

CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S GLOBAL WORLD: WHAT TO EXPECT, WHAT TO HOPE FOR, WHAT TO DO

The Western civilization and the whole world with it have been living in the environment of the keenest challenges and crises for many decades already.

The environmental crisis has been going on for at least half a century. Development of the Western world and the rest of the world after it along the technological civilization road led to unprecedented intrusion in natural processes, the idea to subjugate nature to serve man was embodied in disturbance of natural relations and placed the human race in the face of its own peril (our well-known scientist, academician N.N. Moiseev, combined the question “to be or not to be as to the human race” with the solution of the ecological problem). A lot is being written about this crisis. There are influential environmental movements, or green movements and even political parties. There are decisions taken on the subject at the international level. However, on the whole the problem does not disappear but it is becoming more acute.

But recently other challenges cropped up, they are no less acute, they originated in another field of human activities, they also question a possibility to preserve a human in the habitual for us form. These challenges are the result of the latest stage of science and technology development, emergence of new information technologies (TV, computers, communications on the Internet) and in connection with that the most developed countries' joining the so-called “information community”.

The high rates of knowledge renewal, typical for the information society, entail quick alternation of social structures and institutions, personifying this knowledge, as well as types and means of communications. Many social processes become something ephemeral: existing for a relatively short time. Integration of the past and the future into a common chain of events, forming an individual

biography and “the defined self” lying in the personality’s foundation, in some cases turn out to be a difficult task. The chain of social and technological mediations between the action and its result, which is becoming more and more complex in the present-day society, makes rational planning of actions complex not only on the collective level but even on the individual level. But there is more to it than that. Any rational action presumes not only taking into account its possible consequences but also correlation of the chosen means and the existing in the society behavioral standards, collective ideas of what is allowed and what is not allowed, ideas of the acting subject about oneself, one’s biography, commitments taken upon oneself in the past, belonging to this or that community, i.e. with what is called individual identity. Meanwhile, the today’s Western world suffers an individual identity crisis. It’s not without reason that the identity crisis problem today is one of the most discussed at various conferences of philosophers, psychologists, sociologists. This is connected with destruction of many habitual standards, with the above-mentioned evanescence of social processes, with the difficulty of integration of the past and the future, various communication flows and various systems of social interactions at the individual level. There are more and more individuals characterized by poly-identity or “blurred identity”, whose conscience turns out to be fragmentary and who cannot answer the question of what they are (“Who am I?”). This is already not a man in the usual sense of the word as the basic condition of the normal human vital activities (from the point of view of the standards that have been unquestionable until now) is the presence of the unity of consciousness – both synchronous and diachronous. According to Kant, the unity of individual consciousness is the a priori condition of its possibility. But today exactly this unity is questioned, if you believe the results of a number of sociological and psychological studies. An individual included in the today’s mass communications system turns out to be very pliable for various propaganda influences. This is used in modern PR and the so-called political technologies. The main goal of PR professionals is not development of rational abilities of an individual but on the contrary damping his/her critical reflection.

The old ideal of the European culture is an individual who freely, without any external pressure takes decisions based on one's own considerations, but today it seems even less viable than it was one hundred years ago. Contemporary information technologies provide new opportunities for manipulating the conscience, suppression of the freedom of man.

These technologies, in particular, social in essence blast the human lifeworld. At the same time we are not speaking about its invariants that make the foundation of human existence in contrast to its cultural and historically established forms.

To illustrate this point I'll start with reviewing the Internet. This is a great technological and social achievement meaning exit to new horizons of human life and new space of freedom. This is elimination of cultural isolation, new ways to create inter-individual ties, setting up online communities, or Webcieties. If historically existing communities presume a cultural tradition (i.e. special reference to the time) and organic development, tied to a certain space, online communities originate spontaneously and exist out of time and out of space in a certain sense. Belonging to a historical community does not depend on an individual. Reference to a Webciety is determined by an individual.

It's possible to create a new personality for yourself on the Internet, with a new biography and a new name, and to communicate with others of the same kind (in chats). In this case a number of limitations present in real life are eliminated. "Expanded reality" and "virtual person" appear. New opportunities for creative self-expression present themselves: creation and placement of various texts on the Internet, starting from those having pretensions to fiction and ending with attempts to solve academic and philosophical problems, political thoughts and comments on current events in social, political and cultural life. If there are restrictions in most cases when texts are published on paper (censorial as well as stereotypes existing in every field of professional activities), all such restrictions disappear in case of the Internet. An individual as if gets an opportunity for unrestricted free creative hovering. The difference between the author and the reader is eliminated. Anyone

can become “an author” on the Internet.

However, a number of keenest problems crop up in this connection. Really, the Internet as it exists today is not only new great opportunities but also new big dangers.

The matter is that any action in the real, not virtual world presumes not only freedom but responsibility as well. This is a necessary condition of the real social life (Kant would say “transcendental condition of possibility”). It’s possible to speak freely about everything on the Internet, without bearing responsibility for that, and not infrequently hiding under a fictitious name. In real life any kind of activities, starting from building a house and ending with academic research and creation of literary works and works of art, presumes certain standards and norms, without which it is impossible. These standards at the same time serve as filters (censorship, if you want it), not letting into this system of activities anything not in correspondence with it, that can destroy it, and at the same time they allow to appraise what was done and single out samples (authorities). All the said restrictions are non-existent on the Internet. There are no authorities. All are equal, everyone can be an author independent of his/her talent and professionalism, and may speak about anything and say anything that comes to his/her mind. Really this means complete de-professionalization. It’s not without reason that there are too many deprived, resentful, not recognized in their professional circles people on the Internet today. As one of our prominent figures in the field of culture said, the things which were written on fences in the past are now placed on the Internet. If everyone is an author, this is the end of fiction (there is such a theory suggested now). But this is not only the end of literature. This could be the end of science as well (had the academic community been serious in its attitude to the publications on the Internet). This could be the end of culture as a whole as the latter presumes standards, examples and hierarchy – exactly what the present-day Internet negates.

The matter with the “e-democracy”, which the Internet as if makes possible, is not so simple. Really it is possible to make people take to the streets with the

help of the Internet and social networks. But in order to offer a sensible program for overcoming the social and political crisis, experts', specialists' efforts are required. Such programs are not worked out in Internet chats. On the whole, as the life shows, the today's society of knowledge with its complicated technologies, including social, presumes the increasing role of experts, without whose work no serious social, economic, political decision is possible today. Because of that as a number of theoreticians think, modern social technologies presume not "e-democracy" but more likely "expertocracy". But in this case other problems spring up. As the experience shows, experts may proceed not from the interests of the majority of people but interests of a narrow circle, besides they have their own interests.

To put it otherwise, the Internet and the connected with it information and communication social technologies are challenge to traditional ideas of culture, man and social life. The Internet generates problems, which did not exist before and which need to be solved. Where to look for the solution?

The answer to this question presumes serious discussion. I don't have a ready answer. I nevertheless think that the future of the Internet is connected with the fact that at the same time with online de-hierarchized communities, it will also support professional communities with certain standards and samples of activities. The latter cannot be viewed as unchangeable, they should be dynamic and flexible. But they should exist at every moment of time and grade professional activities. I think that terms and conditions will be worked out for acknowledgement of Internet publications as academic or literary. Certainly, it's impossible to get rid of trash and rubbish on the Internet (creation of this rubbish can even be useful for psychotherapeutic purposes). As for misanthropic, pathologic and criminal texts, it's required to find a way to get rid of them. To put it otherwise, the Internet requires regulating. Then it may transform from the threat to culture into means for its creative development, the way to realize the freedom of man.

Another problem generated by modern technologies is growth of the number

of risks and degree of risk to life. The risk society is not something separate from the society of knowledge but just the other side of the same coin, on the face side of which the words about the society of knowledge are written. The technologies deeply transforming the existing natural and social order, are developed on the basis of modern academic knowledge. And that is always fraught with unforeseen consequences. There is special work done to minimize risks when working out new technologies. But it turns out to be impossible to prevent them completely. And let their probability be considered insignificant. In cases when these risks are realized, their consequences turn out to be horrendous (as, in particular, the Fukushima disaster in Japan demonstrated).

The work to minimize risks will continue. But their numbers and the degree of danger in the society of modern technologies will hardly decrease.

And that presents certain requirements for a man. On the one hand, a need arises to take quick decisions in unforeseeable circumstances, i.e. the requirement to enlarge the spaces of freedom. On the other hand, there is also a need of bigger control over an individual by the society – especially in the environment of technology-related and terrorist threats. This will be possible to do already in the nearest future with the help of universal e-cards fixing individual's movements, his/her entering shops, purchases made, etc. One can be provided with a device that will constantly sent signals to some service about an individual's location and everything happening to him/her. This will allow to control his/her movements and send recommendations about movements and in case of danger interfere in an individual's life. Certainly, this is a way to control an individual and limit his/her freedom. But one can suppose that most people will be eager to agree to such limitations in the environment of increased risk. One can think that in the interests of human life's safety, control over an individual may go even further as modern technologies allow that. By the way, this is not the thing for the future but what we are already approaching today.

But where in this case is the borderline between the required restriction of

freedom in the extra-complex technological society and a possibility to manipulate a man in the interests of certain social groups? On the whole, the borderline between “mine” and “not mine” in the today’s society, between private and public space, principally important for European culture for many centuries, is being more and more blurred. And this generates problems connected with understanding an individual, his/her freedom, his/her opportunities.

Development of biotechnologies generates new challenges. In the nearest future, it will be possible to make a personal gene map of an individual quickly and fairly cheaply, it will be possible on the basis of it to judge not only biological special features of an individual and his/her diseases but his/her predisposition to various diseases as well. One can imagine how such maps may be used by contemporary employers, what possibilities for control over an individual they open.

Today’s experiments connected with direct intrusion into human body, brain and psyche go even further. This is not only affecting human genome (genome editing or transformation). This is direct intrusion into human brain, sensor system. The consequences could be monstrous.

Thus, if we speak about crises experienced by the modern civilization, it’s possible to add the anthropologic crisis to the environmental crisis.

And finally there is another crisis, which hit the human race fairly recently. It can be called the crisis of that form of globalization, which was practiced until recently.

The intensively going globalization process creates serious challenges for nation-state interests.

Globalization includes several components. This is, first of all, modern market economy’s spreading to all regions of the world, accompanied by origination of multi-national corporations, which today manage many economic processes in the world, and not taking into account the existing nation-state borders. This is,

second, universal penetration of modern communications technologies into all countries of the world: TV, Internet, mobile communications. Both generate global mass culture, which as it may seem successfully pushes out traditional culture, developing exactly within the limits of nation-states.

There are theoreticians thinking that nation-state identity should disappear in the process of globalization, that the future of the human race is connected with disappearance of nations and nation-states, that the idea of state sovereignty will soon be history, and individual identity in future will base on either global collectiveness (cosmopolitanism) or separate accidentally set up and quickly disintegrating Webcieties. Other theoreticians, post-modernists, go even farther: in their opinion, the idea of any human identity, both individual and collective, totally loses sense today.

Meanwhile, this issue is full of deep sense and especially today.

Surely, it's possible to efficiently solve many economic problems within the limits of market economy. Undoubtedly, new communications technologies and new NBIC (nano, bio, information, cognitive) technologies create a new space for human development, present principally different opportunities to go beyond the limits of cultural isolation. But at the same time the globalization process as it goes now threatens not only the existing nation-states but an individual as well. Globalization breaks not only inter-state borders but also the man's lifeworld, not only an individual from this or that culture but a man in general.

The growing individual's inclusion into global information and communications network is not only an opportunity to establish contacts with other people and cultures but also a growing network of dependencies. Opportunities for manipulations with conscience, human control, generating disinformation on large scales are expanding.

Communities originating as a part of global information networks differ from those based on traditional cultures in some respects. A Webcietiy can crop up

in a moment and disintegrate at the same speed. It is not tied to any territory and it is not based on any sustainable tradition. Relations between such communities have no hierarchical character, and their aggregation cannot be presented as a systemic whole. Because of that inclusion into such communities and attachment to one of the existing cultures, based on historical traditions and supposing localization in space, come into a serious conflict.

Market economy has demonstrated its efficiency on the global scales. But as development of modern technologies and science in the basis of them takes place today within the limits of economy of this kind, both science and technologies acquire some features, which did not characterize them in traditional culture and which in a certain sense "dis-man" both science and technologies. I've just said about a possible danger of employing up-to-date technologies by men. As for science, in the environment of the present-day consumer society (which globalization is trying to spread all over the globe) it achieved the character of the so-called "technoscience": only the knowledge that can generate technologies is appreciated and promoted. And it is possible to manufacture goods for sale with the help of technologies. Knowledge turns into goods, and scientists turn into suppliers of services. This very seriously influences the ethos of science. If science works for big corporations, knowledge, acquired by scientists, becomes the property of the said corporations with all the following consequences – up to making secret methods of obtaining knowledge that can be used to create new technologies. The so-called "cognitive capitalism" appears, new types of scientists, impossible before, come into being: e.g. scientist-manager. Luckily, not all science turned into technoscience and far from all academic knowledge became corporations' property. But surely the trend to turn science as one of the highest cultural human achievements into a simple way to make money, is connected with spreading of market relations to all spheres of human life, which exactly is taking place in the modern globalization process.

What can oppose this process, to be more exact the form globalization took today (as globalization can take place in other forms)?

It's possible to oppose dis-manning a man only in case if we are able to preserve traditional human values and at the same time adapt them to modern realities, including challenges created by science and technologies' development. And traditional values exist and are translated from one generation to another within the limits of existing national cultures. These cultures differ from one another. Understanding the world and man is not the same in them. But all of them have some common ideas, which are questioned today by global challenges. The variety of traditional cultures is not a drawback but a condition for survival and further development of the human race. On the whole, homogeneity (to which globalization practiced today leads) is a way to a dead end as it is well-known that development, evolution are possible only on condition of variety as various forms may reveal various resources at this or that spiral of further development and what today seems to be the most promising may not turn to be so at the new stage. The cultures existing today have to react to globalization challenges and adapt to these challenges by way of self-development. It may turn out that resources for such adaptation will be different in cases of various cultures. Thus, for example, some traditional ways of work arrangement in China and Japan turned out to be well correlating with today's forms of chain enterprises' operation (because of that popular until recently identification of globalization with Americanization does not work any more). I think that values beyond pragmatism cultivated in Russian culture, can play a positive role in looking for a way out of the dead end of "cognitive capitalism". The most tragic will be the position of those cultures (and connected with them states) that won't be able to find resources for adaptation to the present state of affairs and self-development in themselves. They may lose their identity – both cultural and state.

So, protection of an individual today means protection and development of traditional culture, and the latter presumes protection of national identity,

consequently, national interests. Today many politologists started speaking about the role of national interests - especially after the recent events in the USA and Western Europe (election of the new American President, Brexit). At the same time there are talks today that supposedly the recent international politics basing on values (first of all, the proclaimed by Obama's administration course for "spreading democracy" all over the world is meant) are to be replaced by new politics – Realpolitik, proceeding from national interests and even inclined to isolationism. But it's difficult to agree with such understanding of the contemporary world order.

Surely, national interests include protection of geopolitical and economic interests of the country, development of economy, public health, strengthening defense potential and many other things. But in order to preserve one's national identity, the state has to develop, and consequently adapt to existing global and political realities, to be more exact, not just adapt but give its answer to global challenges and consequently change, develop itself. A country cannot be isolated. But all that is impossible without preservation and development of culture as exactly the latter is what lies in the very basis of nation-state identity. Without one's own culture, all the rest (political and economic ties, state and public institutions) will not provide preservation of national identity. And that means that protection of national interests is impossible without development of education, science and arts. An economically developed country, losing its culture, is deprived of national identity and consequently its national interests as well.

Because of that, certainly, competition and even struggle of various cultural essences will continue on the international arena. The world cannot evade the issue of global values. National interests do not push out the highest cultural values, on the contrary, they are tied with them very strongly. Consequently, the issue of dialogue of cultures (exactly the dialogue and not thrusting one culture on the others) is not becoming less urgent than it was until now.