultural consequences must be necessarily overcome. This can be done with a help of Humanities and philosophy as the quintessence of culture. They should take their rightful place in the modern digital society. Philosophical and humanitarian education is a good alternative to the widespread model of the narrow-profile professional training of specialists.

Today the labor market and the very principles of its organization and functioning are significantly changing (Shestakov et al., 2017). In the next decade, this may lead to radical economic and existential changes that the modern humanity hasn't yet faced at all. For example, it'll have soon to deal with the problem of expanding robotics. Soon, the robots will begin to take jobs from people, and the machine algorithmic intelligence will be able to process and analyze data much better than every human, even the most erudite and encyclopedically educated (Timofeev et al., 2021). In such conditions, many experts are sure it'll be Humanities and philosophy able to resist the new trends of robotics. Their main tasks are to formulate new ideas, to make balanced conclusions, and to cope with the problems that can't be solved by robots and algorithms. Modern humanitarians – philosophers and philologists – can do it well because they have a specific worldview that allows humanizing any object in the process of its studying. The other important character of Humanities is a highly emotional subtext of researches that is noted by many authoritative experts in the field of information technology and digital economy, for example, by Schwab (2017).

Today one of the most valuable professional qualities is an ability to solve the problems quickly and creatively. That's why in 10 years, the demand for humanitarians will be greater than the demand for programmers or even engineer. In the future, it'll be a need for people with a special view of things who can give a critical assessment of the data collected by algorithms. Such skills are attributes of philologists and philosophers (HighTech, 2017). This is the reason of an increasing role of Humanities in the digital world.

7. Conclusion

Summing up the results of the research, we can note that we are living in a very interesting but also a very difficult time. It's a time of changing historical epochs, breaking paradigms, updating the traditional

system of values and establishing the new ideological priorities. In such conditions, innovative ideas and creative potential are in great demand. Generation of such ideas is the primary task of the Humanities. So, their role in the modern digital society is significantly increasing. For example, philosophy must protect society from the pressure of absurdity and destructiveness, from the growth of neurotic tendencies in culture. It must strengthen the self-consciousness and even the spirituality of the humans.

The significance of philosophical reflection in the digital era is determined by the fact that it's able to create the new, constructive and vitally important meanings. It also protects and preserves the previous worldview orientations that have proved their effectiveness in history and in practice. Philosophy helps the modern humans to form a positive and optimistic socio-cultural position and to implement it in their lives. Like all other Humanities, philosophy teaches people to treat the surrounding world, makes them responsible and thoughtful, helps to reach balanced decisions. These qualities are very important in the field of solving difficult tasks that go beyond the potential of algorithmic, machine-type thinking.

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