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## PHILOSOPHY IN THE DIGITAL EPOCH: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHALLENGES

The world of digital technologies is reformatting socio-humanitarian knowledge, in which digital humanities are actively developing, bringing together the hard sciences and humanities. It began to take shape form in the middle of the XXth century, and due to digital humanities, traditional philosophical questions received new perspectives also. The huge amount of digitized information does not simplify, but often complicates the search for true knowledge, pushing to epistemological pessimism. Blurring the boundaries between the physical world and the computer virtual environment in a new way raises the ontological question of reality itself and its boundaries. The ability to create a new person (s) in a virtual environment often causes not only psychological, but also axiological problems, contributes to the crime of ethical norms, and leads to alienation between people. In the field of philosophical anthropology, the gradual cyborgization of society modifies the question of the essence of man (Transhumanism, etc.). A new branch of philosophical knowledge, digital philosophy, is developing actively. It can be interpreted in two directions: simple digitization of philosophical texts and visualization of philosophy or an interdisciplinary field at the intersection of metaphysics and cosmology. All the above allows us to speak about the formation of new vectors of philosophical knowledge: media philosophy, digital philosophy, etc.

**Key words:** *digital philosophy; digital humanistic; digitalization.*

**Introduction.** We live in a digital age, in the information civilization with its fundamental changes in the technological sphere, on the crest of the "third wave" (E. Toffler). The use of computer technology becomes an inalienable attribute of almost every sphere of our live, and a good many people belong to the category "digital natives" ("digital aborigines"), who can not imagine our world before the era of digital culture. Obviously, these processes affect the evolution of knowledge. Speaking about the humanities, the most dynamic sphere here is the development of Digital Humanities. Today we can confidently state the digital revolution in the field of socio-humanitarian knowledge has taken place, and we can talk about the formation of new perspectives here, including for philosophy.

The purpose of our study is to outline the main vectors of the development of philosophy in the digital age in the context of digital humanities, its modifications and challenges.

In spite of the urgency of the matter, scientific publications of a generalizing nature devoted to the aforementioned subject are absent. There are some works that explore certain aspects of the existence of philosophy in the digital environment. So, A. Lisenkova studies the philosophy of aggression, which Internet communication often produces and disseminates due to anonymity, imaginary freedom and impunity (*Lysenkova, 2017*). In spite of the title "Philosophy of Digital Space", E. Yaroslavtseva is essentially comes to nothing more than to general phrases concerning the formation of a digital space as a third nature (alongside with nature and culture) and new opportunities that are open for a person in a social environment thanks to nanotechnology (*Yaroslavtseva, 2009*). One of the specialist in the sphere of digital philosophy is A. Makulin (*Makulin, 2016a; Makulin, 2016b*), who primarily investi-

gates of new potentials of knowledge visualization. E. Fredkin writes about a new way of thinking, linking the digital philosophy with digital mechanics, and, from his point of view, traditional mathematical models should be replaced by the latter (*Fredkin, 2003*). However, all above cited is just a few attempts to explore ways of transforming philosophy into the era of digital technologies. We have no generalized research about the transformation of different branches of philosophy in digital epoch.

**Presentation of the main material.** Consideration of our subject befits to start with definition of digital humanities and its tasks. Without clarification of these moments it is impossible to talk about the development of digital philosophy, which is part of this broader phenomenon.

The birth date of digital humanities is considered to be 1949, when the Jesuit priest R. Bosa initiated the creating of Index Thomisticus - a toolkit of orientation in the texts of Thomas Aquinas (*Dalbello, 2011*). However, the current digital humanities does not confine itself to simply finding content. For example, among the stages of the formation of digital humanities the Humanities Computing is often used as a designation of the first stage of its development. It is understood like elementary using of computers in the humanities (for example, to find the necessary text). At the same time, Digital Humanities refers to the electronic humanities, which are the development of another stage and involves the use of specialized programs, the publication of research results in the Web, and virtual communities of scientists, who are working on one study together (*Terras, Nyhan, Vanhoutte, 2013*). However, there is no single point of view among researchers, and we can set just tendencies.

Let's quote the definition of Digital Humanities (eHumanities) that is proposed by M. Thaller, one of the

"classics" of her study: "eHumanities describes the idea of conducting research in the field of humanities in a distributed digital environment, which equally well provides: 1) access to the information that is necessary to solve the task of research; 2) analysis of information by corresponding to the methodological requirements of a particular discipline and research tasks means; and 3) publication of new obtained as a result of analysis information" (Таллер, 2012: 7). The emphasis here is placed on conducting and publishing a study, however, this is just one of the areas of digital humanities. There are a far cumbersome list of issues that is involved in digital humanities: digital archives, interactive technologies in museums, text analysis, data digitization, digital data storage, analysis and using of new media, 3D modeling technology for historical objects reconstruction, graphic reconstruction historical events, visualization of socio-cultural processes, cyberculture, virtual reality, digital rehabilitation, the impact of digital technologies on human beings, the creation of transnational research teams, and others. One of the monograph on the topic presents over 100 directions of development of Digital Humanities (Можаяева, ред., 2016: 27-30). As we can see, the list is huge, however, is not exhaustive. It allows us to speak about the absence of a specific research object. It involves the absence of more or less stable (general) definition in this area also. However, for example, M. Terras believes that this matter is rather not a problem, but an advantage, because the lack of a clear definition gives the researcher greater freedom both in scientific and in career terms (Terras, 2006: 242).

How can the philosophy use all these new digital capabilities? Let's start with the simplest - the problem of digitization of information. "Digitized culture" is called the new achievement of computer science, because digital encoding "opens up" almost mathematical equivalence in art, and this is something like Plato's idea of unity of knowledge. Proponents of digital culture see it as a renewed interdisciplinary culture that combines art and science (Heersman Leeson, 1996: 12). There are already a lot of similar projects. For example, the well-known Google Books service offers unprecedented opportunities to find the book you want. There are numerous sites for the search for thematic information, including philosophy. It seems that all this should ultimately help to resolve the eternal epistemological question of truth. However, in reality, finding the truth does not become easier. Moreover, from our point of view, it becomes extremely complicated because of vast unverified information. Internet is filled with many sites, where scientific works are adjacent to esoteric literature or frankly illiterate creations of people, who are seeking to become famous. The postmodernism proclaimed the principles of relativism and divergence, and we can see their realization on the Internet. Digital technologies give equal opportunities to present the results of their work to the general public, and this is one of the evidence of the democratization of knowledge. The problem is that science always has been an elite matter. Current epistemological relativism leads to a drop in the level of scientific knowledge in general. And it is no coincidence that current gnoseology quite seriously challenges not only the achievement of truth, but even the possibility of scientific objectivity as such.

Digital reality has put new challenges ahead of ontology. The traditional question of the limits of life and death, the problem of being acquired new perspectives, especially in virtual reality. As A. Lisenkova rightly points out, "digital space has become an environment in which a person is from birth to death, and even after death, since user accounts exist even after the person has passed to eternity"

(Lysenkova, 2017: 138). For a modern person, virtual reality can very often become more "real" than our usual physical one. It is evidenced by notorious cases (sometimes with a fatal outcome) of the "dissolution" in the world of computer games. Computer technology with their fantastic capabilities (holographic monitors, video telephones, smells over the Internet, etc.) can really create the illusion of real life, especially since virtual and real worlds sometimes overwhelmingly overlap. Today, there are whole cities with their currency, fashion, shops, families and friends, and a huge number brands exists in real life, real products are advertise, and real money can be exchanged for virtual (and vice versa). Consequently, if a person spends most of his free time in virtual reality, then there is a reasonable question: what is reality for him? A separate cluster of questions is about mediareality and mediaspace, their influence on our consciousness, their borders, etc. It is extremely important in the era of reorientation of philosophical knowledge, so-called "pragmatic turn" (R. Rorty).

The mentioned problems also raise many of axiological issues in new aspects. For example, the anonymity of online space often provokes impunity. It is much easier to cross that psychological barrier, which in real life would seem insurmountable: threats, insults, humiliation during online discussions are just the tip of the iceberg. People often choose a new, virtual personality in the online space that is usually different from the real one. The new identity opens up new opportunities, but it is just a surrogate of real life that provokes the alienation among people (according to E. Durkheim, anomie is one of the most common phenomena in modern society), and can also cause dependence. Anonymity provokes a lie, however it is impossible to build normal relationships with another person through falsification and manipulation. The virtual identity itself can also lead to dangerous or even tragic consequences, because the virtual image constantly reminds us of the limitations and weakness of the real person, causing psychosis, depression and even fragmentation of personality (Kasza, 2017: 47-48). Classic metaphysical questions do not disappear with the advent of digital technologies. There are many corroborations of this: religion is now widely represented in the online space (broadcast worship, sites, blogs, etc.). Due to the "digital", the search for the transcendency receives a new incarnation: the virtual church, that is formed around the idea that Google may be a new contender for the role of God, because of it is omniscient, omnipotent, ubiquitous, immortal, infinite, etc. (Glazer, 2012).

Axiological problems are inseparable from anthropological ones. Due to digital technologies philosophical anthropology has received extraordinary opportunities for analyzing men. It has already been proved that Internet technologies change the structure of the human brain, algorithms for processing information, processes for its memorization and reproduction. It is also not a secret that modern people often feel disadvantaged without a smartphone, and loss, for example, a laptop might be to interpret as a partial loss of identity. We will not dwell on the problem of cyborgization of society, however, it is worth mentioning the Transhumanism, which is called the most dangerous idea of the twentieth century by F. Fukuyama. In fact, while philosophy has been struggling to solve the problem of human nature for more than one millennium, current science offers algorithms that allow radically to change human nature itself. R. Kurzweil's prophecies about the fusion of artificial and human intelligence into a single whole and disappearance the difference between a man and a machine already in the middle of the XXI century now do not look so fantastic. In the technocratic era the

age-old desire of man to improve gave birth to the idea of a Transhuman.

However, without deepening in such global prospects of digital technologies, on an ordinary, everyday level, it gives us possibilities to see an average person "in all its glory". So, digital folklore sometimes shows us the true creativity and talent, however much more often - a complete absence of culture at all. However the culture is one of the key anthropological characteristics. So, it is easy to understand E. Keen's reflections about the death of culture due to the Internet. He considers technology as a "great affection" because of democratization has led to humiliation of experience and talent, promises to give more complete and objective information - to the communicative noise of tens of thousands of bloggers, and the "digital panopticum" gave possibilities to spy one after another, forgetting about the norms of morality (Keen, 2007: 15-16, 177).

The possibilities of social philosophy in the aspect of the development of digital humanities look very promising. For example, the visualization of sociocultural processes or their prediction may play an important role in the development of practical philosophy. However, today it still remains only the theoretical potential of the future development in this area. Although it should be noted that some Western higher education institutions, whose students are already studying digital humanities courses, offer some modules in their structure, which include certain social issues. For example, the King's College London offers a study of "Digital culture and political protest".

In recent years more and more people are talking about the formation of digital philosophy, which, however, as well as digital humanities as a whole, is still in the process of becoming. Of course, we can talk about new opportunities for teaching philosophy, its visualization, etc. For example, with using digital technologies you can create interactive maps of the correspondence of philosophers, based on their works, correspondences, diaries, etc. A. Makulin characterizes the digital philosophy as a "marker to indicate the application of software for teaching, analysis or simulation of the classical problems of philosophy" (Макулин, 2016a: 79). He enumerates a wide range of topical issues of digital philosophy: computer ethics and aesthetics, artificial life, the ethics of artificial intelligence, the problems of cyborgs and robots, etc. (Макулин, 2016a: 80). A. Makulin analyzes a developed digital project in the field of philosophy of history, that is designed to demonstrate it visually through system of mutual influences of different philosophers on each other (Макулин, 2016a: 81). And here the complexities, that is associated with the visualization of philosophical knowledge, are obvious. We have a philosophical conceptual apparatus, however, we have no generally accepted structures of philosophical knowledge, which would serve as "stable" material for its programming and algorithmization (Макулин, 2016b: 125).

However, anglophone researches consider digital philosophy otherwise. It is supposed like an interdisciplinary field on the line of metaphysics and cosmology. This is a rethinking of Leibniz's Monadology at the level of quantum mechanics. If we consider the universe as a set of information, then, like any information, it can be processed and calculated. So digital philosophy is a philosophy in the language of mathematics (quantum physics).

This idea is the basis of evidence that the regularity and symmetry dominate in the world (for example, the repetition of the number  $\pi$  in various natural structures - honey, sunflower, etc.). These natural philosophical ideas with the search for the primary source (elements) have got a new digital incarnation. Natural philosophers of antiquity developed speculative designs, the current philosophy

has a powerful computer toolkit that allows to calculate these patterns. E. Fredkin, one of the founders of this new branch, calls the digital philosophy a new way of reasoning about the principles, how the world is arranged (Fredkin, 2003: 189).

### Conclusions

To summarize the foregoing, we could note that philosophy in the digital era gains new opportunities, however, at the same time it faces new challenges. The general tendency of knowledge development in recent decades has become its interdisciplinarity. The philosophy always was interdisciplinary, however, modern philosophy, being part of the trend of digital humanities, borders primarily on computer science, and it might be a good way for overcoming the abyss between "technicians" and "humanitarians". We can argue that digital culture has raised traditional philosophical questions in a different way: what is reality? existence? truth? man? good and evil, etc. There is a certain breakthrough in the formation of numerous new philosophical branches: mediaphilosophy, digital philosophy, etc. However, neither their names nor the essence of the subject of research are stable yet, and the process of their formation takes place presently. It opens an immense horizon for further investigation.

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### ФІЛОСОФІЯ У ЦИФРОВУ ЕПОХУ: ПОТЕНЦІАЛ РОЗВИТКУ ТА ВИКЛИКИ

Стаття присвячена змінам, що відбуваються у філософії в епоху цифрових технологій. Проблема розглядається у річці цифрової гуманітаристики, яка нині являє собою авангард соціокультурного знання. Автор аналізує, як цифрова реальність модифікує традиційні філософські питання. Так, дигіталізація інформації, з її майже безмежними можливостями повинна була би, здається, спростити процес пізнання, але насправді це призводить до переповнення Інтернету паранауковою інформацією, що лише ускладнює пошуки істини. Комп'ютерна віртуальна реальність по-новому ставить онтологічні питання про буття, межі життя та смерті, час і простір тощо. Сучасні технології створюють ілюзію реального життя, яке іноді може сприйматися як більш реальне у порівнянні з нашим фізичним світом. Медіапростір створює свою медіарельність, з притаманними їй законами та істотним впливом на нашу свідомість. Антропологічні, аксіологічні та соціальні питання також постають у нових аспектах. Пророцтва трансгуманістів про цілковите злиття людського інтелекту зі штучним і остаточне стирання кордонів між людиною і машиною вже не виглядають фантастичними. Тоді як аксіологія вже стільки століть поспіль б'ється над з'ясуванням атрибутів людського, комп'ютерні технології пропонують міркувати вже над проблемою кіборгізації і трансхьюманів. Онлайнна анонімність дає можливість створювати нову ідентичність (ідентичності), обираючи різні аватари, але це провокує поширення аномії (Е. Дюркгейм), і відчуженість стає характерним явищем сучасного соціуму. Більше того - віртуальна особистість постійно нагадує нам про слабкість і недосконалість нашого реального "я". Класичні метафізичні питання також не зникають з приходом новітніх технологій. Пошуки трансцендентності можуть реалізуватися в утворенні "Google-церкви", що базується на ідеї сприйняття пошуковою сервісу як Бога, оскільки він всезнаючий, всемогутній, всюдисущий, безсмертний тощо. Останні десятиліття формується т. зв. цифрова філософія, яка в англійських дослідженнях постає як міждисциплінарне поле на стику метафізики та космології і дає можливість говорити про філософію мовою математики (квантової фізики). Натурфілософські пошуки першоджерела (першоелементів) нині втілюються в обчисленнях закономірностей нашого світу за допомогою комп'ютерного інструментарію. Отже, можна говорити про формування нових галузей філософського знання - медіафілософія, цифрова філософія тощо, але поки що ані їх назви, ані предмети дослідження не є усталеними.

*Ключові слова:* цифрова філософія; цифрова гуманітаристика; дигіталізація.

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