The Process of Knowledge and Transformation of Consciousness in the Era of the Internet

Mejevnikova Olga P.

Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy and National Idea Tashkent State Technical University, Uzbekistan

olgamejevnikova@mail.ru

---***---

Annotation: The aim of the research is to reveal the peculiarities of the work of consciousness under the influence of information and communication technologies. The article describes the process of transformation of consciousness in virtual reality in the process of cognitive activity. The author tried to present the work of thinking in the context of the virtualization of modern society. Scientific novelty lies in the interdisciplinary consideration of the issue of virtualization of thinking with the involvement of the works of modern philosophers, sociologists, psychologists.

Key words: virtual reality, consciousness, cognition, information and communication technologies, polyphonicity, hypertext, clip thinking, Internet.

INTRODUCTION

Most modern philosophers recognize that the world around us exists by itself and is an objective reality. It exists independently of our will and consciousness. The independence of the existence of things from our will and consciousness implies the continuation of the existence of the surrounding world without us. This reality of the world is the essence of the everyday reality in which we exist. In other words, this is everything that surrounds us in the real world, which is perceived by our senses and reflected by our consciousness. But the objective reality of the world can be completely unknown, since each person lives in his own world, created on the basis of his own worldview, worldview and personal experience. This thought reflects the concept of subjective idealism.

The concept of virtual reality dates back to ancient philosophy. So, Plato's idealism was that the reality around us is just an illusion, inaccessible to knowledge. Aristotle's metaphysical reasoning proves this to a certain extent. Aristotle, who studied the beginnings and causes of all that exists, expressed the opinion that matter in itself is not cognizable: on the one hand, it is perceived by the senses, and on the other hand, it is comprehended by the mind. In his search for truth, Aristotle points out the deceitfulness of sensory perception and notes the following: "... even to each individual person, when he perceives with his senses, the same thing does not always seem the same. So, which of these ideas are true, which are false - it is not clear, because some are no more true than others" [1, 106]. Discussing the truth, Aristotle points out that what is perceived by the senses is not identical with the imagined images that are formed in our brain. "... the perception of what it is characteristic of a particular feeling to perceive is, of course, not deceptive, but the idea is not the same as perception" [1, 107]. Therefore, the surrounding world perceived by us can be partially changed by our brain, our consciousness, and then we can say that the objective reality in our brain creates virtual images. These virtual images and representations are superimposed on everyday reality, embedded in our behavior and mental activity.

Scottish philosopher D. Hume argued that there is a significant difference between real perception and the state when a person evokes this sensation in his memory or anticipates it in his imagination. Speaking about imagination, he writes: "There is nothing freer than human imagination; even if it cannot go beyond the initial stock of ideas delivered by internal and external feelings, but it has the ability to infinitely mix, unite, separate

from each other and share these ideas with all the diversity that fantasy and fiction are capable of " [2, 88]. Further, Hume points out that the imagination controls our ideas, that it can mix and diversify them, invent fictitious objects with all the details, or put them before our eyes in the form in which they could exist in reality. Thus, the sensation of virtual reality depends on the development of a person's imagination. And a person immersed in the virtual world forgets about his biological and social needs, he does not need anyone, and he considers the virtual world created in his imagination to be ideal.

The position of dialectical materialism is different, according to which the soul is not recognized, but objective real being is recognized, which exists independently of consciousness, sensation and experience. Moreover, consciousness is a reflection of being, and matter is what, acting on the senses, produces sensation. Thus, matter, from the point of view of dialectical materialism, is an objective reality, given to us only in sensation. Many representatives of modern philosophy also correlate the concepts of philosophical materialism (being, matter, consciousness, development, matter) with such concepts of the information society as objective, subjective and virtual reality. They conclude that the theory of matter, developed in dialectical materialism, is applicable to further development in the information society [3, 173].

Thus, today, in the era of development of the information society, as an alternative to the existence of objective (physical) reality, an artificially created virtual space is being formed, which acquires an ontological status, since in the virtual world a person exists in the form of images and signs [4, 38], and the development of a new social reality - a virtual network society, that is, there is a gradual movement of individual and social consciousness into the "digital no sphere" [5, 69].

MAIN BODY

We are faced with the task of tracing how consciousness is transformed in virtual reality and how the process of cognition takes place.

Humanity has isolated its existence from the factors of reality, and the Internet became one of the most important tools for this separation. At the turn of the XX-XXI centuries, thanks to the Internet, a new type of consciousness appeared - virtual consciousness.

The Internet in the form of a global information space, which includes many network communities, the actors of which are virtual personalities, inevitably forms a new type of communication, a new type of language and a new type of thinking, which different researchers call either network thinking or virtual thinking [6, 65]. A new language also emerged - the language of Internet communication. It is a language of symbols, signs, communication formulas, emoticons, specific designations, abbreviations and other virtual slang. In the traditional sense, thinking is closely related to language. It is quite reasonable to formulate the thesis that the change in language as the material existence of thinking could not but transform human thinking itself.

With the help of computer technologies, a new level of symbolic existence is created, into which a person plunges in the process of semiotic contact with a machine interface. This becomes possible due to a wide variety of devices and mechanisms for input and output of information. Semiotic effects arising from the use of these means actively affect the work of our consciousness, on the one hand, developing the ever-growing need for presence in virtual space, on the other, they help to build such projections of being inside the field of technological space that claim to be the properties of true reality ... On this basis, it is possible to assign a kind of ontological status to these projections. The next level of semiotic organization is network technologies and, in particular, the Internet. The global network is presented both as a completely material carrier of information, as well as an extensive collection of signs and symbols that form the basis of the hypertextual content of the Internet. Everything that is inside the network consists of code symbols, text is located above the code. Texts can form a field of meanings, contain interactive components, drawings, photographs. Interactive components can contain multimedia inserts,

animation. In a broad semiotic sense, texts within the global network have a branching structure. Thus, the entire Internet is nothing more than a new universal form of the existence of texts, in the most varied modifications and interpretations.

Thus, virtual thinking is not only textual, but also hyper textual. Hypertextuality is a feature of electronic texts, which are a form of information exchange in the global information space. The essence of hypertext is that, first of all, it contains a system of links to one's own and other people's texts. This means that the medium of information - hypertext - is not a "closed" text, but a fundamentally "open" text, which often leads to the joining of disparate parts in the flow of information. Hyperlinks provide the ability to structure information in chunks that are related and, at the same time, relatively independent of each other. Hypertext is an extremely vague yet widely used concept. Hypertext refers to the Internet, an encyclopedia, a reference book, a book with content and a subject index, as well as any text in which any links (indications) to other fragments are found. Hypertext can be considered as a means of communication in a society focused on multiple, simultaneous flows of information that cannot be perceived and assimilated by the subject [7, 5]. The assimilation of the entire amount of knowledge becomes impossible; moreover, the rigid structuring of such knowledge becomes an elusive task. Knowledge is organized into hypertext, into a network of relatively free messages that can be combined and disintegrated in the process of production and consumption of knowledge. Under these conditions, the subject needs auxiliary means, which is why at present hypertext as a method of communication and organization of knowledge includes knowledge itself (text), a computer and software. In this extremely general sense, one can agree with S.I. Orekhov, who asserts that "in general, culture, human knowledge ... can be represented by a single gigantic hypertext" [8, 153] and "virtual reality, which is reproduced using the Internet, is pan textual" [8, 143]. In the process of work, the user in one way or another travels through the links associated with a certain meaning, idea. U. Eco points out the same essential characteristic: "Hypertext is a multidimensional network in which each point or node independently and without the slightest difficulty is linked to any point or node of the text" [9, 276]. For our research, it is important that the text is built from other texts in the process of constantly establishing new connections, and such connections allow the communicative act to be carried out in directions determined by a person's conscious choice.

With prolonged work, it may increase semantic redundancy in the form of duplication of texts and in their quantitative growth. At the same time, meanings can be blurred, mixed, fade into the background, become "information noise", be born and die. M.Yu. Openkov gives a narrower definition of hypertext: "Hypertext is a nonlinear network form of organizing textual material, where the text is divided into fragments with transitions and connections explicitly indicated for them. The transition from one fragment to several others is allowed. The textual material loses its isolation, becomes fundamentally open, new text fragments can be inserted into it (indicating connections for them with the existing ones) without destroying the structure. Hypertext is a way of presenting precisely unstructured, freely growing knowledge" [10, 218].

Hypertextuality is characterized as extreme artificiality, the absence of corporeality. Virtual reality itself, being the result of human activity and consciousness, significantly affects the process of its formation, in a new way sets the accents in its components, leading to significant changes and deformations. Under the influence of virtual reality, structural shifts occur within the framework of consciousness.

Networked thinking is closely related to such a characteristic of the consciousness of a virtual personality as polyphony. Polyphony is a new phenomenon of the consciousness of a virtual personality, which differs from the monologue of the text and the dialogic nature of "live" discussions. Polyphony is associated with the multiplicity of interpretations of information content and with the interactivity of the communicative process in the information space. Another basis for polyphonicity is the distribution of the consciousness of a virtual personality in the information space, which was mentioned in the previous paragraph. The virtual personality, thanks to

anonymity, has the ability to simultaneously occupy different virtual spatial and personal positions, i.e. can simultaneously participate in different forums, sometimes defending different, including opposite, theses. The extreme expression of this effect of the distribution of the consciousness of a virtual personality is the "splitting" of the virtual personality, the "splitting" of its consciousness and thinking.

The characteristic features of virtual thinking should also include its "message" nature, mosaics and clip nature. The most widespread means of transmitting information through an information channel is a communication message. This is a fragmentary situational process of information interaction; accordingly, the processing of this information, the essence of virtual thinking is also to some extent fragmentary, situational, or "message".

The mosaic picture of the world is generally the dominant trend in the media today. And the Internet is the most mass media out there. In this clip-like mosaic picture, there is chaos of perceptions, confusion of meanings, illusions of representations, unbiased delusions, deliberate disinformation and manipulation. Clip thinking is the thinking of the consumer, the user of dosed information that is mosaic ally prepared, molecularly isolated and presented in an accessible simple form [11, 60]. This is a simplified thinking that does not allow a person to be holistic, deep, and personal. This thinking is developed in the form of the skill of quickly and constantly browsing sites. It leads to the fact that the human brain loses the ability to systematically and deeply think.

Clip thinking is a term that originated in Russia thanks to the professor of philosophy F. Girenok in the late 1990s. This term was part of the concept of "clip culture", which appeared with the development of mass culture. The word "clip" is primarily associated with music videos. They often have a meaningless plot that does not even closely match the lyrics of the song. The word "clip" in translation from English means any piece of text, an excerpt from a film or a clipping from a newspaper or magazine. The clips do not carry any semantic load, they are simply composed of several interconnected images. By 2010, the phenomenon of clip thinking gained such momentum that it was seriously studied. So, K.G. Frumkin was able to identify five main reasons [12] due to which people began to think in fits and starts:

1. The growth of the pace of life, and with it - the volume of information. For many, it is problematic to single out the main thing, to engage in the selection and analysis of information.

2. The need for continuous updating of information. This increased its volume and the rate at which topical news emerged.

3. Variety of information.

4. The need to save time.

5. The growth of dialogue among different strata of society.

The term "clip thinking" refers to the habit of perceiving information using a short, vivid, very expressive image. Virtual consciousness perceives information in a collage - "clip" form, cut off from the context of sociocultural reality. There are many reasons for this, one of which was pointed out by the American futurist E. Toffler - a significant increase in the amount of information: "... At the personal level, we are besieged and they blind us with contradictory and not related to us fragments of the figurative series, which knock the ground from under the feet of our old ideas, bombard us with torn, meaningless "clips", instant shots" [13, 234]. That is why the Internet is becoming not so much a way to get the information you need, but rather a way to filter unnecessary information. The hyperlink turns out to be not just a path, but a limited tunnel through which the user does not encounter unnecessary images. True, a person loses the ability to deeply assimilate information - this ability simply turns out to be unclaimed. Memory, as a mechanism of protection and survival, is losing its meaning and is being replaced by "electronic" - round-the-clock network connectivity gives access to any knowledge at any time. Does this make

us more vulnerable in a technogenic civilization? This question cannot be answered unequivocally. However, there is a need to develop such ability as the logic of information retrieval.

Clip thinking is characterized by superficiality, imagery, and intuition. In extreme situations requiring a high speed of processing a large array of scattered information and prompt decision-making, clip thinking provides effective behavior in terms of adaptation and survival [14]. However, a person ceases to perceive the picture of the world as integral, indivisible. With the advent of clip thinking, we more and more often see disparate objects, try to connect them into a single puzzle, but often fail. The flickering of new images does not allow you to concentrate, to start analyzing. The picture escapes from memory; another one immediately takes its place. However, the advantages of clip thinking can be highlighted:

✓ speed of reaction;

✓ the ability to solve several problems at the same time;

✓ protecting the brain from information overload;

✓ Desire to cover as much information as possible.

✓ In addition to the advantages, this type of thinking also has a number of disadvantages:

✓ reduced ability to analyze information;

✓ reduced ability to concentrate;

✓ reduced the effectiveness of training and assimilation of knowledge;

✓ increased susceptibility to someone else's influence and manipulation;

✓ the feeling of empathy is reduced;

✓ Leads to simplification in problem solving and decision making [15, 7].

From all of the above, it becomes clear that the phenomenon of clip thinking has more disadvantages than advantages. Such a profile of thinking leads to the fact that the human brain, to a certain extent, loses its ability for systemic and in-depth thinking and cognition. By the way, physiologists emphasize that with constant work on the Internet, those areas of the brain are mainly involved that are responsible for short-term memory, making quick decisions and effective operational actions, while the strategic resources of the human brain are in a depressed state and are not in demand, and hence, they degrade.

CONCLUSION

Summing up, it should be noted that a person created a virtual space as a tool, but having overcome the functions of a "means", it became an "environment" - a platform for life and social and cultural activity. And, if earlier a person had to "work" with the virtual space, then, having gone through the path of adaptation, he gradually begins to feel more and freer and at ease in it - a person and a computer speak the same language today and practically do not need intermediaries. The adaptation mechanism was the "virtualization of consciousness", which entailed some significant changes in the very essence of human thinking.

REFERENCES

1. Aristotle (2019). Metafizika [Metaphysics]. M.: Izdatel'stvo AST [In Russian].

2. Hume, D (2017). O chelovecheskoy prirode [On human nature]. SPb.: Azbuka, Azbuka-Attikus. [In Russian].

3. Orlov, SV (2017). Materializm, dialektika i informatsionnaya paradigma filosofskogo myshleniya [Materialism, dialectics and information paradigm of philosophical thinking]. Novyye idei v filosofii. No 4 (25) [In Russian].

4. Solovieva, LN (2016). Chelovek v global'nom virtual'nom prostranstve: filosofskoye izmereniye [Man in the global virtual space: philosophical dimension]. Obshchestvo: filosofiya, istoriya, kul'tura. No. 2 [In Russian].

5. Devterov, IV (2015). Chelovek i mashina: neyrofilosofiya i novyye antinomii [Man and machine: neurophilosophy and new antinomies]. Znaniye. No. 11-1. [In Russian].

6. Kurbatov, VI (2013). Simvolicheskoye virtual'noye setevoye myshleniye: novaya epokha, i epokha novostey [Symbolic virtual networked thinking: a new era, or the era of news]. Gumanitariy yuga Rossii. No. 2. [In Russian].

7. Cooper, IR (2000). Gipertekst kak sposob kommunikatsii [Hypertext as a way of communication]. M.: Institut sotsiologii RAN [In Russian].

8. Orekhov, SI (2002). Поиск виртуальной реальности [Search for virtual reality] monograph. Omsk: Publishing house OmGPU [In Russian].

9. Eco, U. (2000). Ot Interneta k Gutenbergu [From the Internet to Gutenberg]. Obshchestvo i kniga: ot Gutenberga do Interneta. M.: Traditsiya [In Russian].

10. Openkov, MYu (1995). Razvitiye vizual'nogo myshleniya i komp'yuternaya revolyutsiya [The development of visual thinking and the computer revolution]. Kognitivnaya evolyutsiya i tvorchestvo. Moskva [In Russian].

11. Krupennikov, LSh. & Kurbatov, VI (2014). Virtual'naya lichnost': Net-myshleniye, setevoy psikhotip i Internet-fobii [Virtual personality: Net thinking, network psychotype and Internet phobias]. Inzhenernyy vestnik Dona. No. 3 [In Russian].

12. Fadeev, A. (2020). Klipovoye myshleniye: zlo ili blago? [Clip thinking: evil or good?] Retrieved from: https://fadeev.su/myshlenie/klipovoe-myshlenie.html posiv 28.11.2021 [In Russian].

13. Toffler, E. (1999). Tret'ya volna [The third wave]. M.: OOO «Firma «Izdatel'stvo ACT» [In Russian].

14. Klipovoye myshleniye, kak faktor razvitiya poznavatel'nykh tekhnologiy [Clip thinking as a factor in the development of cognitive technologies]. Retrieved from: https://push-zverosoh.edumsko.ru/activity/methodics/post/293454 posiv 02.12.2021. [In Russian].

15. Kutuzova, NV (2018). «Klipovoye myshleniye» kak massovoye poverkhnostnoye vospriyatiye informatsii ["Clip thinking" as a mass superficial perception of information]. Innovatsionnyye pedagogicheskiye tekhnologii. Kazan': Molodoy uchenyy [In Russian].