

The concept “freedom” in a virtual reality of the information society

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Abstract. In the article the authors analyze the key aspects of the crisis of western culture which are revealed in the formation of “civilization of consumption” and create limitation of freedom which has a variant of value orientations choice. At the same time the contradiction between traditional and global value dominants appears and here due to freedom of choice ethical guidelines become situational ones, satisfying utilitarian aims. There appears a condition of instability, leading to “social loneliness”. The only way out for a man is an “imaginable world of a dream”, a virtual reality based on information technologies where a man feels genuine freedom. The authors of the article study transformation of freedom, starting from the antiquity where there appeared the problem of freedom in the slave-holding polices through existentialism and freedom of choice, synergetics of the XXth century where freedom was blend with life of the society, to genuine freedom of virtual reality.

1 Introduction

It's well known that in the course history moral, ethical ideals in their different forms have been a necessary condition of the society's stable existence. Value-oriented rational motivation of deeds, actions in accordance with commandments and demands which a man suppresses to be raised to himself, according to M. Weber, from “axial age” till the epoch of capitalism was a regulator of social behavior.

Unfortunately, the realities of the present day socio-cultural process reveal dangerous tendencies of free choice of ethical dominants and guidelines starting from the situation of utilitarian goals achieving. We can observe transition to the aim-oriented rational type of social actions which can result in destruction of the moral base of civilization, disruption of moral and cultural bases of human behavior.

It would be appropriate to mention that modern philosophical interpretation of freedom has been undertaken by Shtifanova E.V. (2000), Rumyantsev L.V. (2003) in his thesis, Parkhomenko R.N. (2016), etc. But the above mentioned works are based on the analysis of classical philosophical sources and are not connected with the realities of virtual information society.

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The aim of the given research is to reveal the concept of freedom in virtual reality of information space.

The objectives are:

1. to consider the crisis of values in connection with the growing processes of globalization;
2. establish the link of freedom of choice and loneliness;
3. to trace the transformation of the concept of "freedom" from antiquity to the virtual reality of the information space.

2 Freedom of ethical choice and loneliness in modern European culture

The situation of crossing traditional and globalization systems in modern culture is regarded as a process of interconnection between two contrasting semantic spaces. The corresponding semantic asymmetry leads to understanding a boundary between them as a problem of moral choice, the system of values, criteria of life activity estimation by a modern man. Freedom of a value-oriented choice is in the idea that value guidelines and dominants in modern culture are determined situationally, starting from utilitarian purposes.

Post-modernism is characterized with a relativity of systemic ideological and value orientations of culture. Philosophical and moral relativism assumes refusal from classical values and norms, equal rights and freedom of existence of various forms, ideas, styles and meanings of life. In expressing images of a personal world outlook the importance of subjective interpretation of the environment has grown recently.

The conditions of uncertainty, disorder, multilayer and mosaic character, contingency of the value-semantic hierarchy are becoming the dominating sensations in the context of post-modernist model of perception and interpretation of the world. Pluralism of "language games" which obeys no norms and rules is opposed with post-modernistic type of mentality to spiritual-historical bases of traditional values and norms of culture.

As Golman T.I. [1, p.91] says, formation of market relations and institution of private property was accompanied with forcible breaking of social relations, psychology and mass consciousness of people that resulted in deformation of the population's self-consciousness. Peculiarity of social loneliness is in the fact that both an individual and the entire layers of the society break their ties with their surrounding in which and thanks to they lived when they realized themselves as fully-fledged members of the society.

A psycho-emotional tension which is revealed in the dynamics of mass consciousness reflects the process of growing social loneliness: increasing of fear, understanding of impotence, loss of ties with the society and belief in the future.

R. Weis, the founder of an interactional approach in the study of the "loneliness" phenomenon introduces such a notion as "emotional loneliness" and "social loneliness". In his works he regards loneliness as a condition caused with the lack of close intimate affection. We should note that the word "affection" implies having particular connection between people or some kind of addiction. Such a connection means that the person is not alone. Social loneliness is interpreted by R. Weis as absence of an available circle of contacts and satisfaction of social relations. The senses of expulsion, rejection etc. are the basic forms of its expression. Such a type of loneliness is painful and is accompanied with different negative emotions – feelings of boredom, stress, despair, depression, pity to yourself, rejection etc.

Loneliness as an emotional experience is caused with many reasons of objective and subjective character.

We should mention that a strive to compensate the absence of purposeful and stable social reality stimulates spreading of virtual reality technologies because it's not computerizing of life that virtualizes the society, but virtualization of the society computerizes life.

The essence and the main principle of post-culture is in mosaicity. Elements of mosaic make up quotations of images, ideas, meanings that once composed internally unified and self-reliant cultural values. A unified image of perception of the integral, organized and stable world is divided into components of subjective images, deprived of organic semantic structure which can't catch and preserve ethical warmth of existence.

The phenomenon of post-culture is focused on rejection of traditional translation of socio-cultural components, suggesting alternative ones which do not provide full-value translation and perception of the world. Post-modernistic orientation to styles mixing, contextuality and combining transform the semantic field of socio-cultural phenomena basing on the post-modernistic play, irony, art-objects, for example, modern installations, environments, etc., that seems to be the reason of destruction of the synthetic character of the original image perception and the loss of that part of traditional translation which historically contributed to stability of cultural values and their succession.

In the course of development of information means of replication and display of cultural values the conditions of their classical forms existence are changed. It seems that the condition of post-modernism tends to be one of the reasons of the problem of classical human values diffusion.

It's well known that in post-modernism a sign has nothing in common with the reality and is interpreted as a simulacrum. In fact, multiple replication of an electronic image which is the sign of the original is able to eliminate the distinction between a sign and reality. Relativity and insufficiency of differences between an electronic image and the original in mass perception weakens the idea of its cultural exclusiveness. But in a virtual reality an electronic sign, having no meaning of its own, is made up and this fact appears to be a basic one in the culture of meta-modernism, i.e. a virtual reality makes its own signs which are not replicas of the reality and do not exist in reality.

A peculiar feature of post-life is the fact that a modern man strives to and is fully absorbed with a virtual world which is the most comfortable one for him. As A.I. Lutchankin says, 'a virtual world nowadays is a soteriological reality of safety and consolation and its criticism just consolidates its attraction not only for those looking for a traditional escape from abominations of life but for quite prosperous people as well [4, p.77]. In a virtual reality imitation is no more some replica but it becomes the reality that realizes a long-standing dream of a man to be similar to the God and create his own worlds [3, p.79].

Freedom given by a virtual reality becomes a reason and the result of loneliness. The attempts of the mankind to rationalize, regulate, excommunicate a man from the opportunity of spontaneous actions contributes to a man's escape to some comfortable environment where he creates his world and values by himself, where a man is really free and entirely alone.

3 Evolution of "freedom" from antiquity to virtual reality of information society

The problem of freedom appeared in the slave-holding society in Ancient Greece. So freedom in democratic Athens was historically limited as it was freedom in the slave society. Slavery was 'a necessary' prerequisite of the Ancient Greek culture flourishing.

In philosophy of existentialism a personality while cognizing itself as *existential* gains freedom which is the choice of itself, of its essence. The choice of freedom imposes responsibility on an individual for everything happening in the world.

A synergetic paradigm of the XXth century lets us see that freedom is revealed in the most distinctly way only in the zone of social bifurcations, in the conditions of quantitative overstepping behind the limits of measure and appearing of new qualities within the society.

In the culture of the XXIth century information society and a virtual reality appear. The notion of a virtual reality is applied to the reality of cognitive and social models, abstract notions and categories and which do not always coincide with real physical processes. A virtual reality is regarded as a special reality which appears with the help of consciousness and is given to a man's psychics in such a way. A virtual reality is a specific sample, 'an integral part of the reality' with such a constituent as an information virtual reality. When we say "a virtual reality", we mean cyberspace which has been created on the base of information technologies with the attempt of complete isolation of a virtualizer from the outer world.

According to Y.V. Surzhanskaya's opinion, put down in her article "Concept as a philosophical notion", a philosophical interpretation of the concept is in the fact that a concept is a fundamental and initial form of human thinking, having in its base both cognitive and perceptive experience. Feeling of freedom is absolutely the same either in the real or in a virtual world.

As absorbing with a virtual reality is interpreted as the impression of being in the realistic situation, the interface, appealing to muscular and perceptive systems of the participant of the interaction, gives the impression of some realistic environment. There are two properties that help differentiate between a virtual reality and traditional systems of computer graphics: 1) beside the ordinary transmission of visual information these programs at one and the same time influence on some other organs of senses such as hearing, tactility and even olfaction. 2) the systems of a virtual reality provide with a direct and immediate contact of a man with the environment (in the most perfect ones a user can touch an object which exists only in the memory of the computer having put on a glove filled with sensors [4-10]).

We should mention that the basic forms of information culture, making copies of the reality, in their content respect exist thanks to the concept of freedom which implies some choice connected with the necessity and responsibility. And in the information space of a virtual reality a virtual feels like an experimenter creating the world and its values for himself, he is free and alone, having overcome something human in a man (Nitzsche), imagining life with Zarathustra and being lonely together with him.

An appropriate outcome of this tendency in the West-European culture is a philosophical concept by K. Marx, who called on to change the world. But the ideas of imitation, peculiar to the West-European culture become finally evident with the creation of an information virtual reality which begins to substitute for human in a man and imitate the Creator's activity.

4 Methods and methodology

It is a well-known fact that the main method of philosophical cognition is the method of reflection. Reflection means a critical analysis of cultural processes, problems of a man and the mankind, transformation of values and dominants of a man's existence. Only philosophical reflection is the base of a man's finding of his adequacy. In the research, the

results of which are given in this article, a dialectical method is used. It works efficiently within the limits of mastering both objective and virtual realities. A hermeneutical method with its axiom of a text singleness and pluralism of its interpretations integrity was realized with the help of understanding and interpreting the texts of post-modernism, in pluralism of “languages games”, obeying no rules and norms. A phenomenological method provided with the possibility to “purify” our consciousness, to purify our thoughts about an object from different deviations on part of our subjectivity and to give our objective assessment of cultural processes, processes of globalization, phenomena of freedom and loneliness, freedom and necessity, responsibility. The method of synergetic contributed to studying freedom which is included into a mass-scale problematic character of stability and changeability of the society.

5 Conclusion

Summing up our philosophical reflection over the concept of “freedom” we can come to the following conclusions. The crisis of modern culture, based on transformation of ethical principles and value orientations, puts a man into a state of uncertainty and fragmentariness. It results in both isolation of a man from the society and enclosing from really human, giving him the role of a consumer. It’s impossible to cognize the nature of loneliness if we don’t take into account one peculiarity of modern life – its more and more intensifying suppression of the interest to the most important parts of a man’s existence, all-human problems.

The only way out for a man is a feeling of freedom in a virtual reality.

In a virtual reality a man finds freedom that can’t be compared with creativity on the one hand and game on the other hand. A creative process is subdued to the result which is integrated into active systems of values, and a game is subdued to artificially given rules. With emancipation of virtual worlds and their liberation from direct relation, integration into the real world a man gets a chance of real freedom. A concept “freedom” in a virtual reality is revealed in a spontaneous activity, experiment, variation of lifestyles.

The research based on the study of “freedom” evolution and exposing it in a virtual reality of the information society is the matter which demands further elaboration, analysis, and reflection of peculiarities of “freedom” and its influence on a man’s psychics and his existence in natural social environment.

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