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Transformation of Moral Principles in The Virtualization of Public Life

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Abstract: The article analyzes the impact of information technologies on the development of culture and art, as well as the phenomenon of computer culture and computer ethics, from a socio-philosophical perspective. The role of the computer in creative processes is explored through examples of musical synthesis and graphic programs, highlighting new aesthetic possibilities along with their associated risks and limitations. Furthermore, based on the views of thinkers such as H. Lenk, P. Sorokin, and A. Peccei, the article addresses the problem of moral responsibility in the information society, the concept of new humanism, and the need to reestablish human values in a new context. It is devoted to the study of the formation of computer ethics, the complex dialectic of the relationship between humans and technology, and reveals its socio-cultural significance.

Keywords: Information society, computer culture, computer ethics, information technologies, socio-philosophical analysis, new humanism, moral responsibility, artificial intelligence, culture and technology, computer ethics, spiritual crisis, human revolution.

Introduction: Culture represents a complex social phenomenon that encompasses diverse social processes. The impact of cultural environments on social life is inevitable, and the advancement of science and technology directly influences cultural development. The emergence of paperless information technologies has marked a fundamental shift in modern culture, reshaping modes of knowledge acquisition and transforming human cognition, particularly among younger generations. Computers now enable rapid perception of information through graphical and audio forms, signaling a new stage in the processing and transmission of knowledge. Paperless technologies primarily serve to manage rapidly changing operational information, while electronic publishing–through the Internet, satellite communications, and other channels–has democratized access to archival sources, rare manuscripts, and ancient works. Consequently, science functions both as a unique mode of human activity and as a system of knowledge applied in social practice, reinforcing its role as an integral component of culture.

METHOD

At the same time, this influence is not always positive. For instance, the crisis phenomena in modern science–such as the decline in confidence in the power of scientific thinking, the displacement of traditional methods by non-scientific approaches, and the rise of anti-scientific trends–have created certain tensions within culture. The emergence of anti-science movements, dismissive attitudes toward scholars, the intrusion of businessmen and outsiders into scientific processes, and the spread of various “modern” theoretical currents are not accidental. These processes illustrate the complexity of the dialectical relationship between culture and science.

The impact of information technologies on art is also unfolding in two directions. On the one hand, they serve as effective tools in the creative work of painters, sculptors, composers, and actors. On the other hand, new technologies have become a universal medium for delivering high cultural values to the wider public.

The use of computers in art has produced two approaches: in the first, the computer functions as a

simple technical tool; in the second, the artist provides the machine with a program, and without knowing the outcome, the computer independently generates a "work of art". Such results may at times be successful, and at times not, but in either case they reflect a new form of the creative process. Graphic programs are capable of producing new aesthetic models with strong emotional impact. In sculpture, computer technologies are connected to special machines that cut patterns from metal or other materials.

Musical synthesizers represent a vivid example of technology's entrance into the sphere of culture. They not only imitate traditional orchestral instruments but also enrich the sound palette, creating new acoustic possibilities that did not previously exist. In some cases, under program control, computers use synthesizers to generate compositions from simple musical motifs. Thus, computer music makes it possible to imitate instrumental timbres, synthesize novel sound effects, and greatly simplify orchestration.

Speakers connected to computers can reproduce complex sound combinations in accordance with a "score" created by the programmer. This process has laid the foundation for the development of electroacoustic and computer music. In this respect, such music serves not only as a field of creative experimentation but also as an effective means of constructing virtual realities.

The applications of computers in other forms of artistic creativity are also expanding. For example, for a long time, experiments in poetry generation with computers have been popular. In these cases, the user provides the program with a vocabulary of words and expressions, along with a structural template for the text. The computer then produces a literary form based on the algorithm provided.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to overestimate the potential of computers in artistic creativity. Their activity is strictly limited to the programs and algorithms defined by human beings. Computers are not "creators" in themselves but rather serve as auxiliary tools in higher intellectual activity. From a philosophical perspective, this demonstrates an important point: technology expands the scope of creativity, but its essence remains defined by human thought and aesthetic perception.

From a socio-philosophical viewpoint, computer-based creativity exerts a dual influence. On the one hand, it broadens opportunities for creating and disseminating works of art, thereby democratizing creativity. On the other hand, such technologies risk "flattening" human subjectivity and subordinating art to algorithmic mechanisms. Hence, the problem of computer creativity reflects the complex dialectical balance between technology and human thought in the development of culture.

As an illustrative example, it may be noted that when I asked ChatGPT, OpenAI's text editor based on artificial intelligence, to compose a poem about the "Homeland," it produced the following lines. Although formally resembling a poem, it seemed to lack human artistic color and emotional expression:

"Homeland – the highest call of my heart,

An eternal longing that will never depart.

Your skies are clear, your fields in bloom,

In every breath I find my strength and room.

For you I burn, in noble intent,

My veins flow with loyalty, heaven-sent.

My dear land, beloved Uzbekistan,

You are my life, my joy, my span!"

The development of modern mass media has marked a profound turning point in the history of culture. Today, however, they also present a dangerous tendency: shifting from being devoted transmitters of spiritual wealth to becoming producers of cheap mass products. At the same time, information technologies have significantly expanded humanity's opportunities to engage with the highest achievements of art. It is no longer necessary to travel to the Dresden Gallery [1] to see the Sistine Madonna, to admire the works of Rubens or Kramskoy, to attend the opera stage of the Bolshoi Theater, or to visit the treasures of the Louvre [2] and the Hermitage [3]; one can now listen to Beethoven's symphonies, Bach's fugues, and the performances of the world's finest vocalists at home through television or the Internet. Thanks to multimedia technologies, the rarest achievements of world culture have become accessible to the masses.

The philosophical essence of this process lies in the fact that culture is simultaneously manifesting two opposing tendencies: on the one hand, massification – the dissemination of cultural wealth to broad audiences; and on the other hand, individualization – the adaptation of culture to subjective experience through personal information systems. Thus, in modern cultural development, mass character and individuality coexist in dialectical interrelation.

According to V. Kraus, "fantasy materializes very quickly": today, it is not poems about the Moon, but the actual launch of rockets; not tales of flying carpets, but the technical reality of flight. Technology, therefore, not only expresses our dreams but also transforms them into practical reality. Many of the images found in today's literature and art are becoming

materialized through science and technology [4].

Humanity is moving from written culture to a new – screen culture. Emerging through the fusion of computer and video technologies, this culture has generated a new form of thinking, referred to as "screen thinking," characterized by the synthesis of logical and imaginative, conceptual and sensory-visual elements. In this sense, the screen page has become the central platform of modern culture, enabling unprecedented opportunities for universal communication.

The philosophical significance of information technology lies in its ability to reduce cultural monopolies and foster the emergence of diverse subcultures that cannot be centrally controlled. At the same time, decentralized tools (books, audio recordings, computers) continue to coexist alongside centralized ones (newspapers, radio, television). This duality underscores the contradictory influence of mass media on culture and demands the reconsideration of many ethical issues.

One of the key components of the new computer culture is the emergence of "computer ethics." This concept refers to the system of moral principles and norms governing human interaction with computers. While humans program computers, the process also influences human thought – technology not only facilitates human activity but, to some extent, also "programs" human worldviews and ethical decisions.

Modern researchers emphasize that the transformation of moral norms under the influence of information technologies is inevitable. Therefore, the effort to establish certain rules of conduct in working with computers is a natural process. For example, the following principle has been proposed: "You should not do anything with the aid of a computer that you would consider unethical without it. An action does not become ethical simply because it is performed with a computer."

This approach demonstrates the necessity of a new form of applied ethics – computer ethics. The primary function of ethics is to regulate human activity in specific situations. Yet, the advancement of science and technology brings forth situations that previously did not exist. Such situations often fall outside the framework of classical ethical codes but are now becoming the subject of moral consideration. As E. Agazzi notes, "if ethics must regulate human activity in various circumstances, it cannot disregard the new situations created as a consequence of technological progress" [5].

One of the factors determining the necessity of computer ethics is that computers today operate in domains that previously had little or no direct moral significance, such as forecasting natural disasters or addressing complex social problems. Consequently, all processes associated with computer activity must remain under strict human ethical oversight. In this regard, humanitarian values are increasingly prioritized over mere economic interests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This raises an important question: can moral norms be directly applied to computer systems? Or should computers be regarded as socio-ethical phenomena? Most representatives of contemporary philosophical and technical thought approach this issue cautiously and tend toward a negative answer. This is because moral norms are inherent to conscious beings engaged in social relations, whereas technical systems lack such qualities. For the computer, it is indifferent whether the task it performs is humanitarian or inhumane. Ethical evaluation of such processes can only be carried out through the human being – through their goals, ideals, and social practices.

Thus, computer ethics does not imply attributing moral qualities to technical systems, but rather emphasizes the necessity for humans to recognize and apply their own moral responsibility in the process of utilizing technology. In this sense, computers are not moral subjects in themselves, but instruments shaping new socio-philosophical experiences of humanity.

The contemporary German philosopher Hans Lenk, analyzing the new challenges arising in the information society, stresses that in the future information systems will increasingly make vital social and even personal decisions. Particularly in emergency situations, such decisions may be taken without the direct involvement of individuals or social groups. Here, the key question emerges: Who bears moral responsibility? Can information systems themselves assume ethical accountability?

According to Lenk, computers possess neither moral nor social essence, since they are not conscious subjects and lack autonomous decision-making capacity. Therefore, attributing moral responsibility to information systems is merely a strategy for individuals or groups to evade accountability. The philosopher compares this process to "turning the computer into a scapegoat": when it becomes difficult to determine personal responsibility, it is tempting either to assign it to the machine or to deny it altogether. Yet moral responsibility cannot be evaded; it is inseparable from the human being and cannot be transferred to the machine [6].

In this matter, the Japanese experience is particularly noteworthy. At times, they refer to themselves as a

"computer nation". However, this expression is harmonized with the moral principles reflected in their discipline, precision, and order. For this reason, the Japanese often prefer to see themselves as a "thinking nation," since they integrate technical excellence with spiritual rigor and ethical discipline. This process is vividly expressed in Daisaku Ikeda's work Human Revolution, where it is portrayed in a highly artistic and philosophical manner.

At the same time, a human moral revolution is becoming increasingly urgent in today's world. This is due to the growing revival of mystical worldviews, psychological tendencies to retreat into a simpler past, and rising anti-rationalist sentiments in modern society. Information technologies themselves are not free from global dangers. According to data from the Central Intelligence Agency, more than ten states are preparing for cyberwars. Computer viruses – "logic bombs" – are being secretly developed, capable of destroying information at critical moments.

Today, there are more than 12,000 artificial satellites in Earth's orbit [7] and over 2.9 billion computers worldwide [8]. This scale creates an immense arena for cyber-conflicts. At the same time, in the military sphere, the human factor is increasingly being marginalized, while technical devices are gaining predominance: unmanned aircraft, ground robots, space reconnaissance tools, and intelligent targeting systems are becoming the foundation of military strategy.

Thus, information technology simultaneously acts as a decisive factor both in the development of culture and in the emergence of dangerous global confrontations. Its socio-philosophical interpretation reveals that information systems possess the power to transform human life, but the burden of moral responsibility cannot be assigned to them–it must be borne by humans themselves. This necessitates a reassessment of moral principles and their adaptation to new technological conditions within the information society.

The rapid development of information technology sharpens ethical questions in both its creation and application. On the one hand, this process requires searching for ways to overcome a genuine spiritual crisis; on the other hand, it demands the elaboration of new moral norms and principles.

The sociologist and philosopher Pitirim Sorokin saw an alternative solution in the creation of a humanistic ethic. He advocated selfless love as the fundamental social principle in human relations. In this way, Sorokin's theory called for harmonizing technological development with humane interaction.

Similarly, Aurelio Peccei, one of the founders of the Club of Rome, proposed overcoming the moral crisis facing humanity through the concept of a "New Humanism." According to him, values and norms that until now seemed immutable must be replaced by new principles compatible with the conditions of the information society. Peccei regarded "revolutionary character" as the distinctive feature of the New Humanism, emphasizing that such a radical transformation is necessary to ensure human cultural harmony and the balanced, healthy development of the entire human system. This process, which he defined as the "Human Revolution," represents a historical turning point that guarantees humanity the attainment of true purpose and meaning [9].

Some engineers also see the potential for moral improvement of society within computer technologies. For instance, a research group led by R. Picard has been working on teaching computers to respond in accordance with human emotions. Through special wearable devices, facial muscle activity and emotional indicators can be monitored, enabling the computer to detect more than five distinct emotional states. Such research represents a practical example of a humanistic approach aimed at harmonizing technology with humanity.

CONCLUSION

All these facts demonstrate that, in the process of shaping the information society, the issues of computer ethics are becoming a subject of not only theoretical but also practical discussion. A new culture is emerging amidst challenges and contradictions, through the formation of a new computer morality. At the same time, various concepts are being tested in the development of new moral norms and their application in social life.

As a result, the pace, effectiveness, and prospects of this process may be evaluated differently; however, one fact is clear: the information society is driving humanity toward spiritual renewal, and computer ethics is becoming one of the key philosophical issues on this path.

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