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SHAPING ONLINE CULTURE AS THE NEW CULTURAL REALITY: PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS

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The purpose of the article is to substantiate the emergence of online culture as a new phenomenon of our time, the development of which was stimulated by the comprehensive approval of the online space as a space of existence of culture in the broad sense of this concept in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic with the reference to the cultural and philosophical ideas of the 20th-century thinkers (on the example of K. Jaspers, J. Ortega y Gasset and W. Benjamin's ideas) and the 21st-century thinkers (on the example of E. Schmidt, J. Cohen and U. Eco's ideas). The article outlines the main prerequisites for its rise and argues favouring the concept of "online culture" in its own right. Today, a new cultural phenomenon is being actively formed, which we mean as "online culture". The impetus for its rapid development was the challenges common to all humanity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which stimulated the active search for new forms and opportunities for self-realisation and communication by the world community. Online culture is a voluminous and multi-component phenomenon, and it has every reason to become a characteristic of contemporary culture and a new cultural form. The study uses elements of methods of hermeneutical reading of texts, comparative historical and cultural analysis of texts, as well as the method of participant observation. Conclusions. The study results show that a new stage of cultural development is currently being formed, which the authors of the study called "online culture". The emergence of such a new cultural reality is closely linked to the online environment and digital forms of representation of cultural products. It is demonstrated that predictive reasoning about its occurrence took place in cultural and philosophical studios of the 20th and the 21st centuries, overcoming pandemic

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challenges by humanity; its entry becomes the realities of the present. The concept of “online culture” correlates with other cultural phenomena close to it in content and forms of representation, such as “information culture”, “digital culture”, “virtual culture”, etc. Still, it exists independently and denotes a fundamentally different cultural cross-section of the present. Now online culture is in its infancy, but the pace of its formation, inspired by the exponential development of the online space, is swift.

Keywords: online culture; online platforms; online space; pandemic

Introduction

Since the COVID-19 pandemic has covered society, everyone feels the infinity of challenges that humanity faces. They are related mainly to the restriction of communication in various sociocultural spheres. When humankind was at risk, and the functioning of various public life spheres was raised, the community accumulated its creative potential quickly. It began to find ways out of unexpectedly arisen complex problems, as evidenced by a wave of innovative and very pointful “reviews” that opened new prospects for culture. Due to the constant growth and expansion of the online space and the gradual transfer of various cultural spheres — education, art, economy, politics and others — to the online format, it is possible to state the formation of a new stage in the development of culture, which we propose to call “online culture” and which, using the methods of hermeneutical and comparative historical and cultural analyses of texts, including field observation, we analyse. The emergence of a new cultural reality, which will be closely connected with the online environment and digital forms of representation of cultural products, was once predicted by cultural and philosophical studies (included in the analysis), but now it has become a reality.

Analysis of the latest researches and publications. The rapid course of history, the fast growth of scientific and technological progress, the introduction of innovative technologies in all spheres of sociocultural life — all these facts induced the thinkers of the 20th century (J. Ortega y Gasset (1994), A. Peccei (1977), A. Toynbee (1987), A. Spengler (2012), K. Jaspers (2011), etc.) to reflect on the latest tendencies of our time and stimulated them to design the future. D. Bell (2003; 2004), Ye. Bystrytskyi (2020), E. U. Weizsäcker and A. Wijkman (2018), U. Eco and J.-C. Carrière (2012), J. Ito and J. Howe (2016), K. Kelly (2017), M. Ozhevan and D. Dubov (2017), M. Popovych (2018), K. Robinson and L. Aronica (2015), A. Toffler (1984), R. Florida (2014), F. Fukuyama (2003) and others — the thinkers and socio-political figures of the late 20th – early 21st centuries also reflect on what the future holds for mankind, in what direction culture is developing and transforming.

The researchers paid much attention to the impact on the formation of the culture of the present and future, digital technologies, the space of virtual hyperreality, which was created using these technologies in close connection with the exponentially increasing knowledge that humanity operates with. The possibility of successful reformation of sociocultural life to exist only in the online world was stimulated by the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine re-

strictions related to it. It was the beginning of a new “online culture”, which is demonstrating its effectiveness increasingly more. The study of this new cultural reality has not been the subject of cultural, philosophical understanding yet, that is evidenced, in particular, by the following facts: 1) the Google Search service for the query “online culture” suggests links only to several cultural projects called Online Culture and covers the variety of cultural events that are held online, the resource does not find the notion of “culture online” as an independent one; 2) as of May 2021, the scientometric database Web of Science has not indexed a single publication in which this notion is the subject of study.

Purpose of the article

The purpose of the article is to substantiate the emergence of online culture as a new phenomenon of our time, the development of which was stimulated by the complete approval of the online space as a space of existence of culture in the broad sense of this concept in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic regarding the cultural and philosophical ideas of the thinkers of the 20th (on the example of J. Ortega y Gasset and K. Jaspers’ ideas) and the 21st centuries (on the example of J. Cohen and E. Schmidt’s ideas).

Main research material

In the context of various cultural and philosophical concepts of the 20th century, the notions of mass culture, the culture of the technological age, industrial culture, information culture, and others were formed. All these forms of culture allowed seeing the peculiarities of the functioning of society and various sociocultural spheres at certain stages of its formation. New circumstances of society life encourage the formation of new iterations. Today we can talk about the formation of “online culture” as a broad and multi compound phenomenon. We propose the notion of “online culture” that determines a fundamentally different way of culture existence of the 21st century, and, although it is correlated with other cultural representations that have been already denoted by familiar definitions, such as information culture, digital culture, virtual culture, etc., it exists independently and denotes a fundamentally different cultural cross-section of the present.

Life in the era of dizzying changes and extreme challenges accelerates the course of history and makes it possible to observe phenomena, analyse them and summarise certain results. Lately, the challenges that humankind faces globalise the world increasingly more because problems common for all people require a standard solution. The question of human unity is becoming more critical. The formation of this unity is facilitated by a single online space, which is becoming more widespread now and makes the way out of the crisis in which all spheres of public life have found themselves due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The introduction of long-term and strict quarantine restrictions in different parts of the world has stimulated the expansion of the online space and created online platforms that solve various problems: educational, business,

economic, political, artistic, etc. In a relatively short time, different sociocultural systems have established their online work. The experience of such work has shown that the online format is more convenient and appropriate in some instances. It opens new prospects and opportunities for a person, creates a basis for coexistence in diversity.

The idea of the unity of the human community and world culture takes a significant position in European philosophy. The outstanding German existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers (2011) proves this idea reasonably and convincingly. The unity of world history and world culture, according to K. Jaspers (2011), begins the “axial time”, and it manifests itself over the years more fully. The global unity of humankind, as the thinker notes, manifests itself especially vividly in the 20th century. The reason for this is the rapid development of the scientific and technological sectors of culture, the formation of popular culture and, most important, common challenges for all humanity. K. Jaspers (2011) considers the Second World War to be such a mighty challenge. It was after its ending that the signs of the unity of humankind appeared in various cultural spheres, and most fully — in all types of communication. The common spiritual origins, the common essence of people representing different nations and cultures, according to K. Jaspers (2011), are prerequisites that will make such constructive communication possible and allow establishing mutual understanding and cooperation for the benefit of all humankind. The philosopher predicted the emergence of a new “axial time” that would change humankind by uniting it around new great future projects.

These tendencies to unity and establishment of communication are still relevant for society. Especially in response to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The joint searches for treatment options, joint restrictive measures, joint steps taken by states and charities around the world in the fight against coronavirus unite the international community and confirm the importance of well-established communication undoubtedly. The current level of technology was ready to provide it at a high level. K. Jaspers predicted the need for communication as a realisation of the unity of humanity in his work in 1948. The formation of a space that made it possible for people to communicate and opened new opportunities for interaction — the online space — has happened recently.

The internet network covered the planet quite fast. Along with this, there was a powerful leap in the development of innovative technologies. European culture experienced a similar situation in the early 20th century. At that time, technologies also had a powerful impact on the future of humankind. Jose Ortega y Gasset (1994) called this phenomenon “the rise of the historical level of the era”. Owing to it, human society has improved the quality of life, received many of the achievements of civilisation for use and finally realised itself in a new way. Today we are in the situation when the “level of the era” has changed again. And society has received not only innovative technologies but also a new space for its life.

In the pre-COVID period, the online network met the users’ needs in entertainment and communication mainly. But when the pandemic restricted peo-

ple's ability to move freely without threat to their lives and to be engaged in socially important affairs, online became not only a parallel but often the only space for the realisation of the needs of a person and society. In this regard, the life of all people has changed radically: today, a person has access to communication, information, education, art, science and other spheres of sociocultural life, the opportunity to work fully and ensure his livelihoods in online space. Online has become a tool that has helped various areas of culture to continue their work. Undoubtedly, it had difficulties and failures and worked hard, but culture as a multicomponent and multifunctional structure adapts to the online space.

In a relatively short time, we have online science (online conferences, online internships, online training, online advanced training courses, online defence of dissertations, etc.), online education (distance learning platforms for higher and secondary education, educational platforms, distance accreditation, etc.), online art (music, cinema, theatre, fine arts, literature are newcomers, but they are quite successful in this space); politics, diplomacy, business, economics, even religion (the oldest and most conservative sphere of culture) function in the online space successfully. There is no need to talk about digitised books, films, musical works, theatrical productions, collections of libraries, museums, archives and the growing openness and accessibility of their resources.

Thus, we are talking about the emergence of a new space of culture existence — not the one that uses digital opportunities, but the one that functions online, since digital technologies are used in it not as a supplement to human abilities but as the creation of fundamentally new opportunities and new cultural products. Its formation could still have continued in a relatively calm course if not for the extreme challenges related to COVID-19. This complex problem that is not overcome yet has changed the life of humanity extremely quickly and caused a confident strengthening of the online space as a living space not only for individuals but also for the entire world community, and therefore a shared space for the realisation of world culture. Today, almost all spheres of culture are realised online, even convenient ones that depend on the physical space and physical presence of a person find themselves successfully. It is possible to state that now we are at the beginning of forming the new stage of culture, which we suggest defining as “online culture”.

The authors of the study, which was published in 2013 and became a best-seller, according to *The New York Times*, are Eric Schmidt, the executive chairman of Google's board of directors and Jared Cohen, director of the Google Ideas, aimed to show how the virtual world can affect the real world: to improve, worsen or to change it in general. Undoubtedly, they could not predict such an extreme challenge to humankind as the coronavirus epidemic. Still, they described the phenomena and processes accompanying the adaptation of people's sociocultural lives to the online space. COVID-19 has accelerated the processes that the authors of the book described and predicted for humanity. There is no mystery in these prophecies as they predict tendencies in developing innovative technologies and how people adapt to technologies, “exploit technologies in their environment, now and in the future, throughout the world” (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013, p. 18).

The switch of people's social and cultural lives to an online format is accompanied by global searches in all spheres of human activity. And this, as the authors of the book note, causes the most exciting changes in the history of humanity (social, cultural, political). The Internet and innovative technologies have erased barriers to communication. Now neither geographical remoteness, nor language, nor information barriers stands in the way of communication. Online gives humankind a new shared space for life, the new means for creation and work, culture begins a new stage of its self-realisation in an online format. Therefore, it is possible to state that the new cultural reality is being formed — “online culture”.

In 2010–2013, calculating the rate of spread of accessibility of the World Wide Web, E. Schmidt and J. Cohen predicted that the Internet would cover the entire population of the planet by 2025. We are witnessing how art, education, science, economics, religion, medicine, the service sector and other spheres of human activity are successfully looking for opportunities for their realisation in the online space. The authors of the book prophetically note what we see around us today. Global connection is developing rapidly, so old institutions and hierarchies, not to lose their place in society, not to become unnecessary, are forced to adapt to this (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013). Describing the way of human existence within online culture, E. Schmidt and J. Cohen say that a person will live and work in two worlds simultaneously: in the virtual world, where people will be in touch with others constantly, using various devices and ways, and in the real world, where one needs to continue to take into account geography, place of birth, good and bad features of human nature (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013).

The switch of culture to the online space was a logical consequence of the technological breakthrough and coverage of the entire world by the Internet and the creation of various online platforms that provide convenient communication and collaboration opportunities for people around the world. Among them, E. Schmidt and J. Cohen (2013) named the platforms from Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple. They have grown rapidly, and other powerful and popular platforms have improved their capabilities: Zoom, Office 365, Google Meet, Skype, and others with a narrower specialisation (for example, online educational platforms: Prometheus, EdEra, Coursera, Mentimeter, Kahoot!). Owing to them, the world began to look completely different than a few years ago. The book authors claim that the creation and development of online platforms mark a turning point in human culture, a kind of “paradigm shift”, a technological revolution. Their global spread has irreversible consequences for humanity. They are and will be used because they are convenient, accessible, easy to use and provide fast achievement of the desired result. Due to the massive scale of internet platforms in today's digital world, everything happens much quicker. It has a significant impact on all components of society: politics, economy, media, business and social norms. The acceleration of all processes of public life, enhanced by internet technologies, marks the beginning of a new era of globalisation — the globalisation of products and ideas (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013). The authors of the book compare this modern technological revolution and its

probable consequences with the global changes in the life of society that the emergence of television caused. At the same time, modern innovative technologies have a peculiar tendency to spread, improve and adapt rapidly, taking into account human needs.

E. Schmidt and J. Cohen's (2013) accidental comparison between the speed of spread of technology platforms with the rate of spread of a virus sounds a bit scary, concerning our experience. But it does show the power of the new tools we are already dealing with and with which the future of society is connected. More than ever before in human history, such a significant number of people are connected online in real time; this creates unprecedented opportunities for collective actions through common internet platforms (for consumers, creators, researchers, activists, and many others). The results of such grand interaction, which are already visible today, are considered by E. Schmidt and J. Cohen only as a hint of what is waiting for the humanity in the future (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013).

With their power and capabilities, modern online platforms will ensure the full online functioning of all critical systems for contemporary society. Therefore, online education, online science, online business, online diplomacy, etc., are becoming an unavoidable phenomenon of modern culture. Such transformations can be estimated in different ways. Undoubtedly, there will be critics who will warn against new prospects. And this is obvious, because in connection with innovations, now society is facing major problems and difficulties of both psychological and economic nature. However, the general consolidation of humanity to overcome such issues, which is taking place actively, is the key to success.

As we remember, the thinkers of the first half of the 20th century, observing the introduction of the latest technologies into the cultural space, also expressed warnings and depicted possible threats. The German philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin (1996) warned that the technique of reproduction would destroy the essence of a work of art (it should be noted that he wrote about this in 1935). However, at the end of the century, the Italian philosopher Umberto Eco (2012) refuted such prejudice in the interview book and confirmed the idea that innovative technologies give a person the opportunity to realise all cultural forms and demands that are interesting and important to him. Therefore, there is not a chance that, for example, a paper book will disappear and be replaced with an electronic one. Instead, there is an opportunity to access any online book, regardless of where it is located physically. Fear of the new should not stand in the way of progress. Difficulties, as we can see, can unite society for creative and constructive solutions. The main thing is to catch, hold, as A. J. Toynbee (1987) has said this wave of "challenges-and-responses" responds creatively to the time's demands.

In our opinion, the formation of online culture is the response of humanity to the era's demands. The development of the online space, various online platforms and innovative technologies allow us to think that the formation of online culture as a broad and complex structure will open new, still unknown prospects for realisation for humanity. Online culture is man-made, so the way

it will also depend on the person. E. Schmidt and J. Cohen emphasise that the future depends on us because the direction of countless opportunities for communication technologies for good or evil depends on people (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013). Once again, this exacerbates many ethical issues that should become a marker of scientific and cultural progress according to the inexhaustible opportunities that mankind is increasing in its arsenal.

Conclusions

The emergence of new cultural realities defined by the notion of “online culture” was substantiated by the thinkers of the 20th (in particular, W. Benjamin, J. Ortega y Gasset and K. Jaspers) and the 21st centuries (in particular, U. Eco, J. Cohen and E. Schmidt), whose ideas were covered in this study. The establishment of a broader theoretical basis for the emergence of “online culture” based on the involvement of a broader range of scientific literature in the analysis should be the subject of additional study.

The concept of “online culture” correlates with other cultural phenomena close to it in content and forms of representation, such as “information culture”, “digital culture”, “virtual culture”, etc. Still, it exists independently and denotes a fundamentally different cultural cross-section of the present. The comparative analysis of these notions with the notion of “online culture” also requires a separate study and should be the subject of independent researches.

Now online culture is in its infancy, but the pace of its formation, inspired by the exponential development of the online space, is swift. Now online culture is in its infancy, but the rate of its formation, inspired by the exponential growth of the online space, is extremely fast. The statement of the emergence of this new reality in the field of cultural being as a subject of independent scientific reflections, describing the foundations of the existence of this new culture of the present time, is the initial but significant and necessary step towards the emergence of these fundamental scientific researches.

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ФОРМУВАННЯ ОНЛАЙН-КУЛЬТУРИ ЯК НОВОЇ КУЛЬТУРНОЇ РЕАЛЬНОСТІ: ФІЛОСОФСЬКІ РЕФЛЕКСІЇ

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Мета статті — з посиланням на культурфілософські ідеї мислителів ХХ ст. (К. Ясперса, Х. Ортега-і-Гассета, В. Беньяміна) і ХХІ ст. (Е. Шмідта, Дж. Коена, У. Еко) обґрунтувати

появу онлайн-культури як новітнього явища сьогодення, стимулом розвитку якого стало всебічне утвердження в умовах пандемії, що спричинена COVID-19, онлайн-простору як простору існування культури в широкому сенсі цього поняття. В дослідженні окреслені головні передумови її появи, наведені аргументи на користь виокремлення поняття «онлайн-культура» як самостійного. В умовах сьогодення відбувається активне формування нового культурного явища, що означається нами як «онлайн-культура». Стимулом до його стрімкого становлення стали спільні для усього людства виклики, спричинені пандемією COVID-19, які стимулювали активний пошук світовою спільнотою нових форм і можливостей для самореалізації та комунікації. Онлайн-культура є об'ємним та багатоскладовим явищем, вона має всі підстави стати не лише характеристикою сучасної культури, але й новою культурною формою. У дослідженні використовуються елементи методів герменевтичного прочитання текстів, порівняльного історико-культурного аналізу текстів, а також метод включеного спостереження. Висновки. Результати дослідження засвідчують, що нині відбувається становлення нового етапу розвитку культури, який авторами розвідки названий «онлайн-культура». Поява такої нової культурної реальності тісно пов'язана з онлайн-середовищем та цифровими формами репрезентації культурних продуктів. Продемонстровано, що прогностичні міркування про її виникнення мали місце в культурфілософських студіях ХХ та ХХІ ст., у ситуації подолання людством пандемічних викликів її поява стає реаліями сьогодення. Поняття «онлайн-культура» корелюється з близькими до нього за змістом та формами репрезентації іншими культурними явищами, такими, як «інформаційна культура», «цифрова культура», «віртуальна культура» тощо, але має самостійне існування та позначає принципово інший культурний зріз сьогодення. Онлайн-культура нині перебуває на початковому етапі свого формування, але темпи її становлення, інспіровані експоненціальним розвитком онлайн-простору, є вкрай високими, що загострює необхідність її культурфілософського аналізу.

Ключові слова: онлайн-культура; онлайн-платформи; онлайн-простір; пандемія

ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ОНЛАЙН-КУЛЬТУРЫ КАК НОВОЙ КУЛЬТУРНОЙ РЕАЛЬНОСТИ: ФИЛОСОФСКИЕ РЕФЛЕКСИИ

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Цель статьи — со ссылкой на культурфилософские идеи мыслителей ХХ века (на примере идей К. Ясперса, Х. Ортега-и-Гассета, В. Бенямина) и ХХІ века (на примере

идей Э. Шмидта, Дж. Козна, У. Эко) обосновать появление онлайн-культуры как нового явления настоящего, стимулом развития которого стало всестороннее утверждение в условиях пандемии, вызванной COVID-19, онлайн-пространства как пространства существования культуры в широком смысле этого понятия. В исследовании обозначены основные предпосылки ее появления, приведены аргументы в пользу выделения понятия «онлайн-культура» как самостоятельного. В современных условиях происходит активное формирование нового культурного явления, которое обозначается нами как «онлайн-культура». Стимулом к стремительному становлению стали общие для всего человечества вызовы, созданные пандемией COVID-19, которые стимулировали активный поиск мировым сообществом новых форм и возможностей для самореализации и коммуникации. Онлайн-культура является объемным и многосложным явлением, она имеет все основания стать не только характеристикой современной культуры, но и новой культурной формой. В исследовании используются элементы методов герменевтического прочтения текстов, сравнительного историко-культурного анализа текстов, а также метод включенного наблюдения. Выводы. Результаты проведенного исследования свидетельствуют, что в настоящее время происходит становление нового этапа развития культуры, который авторами исследования назван «онлайн-культура». Появление такой новой культурной реальности тесно связано с онлайн-средой и цифровыми формами репрезентации культурных продуктов. Продемонстрировано, что прогностические соображения о ее возникновении имели место в культурфилософских студиях XX и XXI вв., в ситуации преодоления человечеством пандемических вызовов ее появление становится реалиями сегодняшнего дня. Понятие «онлайн-культура» соотносится с близкими к нему по содержанию и формам репрезентации другими культурными явлениями, такими, как «информационная культура», «цифровая культура», «виртуальная культура» и т. п., но имеет самостоятельное существование и обозначает принципиально другой культурный срез настоящего. Онлайн-культура сейчас находится на начальном этапе своего формирования, но темпы ее становления, инспирированные экспоненциальным развитием онлайн-пространства, являются крайне высокими, что обостряет необходимость ее культурфилософского анализа.

Ключевые слова: онлайн-культура; онлайн-платформы; онлайн-пространство; пандемия