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Agency in the Context of Internationalized Intellectual Practices: An Attempt at a socio-philosophical analysis of authorship

This article presents a philosophical analysis of the transformation of agency within the context of institutionalized intellectual practices, utilizing the phenomenon of authorship as a case study. The focus is on the question of how contemporary intellectual practices set the framework for the subject's possible action, redistributing the function of thought, responsibility, and recognition. The article demonstrates that authorship cannot be viewed as an expression of individual consciousness. It is possible only as a historically formed status within stable institutional structures. These structures presuppose the existence of mechanisms for regulating intellectual activity (academic regulations, expert review practices, citation systems, digital platforms) that shape the status of the intellectual, oriented toward the reproduction of formalized systems of action. The article demonstrates that, in the context of the infosphere and the development of artificial intelligence, distributed forms of knowledge production and a new institutional structure are emerging, constituting the phenomenon of authorship. The topic of authorship in contemporary academic, legal, and political discussions is problematized because the existing conception of authorship no longer meets the new conditions of intellectual labor. The required revision is driven by the need to address questions of responsibility, innovation, and the mechanisms for confirming and protecting authorship. The authors of the article draw on an understanding of agency as a person's capacity to explore and transform the world in collaboration with others. Attempts to attribute agency to artificial intelligence are based on the anthropomorphization of machines and technology. Only humans are capable of acting, thinking, and bearing responsibility; in the context of contemporary realities, the problem of agency becomes particularly relevant due to the increasing demands placed on humans regarding responsibility for cultural creation and self-preservation.

Keywords: agency, human, culture, institutions, intellectual practices, authorship, infosphere, artificial intelligence.

Introduction

The category of agency expresses the logic of active engagement with the world, within which humans do not merely reflect reality but actively transform the world, shaping culture. In turn, agency is formed only within culture, which, by its very nature, is a means of reproducing the image and logic of creative, constructive, and socially significant activity. Culture cannot be reduced to a collection of ready-made results, a sum of achievements suitable for replication, consumption, or use. While accompanied by the production of results, culture cannot be equated with them, serving as both an expression of human agency and its source. This is precisely why agency is historically and culturally conditioned: it develops alongside the development of forms of human activity and communication.

A defining feature of the modern world is the challenge posed to culture and human agency, stemming from the fact that people live within the machinery of society, where their lives are increasingly subordinated to institutionalized, formalized practices and social technologies. When it comes to intellectual activity, this is linked to the presence of the modern intellectual within the system of scientific production, the existence of systems for evaluating and recognizing the status of researchers and the results of intellectual activity, the parameters for conducting expert evaluations, the norms of academic communication, and so on. In the modern world, these practices ensure the development and reproduction of intellectual outcomes, their integration into social and legal circulation, and their dissemination. At the same time, the living process of thought within the framework of institutional forms is subject not to the logic of its own unfolding, but to procedural requirements and the necessity of conforming to the institutional order that ensures its social recognition.

The aim of the study, the conclusions of which are reflected in this article, is to examine how agency — as the logic of active engagement with the world — correlates with forms designed, first and foremost, to reproduce the institutional order and ensure the functioning of technologies.

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The phenomenon of authorship as an institution within the system of intellectual production, taken as an example and *subject* of analysis, presupposes the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the forms and results of intellectual labor, attributing them to a specific subject who bears responsibility for them and/or receives rewards in the form of payment, status, etc. The basis for the existence of the phenomenon of authorship is the presence of an institutionally formalized mechanism for recording the finished result, separated from the process of intellectual creation, and attributing it to the actor (subject, quasi-subject) who produced it. The phenomenon of authorship, which is essentially not necessarily linked to the presence of living thought that grasps real contradictions and develops socially significant ways to overcome them, refers to it only in a formal sense. The danger of substituting living thought with a set of intellectual operations subordinated to the task of producing an intellectual product that meets formal requirements and opens the possibility of social approval lies in curtailing the possibilities for the formation of socially significant knowledge, ideas, and meanings.

Methods and Materials.

The methodological foundation of this study is the tradition of classical philosophy, within which agency is viewed as a mode of human existence proper, linked to the ability to creatively overcome circumstances, transcend the existing, and form something qualitatively new. The examination of human potential and the problem of agency cannot be abstract but must be linked to an analysis of the specific parameters of the cultural-historical era in which a person is formed and achieves creative self-realization. An intellectual cannot be understood as an autonomous knowing subject, nor can cognition be understood as an individual psychological process or a set of cognitive operations. Consequently, to understand how the intellectual is embedded today in socially significant processes and social transformations, it is important to recognize that the intellectual practices within which they operate constitute historically established forms of objectification and fixation of intellectual activity, institutionally ensuring the reproduction of knowledge. In this context, authorship is understood as a civilizational form of consolidating the results of activity, allowing one to identify the difference and contradiction between the logic of development and the logic of functioning.

Results and Discussion.

Classical philosophical thought has developed the concept of a uniquely human mode of existence as the overcoming of oneself and one's circumstances, a refusal to conform rationally to existing conditions, and the ability to transform the world and endlessly expand one's horizons as a fundamentally indeterminate being. This human capacity is expressed in the category of agency.

In the modern world, the formation and unfolding of agency takes place within the framework of institutional practices functioning as moments of intellectual production. This gives rise to a contradiction between a creative attitude toward the world and the reproduction of normativity:

- agency is directed toward development, toward transcending existing forms, toward transforming both the material world and the very modes of activity;
- institutional practices are, on the contrary, oriented toward stabilization, reproduction, and normative ordering. Institutional practices require subjective activity but seek to confine it within the framework of prescribed procedures.

The problem of the formation and unfolding of human agency in the modern world is mitigated by the fact that the human being, as a part of the machinery of society, functions as a thing among other things, a resource among other resources, more or less useful for the realization of certain functions (e.g., the production of goods, the reproduction and expansion of capital, the reception and transmission of information, etc.). Institutionalized intellectual practices are oriented toward the reproduction, standardization, replication, and control of the functioning of the intellectual sphere to maintain a complex social order. These tasks are solved by breaking down intellectual inquiry into systems of actions and operations assigned to specific participants. Their existence is impossible without the presence of actors' status and a system for confirming them, a set of functions and formalized requirements, ratings, and sanctions. All of this creates a requirement for the intellectual to possess functional literacy.

If an intellectual is oriented toward success and social recognition, they must fit into the system of required discourse and be able to fulfill prescribed tasks on time. Thus, the living creative process — which involves resolving real-life contradictions and contributes to the development of culture — is formalized (and often supplanted) by the production of an institutionally prescribed product, described through systems of performance indicators. This situation of substitution carries the risk that institutionalized intellectual

practices may devolve into the interpretation and reinterpretation of the old in the pursuit of “novelty” and the fulfillment of prescribed outcome parameters. Thus, as part of such a system, the intellectual is obligated to fulfill its requirements for producing new results and formalizing them, leaving genuine scientific inquiry outside the scope of attention.

One form of institutional fixation of results is authorship. Historically, authorship emerged as a means of attributing the result of intellectual activity to a specific name (or names), and in the context of various cultures (if it exists there at all as a phenomenon), it takes on different forms of attribution and legitimization within institutions such as the legal system, academia, the education system, the market, and the creative industries.

The requirements to account for the institutional conditioning of the phenomenon of authorship are dictated by conclusions drawn from an analysis of how it is formed. The activity of the “empirical subject of individual creativity” outside institutional structures transforms the view of it into an abstraction. The point is that the finished result itself (text, image, ...) becomes an authorial work (which, in fact, is what makes the author an author) not in a vacuum, but always within specific historical conditions. This concerns the presence within the mechanics of the social order of institutions of social recognition, responsibility, the reproduction of knowledge, and the incorporation of the result into economic, legal, and scientific circulation.

Plato was one of the first to raise the issue of authorship from an epistemological perspective — or, more precisely, as a problem of the autonomy of the text — in the history of Western philosophy, continuing the line of thought of Socrates, who, as a matter of principle, did not write texts, viewing them as the death of thought. In the dialogue “Phaedrus”, Plato says that a text is only a finished result that “lives” its own life, detached from the speaker/writer (author), unable to defend itself or reconfigure itself to become understandable to different audiences, and that the meanings present in it often pass by the reader, who is unable to see what is essential in the text [1; 165].

The figure of the author and its problematization in the social dimension emerged in the Modern era, when science acquired institutional form within the framework of the task of knowledge production. R. Barthes, reflecting on this, argues that the figure of the author took shape during this era as society began to discover the autonomous human personality embedded within the capitalist social order [2; 384]. The positivist tradition, as the most complete reflection of the thinking of this era, R. Barthes believes, absolutizes the idea of the subject’s autonomy. In this context, the author is understood as the sole source of meaning, and the text is read as a document of the individual — a consequence of his biography and psychology. Thus, R. Barthes implies the following: the figure of the author is not a neutral empirical fact, but an expression of historical ideology, where the individual is considered the source of meaning, meaning is conceived as property, and interpretation is subordinated to authority: text and meaning are viewed here as property within the logic of possession.

In his article “The Author: Epistemic Subject and Tragic Hero”, I.T. Kasavin notes that the term and concept of the author/authorship have been part of a systematics, literary studies, and philosophy. In philosophy, the concept of authorship is understood within the context of a semantic field defined by the categories of subject, consciousness, creativity, work, and dialogue, the content of which is examined in postmodernism, as well as through the prism of theories of alienation, the information society, and network analysis. Thus, one can observe the existence of a “conceptual migration” of the author/authorship from specialized academic knowledge (jurisprudence and literary studies) into philosophy [3; 6-7]. M. Foucault, in his work “What Is an Author?”, notes that there are only “a certain number of discourses endowed with the “author” function, while others are deprived of it. (...) The “author” function, thus, is characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of quite specific discourses within a given society” [4].

To be an author means to conform to certain formats, standards, and expectations: to master the language of the institution — the discourse — to comply with procedural requirements, and to reproduce recognized forms. *As a result, authorship can become a form of institutional fixation of results, capable of being reproduced independently of the subject’s actual development and even the fact of their existence.*

In the modern world, amid digitalization and the spread of artificial intelligence, a new round of discussion has emerged, involving an examination of the phenomenon of distributed/networked authorship, the issue of responsibility, creativity/reproductivity, intellectual property, innovation, and so on. These circumstances provide a substantive historical context in which the agency of the modern individual is formed and unfolds.

“In contemporary reality, the well-known statement: “Man is a sum of social relations” can be rephrased as “Man is a sum of information and channels for its transmission” [5; 21]. This position is ex-

pressed in the concept of the philosophy of information, a framework that was developed by L. Floridi. Man lives in the infosphere, which is an informational environment constituted by “informational processes, services, and entities, thus including informational agents as well as their properties, interactions, and mutual relations <...> Since the 1950s, computer science and ICTs have exercised both an extrovert and introvert influence, changing not only our interactions with the world but also our self-understanding. In many respects, we are not standalone entities, but rather interconnected informational organisms or inforgs, sharing with biological agents and engineered artefacts a global environment ultimately made of information, the infosphere” [6; 9].

In the infosphere, action is not localized within a single autonomous subject but is distributed among human agents, technical systems (algorithms and platforms), institutions, and data infrastructure. As a result, the generated product (text, image, solution, etc.) cannot be attributed to a single author. Authorship becomes a networked rather than an individual act, with results attributed to an individual by institutions of social recognition. This provides the basis for revising the institutions and norms of authorship legitimation suitable for the modern social order. The entire list of issues under discussion pertains to the fields of law, management, accounting, ethics, etc., to the realm of establishing institutions and the associated norms that support the status of the author under new conditions. It should be noted that the resolution of these issues is not directly related to creativity, socially meaningful self-realization, or cultural development, but rather serves as their institutional infrastructure.

Human existence within the context of the modern social order is impossible without mechanisms for affirming status; consequently, the emergence of new phenomena must always be “carefully planned”, integrated into a system of requirements and norms designed to resolve potential conflicts among stakeholders. This is precisely why discussions are circulating in the contemporary academic sphere regarding a reevaluation of the phenomenon of authorship within the context of the concept of the infosphere.

The proliferation of artificial intelligence systems capable of generating coherent text, images, and analytical materials has led to a reevaluation of questions regarding the nature of human agency. Artificial intelligence demonstrates that institutionally planned and sought-after intellectual products can be created without human involvement as a result of the manipulation, compilation, and interpretation of information. Thus, it becomes evident that human agency is not a necessary condition for the institutional functioning of intellectual practices, although it remains a necessary condition for cultural development, goal-setting, and the generation of ideas and meanings: a machine is capable of producing “ready-made” results.

An important subtext of these discussions is the absence or presence of an understanding that the source of the production of ideas and meanings is and always remains solely the human being in their subjective dimension. The generation and articulation of ideas and meanings, built on the operation of algorithms, acts as a substitute for the subject’s substantive, responsible position, and consequently, cannot, in principle, be distributed. An understanding of the phenomenon of authorship, based on the reduction of agency to authorship or other forms of its institutional substitutes, carries the danger of replacing what is essentially meaningful to a human being with its functional manifestations, and thus, questions the very survival of humanity.

Attempts to attribute agency to artificial intelligence rely on the anthropomorphization of machines and technology. In this case, philosophical analysis is replaced by a functionalist reduction, which is unacceptable when we understand the human being as a subject of culture, and culture itself as an expression of human agency.

In the context of human life mediated by the infosphere, humans are described as users, operators, or controllers of artificial intelligence, a meaningful, practical “interface” (artificial intelligence exists entirely within a symbolic and digital circuit and has no direct access to offline reality). Texts, images, and diagrams generated by artificial intelligence remain within the symbolic space until they are perceived and realized by humans in the social space. Humans are capable of acting, thinking, and bearing responsibility outside the application of artificial intelligence, whereas the latter, without humans, is confined to the information environment. This understanding dispels both the techno-humanistic illusion of “artificial intelligence agency” and the techno-humanistic anxiety about “the replacement of humans by machines”.

Conclusions

The analysis conducted leads to the conclusion that authorship functions as a socio-historical mechanism for the consolidation and social recognition of the results of activity, whereas agency implies creative engagement in practice — the human capacity to produce socially significant outcomes that are vital for the

development of culture. Institutional practices are necessary for the preservation and transmission of cultural outcomes to people for further objectification and integration into practice.

Contemporary technologies, including artificial intelligence, demonstrate the possibility of intellectual practices functioning without a subjective foundation. Under conditions of technical mediation, humans cease to be the sole “producers of text”, yet remain the sole node through which meaning can transcend the symbolic space and become a moment of practice. The development of artificial intelligence does not abolish agency but radicalizes it, intensifying the demands on human responsibility for cultural creation.

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Институттандырылған интеллектуалдық практикалар контексіндегі субъективтілік: авторлықты әлеуметтік-философиялық талдау тәжірибесі

Мақала авторлық феномен материалында институттандырылған интеллектуалдық практикалар жағдайында субъективтіліктің өзгеруін философиялық талдауға арналған. Қазіргі интеллектуалды практикалар ойлау, жауапкершілік және тану функцияларын қайта бөлу арқылы субъектінің мүмкін болатын әрекетінің шеңберін қалай белгілейтіні туралы мәселе басты назарда. Мақалада авторлықты жеке сананың көрінісі ретінде қарастыруға болмайтындығы көрсетілген. Бұл тұрақты институционалдық құрылымдар ішіндегі тарихи қалыптасқан мәртебе ретінде ғана мүмкін. Осы құрылымдар іс-әрекеттің формальды жүйелерін көбейтуге бағытталған интеллектуалды мәртебені қалыптастыратын интеллектуалдық қызметті реттеу тетіктерінің (академиялық регламенттер, сараптама практикасы, дәйексөз жүйелері, цифрлық платформалар) болуын болжайды. Мақалада инфосфера мен жасанды интеллекттің дамуы жағдайында білім өндірісінің бөлінген формалары және авторлық құбылысты қалыптастыратын жаңа институционалдық құрылым қалыптасатыны көрсетілген. Қазіргі академиялық, құқықтық, саяси пікірталастардағы авторлық тақырып проблемалық болып келеді, себебі интеллектуалдық еңбектің жаңа шарттарын қанағаттандырмайды. Талап етілетін қайта қарау жауапкершілік, инновация, авторлық мәртебені растау және оны қорғау тетіктері туралы сұрақтарға жауап беру қажеттілігіне байланысты. Мақала авторлары субъективтілікті адамның басқа адамдармен бірлесіп әлемді игеру және өзгерту қабілеті ретінде түсінуге негізделген. Жасанды интеллектке субъективтілікті жатқызу әрекеттері машинаның, технологияның антропоморфизациясына тұжырымдалған. Тек адам ғана әрекет ете алады, ойлана алады және жауапкершілікті өз мойнына ала алады және қазіргі шындық аясында субъективтілік мәселесі мәдени шығармашылық пен өзін-өзі сақтау үшін жауапкершілік мәселесінде адамға қойылатын талаптардың артуына байланысты өзектендіріледі.

Кілт сөздер: субъективтілік, адам, мәдениет, институттар, интеллектуалдық тәжірибелер, авторлық, инфосфера, жасанды интеллект.

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Субъектность в контексте институционализированных интеллектуальных практик: опыт социально-философского анализа авторства

Статья посвящена философскому анализу трансформации субъектности в условиях институционализированных интеллектуальных практик на материале феномена авторства. В центре внимания находится вопрос о том, каким образом современные интеллектуальные практики задают рамки возможному действию субъекта, перераспределяя функции мышления, ответственности и признания. В статье показано, что авторство не может рассматриваться как выражение индивидуального сознания. Оно возможно только как исторически сформированный статус внутри устойчивых институциональных структур. Эти структуры предполагают наличие механизмов регламентации интеллектуальной деятельности (академические регламенты, практики экспертизы, системы цитирования, цифровые платформы), которые оформляют статус интеллектуала, ориентированный на воспроизводство формализованных систем действий. В статье показывается, что в условиях инфосферы и развития искусственного интеллекта формируются распределённые формы производства знания и новая институциональная структура, конституирующая феномен авторства. Тема авторства в современных академических, юридических, политических дискуссиях проблематизируется в связи с тем, что существующее представление об авторстве перестаёт удовлетворять новым условиям интеллектуального труда. Требуемый пересмотр обусловлен необходимостью ответить на вопросы об ответственности, инновационности, механизмах подтверждения статуса авторства и его защиты. Авторы статьи опираются на понимание субъектности как способности человека к совместному с другими людьми освоению и преобразованию мира. Попытки приписать искусственному интеллекту субъектность опираются на антропоморфизацию машины, технологии. Только человек способен действовать, мыслить и нести ответственность, и в контексте современных реалий проблема субъектности актуализируется в связи с усилением требований к человеку в вопросе ответственности за культуротворчество и сохранение себя.

Ключевые слова: субъектность, человек, культура, институты, интеллектуальные практики, авторство, инфосфера, искусственный интеллект.

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