

To the Issue of Information Impacts on Humans in Modern Society

O.I. Zhukova

Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences
Kemerovo State University
Kemerovo, Russia
oizh@list.ru

V.D. Zhukov

Department of Philosophy and Cultural Studies
Kemerovo State Medical University
Kemerovo, Russia
oizh@list.ru

Abstract—The paper considers the role of information in society and its impact on human consciousness. The authors distinguish two opposite trends: tolerant-optimistic and critical ones. The first position expressing moderate optimism (J. Liotar, J. Derrida, P. Kozlowski) emphasizes that the value of information is what can be said and what conclusions can be drawn from it. Hence, information is a measure of choice which leads to a certain degree of human freedom. The human perceives himself as a Creator of his subjective individual space. The world in which humans exist is a set of random discourses. The critical approach (Z. Bauman, J. Baudrillard, P. Bourdieu, Yu. Habermas et al.) says that the reverse side of the boundless openness and diversity of the information field is the absence of elementary boundaries which causes permissiveness and violation of personal space, the absence of any solid foundation for the worldview of the modern human. Immeasurable flows of information generate the loss of a semantic basis, intellectual dissonance which does not allow humans to distinguish "genuine" from "genuine", "feuilleton culture" from "authentic culture".

Particular attention is paid to the problem of communication as one of the main parameters of the information society. It is emphasized that this problem has its own history. It appeared in the end of the 19th century and became one of the key problems of philosophy, psychology, literature and other areas of humanitarian knowledge.

The authors concluded that the key problem of the modern information society is the search for a new way of personal and social interaction.

Keywords—*information society; person; consciousness; communication; intellectual dissonance; values; criticism; personal existence*

I. INTRODUCTION

In humanities, the modern society has different characteristics and names: post-industrial, over-industrial, electronic, programmable, risk society, civilization of the third wave, postmodern society. Of course, these immanent characteristics objectively reflect the modern society. However, the most accurate description for the modern society is information society. Information in its various forms (from primitive to complex – intellectual ones) permeates all the structures of the social world. In this context, society appears as a factory of meanings (Z. Bauman) [1.], and these meanings are generated by information impacts.

II. ROLE OF INFORMATION IN SOCIETY

The role of information in society and its impact on human consciousness is interpreted differently by philosophers. In this context, we can distinguish two opposite trends: tolerant-optimistic and critical ones. The first position expressing moderate optimism (J. Liotar, J. Derrida, P. Kozlowski) [2] emphasizes that the value of information is what can be said and

what conclusions can be drawn by a person. Hence, information is presented as a measure of choice which leads to a certain degree of human freedom. The human perceives himself as a Creator of his individual space. The world in which the human exists is a set of random discourses. Therefore, it is unlikely that people will perceive everything happening in their lives with stoicism and humility. Another advantage of the information society is realization of the random and mythological nature of key universalist values making the human take personal responsibility for social realities. This makes the human more critical, attentive, objective to social processes.

K. Jaspers [3], who analyzed the current socio-political situation which caused totalitarianism, emphasized an uncritical attitude to progress expressed in the conviction of people in correctness, logic of information presented as self-evident and objective truth. This ideology was based on recognition of the inevitability of upward movement and led to a removal from responsibility for social changes.

Proponents of this approach believe that human recognition of the relativity and historical variability of various value parameters, largely determined by information influences, make a human more responsible for his social existence, make him aware of his personal, social active participation as logical and necessary.

Rather critical views on information impacts on the personality are expressed by modern thinkers: Z. Bauman, J. Baudrillard, P. Bourdieu, J. Habermas [4]. They note that the flipside of boundless openness and diversity of the information field is the absence of elementary boundaries which leads to permissiveness and violation of personal space, the lack of any solid foundation for the worldview of a human. Recognition of information reality as a branched, multi-dimensional, infinite causes confusion. Information flows generate the loss of a semantic basis, intellectual dissonance which does not allow a human to distinguish "genuine" from "genuine", "feuilleton culture" from "authentic culture".

The influence of information on personality is studied by many theorists. Among these thinkers is E. Fromm who ("Escape from freedom", "Healthy society", "Whether to be", etc.) showed the dependence of a person on information systems of society and "illusions of individuality" which are presented to him as personal but in fact are deterministic social preferences.

Fromm justifies the following idea: in fact, any sphere of society (economic, political, educational, etc.) is permeated with information impacts. For example, advertising methods are basically irrational, have nothing to do with the true essence of objects, "kill a critical ability of the buyer, like opium or

direct hypnosis ... in fact; the methods euthanizing critical thinking are much more dangerous for our democracy than opening attacks on it; as for the impact on a human, they are much more immoral than illegal literature" [5. p. 114]

These ideas refer to economic and political areas. Information impacts used in the political area increase the feeling of insignificance of the voter. Repetition of slogans and accentuation of unimportant factors affect critical abilities. "A clear and rational approach to thinking is an exception rather than a rule in political propaganda even in democratic countries where voters cannot help but feel tiny and meaningless" [5. p. 115]

The critical assessment of the information impact on a person is typical of the work "Morality of the XXI century" by D. Sommer [6.] The society is seen as a source of misinformation turning the meaning of objective understanding of reality. The author shows that the society in which information is replaced by disinformation turns people into primitive limited individuals rather than cultural people. Human thinking becomes more and more confused and clouded instead of being enlightened. The brain receives messages which reinforce the status of destructiveness and do not allow humans objectively evaluate objects. Various information structures are fighting for people's consciousness, and a person has to belong to a particular product, ideology, political party, rather than to himself.

The result of this impact is ambivalent: on the one hand, there is skepticism and cynicism, on the other hand, there is naive trust in everything that is said. This combination of cynicism and naivety is very typical of a modern human. It causes a fear of own thinking, responsible independent decisions and a habit of being led by someone.

Many thinkers of the past paid attention to this feature of the modern society. S. Kierkegaard [7] described an individual who lost himself, experienced painful doubts, felt alone. Nihilism absorbed the European consciousness and became a standard of human behavior [8]. The topic of powerlessness is reflected in works by Kafka.

III. SUBJECT IN CLASSICAL LITERATURE

For human consciousness who receives information from all sides, everything becomes problematic and indifferent. Information overwhelms thinking, creates a fundamental threat to human existence. In this context, a person had to develop a habit to "work" with incoming information while maintaining its psychosomatic integrity, without falling into spiritual disorientation. This required the ability to alternate the main and secondary, change the significance of messages which initially require maximum concentration, but lose their relevance and cease to be the object of initial interest. The reasons for this unbridled attraction to information are considered by P. Sloterdijk [9], Umberto Eco [10], etc. We agree that since its beginning, the civilization has been captured by news. The age of Enlightenment turned the society into a structure which was completely dependent on news and information. This was done with the help of two complementary phenomena – the encyclopedia and the newspaper satisfying curiosity of people who wanted to know more. In the process of accumulation of

multi-order knowledge which lasted for more than one century, the civilization was directed by the vector of information flows which turns into an unstoppable current which carries a human rather than manages him.

One of the important parameters characterizing the information society is communication. Total invasion of communication into human life (television, Internet) deprives humans of their individual qualities. It is a loss of human ability to embody his personal qualities [11]. Communication means destroy a mystery, a depth of personal lives, everything becomes open causing full transparency of actors, making them "incorporeal". All this deprives social life of personal expression. A person loses his expressive ability, unique individuality and becomes only a transmitter of continuous information flows. All this leads to vulgarization, simplification of social life in which there is no longer a mystery of communication.

This problem is not new for the modern society. It has long historical socio-cultural roots. For more than a century, it has varied in its forms of being and vision. Therefore, in order to understand its originality, it is necessary to turn to the genesis of the problem, because its current relevance is directly related to its global socio-cultural attitudes.

We think that the problem of social communication in Russia, in Europe and in international relations has already taken shape by the middle of the twentieth century. It is in the center of attention of various representatives of spiritual culture. It is discussed by philosophers (for example, by L. Shestov [12]. In his "philosophy of tragedy", he said "about the disintegration of the connection of times in psychology and philosophy (K. Jaspers and his idea of communication), literature (Kafka, Borgen), cinema (Fellini). The list of variations is long. The very polyphonic nature of the areas dealing with communication problems speaks for itself. It is no longer important in which component of spiritual culture this takes place. It is important in which component of the spiritual culture communication problems exist. They exist everywhere, in all cells of social and cultural lives of humans, from interpersonal relations to global interstate ones.

In the novel "the Idiot" [13], M. Dostoevsky tried to express the specifics of ethical and cultural ties of human society, revealing the basic meaning of human existence through the desire to assert oneself at the expense of others. It is necessary to assert oneself in any way: immoral behavior (Totsky, etc.), committing murder (Parthen Rogozhin). This behavior breaks "the link of times" and human communication based on natural and moral ties. Separate egoistic individuals see the meaning of life in their personal existence, while other people are only a means to achieve their goals. It is the society where the human norm (Prince Myshkin) is represented by madness, pathology, and real practical pathology – spiritual norm. In fact, in the end of the 19th century, the Russian writer revealed a model of society with broken, mutilated human communication.

Soon after the publication of the novel "Idiot" both individuals and whole nations and states began to assert themselves at the expense of others, dominate at the expense of other peoples and states (for example, Germany). In this regard, current state egoism is generally perceived as something a priori

inherent in any modern society: modern political communication has actually turned into a game of state, selfish interests (USA today).

IV. CONCLUSION

In this context, the current philosophical construct is not entirely new. But it focuses on complex choices of intellectual and moral positions of the individual who lives under polyphony of current information [14]. It is quite possible to ask whether the information society reinforces or opposes negative communication trends? The ontological specificity of communication in the information society invariably generates antinomic contradictions. On the one hand, communication covers all spheres of human practice in the world of society, the practice itself is global communication establishing the space of culture and social relations. It is a person who masters the world. Thanks to him, the world of reality turns into the world of culture. Free access to a huge amount of information expands his intellectual abilities, knowledge, making it easier to obtain required epistemological information. On the other hand, traditional ties, personal relationships are destroyed, while there is an increase in virtual contacts, formal communication through intrapersonal communication which impersonalize a human who loses his unique identity, becoming a mosaic, file individual. Accordingly, the problem of the information society is the search for a new way of personal and social interaction. Modern information society is still developing, so the process of searching for new meanings and new ideal constructions is developing as well.

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