D. Y. Barkov

Kharkov National University of Radio Electronics
Graduate student of the philosophy department

THE PROBLEM OF ALIENATION IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNET TECHNOLOGIES DEVELOPMENT

The article considers the role and degree of network technologies influence on the alienation mechanism. Today network technology radically transforms the cultural space of society. At the same time, in spite of the significant opportunities that are opening before the person in the field of communication and obtaining information, staying on the Internet is increasingly accompanied by alienation. Consideration of alienation theories of K. Jaspers and G. Marcuse, in which the influence of technology and technological progress on the alienation phenomenon in society is analyzed, allow not only to identify the main prerequisites for alienation in the process of using network communication tools, but also to uncover the impact on the Network users of the unique technology of nowadays - search engine.

Keywords: alienation, network technologies, Internet, electronic communication.

Д.Ю. Барков

ПРОБЛЕМА ОТЧУЖДЕНИЯ В КОНТЕКСТЕ РАЗВИТИЯ ИНТЕРНЕТ-ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ

В статье рассматривается роль и степень влияния сетевых технологий на механизм отчуждения. Сегодня сетевые технологии радикально трансформирует культурное пространство общества. При этом, не смотря на значительные возможности, открывающиеся перед человеком в области коммуникации и получения информации, пребывание в Сети все чаще сопровождается отчуждением. Рассмотрение теорий отчуждения К. Ясперса и Г. Маркузе, в которых анализируется влияние техники и технического прогресса на феномен отчуждения в обществе, позволяют не только выявить основные предпосылки отчуждения в процессе использования сетевых средств коммуникации,

но и раскрыть влияние на пользователей Сети уникальной технологии современности – поисковой машины.

Ключевые слова: отчуждение, сетевые технологии, Интернет, электронная коммуникация.

Д.Ю. Барков

ПРОБЛЕМА ВІДЧУЖЕННЯ В КОНТЕКСТІ РОЗВИТКУ ІНТЕРНЕТ-ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ

У статті розглядається роль і ступінь впливу мережевих технологій на механізм відчуження. Сьогодні мережеві технології радикально трансформує культурний простір суспільства. При цьому, не дивлячись на значні можливості, що відкриваються перед людиною в області комунікації і отримання інформації, перебування в Мережі все частіше супроводжується відчуженням. Розгляд теорій відчуження К. Ясперса і Г. Маркузе, в яких аналізується вплив техніки і технічного прогресу на феномен відчуження в суспільстві, дозволяють не тільки виявити основні передумови відчуження в процесі використання мережевих засобів комунікації, а й розкрити вплив на користувачів Мережі унікальної технології сучасності - пошукової машини.

Ключові слова: відчуження, мережеві технології, Інтернет, електронна комунікація.

The socio-philosophical understanding of the alienation problem is inseparably linked to the identification of the degree and role of the Internet technologies influence on modern society. Considering the significant transformations that society has undergone in recent decades, researchers have raised the issue of the need to identify and analyze new forms of alienation. Despite the high rates of the network technology and the network culture development generated by it, at the moment the researchers described in sufficient detail such phenomena as virtual and informational alienation, interpersonal alienation due to the weakening of social ties against the background of the transfer of a significant layer of cultural interaction to the Network and many other phenomena that are somehow connected with the influence of network technologies on the person's alienation problem.

However, in our opinion, the question of technology influence on the person's alienation in the context of the electronic communication use is not sufficiently investigated. Meanwhile, among philosophers studying the alienation problem the question of the role of technology and the degree of its influence on society was developed in sufficient detail both within the framework of Marxist and existential philosophy. In particular, researchers of the alienation problem noted that technology increasingly takes the form of a hostile force opposing the individual that enslaves and empties it.

Thus, K. Marx in his «Capital» noted: «Instruments of labour not only supply a standard of the degree of development to which human labour has attained, but they are also indicators of the social conditions under which that labour is carried on» [4, p. 128]. Although Marx did not directly treat technology as a cause of alienation, we encounter at his follower G. Marcuse's works a sharp criticism of technological fetishism that « which makes scientific and technical progress into an instrument of domination » [3, p. 18]. In his works G. Marcuse noted the specific particularity that alienation acquires in the industrial society. It becomes less obvious, almost invisible and even logically justified. The same implicit seems to be the fact of subordination of the person to the machine, and if to be more precise, the fact of turning a person into an appendage of machine, bringing it down to the instrument or thing. The role of a person in conditions of increasing rationalization, dictated by technological progress, is reduced to performing monotonous, routine operations. This trend is characteristic not only and not so much for the way of production as for the culture as a whole. Marcuse believed that the technological society of the 20th century destroys the human individuality, forming a machine-like one-dimensional person for whom production, consumption and cultural life become externally conditioned activities. A similar point of view, but within the

framework of the existential approach, is expressed by K. Jaspers. He notes: «Technology radically changed the daily life of a person in its environment, forcibly moved the labor process and society into a different sphere, into the sphere of mass production, turned all the existence into the action of a certain technical mechanism, the entire planet into a single factory. Thus, a complete separation of man from his soil has occurred - and is still happening to this day. A person becomes a resident of the land without a homeland, loses the consistency of tradition» [5]. Jaspers believed that despite the increased human capabilities in the conquest and transformation of nature, the new technical nature created by man for himself more and more devastates his own being. It takes the form of a mass factory, which produces not only technical but also spiritual products of culture. At the same time, a person loses the ability not only to dispose of his being but simply to discover it outside the relationships built within the technological culture. Jaspers emphasizes the fact that human life is mechanical in nature, covering the entire sphere of being. In this connection the author speaks of a new form of alienation - *alienation in automaticity,* which Jaspers understands as immersion into a meaningless existence, an empty functioning as a part of the mechanism.

The question of technology is considered by M. Heidegger in a completely different way. Considering that «the essence of technology is not something technical», the author turns the technology problem into an ontological plane. For Heidegger, the main purpose of technology is helping a person to cognize the surrounding life, to uncover the laws of nature, to bring man closer to the truth. In this connection, the technique for Heidegger is not something negative: «Technology is not demonic; but its essence is mysterious» [2, p. 110]. The danger is only an «instrumental» use of technology as *a tool* for endless reproduction of things, and not *a way* of knowing existence.

When philosophers of the 20-21 centuries talked about «subordinating the person to the machine», of course, this was a metaphor designed to reflect the substitution of priorities, when the means and the purpose of the activity change places. However, such a statement is not so metaphorical at the present stage of society development. Over the last century the role of technology in the daily life of man has increased many times. Today's global society exists and functions thanks to the turnover of a huge array of information that is accumulated and processed through network communication technologies. The network has not only penetrated the social, economic and political spheres of a person's life, but has formed its own culture of providing and exchanging information between users. The consideration of these two processes, that is, the presentation and exchange of information, will allow us to identify the nature of the network technology impact on a person.

As it's known, the Internet is a set of interconnected cells, functioning on the basis of a horizontal communication model, within which the possibilities for posting and receiving information are equal for all the network users. However, despite the fact that the network is filled with people, it is the machine that processes the incoming information to the network. Actually, there are two main tasks before the search engine: 1) filtering incoming information; 2) ordering it. Doing its function, the search engine determines the value of certain information according to a number of criteria, raising and lowering the rating in the issuance of various resources with similar information. Thus, the cultural significance of the machine became completely different and went far beyond the production process, because the machine, in fact, started to dispose of one of the main socio-economic resources of modern society – information. Giving the machine the role of the information filter, we witnessed the beginning of a full-fledged confrontation between man and machine, which continues to this day.

This statement, of course, can be objected to by the fact that the principles of the search engine are developed by people. What kind of opposition can be there if the developers fully control the workflow and the machine principles? The essence of this confrontation was identified by Jaspers: «Inventors and organizers engaged in the creation of new production

units become a rare exception: they are still continuing to improve the machine. On the contrary, more and more people are forced to turn into the parts of the machine» [5]. That is, despite the fact that the principles of the machine are laid in it by the developers, most of the Network users are confronted with the machine as some kind of objective force, for the work of which they need to adjust. A vivid example of such confrontation is the practice of «optimizing» information for the search engine requirements. Users engaged in placing information on the network defined a simple law: the most valuable information on the Internet is one that the search engine found most relevant. The social, aesthetic, and no other cultural value of information is no longer decisive. Keywords, their frequency, number of links and a number of other mathematical parameters are important for a machine. The totality of these parameters determines the «value» of information. Thus, the orientation of human activity shifts in favor of the machine. The machine takes the form of an objective force, under which a person is forced to adjust. At the same time, alienation is typical for both the information consumer and the producer of it. The consumer is forced to constantly collide with information useful from the machine's point of view and often inadequate from the person's point of view, as well as attempts to manipulate his attention. The information producer is busy trying to «optimize» information for the requests of the machine. Considering the fact that the machine's principles often remain unknown to the user, the «human-machine» relation sometimes takes the form of almost archaic worship, since the positions of the published messages in the general information flow depend on the «favor» of the machine. And these positions in the information economy are a strategic resource.

New network technologies transform relations not only between man and machine, but between people in general. Today, the network has become the leading communication intermediary - both globally and on a personal level. At the same time, the influence of network technologies is so great that modern scientists say not only about network culture as a new phenomenon, but also about a fundamentally new form of being - virtual. The problem of virtuality has already been researched in sufficient detail by national science. We only note that such phenomena as withdrawal to virtual reality, Internet addiction, obsessive experiments with identity tell us about the significant narrowing of human being, which amounts only to being on the Web. More common are less severe forms of alienation, when a person feels his being only when his manifestations get on the Web. We are talking about such phenomena of the being translation as a selfie culture, keeping a microblog with a description of what happened. Receiving feedback from other network users, a person feels that he lives. At the same time, it is important for a person not just to designate the fact of existence, but also to verify its authenticity by recognition and approval from other users, having carried out at least a short communication act.

The actual act of communication also undergoes certain transformations. Often transient, using a large number of mass images, network communication loses its ontological status. As pointed out by Boldonova I. S. and Tsydenova N. S., «the lack of integrity of meanings in online-communication leads to the loss not only of essential information and the possibility of obtaining knowledge, but also the leveling of identification, the manifestation of ontological characteristics of the communicating person» [1, p. 47]. Since the discovery of one's inner world and the cognition of the Other's world is reduced only to the designation of mutual existence, the communication act becomes more and more automatic.

Thus, the network technology becomes the cause of alienation when it begins to limit the being of an individual. In the most acute forms of alienation the human existence is reduced only to being on the Web. The extreme form of Internet addiction can be an example of it. In less acute forms the Network contributes alienation in automaticity manifested in formal communication without an existential component. However, these forms of alienation are generated first of all by the person himself, and their overcoming is quite feasible task. At the same time, on the web a person encounters technology of the global level - a search

engine, in interaction with which the individual loses the dominant role in relation to technology, becoming only an alienated user.

REFERENCES

1. Болдонова Ирина Сергеевна, Цыденова Наталья Сергеевна Социально-философские проблемы виртуального общения // Вестник БГУ. 2014. №6-1 С.45-49.
2. Heidegger M. The question concerning technology / M. Heidegger // Technology and values: Essential readings. – 1954. – p. 99 – 113.
3. Marcuse H. One-dimensional man: studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society / Herbert Marcuse; with a new introduction by Douglass Kellener. – Boston.: «Beacon Press», 1991. – 275 p.
4. Marx K. Capital. A Critique of Political Economy. Volume I. Book One: The Process of Production of Capital. – M.: Progress Publishers, 1995-1996. – 549 p.
5. Jaspers K. The Origin and Goal of History (Routledge Revivals) / K. Jaspers. – Routledge, 2014.