

Theory and History of Culture

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**A Rhizomatic Model of Post-Modernism Culture in the Digital Era****Nadezhda A. Tsareva**

*Far Eastern State Technical Fisheries University,
Vladivostok, Russian Federation,
nadezda58@rambler.ru[✉], <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6179-3978>*

Abstract. Reflection on contemporary digital culture is relevant due to its significant impact on people and society. The concept of “digital culture,” which may be considered as the next stage of cultural development after postmodernism, is characterised by the increasing dominance of digital technologies in all spheres of society. The model of digital culture set out in the present article is compared with the postmodern rhizomatic model. In order to understand the substantive nature of digital culture it is important to define its main characteristics. Over the course of the study, the following provisions were identified. 1. A comparison of the rhizomatic model of culture and digital culture reveals certain similarities in terms of their characteristics: the absence of a single centre; a non-linear form of organisation; multiple forms of culture; the idea of culture as an open self-organising system. 2. An analysis of postmodernist prognoses of the modern socio-cultural situation discloses the ambivalent nature of the influence of digital culture on individuals and society. Positive aspects of digital metamodern culture include an expanded world-perception horizon due to the combination of the real and the virtual and enhanced opportunities for becoming familiar with the world of different cultures and creative self-development. At the same time, there are significant anthropological and social risks inherent in the development of digital culture. The cultural transformations taking place in the 21st century profoundly affect the traditional system of values. The contemporary person’s perception of the world as mosaic and fragmentary can be attributed to the departure from traditional verbal communication forms. “Clip culture” acquires a “simplified” character due to its focus on hedonistic or utilitarian-pragmatic meanings. Such rapid cultural evolution represents a potentially existential threat to humanity and the entire socio-cultural system. Since digitalisation processes take many diverse forms, a person must determine the level and nature of their interaction with IT technologies in order to mitigate anthropological threats.

Keywords: digital technologies, digital culture, postmodernism, metamodernism, rhizomatic model

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Introduction

The relatively recent technological level of development achieved as a result of the Internet has created a new digital environment. The actuality of cyber-culture is characterised by the network space, mass media sphere and virtual reality. The digital era of metamodernism, which represents the 21st century cultural development stage following postmodernism, offers new forms of culture and a distinct space of existence.¹ In the emerging era of metamodernism, thanks to digital technologies, a special environment is being formed, similar to reality — a “virtual state” without borders with a powerful cyber-culture that threatens the gradual replacement of the human mind with artificial intelligence (see: [1, pp. 7–8]).

The expressions “a person of culture” and “a person in culture” have different meanings. The existence of “a person in culture” represents his or her passive subordination to the values of the prevailing culture. “A person of culture,” conversely, is someone who actively transforms reality in accordance with their aims. To what category does a person of the 21st century belong: a passive consumer of digital products or an individual creatively mastering virtual space? Is such a person capable of using computer technology for his or her own benefit or is there a risk of being transformed into a mere computer system operator? Is there a threat to the anthropological essence of man under the influence of digital technologies? These substantive questions make the problems of understanding the essence of digital culture and the degree of its influence on humans some of the most pressing in the humanities.

Many authors have written about digital culture as a product of the information society.

Such an analysis proceeds from the obvious fact that the nature of culture is largely determined by the methods of exchanging cultural information in all spheres of life. Since already in the 21st century, culture is largely transmitted by the Internet, human cultural existence has acquired an important digital dimension. In this connection, the concepts of “digital culture,” “information culture,” “culture of the digital age,” and “virtual culture” have semantic intersections.

The concept of digital culture is often considered as an element of general human culture associated with modern IT technologies, [2, pp. 95–114] and as part of information culture (mastery of technology, adherence to digital ethics). [3, pp. 34–39] However, this concept may be viewed more broadly as a stage in the development of culture that is characterised by the inclusion of digital technologies in all spheres of society along with traditional forms of culture. Many other authors hold a similar position. For example, Anastasia Sarapultseva defines digital culture as “changes in the sphere of culture caused by the integration of technologies brought by the digital revolution with traditional spheres of knowledge and activity.” [4, p. 124] Extrapolating the principles of postmodernism to digital culture, Elena Yarkova concludes that “digital culture is a kind of synthesis of modernist and postmodernist principles.” [5, p. 121] However, according to this synthesis, each stage of culture, along with similar characteristics, has its own peculiarities: “And if postmodernism with its inherent destruction, derealisation, decentration and deconstruction appears to be a certain transitional type of culture built on denial, then digital culture with its structuring, realism, floating centrism and constructivism appears

¹ See: Vermeulen T., Acker R. *Notes on Metamodernism*. URL: <https://metamodernizm.ru/notes-on-metamodernism/> (accessed: 27.11.2024).

as a stage type of culture with its own unique system of principles.” [Ibid., p. 121]

Assessments of digital culture remain highly controversial. A number of authors believe that the spontaneous transmission of culture in the Internet space distorts the processes of cultural communication. Digital socialisation leads to a conflict of values, since cyberspace forms an individualistic worldview, initiating a confrontation with representatives of collective meanings. [6, p. 63–64] The problems of virtualisation of “Generation V” (“Generation Virtual”) in the culture of digital society are considered in the works of Vladimir Komarov. The author defines the characteristics of the digital generation, for which virtuality becomes a medium of communication and self-realisation: “...clip thinking, virtual communication, existence in the real world and the world of images, symbols, constant and high level of connection to the Internet.” [7, p. 144] The young researcher Egor Selivanov provides a positive assessment of cyberspace, defining digital culture as an essential component of personality that contributes to its self-realisation. [8] In a theoretical excursion into the concept of “virtual culture,” Albina Tishkova examines markers of self-identification in the digital environment, which is realised through the digital activity of the individual, “the assimilation of social norms, requirements, and values of information (digital) culture.” [9, p. 212] While many authors have reflected on the various attributes of digital culture, Ivan Tuzovsky notes that “conceptual models of contemporary culture” have yet to be proposed. [10, p. 47]

In the present work, in order to consider the model of digital culture, we will compare it with the rhizomatic postmodern model of culture. We will show that in the era of digitalisation, representing the stage of cultural development that follows postmodernism, significant characteristics of the rhizomatic model

are not only preserved but also developed. By identifying such continuity in 21st century culture, we will not only convince ourselves of its underlying regularity, but also reveal prospects for its development and predict future trends in cultural processes.

Thus, the aim of the present work is to compare a model of digital culture with the rhizomatic model widely used in postmodern theory. To achieve this, the following tasks are set: (a) compare the characteristic features of the rhizomatic model of culture in postmodernism with the features of the digital culture of the 21st century; (b) analyse the implementation of postmodern forecasts on the processes of development of the culture of the digital society; (c) demonstrate the ambivalence of the influence of digital culture on a person.

The Rhizomatic Model of Culture in Postmodern Philosophy

The postmodernist trend in philosophy reflected on the changes that took place in the late 1970s. This period marked the beginning of the development of a new global information era. The most important theme in the philosophical reflections of postmodernist theorists such as Gilles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard and Michel Foucault is the state of culture and prospects for its development. From their analysis of social trends and the anticipated transition to a new information world, the philosophers understood the inevitability of cultural change. Traditional culture — in their words, “territorial” — developed on the basis of ancient culture, whose main principle was the reflection of the natural world in art. In the classical type of culture, everything is subordinated to the “One as a subject or object, a natural or spiritual essence, as an image of the world,” [11, p. 255] having a logical hierarchical structure. Thus, the tree, with its trunk, roots, branches, etc., serves as

a symbol of traditional culture. This is the culture of the book era, in which everything is aimed at reproduction or “tracing.”

In their work *Rhizome* (1976), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari consider the model of culture of the coming information age. Its originality lies in its acentrism and non-linearity — that is, it is not structured and does not have a control centre. The existence of such a model is ensured by a multitude of multi-level structureless connections. Thus the new model of culture described by these philosophers came to be known as “rhizomatic culture.” The main characteristics of the new culture are identified follows:

1. The rhizomatic model lacks a single centre, a clear structure, or a genetic connection. The image of a rhizome or branching root consisting of many intersecting shoots and offshoots that are indistinguishable from each other becomes a suitable symbolic model for such a culture due to its indeterminism. Multiple, spontaneously interacting rhizome shoots emerge, form “cross-links,” and then die off as a result of constant interaction with the environment. The nonlinearity of the rhizome is manifested in its growth “in all directions at once,” along with its ability to change freely internally at the same time as expanding its boundaries externally. Consequently, the possible modes of existence of “rhizome culture” are infinitely diverse. Deleuze and Guattari call the new culture “nomadic” or deterritorialising — that is, destroying the traditionally structured model of culture.

The rhizomatic model offers a multiplicity of cultural forms, as well as an infinitude of types and methods of aesthetic connections: “The rhizome constantly connects semiotic links, the organisation of power, circumstances referring to art and science, social struggle. The semiotic link is like a tuber that absorbs the most diverse anti — not only linguistic, gestural, and mental: there is no language

in itself, no universal language, there is a competition of dialogues, dialects, jargons, special languages...” [Ibid., p. 250]

2. The rhizome model represents a fundamentally non-linear type of organisation. “Flat sets with n dimensions are meaningless, non-subjective.” [Ibid., p. 255] The multidimensional elements of the rhizome constantly change the nature of their contact with each other; they are on the “line of flight.” In this diverse multitude there is no subject and object, no progressive or regressive development, no linearity.

3. The rhizomatic model represents culture as an open system, where elements pass into each other through diverse and multi-vector types of connections to create a space of chaos. “The world has lost its core,” the philosophers write, “the subject can no longer create a dichotomy, but it achieves a higher unity — the unity of ambivalence and overdetermination — in a dimension that is always complementary to that of its own object. The world has become chaos...” [12, p. 11]

4. As an open system, rhizomatic culture has the creative potential for self-organisation. Evolution to new forms of existence occurs through breaks and fractures within the culture, which nevertheless continues to exist as an independent system, constantly renewed and therefore indestructible.

Thus, in Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of culture, the traditional culture having a centred and defined structure is replaced by a new rhizomatic culture as a multiple, non-linear, decentred, open, self-developing system. Due to the infinite variety of forms of rhizomatic model of cultural existence, it became possible to consider all reality, all phenomena of the world, as self-developing, open, interacting systems.

Along with their analysis of the characteristics of rhizomatic culture, postmodernist theorists also warned about the threats of the coming information age for man. According to them,

the processes of virtualisation of culture will only continue to intensify. The virtual reality created by computer technologies will offer humanity an infinity of simulacra. According to Baudrillard's prognosis, simulacra will spread in multiple and diverse ways across all spheres of reality. Their dominance will make it difficult to perceive the world as a reality, which itself threatens to turn into a self-replicating system of copies.

Digital culture can also transform a person into a mechanism, depriving him or her of the creative and self-creative capability. In his work *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, Deleuze reflects on the possibility of using computer technologies to control the existence of man and society: "The spaces of confinement are separate matrices, a distinct casting; the spaces of control are modulations of a single substance, like a self-transforming molten substance that continuously flows from one form to another, or like a sieve whose threads constantly pass from one hole to another." [13, p. 20] And although the patterns of human activity differ, the control mechanism organises them as variants of the same structure.

The behaviour, speech, thinking and imagination of an individual will be under the control of the authorities. The coming era of the "power of language" will limit the "territory of man," imposing values and meanings on him by means of codes and symbols. The society of control will take away man's individuality, turning him into a *dividuum*.² In societies of control, according to Deleuze, "we are no longer dealing with the mass/individual dichotomy. Individuals become 'dividuals,' while the masses become samples, data, markets, and 'banks.'" [Ibid., p. 23]

It is obvious that the development of authentic culture cannot be carried out by coded and controlled "dividuals." Deleuze linked the dynamics of culture with the processes of self-development of the individual: "To become does not mean to acquire a form (through identification, imitation, mimesis), but rather to discover a zone of closeness, indistinguishability or non-differentiation, in which it is no longer possible to separate oneself from a woman, an animal or a molecule — neither similar nor common, but unforeseen and non-pre-existent, isolated from the population rather than having a definite form." [14, p. 12]

In postmodern philosophy, the process of cultural development is based on human self-knowledge. The process of formation — that is, the evolution of self-awareness — was understood by postmodernist theorists in terms of creative activity. Culture, in Peter Kozlowski's understanding, is "self-reference, the active meaning of the human project of oneself in culture <...> the individual self remains identical to itself not in a static state, but undergoing changes, and also consciously implementing the latter." [15, p. 66–67] Human self-awareness is a creative process aimed at "explaining one's selfhood" and creating self-identity. Michel Foucault called spirituality "...that search, that practical activity, that experience by means of which the subject carries out in him- or herself the transformations necessary to achieve truth." [16, p. 126]

Thus, in the philosophical understanding, the rhizomatic model contained a contradictory potential for the development of both positive and negative tendencies in culture. Does this ambivalence persist in the culture of the digital age?

² "Individuum" in Latin means "indivisible"; thus, "dividuum" should be understood as "divisible," that is, devoid of integrity, uniqueness, and inimitability.

Features of Digital Culture in the Metamodern Era

The Internet has transcended its status as a means of information: it has become the ideological axis around which the culture of the 21st century continues to develop. The various digital platforms and network technologies created by the Internet are becoming a real environment: a library, a market, a space for informative and communicational interaction, a sphere of leisure, etc. Improvements in digital technologies open up broad prospects for a variety of types and forms of information transfer: websites, search engines, instant messengers, etc. Digital culture has enormous potential to engage a wider audience in the flow of information and to have an even greater impact on people's worldviews than it already does.

The culture of the digital age can be compared with Deleuze and Guattari's "rhizomatic" cultural model on the basis of its multidimensionality, multi-layeredness, acentricity, openness, dynamic development, erasure of spatial and temporal characteristics and capacity for facilitating self-development. Let us consider the characteristics of rhizomatic culture in comparison with the emerging culture of the 21st century.

1. The absence of a centre or subordination to any "One" in the digital culture system is connected with its multi-vectoral nature. Since almost all aspects of everyday life are now covered by information technologies, the Internet has become the basis of digital culture. The underlying model of the Internet phenomenon has a fundamentally acentric character. The Internet lacks a centralising structure because the diverse and multi-vector information it comprises comes from various

sources. Rapid access to constantly changing information and the mobile character of its necessary criteria transform the quest for truth. The Internet functions through multiple, spontaneous and diverse yet parallel connections and intersections. The Internet model in miniature represents a model of digital culture in which there is no single centre and where cultural phenomena interact in a multipolar and manifold system.

2. The open nature of the culture of the digital age is determined by the global nature of the sphere of computerisation in society. Digital culture creates endless opportunities for various types of communications. The main features of the digital space are the speed of information transfer, its hyper-availability, as well as the absence of linguistic, spatial, temporal and other restrictions. Millions of people visit the many hub sites, interacting with and accessing open access information on a variety of platforms on countless issues and topics.

3. The nonlinearity of digital culture is also linked to its inherent hypertextuality. Hypertext or "branching text" (Theodore Nelson³) becomes a means of mass communication in virtual space; it is similar in characteristics to "rhizomatic" text (Deleuze) in terms of the inconsistency of the information it presents. Due to its polydiscursivity and diversity of topics, the Internet does not offer a ready-made scenario; rather, it provides constantly changing information whose flows intersect, each text referring to another text, and new texts being formed at their intersection. "The decomposition of the text and internal rearrangement of its elements," as Elena Yarkova notes, creates the possibility of endless reading in any direction. [5, p. 13] The novel electronic form of text — a phenomenon of digital culture

³ See: Nelson T. H. *As We Will Think. Online 72 Conference Proceedings*. Uxbridge: Online Computer Systems Ltd. Publ., 1972. Vol. 1, pp. 439–454.

— has an intrinsically open character. Having no limitations in terms of its audience of readers and critics, it is open to various changes.

The non-linear nature of digital culture is indicated by its mosaic structure. The worldview of a person in the 21st century changes depending on the multiplicity of discourses offered by communication structures. Since information does not emanate from a single centre, it has a non-hierarchical structure. The horizon of discourse acquires a fragmentary character due to information that is transmitted and received in a scattered manner, in parts, creating separate, unrelated elements of a mosaic in the subject's consciousness.

4. Digital culture is characterised by internal processes of self-organisation. Since its acentricity implies the absence of a teleological evolutionary goal, the culture of the 21st century can be understood as a self-developing system. The digital age shapes the culture of the Internet with its hypertextuality and mosaic information structure. The model of digital culture can be compared to the image of a network, a web in which multiple spatial and temporal interweavings develop dynamically via diverse interconnections. The system of links, which functions like a text within a text, connects the past, present and future. Manuel Castells defines the social system of the digital society as “networked individualism” — that is, a social structure rather than a “collection of isolated individuals. Individuals build their networks based on their interests, values, inclinations and projects.” [17, p. 157] This image of a network or web correlates with the postmodern rhizomatic model of culture.

At the same time, the features of the new technological level have influenced the nature of digital culture, opening up new prospects for development for humanity. The cyberspace culture that is in the process of being formed offers people new meanings and values. The following positive aspects, offering new

opportunities for realising human potential, can be identified:

1. A distinctive feature of digital culture consists in its combination of virtual and real existence. The virtual world — in Deleuze's words, “visibility beyond the gaze” [18, p. 19] — is not identical to the real world. On the one hand, it is immaterial since the virtual image is created by endlessly reconstructed symbols. On the other hand, the virtual image is material because it is presented by real existing programmers. As a result of this activity, a synthesis of the perceiving and authorial consciousness is formed. Oleg Aronson defines this phenomenon as follows: “...Internet images are not images of the world, but the world itself that has become an image.” [19, p. 153]

By connecting everyday life, the world of symbols and images of the Internet, cyberspace presents for perception immaterial objects that are actually experienced. Such experiences are similar to the emotions arising from reading a book or can be associated with events in the dream world, but they are “in many ways objective and have properties inherent in the phenomena of the physical (real) world.” [20, p. 528]

2. By opening up unlimited opportunities for the inclusion of a person in the space of world and ethnic cultures, thus introducing them to their values and norms, digital culture creates a new basis for human enculturation. Abulhasan Nuriymon considers the chief feature of cyberspace to be its expansion into all areas of human existence. [21] Digital technologies facilitate processes of cultural communication and socialisation. Thus, a person's personality is formed not only by the real environment, but also by digital technologies. Yulia Migunova presents the digital environment as a continuation of the real world, in which the development of personality is largely determined by the interests and values of virtual agents of socialisation comprising other Internet users.

[22] Social networks create an attractive socio-cultural environment for people in which virtual communication takes place. The advantages of the latter are due to the accessibility and versatility of the Internet, which confers the possibility to find like-minded people based on a common aim, which in the real world is not always possible. The Internet is attractive because of its anonymity and the predominantly visual (using signs and symbols that convey information in a condensed form) language of communication that replaces spoken language.

3. The culture of digital society is becoming a fertile environment for human self-development. At the end of the 20th century, Manuel Castells predicted that digital technologies would transform the processes of self-determination and human realisation, transferring them into virtual space. He assessed virtual culture as a special culture of the information age, which "...is built on virtual processes of communication controlled by electronics... through virtuality, we mainly produce our creation of meaning." [17, p. 237] In the 21st century, human creative activity and cultural activity can increasingly be realised in the information space. In this case, virtual space can become more productive than reality since it allows a person to freely construct his or her "I". Evgeniya Yurkova considers the virtualisation of culture and socio-cultural activity as a broad field for the manifestation of individual and collective creativity. [23] The opportunity to transform one's "I" appears. By acting as the "Other" for his or her interlocutors, an Internet user embarks on a search for a social role.

At the same time, the influence of digital culture on people undeniably has negative aspects. At the beginning of the 21st century, Baudrillard warned that virtual hyperreality could lead to the death of culture. [24] Political, economic, social and any other reality can become a mere simulation, a game of reality, hyperreality. In this case, culture is replaced

by the idea of culture, its simulacrum, which does no longer reflects, but increasingly distorts reality. Assessing the essence of modern digital culture, Charlie Gere (the author of the term "digital culture") called it a counterculture. By transforming a person into a "digital machine," his or her purpose becomes the development of new technological digital forms. [25] More radical is Nick Bostrom's theory about the virtuality of modern realities created by programs of unknown civilisations from the future. [26]

New forms and methods of transmitting digital culture influence a person's perception and worldview. Virtual space offers its own norms, values and attitudes that shape a person's spiritual culture. According to Marietta Bolokova, the culture of the 21st century is "being simplified." [27] This is due not only to the predominance of works of a hedonistic nature or utilitarian-pragmatic meanings, which impoverish a person's cultural value baggage and his creative abilities.

Firstly, communication on networks allows us to move away from traditional spoken forms of communication, which entails a gradual loss of cultural value experience. In his analysis of the features of digital culture, Oleg Myasoutov notes that "...in virtual reality, semantic constructs are distributed much more easily, practically without encountering resistance, at the same time having the possibility to change any possible socio-cultural identity." [28, p. 37] By recreating already existing models, symbols, and images of virtual communication, a person risks becoming a standard consumer of culture rather than its creator. Analysing information technologies as a new form of domination over the individual and society, Tatyana Savitskaya concludes that "the wider the scale of media and cyber prosthetics of human perception in multichannel multimedia media, the poorer the imagination and the poorer the thought,

the more infantile and insensitive the audience brought up by them.”⁴

Secondly, in the network digital space, the axiological system is blurred and transformed due to the multiplicity of its sources and the unsystematic, spontaneous nature of its transmission. The mosaic, fragmentary nature of “clip culture” (Alvin Toffler) results not a holistic perception of reality, but rather a fragmentary, episodic perception, which is grasped by the subject’s consciousness from the flow of messages. In the resulting picture of the world, not only semantic and cause-and-effect relationships are lost, but also spiritual experience and cultural continuity. In the endless flow of information, traditional values are deformed, ethnic, age, status and other differences are erased.

Thirdly, the digital environment is not only a fertile space for the development of a person’s creative humanistic potential. The information consumer faces various risks. The result of the influence of the digital environment can be Internet addiction, various types of aggression on the networks or, conversely, anomie, computer escapism, even lifestyles, self-identification and consciousness altered by the proliferation of fakes, etc. According to the analysis of a number of authors, a person’s presence in the digital space can have a negative impact on his personality, for example “...the digital environment can also be a desocialising condition, directly influencing a person’s consciousness, his cognitive and communicative abilities, changing his value system.” [29, p. 8] The virtual world turns out to be more attractive to people than reality. This occurs as a result of an unusual synthesis: simultaneously, there is an illusion that the rules are preserved as in reality, while on

the other hand, there are no such conventions or restrictions. Yet virtual space offers the apparent disappearance of explicit coercive controls at the same time as concealing vast opportunities for manipulating human consciousness.

However, an alternative view on the influence of audiovisual culture involves the anthropological foundations of humanity: the processes of human consciousness, cognition, feelings, behaviour, etc. According to Sergei Grigoriev’s concept of “polyscreen culture,” screen information, thanks to the reflective essence of human consciousness, has the capability of returning imagery and analyticity to cognitive practice: “...to ‘slow reading,’ equating the screen with the interface of a labyrinthine or encyclopaedic space of meaning.” [30, p. 3] Humanity currently exists in a situation of development of digital culture; accordingly, the problem of transformation of screen information and its influence on a person has a heuristic nature.

While the trends of anthropological risks in the development of digital culture, which were predicted by philosophers at the end of the 20th century, are changing scales, forms, levels, they continue to structure the present stage. Many contemporary researchers are seeking a solution to the problem of subject-object relations between the digital environment and humans: who or what will be the subject and what is the degree of influence of digitalisation processes on human nature. Multi-vector transformations of the culture of the digital age are capable of affecting the traditional system of values, providing the basic foundation of any culture. The consequent deformation of human existential humanity threatens to change the entire socio-cultural system. However, according to some authors, if a person

⁴ Savitskaya T. The Virtualisation of Culture. *Intelros: Intellectual Russia*. URL: <https://intelros.ru/subject/figures/tatyana-savickaya/23649-virtualizacii-kultury.html?ysclid=m5oa3g1wws930352400> (accessed: 27.11.2024).

has created a digital culture, then he or she will remain "...a creative person, a subject of social existence as the main characteristic and source of development of a digital society." [31, p. 4]

Thus, postmodernist philosophy has had a significant influence on the process of development and formation of digital culture. The features of the postmodern rhizomatic model of culture of the post-industrial society of the late 20th century were developed in the model of digital culture of the 21st century. Contemporary culture, existing on the basis of the Internet, can be imagined as a complex synergistic system with multiple interconnected elements, which are interacting in accordance with the internal laws of this system.

Since the culture of digital society in many ways actualises the characteristics of the rhizomatic model of culture, it makes sense to refer to the postmodernist understanding as a potential means for overcoming the possible negative transformation of the essence of human nature. The change in the anthropological basis of culture can be countered by the formation of analytical critical thinking of a person capable of self-development, "self-creation," and self-realisation.

Conclusion

Deleuze and Guattari first described the rhizomatic model of culture in 1976, at a time when the words "gadgets," "digitalisation," "cyberspace," etc. were yet not in common use since their material carriers had not yet appeared. However, postmodern theorists have once again confirmed the purpose of philosophy: to identify or anticipate upcoming changes, to ask about the essence of the coming changes in

culture, to predict the prospects and threats of its development in hidden meanings. The horizons of development glimpsed by the postmodern philosophers of the 1970s are now visible.

The dynamics of the development of computer technologies confirms that virtual culture will continue to take on increasingly diverse forms and manifestations. The cultural meaning of changes in cyberspace indicates that without knowledge of digital technologies, socialisation and the very existence of people will be faced by increasing challenges. At the same time, new horizons of opportunity will open up for future generations in the evolving digital culture. For this reason, in order to imagine the prospects for the development of society and man, it becomes necessary to understand the essence and characteristics of the digital culture of the 21st century.

At the same time, a person must determine the level and nature of his or her interaction with information technologies. The digital environment becomes the most powerful source of information; however, it is up to the individual to select the data he or she needs. Such a person is faced by the choice to increase his knowledge and develop her creative potential or follow a false vector of movement in an array of information. A person is equally given the simultaneous possibility to be both a passive receiver of information, an object for the manipulation of consciousness, or a "person of culture," who can be the bearer of a holistic cultural experience, in order to actively develop and transform the surrounding reality on its basis for the benefit of humanity. Thus, the place and role of a person in the digital culture of the 21st century ultimately depends on him- or herself.

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Information about the author:

Nadezhda A. Tsareva — Dr.Sci. (Philosophy), Professor at the Department of Social and Humanitarian Disciplines, Far Eastern State Technical Fisheries University, Vladivostok, Russian Federation.

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