

The Meaning of the Nonviolence Ethics in Modern Education under the Conditions of Digital Economy

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Abstract—The article considers the conceptual meaning of such terms as “nonviolence” and “digital economy”, the authors who have made a contribution into the development of nonviolence and digital economy are named here. Semelin’s 3 types of response to violence are studied here and they are interpreted within the context of modern digital education. The role of a dialogue in the development of nonviolence and peacefulness in modern learners due to the Lipman’s “community of researchers” conception is described.

Keywords—nonviolence, community of researchers, digital economy, violence, pedagogy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century, like a previous one, continues to be mostly a century of violence. The whole modern society considers it to be of such kind, no matter on which stage of the development the national, cultural, and ethnic communities are – digital (postindustrial) or traditional. The expectations of the philosophers, psychologists, pedagogues, ethicists, and politologists with humanistic, peaceful, and nonviolent views, that human race suffered enough from atrocity, rightlessness, and racism of the 20th century to enter a new century untainted and revitalized, were futile. Present time starts to reveal the macabre forms of social and ideological violence, which are found in the terrorism intensification, forcible change of mass consciousness, and thus human behaviour transformation by means of dissemination of false and unverified information in mass media, opinion leaders’ false statements, etc. (For instance the creators of the information content for Ukrainian mass media can manipulate people precisely because of the target audience’s uncritical thinking [1]). Therefore the issue of the nonviolence ethics, prevention and prophylaxis of any form of violence becomes actual. Pedagogy and education are one of the most important conditions for violence prophylaxis, and humanistic and nonviolence thinking formation, because the pedagogues and mentors are those persons who have a decisive influence on the children’s and teenagers’ thinking and behavior, laying the ideological fundament for their further life. Child consciousness and mindset are shaped intensively, and they may be equipped with veracious humanistic knowledge and skills, as well as be traumatised by destructive ideas and practices. The life of a present-day person, who lives in a digital socio-economic space, is awash with unchecked knowledge, and, thus, with the opportunities to change the vectors of thinking and behavior in unconstructive way.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The theoretical and methodological background to the research was formed by the articles of the academic specialists, whose works are dedicated to the study of the “nonviolence” and “digital economy” concepts, as well as the problems of education and digital economy in the applied and ideological sense. The research methods include: generalization, literature analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

“Nonviolence” is an ethical, culturological, and socio-philosophical “principle, according to which the limitations of morality coincide with the denial of violence” [2]. The concept of “nonviolence” is corresponding to German term “Gewaltlosigkeit”, and to French and English “nonviolence”, which is a rough translation of “ahimsā” Sanskrit concept, which means “avoiding harm to all the living beings on the physical, mental, emotional, and moral levels” [3].

In the 20th-21th centuries the problem of nonviolence was studied by a number of authors, who consider it as a socio-philosophical issue. Among them we can mention Apresyan R.A. [4][5], Gelderloos P. [6], Gorbunov S.S. [7], Gysseynov A.A. [2][8][9][10][11], Demidova S.A. [12], Zhbankin V.A. [13], Zimbali A.E. [14], Petritskiy V.A. [15], Prokofyev A.V. [16], Pryakhin N.G. [17], Troitskiy K.E. [18] and others in Russia; Semelin J. [19], Freser E., Hutchings K.[20] [21]; Hoeffler A. E. [23]; Paine L., Pereira G., Bernal Bermúdez L., Doz Costa J. [24] abroad. The study of the “nonviolence” concept within the context of psychological and pedagogical issues was conducted by Kozlova A.G. [25] [26] and others in Russia, and by Lipman M. [27]; Omoyibo K.U., Asekhauno A.A. [28]; Fitton L., Yu R., Fazel S. [29] and others abroad.

The term “electronic (digital, web-, internet) economy appeared in the end of the 20th century in the Negroponte’s work “Being Digital” [30] as a metaphor of moving from atoms to bits, i.e. the author claims the necessity to measure the number and characteristics of material objects such as goods, services, money, books, newspapers, people, etc. with the tools of electronic virtual space which volume lies out of three-dimensional space. Therefore “digitization” is the future of socio-economic life of humans. That is why the “digital economy” is an economy based on digital, network technologies, the content of which is consistent with the digital commerce and business. This type of economy then was studied as a field of education, personnel policy, and jurisprudence by following researchers in Russia: Agarmizyan I.R., Kruk E.A., Prokhorova V.B. [31];

Baskakova M.E., Soboleva I.V. [32]; Kondrasheva N.N. [33]; Ovchinnikov A.I., Astapova E.V., Alekseeva M.V., Veselaya T.V., Antsiferova N.A. [34]; Peshkova G.U., Samarina A.U. [35]; Teplykh M. S., Akhmetzyanova M. P., Bashirova T. A. [36] and others.

Nonviolence ethics as an ethical educational value may be regarded in the modern digital economy within the context of a method, which enhances the formation of the voracious, peaceful, and humanistic thinking and behavior. Nonviolence values let a human in a modern network world grow as a person and remain him or her, in spite of the intense impact of mass media. French social philosopher and social psychologist Jaques Semelin writes that “in the face of oppression, an individual selects one of three ways: either he or she fully takes the oppressor’s side, demonstrating the willingness to cooperate; or adapts to the system, turns to the salutiferous values and feels pseudo-safe, while not wishing to make the final choice; or finally raises his or her head and chooses a way of resistance to the oppressor believing that it will totally change their state of life”. [19, c. 76] Violence is a primitive reaction to the evil, though it is sounder than passivity. (Mahatma Gandhi told about exactly this interpretation of violence). But according to Semelin, the way of correct resistance is nonviolent, as it addresses the inner independent power of human dignity. This person understands that their way is difficult, but paradoxically it may lead themselves and others to the salvation. Digital economy supposes the accommodation of the educational and fostering space in the virtual reality. This fact facilitates the revealing the improved opportunities for a formation of personality, but it also has its drawbacks. Empirical investigations which are dedicated to the study of the digital technologies impact on the learners revealed following fact: the more the students watched TV, the more their frontal lobe cortex, which is responsible for the aggression formation and verbal communication decline, developed; and otherwise, the more the students read books, which stimulate compassion with the book characters or thinking, the more coherence of brain regions, which are responsible for language and intellectual functions performance, was observed. [37] That is why the teachers and parents would be absolutely wrong to agree with the fact that the learners find their entertainment in virtual reality only, use the network technologies for picking other people’s works or doing the assignments which demand individual intellectual attention without using the computer. Then, it would be wrong to adjust to the current social trend, when the computer technologies transplace child’s or adult’s rational and individual participation out of pedagogical space. Hence two mentioned above strategies of reaction to the absolute digital technologies domination in modern education can be regarded as evil. The only sound solution in such a situation will be reaction of resistance. On the one hand it is focused on the learners’ unwillingness to have their access to the virtual reality limited; on the other hand it aims to the parents’ broad tendency to agree with all their children’s desires. If this resistance is aggressive or violent, it may cause a learners’ negative response, and the problem will not be solved. But it is necessary to mention that aggressive reaction is much better than passivity or contemplation of the evil, as it means non-acceptance and struggle against the evil. The right reaction should take the learner’s modern needs in consideration. In this sense the particularly attentive attitude to the learner’s personality,

understanding their problems, capacities, interests and at the same time digital technologies appliance in pedagogy will take the most beneficial effect.

Besides, the nonviolence ethics may be used as a topic for lectures and practical classes to study the models of human behavior: passive, watching, or resisting actively, creative. Passive model means the human’s absolute trust in communicative virtual agencies, when they replace a human’s personality with a personality of a creator of informational content in mass media, do not leave the place for their individual opinion. Passive reaction may be caused on the one hand by the trust in public opinion or opinion of an authority, tradition, and on the other hand – by a personal unwillingness to study the stereotypes or social trends rationally. In both cases such behavior is a social immaturity. The active reaction to the virtual content in mass media and biased thinking will be intellectual and personal interpretation based on finding the sufficient and objective evidence and humanistic ethics, where virtue is a basic value. For example, if the evaluative information on a person, social group, social phenomenon (war in Donbass, revolution in Russia, economic situation in Russia, etc.) is represented in mass media, two peculiarities should be taken into consideration. The first peculiarity is that it is necessary to know that if the given information is false (evil manifesting), so this is because the evil which is contained in the message creator’s personality is surface, i.e. it has nothing to do with an existence of a content creator’s inner nature. In other words a person is evil and unjust because of the false interpretation of the outside world by their mind, and if they possessed objective knowledge they would be kind. Human’s natural and elemental ontology is kind. And that is why the right attitude to the human must be as if they are kind creatures by their inception. The second peculiarity is that it is necessary to understand the obligation of the rational attitude to the received information, i.e. this information must be minded around critically to find the evidence of its veracity or falseness.

Matthew Lipman used a term “community of researchers” [26], analyzing the opportunities of nonviolence ethics usage in education. “Community of researchers” is a term which is understood by the author as the expression of a non-official group of people searching for truth within the context of “Socratic dialogue”. This search combines both rationality and democracy. The studies in the form of such thinking are considered by Lipman being a difficult creative work, which involves the overcoming the communicative restraints and communicative incompetence: inflated or deflated self-esteem, selfishness, social stereotypes, faulty judgment, absence of verbal communicative flexibility, disrespect for others’ opinions, etc. This is connected with the fact that the digital news content of the modern postindustrial society demonstrates all the sides of violence, as this very issue is in great demand with the population. Violence is a high-demand product in the digital economy for the people without critical thinking.

The individuals are co-investigators and discuss the most relevant issues in the “community of researchers”. This is a conversation in the form of a dialogue – the variant of a collective intellectual search. Rational approach coordinates the knowledge with the help of analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction, protects the right knowledge from false

conclusions. Knowledge may be right only when it is valid. Hence the “community of researchers” is a method which is used to form a rational personality in a modern digital culture and gives an opportunity to distinguish the objective knowledge from the fake. Only nonviolence, which is expressed in morality and virtue, in beauty and loftiness, is true in digital economy, and violence is immoral, sordid, and sinister.

Cognitive activity which is appropriate to the work method of the “community of researchers” may include:

1. The discussion of the idea (violence/peace) – a lofty image which is to be analyzed;
2. Practical expression of the concept under study;
3. The discussion of the idea content, which is used in this concept realization;
4. The comprehension of the educational space, where the new values and ideas formation takes place.

Thuswise, the “community of researchers” is a theory of social organization designed to form the emotion of belonging and involvement in its participants in the space of the digital culture. We can observe the community members’ self-significance rise as a result of this practice. The general tendency of rational search ruins the violence, hostility, falseness, and delusiveness, which caused intuitivism, fanaticism, and selfishness.

Besides, the methods of Sahaja Yoga may be used to enhance the reproduction of the peace, kindness, and nonviolence image. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, the Sahaja Yoga founder, was an active participant of the Mahatma Gandhi’s movement for the usage of nonviolence in the political struggle and pedagogy. People who practice meditation according to principles of Sahaja Yoga are less apt to aggression, addiction to virtual space, bad habits, possess even and harmonious temper. [37][38][39]

IV. CONCLUSION

Consequently, it can be said that nonviolence ethics may hold the changeable social structure of modern digital culture in the constituent field. The human’s presence within the digital economy space makes the pedagogues form the fundamental humanistic principles in people. From our point of view this process in education may be based on the Semelin’s and Lipman’s researches. Due to our interpretation of the Semelin’s three reaction to the violence theory, the correct reaction to the digital space may be as following: with the attitude to the learner’s and pedagogue’s cognitive needs it should be moderate usage of digital technologies, as the personal space shouldn’t be completely filled with modern technologies, as well as it is impossible to entirely rule them out. From our point of view, the Lipman’s “community of researchers” theory may be applied as a method, which form intellectual nonviolent culture of human being in the space of digital educational technologies on the base of pedagogue’s and learner’s rational dialogue. Thus the unique character of our research is in the new comprehension of the nonviolence ethics usage in the digital economy. The manipulative effects of modern mass media and other tools of digital economy on people may be reduced with the usage of the nonviolence

ethics in education, where an individual is an active, goal-oriented, kindness-cultivating personality.

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