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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES
AND LAYERS OF VIRTUAL IDENTITY

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Abstract

The development of modern information technology to society posed new questions and actualized many problems. One of the major problems associated with the development of information technology is the problem of human identity and its transformation in the situation of human presence in the virtual space. Fragmentation of the human "I", about which wrote the postmodernists and representatives of other contemporary philosophical trends, acquires special contours due to the fact that modern man spends the most of the time not in the real world but in the virtual space.

Under these conditions, human identity can be complicated and acquire a structure consisting of several layers that overlap. Some of these layers may be substituted for other fully or partially. The identity of modern man becomes complex and multifaceted phenomenon. In the virtual space, people can design components of their identity. In this situation, appears the effects of updated virtual identity: "the effect of social expectations", "substitution effect identification", "compensation effect". The study of these effects from the standpoint of the philosophy of the sign may help us to understand the complicated nature of multi-layered social identity of modern man. Semiotic study of the features of virtual identity uses the pragmatist semiotic methodology, which considers as a sign of a wide range of phenomena of natural and social dimensions of reality. The human person in this approach appears as a complex system of interrelated semiotic levels. This approach allows us to represent the process of identity formation as a complex process of social semiosis. This problematic gets more and more important, in the situation of new development of philosophical and humanities studies in general, and pays more attention to the various heterogeneous layers of existence. The study of the layers of virtual identity appears as a problem of the ontological order. .

Keywords: virtual space, identity, reality, information technologies, semiotic, layers, human "I".

MAIN TEXT

Modern society emerging issues and challenges with the confrontation to development of modern information technologies. One of the main issues that have raised sharply, due to the development of modern information technologies is the human identity and how it is transformed into the situation of human presence in the virtual space. Virtual reality, received development and distribution in the present situation of coexistence of society and information technologies increasingly penetrate into people's everyday lives, influences and social processes, and can transform aspects of human consciousness. In order to understand how deeply virtual reality penetrates in various spheres of life of modern man, we need a philosophical approach and make an analysis from the perspective of the philosophy of the sign due to the fact that virtual reality is a universe of signs, the reality created through semiotic means. It should be said that the man himself and his social role in society are fixed using semiotic means. This is convincingly argued by different European philosophers. For example, M. Heidegger argued that the man himself as a mode of being is a manifestation of the intersection of various interpretive perspectives until he does not begin with a genuine responsibility and honesty with himself trying to know himself in his existence, and replace the interpretation of other imposed patterns of social behavior such that would be as deep and rethought.

All legacy of sociological and socio-philosophical thought can be considered from the standpoint of semiotic approach from M. Weber till B. Latour [1], as social roles and social functions can be understood in a semiotic way as something which have meaning and marking certain types of reality and life in general.

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In this respect, people and social relations act as some complex characters that are created during the development of society and then interpreted by it. For example, a particular social status or role of, say, a bank employee, is a sign that refers to the combination of features, fixing some stable concept that expresses a certain class of individuals. And the value of this concept is closely connected with the system of other concepts, such as "bank", "banking system", "market economy" and the others, they largely determine the nature of the concept. This concept is interpreted in different ways, from a strictly logical understanding of the concept and ending human emotional reactions, which, for example, is not fully repaid the loan and that this makes him distress or other negative emotions. Here we note that it is advisable to use the pragmatic approach, which was the ancestor of Pierce to understanding the essence mark. [2] According to the pragmatic approach sign is something that refers to something else, that is the essence of the sign is sending or forefinger. In addition to links to other signs, can produce just the whole system interpretant, i.e. reactions of the recipient, that is the person perceiving and interpreting sign. So, in our example with an employee of the bank negative emotions can be considered as one of the possible values of the sign (along with a strictly defined logical system signs marking the term "banker"). Such a semiotic approach allows us to analyze complex social phenomena and even the phenomenon of ontological order as not confined to purely linguistic interpretations of the sign as Saussurian system differences that exist within the structure of language.

We can apply this methodology in the analysis of such a socio-philosophical problem of identity, which today were transformed due to the fact that virtual reality penetrates and alters many systemic levels of being (including social) of modern man.

The identity of modern man is fragmented and wrote about it many contemporary theorists of philosophy. It is worth to mention the "death of the subject," Foucault's work presages the erosion of subjectivity experiments deconstructionist Jacques Derrida, who, along with all Western European metaphysical tradition, questioned the integrity of the subject, by S. Zizek, analyze pervasive ideology and action, and the political crisis active subject, its dissolution in casual everyday practices.

Now it is difficult to talk about the immutability of components of class identity in the Marxist spirit, and better to say that now appears the idea of the singularity and individuality, developed by M. Hart and A. Negri [3].

Special contours the problem of identity acquire due to a stay of modern man in the virtual space. Virtual space provides more freedom for the person in the construction of their own identity, which is now fractured and fragmented. Modern user is often an active participant in social networks in which he may provide some information about himself. Something he could provide in the foreground, but something on the second. Often, it is an attractive of social networks, you can design your own image requires relatively little knowledge of information technologies and some computer programs, such as for processing images. That's all about appearance. To design your own online identity is relatively easier than in the real world. In the real world, too, there are technologies of constructing the image, they are widely used in advertising and political technologies.

When the person use the virtual space may occur the "effect of social expectations," i.e., the entire amount of expectations about a person anyway present in the virtual space, social network or website. Here clearly visible social aspects of expectations described by social phenomenology. As is well known, within the socio-phenomenological views, for example, Alfred Schütz understands the social behavior and motivation of other people based on self-awareness, that is, the ability to decrypt the social meanings rooted in the ability to self-knowledge. In this regard, the process of creating your virtual-network appearance reflects the understanding of the social environment, which is present in a given individual and understanding of what is expected by others. Some researchers believe that virtual space extends the possible human social contacts, because it allows to find like-minded people sharing similar views, members of a professional group. Individual may adjust social meanings, arrange the necessary emphasis, focusing on the social expectations of one or more social groups, even if the individual membership and the physical presence of topologically impossible. In this regard, the virtual space dually manifested. On the one hand, it is able to bring people together for whatever grounds, on the other hand this social integration is often nominal and formal, may increase social exclusion, social contacts dissatisfaction. This process is reminiscent of disintegration within the dichotomy of the "center-periphery", described by sociologists and social philosophers. On the one hand the political and cultural center, thanks to information technology and cyberspace must be linked into a single unit with the province, such as in the case of cultural capital and a provincial outskirts. On the other hand, information flows in one direction - from the center to the periphery: the inhabitants of the periphery receive information about events and processes occurring in the center, but cannot always affect them and actively take part in them. Center is often uninteresting life periphery. A similar situation can be observed in the relationship "community-individual" when playing the role of a

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community center, even nominal, especially if the members of this community are united geographically. This can occur, for example in youth subcultural community comprising residents of large cities, where there are interesting events, festivals, parties, etc.

It is possible that the emergence of "social substitution effect" - the desire to represent the qualities and characteristics that a person lacks or that are not so pronounced in the real world. Quality can be both physical and socio-psychological and even gender. As for the physical, then this may include various abilities of the body, which for one reason or another the individual is not in real life. Substitution may be in a situation of computer games, the characters which often have outstanding physical qualities and abilities. The substitution may be psychological type, in a situation of virtual presence in cyberspace "double" human, which can be anonymous and presence. In this regard, it would be interesting socio-psychological analysis of the phenomenon of trolling.

Closely related to the effect of social substitution is "compensatory effect", which can manifest its physical and socio-psychological and even ontological sides. As for the physical aspect, here we are dealing with compensation of bodily weaknesses and abilities, or participation in certain practices that in the real world are impossible, socially approved, and etc. Payment may be, and psychological character and manifested in the desire to compensate for the lack of communication, direct social contact. There appear to have the same duality that takes place in other effects, affected earlier, and fixed layers of virtual identity - Physical layer, socio-psychological and gender layer. Modern man often lacking real communication, real physical contact. This occurs because the social relationships in the real society are virtualized.

What Habermas describes as a "system" in the relative opposites "life-world" is largely faceless system of social relations. [4] People often acts as a social function or role, putting on one or several masks. In our view, the lack of genuine feeling of fullness of life, even in perceptual-emotional level makes a person to cover themselves layers virtual identity, just as there is a processing images in the computer program Adobe Photoshop, when the resulting image of the face or body may look improved, devoid of drawbacks, attractive in accordance with generally accepted standards of beauty. There may be a situation in which the resulting image is very different from the original source, and it looks unreal attractive. Here again, a virtual character is shown throughout modern Western culture, which is dominated by the cult of eternal youth, flawless facial features and body shapes. Western culture virtualizes the body, trying to make it too real, this increase is due to the reality of the lack of reality in a virtualized world, the lack of genuine emotion, love, openness in communication and the ability to accept others with all its faults and features, the inability to create a space of co-existence with others. These phenomena have attracted the attention of many researchers, for example, S. Zizek, Z. Bauman.

We want to focus on the ontological aspect of layers of virtual identity, their compensatory role. Modern man no longer faced with the immediacy of being, being in the virtual world of alienation. Virtual reality, nowadays created using information technology allows immediate "natural" pseudo substitution, givens many aspects of life. However, modern man often remains in a situation of lack of ontological completeness and saturation. That immediacy of communication, the opportunity for social contact, visibility borders life locus, which has been available to residents of the ancient Greek polis is no longer available for the modern man. Together with the development of a universal state since Roman social relations, and at the same time and ontological aspects of virtualized and often there is a situation of lack of fullness of life, which can manifest itself in different ways and in different areas. Our assumption is that in order to cope with this lack of ontological completeness person uses various symbolic means, because signification - the ability to perform any objects instead of something else (in accordance with the pragmatic approach to the sign). The whole system of social functions in society and social roles based on a system of values and this allows it to reproduce and keep for a long time. The flip side of this is impossible or difficult to grasp being in the perceptual and social aspects.

American literary critic and philosopher H.U. Gumbreht [5], arguing that Western culture and a high degree has semiotic and hermeneutic sides, and tries to label being as it is directly related to the reality (in the aspects of perceptual experience), which has not become culture is not found its symbolic dimension, since the sign it's always what universalises experience, makes the act of experience that "for all and for no one" put Nietzschean language. So, the layers of virtual identity described by us have a semiotic features. The whole system of meanings and relationships that takes place in a situation of virtual identity is symbolic and hermeneutic nature and is intended to be interpreted, like photography, repeatedly treated in Photoshop. Adjusted facial or body flaws become devoid of signs in the face and body, something that universalises (this deep character trait - the desire for universalization) beauty, deprives it of the "reality" of individual traits and turns into a sign, emblem. Perhaps this is meant Heidegger, arguing about availability judgments «das man» - i.e. "others" some impersonal social subject, as all reasoning "in such situations," [6]. Here perhaps we are faced with the fact that philosophy as such in their quest to grasp tries to resist being iconic, contrasting

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"universality", a unique mental experience that not all available, but for which he yearns without realizing modern man.

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