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SCREEN IMAGES: EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE TRANSFORMATION IN AN ERA OF GLOBAL MEDIA

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Abstract

The paper deals with the transformation of the educational purpose in the age of industrial civilization. The authors proceed on the statement that the changes in the technosphere are transferred to the sphere of the setting of the point of a being, including education. The battle for minds is connected with the competition for the dominance of mass media and its content, with the latter being the reality constructor, creating and setting the guidelines and meanings for human activity. The paradox of the current situation lies in virtual reality variability for its object and constituting subjects. As a result, virtual reality comes into the public domain, becoming a source of mind manipulation. Changing the attitude to the virtual reality is crucial and only possible in the conditions of a person's transformation into a Human Being. The authors suggest a project of technological humanization including the re-humanization of a person. During this process, a person acknowledges his essence as a whole being, interacting with technical facilities and, possibly, alternative life-forms. The process also supposes the revision of the modern media project to eliminate artificially simulated constituents from virtual reality. It is crucial to limit the dominance of the mass media and reestablish such values as truth, professional credibility, formedness, meaningfulness. Otherwise, the idea of a human being is threatened by even more fractional fragmentation and simulation. Thus, further technological development is only possible with human beings being fully aware of their responsibility for their activity products.

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1. Introduction

The modern world of high technology formed due to human's constant desire to understand the world and themselves as its constituent part. Having obtained certain knowledge a person starts using it at his own discretion, starting from fulfilling basic needs, such as shelter, clothes, and food and ending with proving oneself in creating something brand new, including the reality of their existence. Therefore, the call for conservation and transmission of knowledge, or education as a means of the society development, increases significantly. Education becomes more and more technological. But together with the obvious benefits of technology application in the education process (fast information retrieval, real object modelling and managing), there is a downside to it as well, namely, the superficial perception of actual reality due to its virtualization. As a result, the most complex events and phenomena can obtain the features of strict patterns and algorithms and exiting their limits might imply high levels of uncertainty, for the world is a lot more intricate than we consider it to be. And our viewpoint of the world is dictated by the images of global media (Prilukova, 2016).

2. Problem Statement

The images of the world are artificial in their nature and can be characterised as simulacra (Baudrillard, 1994). But it is the manner in which a person perceives the world that determines the value of their existence. The specific character of the world's images is conditioned by the fact that humans are constantly involved in this artificial world not only by perceiving it visually but also applying other senses as well as the mind. As a result, humans try on different roles, masks, becoming travellers in this newly discovered "world". The real world duplicates via modern technology together with cognitive technologies, thus leading to the formation of a particular culture of the impression. New lifestyle appears, in which mobility and convenience become the main values and a person obtains "almost immortality". The collaboration of a human and technology enlarges the horizons of technological discourse making it more than just a tool of human activity development (Epstein, 2001). Technology becomes a constituent part of a human and can lead to unpredictable and irreversible consequences (Drexler, 1986). Humans realise that possessing an extensive knowledge base and technological power together with its careless usage can lead to irreversible repercussions that challenge the very fact of the civilization existence.

3. Research Questions

The question is the transformation of human-technology interaction in the context of increasing complicity of the images of reality that are represented in screen images.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose is to elicit the conditions of a productive dialogue between humans and technological environment in the frames of modern media-reality.

5. Research Methods

An interpretational paradigm and the basis of methodological hermeneutics standard (Kuznetsov, 2007), neurophilosophy ideas (Churchland, 1986) are the methods of research.

An evolutionary-informational approach to the process of information acquisition and application involves its comprehension and understanding (Dennett, 1996).

6. Findings

Within the context of screen means of world presentation dominance, the world's visual representation is realized along with the transformation of its perception from the content to the form (Markov, 2011).

The phenomenon of mass media and communication impact on human consciousness as reality construct has been thoroughly researched in philosophy since the second half of the XX century. The philosophical tradition of comprehension of technology and its interaction with humans begins with the analysis of their technical aspect, although technology aka a specific sphere of human activity has been studied since antiquity. Aristotle was one of the first to dwell on the interaction of human and technology, having elicited technical knowledge as a separate kind. Its peculiarity was the ability to obtain an autonomous existence (Aristotle, 2000). It was the antique philosophers that saw more intricate processes in the technological development, thus proclaiming technology as a power able to influence humans and their entire existence, a power, encompassing not only the human-over-nature subordination but technology-over-human as well. This power is reflected in the fact that technological knowledge, although aimed at production, always requires virtual modelling of the desired result. Technology and nature are alike, but not similar, because the former can model and alter nature according to human needs. Technology is anthropomorphous and social as confirmed by first technological tools that resembled human organs. Thus, the question arises: who and why develops and applies technology.

It was the technology that allowed humans to enter information society. On the one hand, technology provided humans with limitless opportunities to world exploration and life management. Technology enabled humans to comprehend numerous nature secrets, subdue nature to their needs and simultaneously to become the object of technological impact (as confirmed by the case of Fukushima). On the other hand, technology puts at risk the very existence of humans, although it was humans who created that risk. The unity of knowledge and technology leads us to Luhmann's (1993) paradox: the more you know, the more you understand what you do not know and comprehend the risk. Qualities of a human, such as responsibility for the result of their activity, yet again come into the spotlight. Thus, the results of the educational process are of importance not only as a set of knowledge but as the ability to assess and apply it.

This is why it is logical that the appearance of new kinds of communication and ways of information application in the second part of the XX century led humans to contemplate the possibilities of technical knowledge not only to be the result of truth acquisition in theoretical and practical spheres but as a possible source of consequences. Information society gives way to the knowledge society, when it becomes enough to answer a question with "yes" or "no" without dwelling into the real meaning of it. Meanwhile, the amount of informational sources that humans are subjected to eliminates the equation between knowledge and

information. Which is more, knowledge becomes more and more socially, ethically, and politically oriented. The question about the scientists' responsibility for the results of their activity increases its urgency (Jonas, 1979; Roco & Bainbridge, 2002).

Technology combined with science became not only the indicator of progress but also power that can destroy everything that humanity achieved. While working, humans were creating more and more things, which led to the creation of something unique, technology with a big impact – computer. Thanks to this innovation, human life became broader and overstepped the usual boundaries of space (here), time (now) and self (artificial intelligence). A paradoxical situation was beginning to form. A person always has full control, is now being controlled, while escaping into the virtual media reality, where he mostly loses himself, following the digital logic of its existence. Technological achievements led to such level of development that became self-aware and begun impacting the society and humans, forming their world-view. Using the media during the education process allows the use of creolized text, graphics, videos and animation, “broadening” the world-view. Knowledge about the world, thanks to the NBIC-convergence technology, is beginning to form into huge modules. The world of technological knowledge is the world full of unending dynamics, updating and simultaneous destruction (Stehr, 2001; Van Dijk, 1977).

In time, technology becomes not only the place for communication for humans but also enslaves it. Technology finds its way into their life and humans turn from a builder to nothing but a technological building block. Nowadays technological advancement achieved such a level that a person can turn one's dreams into reality, without leaving his home. Remote TV, talking online to anyone around the world, “travelling” to any museum, transferring the big data clusters, etc. As a result, a person gets “drawn” into the technological world. Entering the depths of such world leads to the technology becoming the part of evolution progress and humanity becomes the “accomplice” of such evolution. He gets the opportunity to build his own self. But a question about the humanization of technology arises. What is the cost of the massive change in mass-communication and information in society? Technology gains power, creating the image of the modern world and its values.

Today the verb “to see” is acquiring the status of universal perception of the world. This perception becomes the main feeling and all the values, which are broadcasted by the mass media and communications lose their transcendental value. In a very short amount of time, value, depicted in the media, integrates the experience of the previous generation and the current world, which in turn change the world-view, weakening one's logical thinking. Nevertheless, the same “picture” can have multiple and completely different meanings. Interpretation of which relies on social and cultural factors. The prime example of changes to the perception of reality lies in such spheres of life as economics, politics and law. Here are a few examples of such connection between humans and pictures presented by mass media.

Advertisements in the mass media and information not only convince you to buy a certain product or a service but also impose such decision. Only the most successful consultants of “Forex” suggest trying the business model of “for yourself and under yourself” (Liteforex, 2017). On the screen, it appears to be very easy. Invest some money into the purchase of currency, according to the directions of always-smiling consults, who helps you to earn money. But none of the consultants ever mention the risks, which inevitably appear for both consumers and consults. On the screen, you do not see that at all.

In reality, it is much more difficult. To reach the financial success, many factors must be accounted for. They require you to not only know, but also to analyze, predict and expect the risks. It becomes clear that only “having” knowledge of advertisement success in mass media is not enough. You should have knowledge in not only economy, but also politics and geopolitics, which are connected to it. So, it is important to imagine and understand the financial architecture of the world as a whole. This relies on knowledge itself and not the massive information dumps. Economical “life” on the screen, where everybody is successful, is becoming a reality, even if there is no economy knowledge in a huge part of human population. This allows overtaking the mind, becoming the main value to follow.

As a result of constant growth of different social-political programs, which are built on tough rules and script techniques of mass entertainment shows, the viewers from different parts of the world become involved in the world of politics, which they socialize in. The main heroes and tools of political socialization become the mass media and their actors on screen. Everyone, from a real politician to a young viewer, knows how to solve the most important government problems. It is not surprising that nowadays imagology is an area of research in humanities, which studies the image of people, who are holding the power, becomes more popular (Boytsov & Uspensky, 2010). Today, political battles, determination of the political direction and social growth and using votes to solve problems with the territory are all being done online in real time. With this, mass media and information almost never mention the big army of specialists in the sphere of politics and other sciences, who create such programs. Mass media itself is being presented as a political expert and consultant, appealing to the authority of the science. That is how the multi-faced narrative is born. It is riddled with discourse practices that lead the viewer away from real politics and politicians. The same event can acquire absolutely different meanings. The prime example is the analysis of the first Russian president – Boris Yeltsin, who won over Soviet CCHR in the August of 1990 and is the holder of the special currency account for his own needs (Karaulov, 2015). After the viewing of such program, of course, no respect and trust can be formed to the politician from the viewer. The program is made according to all the rules of the show. Dynamic and dramatic disclosures, one-sided opinion, fragmented “picture” and the absence of time for thinking. Yes, the viewer doesn’t need to think. He is given everything. Also referencing the “authenticity of the documents” about “who lead the country” which was used by Karaulov (2015) in his program was not always believable. As a result, a complex story full of contradictions was turned into a history show on the screen. To understand what is happening, one needs not only time but also knowledge of history.

All the law conflicts from serious to common ones are being solved successfully and swiftly in the media (Smolin, 2009). Opinions, evaluation, acquittals and convictions are being carried out by, possibly, non-professionals in front of millions of viewers. The value of decisions is being transmitted from the screen to real life as some sort of standard. This all raises a question. Does one really need to know the constitution of the country, which proclaims and guarantees the presumption of innocence, since the “image” of law is being transmitted from the media and is lacking and even stifles freedom and removes the presumption of innocence? This decision is made in TV reality and becomes the role model. If we view freedom as nothing but the ability to choose while making a decision, then the values on the screen give a complete solution, making it anti-freedom.

There are numerous examples of this. They illustrate that at this moment, humans are overtaken by visual perception of the world and the events happen only if they are showcased in the global mass media. Otherwise, such an event did not happen.

When trying to understand mass communication and information, it is important to highlight its nature. This is result of human activities, when creating technology and when filling it with purpose. Behind all stories in the media stand real people: editors, providers, co-owners, etc. They are the ones who offer and set the main values to follow.

Classic philosophy defines value as everything that plays an important part for a person in a personal or social sense (Evin, 2006). In the general sense, the value is a concrete relationship between the subject's and object's understanding of that particular object and what it really is. Classical philosophy saw moral values as a foundation of values, as an imperative. That's why value is seen as an important part of activity, regardless of what kind of activity it is. These notions from the classical era are hard to disagree with.

But today moral values are turning into advice. Their imperative character is becoming recommendatory. Accepting or not accepting these moral values is up to every person in society. The morality itself is "dissolved" in the society of mass consumption. That is why today, the word value has so many meanings and this protrudes to the average human being (Ortega Gasset, 1994). Several meanings of value were born, we define three of them. The first meaning defines the character for the normal and the usual use of values in language. This can be any object of any interest. The second meaning is an object of strictly theoretical discourse as a whole (ethical, esthetical, cultural, legal and religious). The third meaning gives us an overview of the standards, which we should follow and imitate. All those three meanings can be seen in all images today, set by the mass communication and information, who are both the creator and the building block of these values. Standard moral values, theoretical discussions about them and their standards can be found in the images produced by mass media. Moreover, those images allow for a huge spectrum of values from highest to lowest by reevaluating them.

It is important to note that the process of revaluation of values happens during the evolution of society and humans. Values change and some of them become immortal, like the value of human life. The process of searching, evaluating and reevaluating the values is very hard and contradictory from acknowledgement of life to searching for its completely new forms in the "boundaries" of life. This was clearly demonstrated by science, whose progress leads to the ability to "end" life (weapons of mass destruction, man-made disasters, etc.). Even the desire for comfort and well-being has its own dark story. Wealth, fame, comfort, prosperity and other values were not formed randomly. They were created and spread out by the professional ideologists of the consumption society. Humans became the "prisoners" of the new society built on consumption with a developed info structure of communication. That is why the need arises to form humans as a subject of society.

"Life", offered on the screen, changes the person's consciousness. It becomes fragmentary, torn, mosaic-like, sinking into the environment, where changes to value and perspective are the norm. This is allowed by technological means of communication, allowed humans to change interactively their environment (computer games, talking online, SMS voting). Consciousness becomes multidimensional. The technological part of this process is one of the cases of mediating interaction. Right after being born, humans react within the scope of the biological system "stimulus-response", where a lot of joint

configuration resides (delay, advance). Humans leave this system through intermediate elements, which dissolve nature intentionality. Intentionality of the biological entity on a natural object leads to a social orientation. Humans for nature are something completely new because humans are a social creature, which can do more than just merely exist, like constant interaction with their peers. Humans have intelligence, abstract thinking and language. The mind is social intentionality. “Language and mind are two of the biggest and complex systems. The humans possess complex psyche, the most important part of which is imagination. It is developed so thoroughly that the whole life moves in two dimensions, two “realities” – real and perceived. The perceived world mostly defines a human. But it’s very weak and malleable, it can be affected from outside so well that one would not even notice that he was affected. So, a human not only lives in the objectively real world but also in the artificially created world of culture. That means that all living beings affect the behaviour of others, with whom they exist in the ecological niche, using natural objects and programs that exist as instincts. But humans, in addition to that, also affect other humans and the culture. In the beginning, people lived amongst “mythological” creatures that were created with their imagination. Then social intentionality is being torn from its genesis through the “meeting” with coded meanings, like words and writing. Here, you don’t need as much imagination, as before. Adoption is required. Imagination moves into the books. Then, the mythological creatures move to the radio and then to theatre and movies and finally onto the TV and computer. Intentional structure of a human defines three planes of human imagination. Nature, society and image. It can be assumed that the image is created by virtual reality. But really, we consider that the virtual reality consists of images, which integrate the sensuous and rational view of reality. This is the result of mind, getting free from nature and society. “Impetuous” (active, seeking, experimenting) mind “revolted” against nature and then, against its own sociality, which it created itself in the first place. The mind as a manifestation of the individual turned against “social shackles”, which were taking away the freedom and will of the person. Society always prefers Logos. Virtual reality gave freedom to humans, which they always chased, returning back again and again. You can change everything – names (nicknames), gender, status, place and the time of life and even life itself can start over. Reality and anonymity in its ontology is the same. This co-existence is possible thanks to “smart” intermediaries in virtual reality. However, this is not reality, but show techniques and practices. Everything is manufactured here – life, image, etc. A subject is now an object and vice-versa. “Things” are becoming the main events of nature and society. This is, in essence, a theatre, where viewers are actively participating, where everybody plays, the future is the present, the present is the past and future at the same time. The world turns into the arena of never-ending, immortal changes. Images (simulacrum) include the means for representing humanity in the context of the culture. The existence in such form does not constitute stasis or the lack of changes, it is the reflection. Thus, the reality, being unnoticeable and unobservable continuity, represents certain moments of the discrete representation of its own being. In this reality, everything starts and ends with the information and the creation of the instantaneous event. The rising speed of modern times, technological advancements and all other linear structures create a turbulent shift and a circular return of the things, which is why nothing is irreversible. The retrospective curve of the historical space, which looks like physical and cosmological space, is one of the biggest discoveries of the millennium (Baudrillard, 1994). In virtual reality there is a lack of reality and, as a result, interest to the high antiquity, the history of the earth, nature, life and humans, as the representative of their species. This

is a game of reality. The reasons for such game Baudrillard saw in the virtualization of social life, in mediocrity, as a “peak of information”, which impacts the person. Following that logic, we consider that the recently formed “Gutenberg Galaxy” re-created the new type of sociality, which can be called virtual by its nature and multidimensional by the form of human existence.

The images of media reality have the power to visualize all the sphere of human life, turning them into a symbolic, ideological construct. The virtual image of the world, created with the help of mass communication, serves as the real world, which is included in the symbolic field of existence and cultural text. Transmitted and printed by mass media, this image influences the consciousness of the person and society. Symbols and meanings from the area of objective practices move to the virtual world. For many people, the channels of media represent the picture of existence. They represent the co-existence structure, rank them (events) according to the certain rules and interpret/reinterpret, comment and analyze. The new virtual discourse is being born. It performs several functions. First of all, it affects the mind – forming the dominant in these systems of moral values. The fight for people’s mind is connected to the fight with mass media. They are the ones who construct reality, give directions and the meaning of life and activities of a person. Nevertheless, the paradox is that reality is accepted by everybody, by consumers and by its overlords. Uniqueness and polysemy, variance and invariance of the aspects of reality are separated by society. Thus, the reality has the attributes of necessity and uniqueness, multi-levelness and validity, thanks to which, it becomes the main means to control the mind (McLuhan, 1962; Masuda, 1980; Eco, 1997). It forms the main locality, when the world becomes “global village”. In other words, “virtualization removes the distance between the neighbours and someone overseas because it destroys the presence of another in the Reality: neighbours and people from overseas are all the same in this ghostly presence on the monitor” (Žižek, 1997). The visual, sound and signal system lets its residence of this “electronic village” use all kinds of information. As a result of mass society, the industry of consciousness is being created. Thus, the virtuality becomes the cheap means to “reduce” the long life process into some sort of symbolic or graphic form manifestation.

7. Conclusion

Further development of technology can only be allowed if the person realizes the responsibilities. That means that outlook on it should be changed. This is only possible if a human becomes a Human. M. Heidegger pointed out, that technology can “suppress” humans only if they will it. If technology cages the humans, it becomes the means, not the goal.

At the same time, the humanization of technology requires the same humanization of a person, during which he will be understanding himself as a whole being, interacting with technology and, even, other forms of life, requiring the special type of interactions, not the humanitarian or technological relation with himself.

It appears that one of the most important branches of popular secondary humanization will be the revision of modern media. In addition, the word “modern” in our times means not only what exists, something current, socially relevant and progressive, but also as what many authors want to interpret it. Making the concept of modern relevant will let us reevaluate all the labels from the position of a human, engrained in this world.

In other words, it is required to limit the absolute domination of the mass media and return such values as “truth”, “authority of the professional”, “integrity”, “formal correctness” and “thoroughness”. Otherwise, the idea of a human is under a threat, which will be followed by fragmentation and simulation, which can lead to the triumph of artificial objects over a defeated human mind.

The authors share the Rosin’s (2005) view: “in technology, humans meet themselves. With their plans and ideas, but they are being represented in a foreign, technological reality” (p. 55). This means that today one should learn how to live in the society of communication, with losing the reality of your being. The concepts of objects, events and occurrences and not their representation should be put to the forefront. Despite the advancements and the supremacy of the digital code and probabilities, one should remember about the formal logic. Our thoughts move from subject to predicate, not the other way around. It is necessary to have a rational and critical view on modern mass communication and information, to remember that they are just a tool at hands of the humans. The tool that is created by them and having a hidden power that can enslave humans. This is why it is important to understand the results of the technological progress and “start the conversation” (Jenkins & Thonburn, 2003) with the new media to give humans the tools that will not enslave them, but develop them and give humans the chance to be the subject and goal of their activities.

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