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DIGITAL MODERN: A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE
ON URBANISM AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES

The article offers a philosophical reflection on the digital reality, digital urbanism, and digital humanities, posing fundamental questions about the nature of these phenomena and their potential risks. Shedding light on aspects of digital urbanism, researchers explore how technological transformations impact the structure, organization, and transformation of living spaces. In the context of digital humanities, the influence of new technologies on humanistic disciplines and ethical aspects is evaluated. Philosophical reflection on the impact of the digital environment on cultural and social aspects of urban life allows for the consideration of the importance of open data and collective knowledge exchange in the digital era. The article proposes an integrative view of digital modernity, emphasizing the relevance of a phenomenological perspective on understanding the complex relationships between humans and technologies in the contemporary world. The research identifies the influence of digital transformation on human existence, raising concerns about the possible loss of human identity in the conditions of the new reality. However, the article offers a new perspective on the issue, emphasizing that it is not the flexibility but the plasticity of human consciousness that could be the key to rethinking the digital age. The authors argue that the plasticity of human thinking can provide humanity not only with a means of adaptation but also with a new source of creativity. As a result, it is concluded that despite the challenges of digital reality, the plasticity of consciousness could become the foundation for creating new, exciting perspectives. The authors see this transition as an opportunity to form a more harmonious interaction between humans and the digital environment and to create unique realities. Thus, the article challenges stereotypes about human vulnerability in the digital age, asserting that the plasticity of human consciousness can open new horizons for creative interaction with the changing world.

Keywords: *digital, philosophical reflection, digital urbanism, digital humanities.*

We live in a rapidly changing world. It seems like just recently – in 1950 – Alan Turing posed the question of whether machines can think. And today, with the advent of artificial intelligence in our daily lives, all that remains for us is to try to comprehend the phenomenon of digital reality. After all, it's a complex phenomenon that sparks debates even in philosophical circles [The Cambridge Digital Humanities Network], as there are ethical and social aspects to the use of digital technologies, such as: freedom and privacy, control over information, digital inequality, discrimination, and other issues. Therefore, *one of the pressing problems that philosophy considers in the context of the digital present is the concern about the impact of digital technologies on human life, society, and culture*: how does digital reality affect our perceptions of time, space, identity, society, and other aspects of life?

Today, websites such as YouTube and Wikipedia have opened up so-called opportunities for new forms of collaborative production [The Cambridge Digital Humanities Network]. Digital platforms provide a larger number of people with opportunities to act and create, to communicate synchronously and asynchronously over long distances. How do digital technologies change our relationships, communication, social structures, and views on moral and ethical issues? This question is related to digital urbanism, which, among other things, is associated with the phenomenon of visual and digital rhetoric. And rhetoric is part of a large complex of strategies for studying the digital present: Digital Humanities. And digital humanities, in turn, are impossible without understanding how digital reality is created. These questions form

a single chain, but they can vary significantly in the levels of understanding and preferred methods.

Therefore, *the task of this article* is to find a comprehensive approach to understanding the new digital reality. More precisely: to question not just one aspect, but several interconnected aspects simultaneously. Problematization will be carried out at the level of pragmatics, in order to combine different planes of being and should be. Such an approach, on the one hand, allows for disagreements, prohibits staticness and inflexibility, and on the other hand, appeals to criteria of reasonableness, truthfulness, and obviousness.

Henceforth, *the methodology employed encompasses*: hermeneutic approach (the correlation of parts and wholes to comprehend the essence of the process, as eloquently described by Karl Jaspers and Paul Ricoeur); reflexive equilibrium within the framework of pragmatics (stemming from John Bordley Rawls' theory of justice); phenomenological-psychological and eidetic reduction (following Edmund Husserl). Another methodological nuance lies in Nietzsche's assertion that we exist within or as metaphors: our existence does not derive from Plato's cave or Descartes' thinking substance, but rather (to the extent that there exists a mode of being that we can call our own) concepts arise from a dynamic array of metaphors, analogies, and anthropomorphisms. The concepts we operate with are themselves metaphors in essence. Consequently, they influence the ways in which we study the world, shaping certain perspectives while obscuring others.

Therefore, a certain novelty of this article lies in the continuous reflection on the metaphorical nature of the digital age (which is itself a metaphor) and the construction of the digital age through metaphors. In this manner, we modernize Hermogenes' viewpoint on the dual-layered reality. Additionally, we propose to examine «plasticity» in the context of the digital age and to create a new understanding of the capabilities of human consciousness in this aspect.

Digital modernity: metaphor as the creation of parallel reality

José Ortega y Gasset in 1961 posited that the world changes with each new generation, as the preceding one alters it to a greater or lesser extent compared to how it found it [Ortega y Gasset, 1961]. What do we observe today? While Homo sapiens remains, a new modification emerges − Homo digitalis (the digital human). Concurrently, we witness the coexistence of the digitized generation (digitalized) − individuals from the Soviet past and the «perestroika» era who were shaped in the «Gutenberg epoch», alongside those born into the digital format (born digital). These generations cohabit within the digital ecosystem. Although distinct, representatives of these generations harbor disparate demands, requirements, aesthetics, and even sensations (distinct microdynamics and micropolitics). For the digitalized, the emergence of modifier individuals and cyborgization is no longer extraordinary. This trajectory leads to Homo extensis (the augmented human). From here, the concept of «transhuman» is not far off. Thus, the rift inexorably widens.

Furthermore, the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) can exert a substantial influence on society and culture. AI has the potential to reshape modes of work, education, communication, and interpersonal interaction, leading to cultural and social transformations. Questions arise regarding how the use of AI may impact interpretations of justice, division of labor, access to resources, confidentiality, and data security. Moreover, AI influences education and learning. Ethical dilemmas emerge concerning AI autonomy, accountability for its actions, transparency, and fairness in AI development and usage. Should people fear the influence of AI? After all, we already inhabit a society where few possess comprehensive technical literacy. This sets a «safe formula for disaster». However, in response to this challenge, let us unfold an elaborate metaphor: foxes are smarter than rabbits, yet foxes have not consumed all the rabbits because, while chasing a rabbit, a fox cannot predict the rabbit's trajectory. For one simple reason: the rabbit itself cannot predict its leaps. Similarly, humans are unpredictable. In this lies our strength: we can pose questions, whereas AI cannot (yet). Yet, within our questioning also lies our weakness: we do not know our full potential, hence our experiments may spiral out of control.

One of the most crucial aspects of studying digital modernity through philosophy is the question of truth, veracity, and honesty in the digital era. Considering that philosophy seeks to explore how digital technologies influence our perception and evaluation of truth and honesty, as well as how to develop critical thinking and information literacy skills in the digital environment in light of the proliferation of fake news, information manipulation, and algorithmic filtering. Digital rhetoric is often tagged with keywords that help readers find, browse, and share relevant texts and information. These tags can be found in blog posts, news articles, and scientific journals. Tags enable writers, scholars, and content creators to organize their work and make it more accessible and understandable to readers. Therefore, it is important for them to be able to predict how their works will be reinterpreted by their audience. Appropriation carries both positive and negative connotations. In some sense, appropriation is a tool that can be used to reapply outdated ideas to make them better. But appropriation is also seen as a threat to creative and cultural authenticity. Social networks are popular because their users lack education. Most participants often do not know what they are appropriating, copying and introducing into reality at a new twist. Therefore, studying digital modernity is related to the question of the technological definition of the future. How do digital technologies influence our conception of the future, how do they shape our expectations, ambitions, and opportunities, and how can we develop a responsible and sustainable approach to technological development and its impact on our lives and society? To do this, let us ask ourselves: is anything new being introduced into the world through digital technologies?

Digital urbanism is a topical and complex issue that concerns not only technological development but also the interaction of people and their environment. One of the key areas undergoing transformation is the urban environment. Digital modernity is an approach to urban development based on the use of advanced technologies and innovations to ensure the continuous and efficient functioning of urban systems. This includes the use of a wide range of digital solutions such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, blockchain, and others. It is precisely innovation that distinguishes leaders from those lagging behind.

Oswald Spengler in 1931 and Georg Simmel later in 1995 viewed urban space as a significant aspect of social interaction and cultural development. Georg Simmel perceived remarkable contradictions within the city. In the narrow, suffocating urban space amidst industrial landscapes, there is no room for individuality: the personality cannot withstand the aggressive environment of the burgeoning metropolis; they become alienated from each other. Nevertheless, for Simmel, the city does not pose a great threat because it endows individuals with the greatest freedom of action, thought, and overall way of life. Technologies teach us to be human again. This is because in large cities, individuals dissolve into space, becoming less noticeable amidst others, whereas adherence to different social norms is not characteristic of the city. From Oswald Spengler's perspective, all world cultures that have shifted civilization onto new paths of self-awareness have been urban. According to Spengler, the construct of civilization consists of three or four major metropolises, embodying the essence of world history. The concept of the city as a vampire, for which is completely irrelevant who you are and what your essential value is.

From this, it follows that the city and the individual will always interact with each other. The city is not only a physical space but also a social environment that influences the formation of identity and behavior. The urban environment can contribute to the development of creativity, culture, science, technology, but at the same time can cause various problems such as social isolation, stress, depression, violence. Today, digital urbanism is necessary to optimize various aspects of urban life, such as transportation, energy, waste management, sustainable construction and infrastructure, as well as interaction between cities and their inhabitants. Digital urbanism enables cities to implement innovations and develop towards sustainable development, improving the quality of life for residents, optimizing resource utilization, and ensuring the efficient functioning of urban infrastructure. In a world where an increasing number of people

reside in cities, digital technologies can help address issues related to transportation, energy efficiency, and infrastructure.

Digital urbanism also poses significant challenges, particularly regarding privacy, security, and social justice. According to Martin Heidegger [Heidegger, 2000], all technology is not just a means to achieve specific goals but a way of constructing the world and defining human existence within it. He refers to this as the «technological shift», where technology shifts the focus of attention from being to technology, meaning our relationship with the world is based on technology and its capabilities. One of the key concepts in «The Question Concerning Technology» is «Gestell» (framework) (as if technology puts humans on a shaky stool and waits to see if the one who created it can cope with even that), describing the way in which technology enframes the world. Gestell means that technology puts everything under control and management, meaning reality is no longer understood as something independent and separate from humans but becomes dependent on technical possibilities and requirements. This leads to humans becoming dependent on technology, rather than the other way around, and losing their freedom and authenticity. Therefore, for Heidegger, the question of technology is not limited to technological inventions and their influence on people but concerns broader issues of human relation to the world and coexistence with it.

The implementation of digital solutions in the urban environment also faces challenges such as data privacy protection, ethics of technology use, and social responsibility. There is an increasing influence of visual and digital rhetoric and more imposed meanings on humans. It is important to strike a balance between technology use and the protection of the rights and interests of the city.

One of the important aspects of Digital modern and digital urbanism is the interaction between various stakeholders such as government, business, scientists, civil society organizations, and city residents. The application of digital platforms, applications, and tools can help residents express their opinions, interact with urban authorities, and participate in the decision-making process regarding the development of their city. But this is impossible without critical thinking and philosophical analysis.

Digital Humanities are the product of the Enlightenment (teaching people to think critically and independently, draw conclusions, and make decisions based on analysis of facts and evidence) because with the emergence of social networks and the internet, people are confronted with a large amount of information and opinions, which can be contradictory and unreliable. Digital humanities [Wyatt, Millen, 2014] challenge traditional boundaries between humanities disciplines and technologies, interpreting the cultural and social impact of new media and information technologies, creating and applying these technologies to address traditional and societal issues arising in the new information age.

Digital technologies such as 3D modeling, virtual reality, and other tools can help reproduce and preserve these materials for future generations. Additionally, digital humanities can be used to analyze and understand contemporary cultural processes, such as social networks, mass communication, and other aspects of modern life. Research in the field of digital humanities allows for shifting the focus of traditional analysis from individual texts to networked text studies. This means that understanding the text, its history, and its significance cannot be separated from its interconnection with other texts and contexts in which it operates.

On the one hand, digital technologies allow for careful analysis of large volumes of texts, which can lead to new discoveries and insights in the humanities. On the other hand, they can also raise new philosophical questions about the relationship between texts and their interaction in the network. Additionally, research in the field of digital humanities can help understand cultural and social changes occurring in the internet space. For example, studying the behavior of social media users can provide insights into how people perceive information and how it influences their thinking and beliefs. The transition to the digital space has reopened existing problems, elevating them to a new level. For example, the spread of technologies can mimic social class status. And the problem of imitation is a longstanding major philosophical problem

of «to be or to seem?» Or preventing cyberbullying: the problem of harassment in social networks has intensified with the emergence of «cancel culture», the goal of which is to end the careers of offenders by any means, mainly through boycotting their work. And just recently, methods using machine learning and artificial intelligence have become popular for synthesizing deepfakes: realistic but fake videos of people whose faces are replaced by those of other people. Such videos can be created using readily available and simple software, raising concerns that people may use this software for blackmail or intimidation online. The COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed to the creation of misleading rhetoric in the online space. There was so much deception that as a result, the WHO declared the spread of misinformation about the virus an «infodemic». This label prompted most social media sites to tighten their policies on false information, but many misleading claims still go unnoticed. Therefore, the task of Digital Humanities is to study the problems of the digital world known now and prevent new ones. And these problems are multifaceted, as digitalization as a global process is as ambivalent as the age of technology, which came into its own two centuries ago. Digitalization meets all the signs of a global problem of modernity because its solution depends on the collective action of all countries in the world, and in fact, on each individual, it determines the survival of humanity and the preservation of ur entire planet.

What do we propose to do? And/or let's summarize what has been said in the article.

Firstly, it is necessary to create a field of fruitful questioning, where the question (that very ancient Greek philosophical question «what is it?») will be raised not only to an existential but also to an ontic level. What is digital modern, digital urbanism, digital humanities? How can they be examined through philosophical reflection? This is what we tried to start doing in this article.

Secondly (and here an announcement for a new aspect of research is needed): if we assume that human consciousness is a kind of ecosystem that faces new challenges from the digital reality, then it is clear that interventions can destabilize the system. In order for the system to withstand, we need to improve our skills. The problem of preserving consciousness as an ecosystem can be described in terms of flexibility, rigidity, and/or plasticity [Malabou, 2022].

Rigidity equals petrification, inflexibility, and the freezing of form. In the conditions of the digital modernity, rigidity of consciousness will lead to a return to the Stone Age and guaranteed death. Flexibility is our ability to make choices based on socially determined affordances. This approach is productive if our Self is seen as a set of situational characters or signs. Then an effective approach is to treat symptoms using tools that are already embedded in social reality, and all we have to do is find and apply them to ourselves. It works something like this: if your salary doesn't allow you to pay utility bills, ask for government assistance, get a subsidy, i.e., identify yourself as a poor person: use proper practices and accept corresponding limitations.

Plasticity, unlike flexibility, is more of a property of our Self, taken as the unity of its intentions, feelings, sensations, experience, and reflection. Plasticity should be considered as the ability of human consciousness to create, accept, maintain, or destroy forms (let's not forget that Plastic may also be an explosive substance. That is, plasticity itself can «explode», destroying the form it is capable of accepting and creating). Modern information garbage: TikTok or Instagram feeds create an unimaginable number of connections in people's brains, yet many of these connections do not live past three days. In this way, the brain seems to clear the cache, optimizing its work). In this aspect, the social is already seen as an exoskeleton, and the internal resources of consciousness are like a snail inside the shell. Catherine Malabou considers plasticity as an element of the new economy. But we see another meaning: plasticity as one of the «tools» of the ecology of consciousness can be seen as a return to creativity at the level of digitalization, which transforms reality. And so digital modernity then becomes a new economy of events, for which the ability to fill the distance between code and user with oneself is important. Then there is no longer a role, no situation in which you are placed. You are a part of modernity, you invest yourself, not spend yourself.

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ЦИФРОВИЙ МОДЕРН: ФІЛОСОФСЬКИЙ ПОГЛЯД НА УРБАНІЗМ І ЦИФРОВУ ГУМАНІТАРИСТИКУ

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Стаття пропонує філософську рефлексію щодо цифрової реальності, цифрової урбаністики та цифрових гуманітарних наук, включаючи аналіз ряду фундаментальних питань, які стосуються природи цих явищ та потенційних ризиків, пов'язаних з ними. Автори досліджують вплив технологічних трансформацій на структуру, організацію та модифікацію життєвого простору. У рамках дослідження автори висвітлюють етичні аспекти використання цифрових інструментів у гуманітарних науках, зокрема питання приватності даних, алгоритмічної справедливості та відповідальності у використанні штучного інтелекту в гуманітарних дослідженнях. Роздуми про вплив цифрового середовища на культурні та соціальні аспекти міського життя розкривають важливість відкритості даних та колективного обміну знаннями у цифрову епоху. Зокрема, обговорюється роль відкритих даних у розвитку міських інфраструктур і підвищенні рівня громадської участі в процесах міського планування та управління. Стаття пропонує інтегративний підхід до розуміння цифрової сучасності, в якому акцентується значення феноменологічного підходу до аналізу взаємозв'язків між людиною та технологіями в сучасному світі. Автори підкреслюють необхідність цифрової трансформації сучасного світу. Водночас, висловлюється стурбованість щодо можливої втрати самобутності людини в умовах нової

реальності та збереження людської ідентичності й культурної різноманітності у цифровому світі. Автори аргументують, що пластичність людського мислення може стати ключем до успішної адаптації до цифрової епохи, надаючи можливість не лише виживання, але й розвитку та креативного виразу. Вони стверджують, що пластичність свідомості відкриває нові горизонти для творчої взаємодії зі світом, створюючи потенціал для інновацій і змін у різних сферах людської діяльності. У висновку підкреслюється, що незважаючи на виклики, які постають перед сучасним суспільством у зв'язку з цифровою реальністю, пластичність свідомості може стати фундаментом для створення нових захоплюючих перспектив. Автори підкреслюють важливість відкритого діалогу та співпраці між науково-дослідницькими установами, громадськістю та державними органами з метою забезпечення сталого розвитку та гармонійного взаємозв'язку людини та цифрового оточення. Отже, стаття покликана спровокувати глибоку рефлексію та активну дискусію щодо майбутнього цифрової епохи та її впливу на сучасне суспільство.