

The Programming Function of Culture in a Digital Society: Selected Tools

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ABSTRACT

Culture sets a person and society program goals and development goals and seeks to achieve them using various tools. Such programs are broadcast and implemented by a person in interaction with the socio-cultural environment of his or her life, they are fixed as codes in his consciousness and subconscious, determine the direction and content of his behavior and activity. Based on these ideas about the content of the programming function of culture, such phenomena as imprinting and impressing are considered as its tools. At the same time, imprinting is positioned as a tool for broadcasting and consolidating programs, and impressing - as a tool for generating new cultural programs. It is emphasized that in the context of digitalization of culture, its programming nature becomes apparent and, therefore, the discovery of its implicit tools acquires special not only theoretical but also practical significance.

Keywords: *digital society, culture, programming function, impressing, social and cultural imprinting, sociocode, cultural code*

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern socio-humanitarian knowledge, the programming function of culture is positioned as one of its main functions. This is due to the discretion in culture, as a self-organizing system, of a certain assignment, consistency, reproduction of patterns of behavior, and types of activity necessary for society. At the individual level of functioning, such reproduction is associated with the implementation of certain programs, expressed in individual targeted actions of the subject, and determining the intentionality of his activity as a whole [1]. At the social level, the functioning of programs of behavior and activity is ensured by a social memory containing the experience accumulated by many generations: the whole history of mankind is “thoroughly penetrated by the influences of socio-cultural programming fields” [2].

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The starting point of our study is the following provisions of the theory of cultural programming:

- since it is a person who acts as the subject of reproduced activity, so far as the bearer of the programs is the person himself;
- programs are defined and implemented in the relationship of the individual with the sociocultural conditions of her life, with her social environment;

- by setting program goals and development goals for people and society, culture seeks to achieve them using various tools.

These provisions allow us to consider as two culturally insufficiently studied phenomena in this aspect, in our opinion, phenomena: imprinting and impressing. The article is devoted to the analysis of their sociocultural nature and the specifics of their fulfillment of the cultural programming function from the perspective of the theoretical positions presented above.

3. RESEARCH RESULT

3.1. General characteristics of imprinting and impressing as tools of the programming function of culture

The general interpretation of imprinting and impressing implies that as a result of the influence of the socio-cultural environment on the individual during critical periods of ontogenesis, a certain informational trace remains in her consciousness / subconscious mind [3], [4], [5]. Such an impact can form certain behavioral patterns in an individual (imprinting), activate abilities for specific types of activity (impressing), and also develop qualities that ensure a steady, unshakable desire to realize these patterns and activated creative abilities. We note that the programming function of culture is carried out precisely by “presenting certain

requirements to a person and cultivating certain properties and qualities in him or her” [6].

3.2. The programming nature of culture: programs and codes

Moreover, such a “presentation” of claims occurs in explicit or implicit form [7]. According to figurative expression V.S. Stepin, in the diagram of an elementary act of activity, such a program is presented on the “placard of consciousness” of the subject of activity: “information structures in which the states of consciousness and subconsciousness of individual individuals are realized” are represented by “neurodynamic codes that arise in the brain as a result of the reflection of the internal states of the body and external (natural and social) environment” [8]. The described mechanism of fixing, fixing in the human mind / subconscious mind a set of certain codes that make up the program, in the case of interpretations of imprinting and impressing, is often indicated, as already noted, by similar concepts: “trace”, “imprint”.

In the functioning of such codes and programs, a paradox and a contradiction are obvious: they simultaneously exist both in a person and outside [9]. The sociocode (cultural code) is an extra-biological way of encoding socially significant information necessary for the reproduction and purposeful change of the diverse subsystems of public life. In contrast to the biological, genetic (DNA, RNA) method, which transfers biological programs from generation to generation that regulate the interaction of the body with the external environment, the sociocode, as a coding system, captures programs of social behavior, communication and activity [10]. These programs are sociocultural in nature; they seem to be built on biological programs.

Attention is drawn to the correspondence of the nature of the two instruments and programs of activity that we are considering. In both cases, we are talking about a complex, biosocial, and cultural nature. Imprinting and impressing, based on the hereditary susceptibility of the individual to certain types of sociocultural influences, logically fit into the model of culture as a “self-organizing system” with its supra-biological mechanisms of stimulating, programming and implementing information-oriented activity of people in society [11].

In their totality and historical dynamics, supra-biological programs form an accumulated and constantly evolving social experience. This experience accumulates and is transmitted from generation to generation as a tradition, as social memory. The consolidation and storage of emerging supra-biological programs of human life in symbolic form, in the form of sociocodes as complexly organized and developing

sets of semiotic systems, is a condition of cultural tradition. The diversity of social experience implies the diversity of sociocodes that consolidate and transmit this experience. In real social reality, programs are embodied in a variety of knowledge, prescriptions, skills, ideals, patterns of activity, ideas, beliefs, goals, value orientations, etc. [12]. Semiotics considers, as symbolic formations, any natural and social phenomena that can fix and denote a specific content: the meanings and signs that are transmitted in the communication process. Moreover, the man himself, from the point of view of semiotics, is the main sign system.

3.3. The Ups and Downs of Broadcasting Cultural Programs through Institutional Channels

Based on this, the main channels for transmitting programs are, first of all, institutional ones, “satisfying certain historically established methods and norms of coding and translation of socially significant experience”. According to V.S. Stepin, “a complex system of programs of behavior, communication, and activity enshrined in various sociocodes, constitutes the body of culture,” and individual development of a person occurs due to the assimilation of social experience translated into the culture. The programs of activity that have taken shape in the historical development of a particular culture are, as it were, superimposed on human genetic programs. Docking of these programs takes place in the process of socialization, training, and education. But the earlier forms of activity contained in the translated social experience, as A. Sannino and Y. Engeström rightly remark, can become both restrictive and resourceful depending on the combination of specific conditions at the moment of influence on the personality: the routine of everyday life, the specificity of everyday life, can affect the specific society of norms and, of course, the way of thinking that translates this experience [13]. Therefore, for some individuals, this process proceeds relatively painlessly, for others it causes serious difficulties. The mental world of the personality is formed as a result of a complex interaction of supra-biological (sociocultural) and biological (genetic) life programs [14]. History knows many examples of the fact that training and upbringing in their socially satisfying and socially significant forms in future talents provoked a sharply negative reaction, if not inherently psycho-trauma, then approaching it in its characteristics: such is the description of the result of negative social imprinting.

3.4. Culture as a programming environment

Consequently, the sociocultural conditions of programming, the characteristics of the environment, and the socio-cultural environment from which the information influence comes are of particular importance. In sociocultural imprinting and impressing, the personal and social contexts of the functioning of culture are combined in their inseparability. The public follows from the personal and, in turn, determines it. It should be understood that the environmental impact is carried out within the framework existing in a particular historical time in the society according to its social laws. If we understand the development of man as subordinate to the environment in which he is experiencing his formation - that "information field in which he is initially located" and cannot "go beyond it without simultaneously falling out of society" [15], then the programming properties of culture become obvious. In this regard, it is interesting to compare culture with "a kind of informational support for society" [16], its "software" [17]. Such a comparison is of particular relevance in a digital society. Understanding culture as "an initially complex habitat endowed with a programming function", S.V. Goryunkov discovers in it a resemblance to technical systems in the sense that elementary, "meaningless" but structurally interconnected units are built by their carrier (person) into countless significant units, give rise to meanings. An individual perceives a system of signs, and not a system of values: a cultural code is able to withstand its time movement due to its characteristics such as openness to changes and universality, providing translation and consolidation in changing conditions, as well as further decoding of converted values into meaning [18]. As an example, we can cite language "world models" as "sociocultural programming fields" with their stable speech stamps and regulatory behavioral settings [19]. Such a comparison seems reasonable, given that a significant part of the cultural programming tools we are considering (impressings and imprintings) are just linguistic [20].

3.5. Two directions of the programming function of culture

The programming function of culture is that it sets the individual program not only as a way of action (direction, content, i.e. goal/result and value) but sets the goal as a kind of ideal image of the result of activity and its value, i.e. its significance, personal meaning for the subject. E.S. Markaryan notes that at the same time, culture, as a self-organizing system, itself is aimed at a certain result: "The key feature of self-organizing systems is their ability to actively strive for a certain result, "guided" by certain information programs. Any

informational programs considered from this angle (be it a genetically encoded hereditary program of a biological population, a conditioned reflex model of an organism's action, programs of activity based on the mechanism of consciousness and expressed in the cultural tradition of the historical community of people, or programs embedded in certain technical cybernetic devices) act on the principle of "leading reflection". Based on the "accounting" of the probability of the occurrence of the corresponding events, they are aimed at adapting to the predictable conditions of the future" [21]. Culture is able to "plan" new programs of activity, behavior and communication of people long before they are embedded in the fabric of social life, generating social and cultural changes. In this case, we are talking about socio-cultural production, about creativity. In other words, the programming function of culture consists not only in the transfer and consolidation/storage of certain information programs but also in the generation of new ones aimed at the functioning of man and his culture in the future.

3.6. Implicit Cultural Programming Tools in Digital Society

Imprinting and impressing do not belong to programming tools generated by new socio-cultural conditions, but they acquire a new and relevant sound in the modern digital society [22], where the creation of a new one is described not only by the concept of creativity but also by the concept of creativity. Through a significant increase in creativity, even if it was "simulated", brought to life by a routine in the everyday life of digital society, culture seems to protect itself from the formation of negative scenarios [23]. However, we agree with L. Manovich's idea that any informational behavior should not be perceived as "disruptive" and challenging the existing order [24]. Perhaps, due to the emergence of the minds of researchers who are concerned about the "digital metamorphoses of society, intersubjectivity and subjectivity" [25], the programs of the future laid down by culture are not visible at first glance. It is possible that young people, who are considered to be most exposed to digital risks [26], including through social and cultural imprints of the digital environment, play a very usual sociocultural role of recipients, carriers, and then translators of new cultural programs.

3.7. Social and cultural imprinting

Imprinting, which consists of capturing by individual information transmitted to him by another individual as a sign system, is able to act as one of the working programming tools. An individual capturing

information later becomes the “next” sign system. The program through imprinting is transmitted in the form in which it is most useful to a particular community and society as a whole. Capturing does not imply any personal processing of the information received: it is transmitted in a transpersonal state. Imprinting is one of the mechanisms for consolidating and transmitting social and cultural experience as a tradition, which implies a largely uncritical acceptance of existing values and norms [27].

The procedural and substantive-productive differences in social and cultural imprints are obvious. The result of social imprinting is the patterns that underlie the interaction of individuals in society. This is what makes up the content of socialization as such and cyber socialization as its variation if we take into account modern digital realities. The procedural field of cultural imprinting is inculturation and acculturation. Its result is cultural identity, which is expressed also in the attitudes of the individual as the bearer of a certain culture (regardless of the criterion for its differentiation), which characterizes the functioning of individual social communities.

Consequently, sociocultural imprinting, as a tool, is suitable for programming behavior and communication, for programming human activity as an “information-driven activity” [28]. But such a programming mechanism, by definition, is little suitable for the “production” of some of the root causes of human activity. If social and cultural imprinting is quite capable of coping with broadcasting and consolidation of programs, then to generate new programs that are ahead of time, you need a tool of a slightly different modus. At the level of personal potential, such generation of new programs is embodied in creative activity, the degree of “advancing” the results of which, described in socio-humanitarian knowledge by the term “novelty”, depends on individual abilities: talent and genius.

3.8. Impressing as a tool for programming a "high" culture

In our opinion, such an instrument is capable of acting as an impressing, implying not only the mechanical recording of information, but the impression of it. Its key differences from social or cultural imprinting are that the information impact of the socio-cultural environment on the person does not lead to direct results of the transmission and consolidation of the program, the result is always mediated by the fact that E.S. Markaryan called “life experience” [29]. Under similar conditions, different individuals respond differently to informational influences under identical conditions: that which makes an indelible impression on one can leave the other indifferent [30].

The field for the sale of impressing products (it is obvious that they are, as a rule, the nature of positive values) is all the sociocultural processes taking place at the level of “high” culture. However, paradoxically, the field of occurrence of impressing may also be an ordinary culture with its spontaneous socialization. The essential difference between impressing and imprinting is that the former acts as a “mode of self-organization and interaction of life systems” based on “the ability to perceive, accumulate, transmit, and transform information” [31]. The result, however, is the generation of qualitatively new programs of fundamental importance for the entire social system. The irresistible desire of talented/ingenious individuals for significant results in their chosen areas of activity, formed by impressing, results in achievements, discoveries, inventions, etc. at different levels - from local to universal. In this sense, in our opinion, the genesis of creative activity is nothing more than cultural programming: impressing as one of its tools launches the most important of programs - the program of generating new programs that determine the development of culture and society in the future. From this point of view, any influences of the digital environment that strive for the personality, if not art, then creativity, already contain some sociocultural meaning.

If in the classical representation of semiotics the function of a person as a sign system consists primarily in the fact that his activity and actions become an object of imitation, then the concept of impressing brings its own corrections to this representation. Obviously, by direct imitation it is impossible to “convey” creative inclinations from person to person, therefore, the programming function of culture has significant limitations. The essence of these restrictions is heredity (already with its programming). The impressing mechanism, on the one hand, demonstrates and explains the “weaknesses” in the broadcast of the cultural component of social experience; on the other hand, it opens up new research horizons.

Consideration of imprinting and, to a greater extent, impressing as tools of the cultural programming function, in our opinion, is in line with the humanitarian tradition, which, according to M. Reed, consists of a constant, updated according to the time, problematization of the relationship “between the nature of the human person and her complex and multi-valued role arising from universal culture” [32]. Impressing is the mechanism of the functioning of culture that confirms and complements the modern idea of its development: a person in his mental life, in his activity, on the one hand, acts as a creation of culture, the result of its programming, which is carried out by including it in various social connections. On the other hand, the individual is a creator of culture, because, solving the tasks set by society, he is able, based on past

social experience drawn from culture, to create new phenomena and states of culture that do not exist outside of the human activity.

4. CONCLUSION

The consideration of the tools of the programming function of culture, including little studied, is seen as fundamentally important since it can serve as a theoretical basis for the practical solution of global problems of our time. In this case, the positioning of the changes caused by digitalization is seen as fundamental and promising, not as problematic and ambiguous due to its novelty and unpredictability, but as regular, laid down in the programs of human culture long before the advent of digital tools. Therefore, the search for ways to solve global problems, and ways for the further development of humanity should be sought in the logic of the embodiment of cultural programs in social reality.

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