CULTUROLOGY

"META": EVOLUTION OF THE DEFINITION AND CONTENT

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Abstract
The content of the definition "meta", found in different languages (Greek, Polish, French, etc.), in literary works of science fiction writers, as well as in scientific papers of researchers, is analyzed. The article considers the peculiarities of immersive space-time environment - a meta-universe developed on the basis of advanced technologies (AI, blockchain, etc.) and perceived as part of the virtual global culture of the XXI century.

Keywords: meta, meta-environment, meta-universe, digital space, immersion, meta-analysis.

Introduction. The integrative approach of technology in human development has become predominant over the last 30 years. Due to globalization, historical and cultural processes in the development of society are perceived undivided. Technogenic-global syncretism presupposes the study of culture not in the "plane" but in the "volume".

More and more often in the scientific literature, the definition "meta" is used to describe volumetric spaces, with which the terms "meta-environment" and "meta-universe" are most often correlated. This phenomenon is united by theme, information, technology and immersiveness.

Immersion is understood as spatial and temporal relationship, as well as artificially created environment with its signs, symbols, laws, rules, cultural codes, with ambivalent perception and distinctive features of real and virtual habitats of humans and interactions between them.

The purpose of the article is to consider scientific approaches to the study of the definition of "meta" in the projection of technological development of modern society.

Main part. The concept of "meta" is present in several languages and has a similar meaning. Moreover, many authors believe it is correct to use "meta", "meta-environment", "meta-universe" in singular form [7; 11; 13]. For example, in Greek, Latin, Polish, French, Belarusian and other languages this concept correlates with form, time, distance and space:

– in Greek "meta" means after, beyond [1, p. 510];

– in Latin "möta" – cone, pyramid; initial or final point, limit; though adjective "meta" - space of canonical form) [2, p. 483];

– in Polish "meta" – end, limit; distance, distance [3, p.436];

– in French the adjective "meta" – belonging to a higher level [4].

In Belarusian mythology the projection of the world model is denoted by the notion "rostani"(«ростані»), which is one of the main channels of communication not only with other worlds, but also a meeting place for guests, znakhar and sacral practices [5, c. 431-432].

A large encyclopaedia treats the concept as [6, c. 179-180]:

– part of a compound word meaning intermediate, following something, moving on to something else (e.g. metagenesis);

– a system that serves to investigate and describe other systems by means and terms outside, e.g. meta-theory - a theory describing the structure of some other theory.

Also, the vast spaces in ancient Greece were called "oikoumene"(«ойкумена») (from the Greek «oikoumevn» – the world, the light, the universe, from which the concept later derives «oikoumevikoc» – worldwide, global, universal [1, c. 575].

This notion is taken as a basis by the Russian researcher A. N. Chumakov, when describing the new synthetic category "cultural-civilisational system" [7, c. 416] as a conglomerate, serving as a link between different oikoumens [7, c. 458]:

– The Christian cultural and civilisational conglomerate covers a number of oikoumens (Western European, Eastern European, Russian, North American, Central American, Latin American);

– Islamic - Middle Eastern, North African, Central Asian, partly Russian, partly Pacific

– Buddhist - Indian, partly Chinese, partly Southeast Asian, partly Japanese oikoumene.

Following the researcher's logic, cultural-civilizational systems - oikoumene, can be considered not only through religious conglomerates, but also socialist/capitalist, political, economic, cultural, continental, etc.

Globalisation ideas are expressed by the American scholar W. McNeil [8], with whom the concept of Eurasian, later African and then global emerged in the understanding of a whole population, where the peoples - civilised and uncivilised - interact with each other in a worldwide global system. "World history should focus first on changes in the world system and then move on to pattern development within individual civilisations and smaller units, such as states and nations, in the structures of this fluctuating whole" [8, c. 26].

Norwegian professor of social anthropology at the University of Oslo, T.H. Eriksen, in his monograph "The Tyranny of the Moment. Time in the Age of Dig-

italization". [9], focuses on the fact that "the time intervals between significant milestones in the history of technology development are getting shorter" [9, c. 50]. According to the author, this indicates the emergence of a new trend in cultural history. The beginning of a new era can be observed since the 90s, there is a transition from the concrete to the abstract [9, c. 20]. Since the commercialization of the Internet, the speed of communication and dissemination of information has increased, resulting in the densification of time, fragmented perception of information, knowledge, work, lifestyle.

T. H. Eriksen compares the development of technology with a pyramid, which like a constructor is built arbitrarily from different phenomena, layered on top of each other upwards. The life of modern man is made up of moments - vivid, fickle, and superficial. T. Eriksen introduces the concept of "instant" to describe and understand modern technogenic civilization [9, c. 144].

In literature, the term "meta-universe" is first used by science fiction writer Neal Stephenson in his novel "Avalanche". [10], by which the author understands the next stage in the development of Internet technologies combining the digital world - physical, augmented and virtual – into a single borderless reality - meta-reality, in which cultural immersive superstructure of offline space simulates illusory 3D environment as a stable social structure of virtual community.

American expert in technology and crypto-projects Matthew Ball, exploring the dynamics of the meta-universe, correlates it with the fourth era of the Internet – even more technological, aggressive in the struggle for users in economic interest and power over them. M. Ball identifies its seven main characteristics [11]:

1. infinite development of the meta-environment;
2. independence from external factors, working in real time;
3. unlimited number and equal conditions of participants;
4. a functioning economic structure, with the possibility of motivations and incentives;
5. linking online/offline spaces with different levels of access;
6. Interoperability of data and digital platforms, with the possibility of transport, transfer, transmission, etc.;
7. meta-environment as an active and constantly evolving content, due to high user demand.

Meta-universe is able to unite different topics under individual interests of a user by analyzing his/her needs and lifestyle; using artificial intelligence (AI) to unobtrusively, in game or entertainment form, rebuild cultural and value preferences, meaningful priorities under commercial dependence, where a user no longer benefits from giving up this exciting, accompanying life - the meta-environment. The manipulative technologies of the meta-universe on this scale can be limitless and possibly dangerous.

But so far, the topic of meta-environment/meta-universe is a new trend of the 21st century and remains under-researched. Successful companies of the world (Microsoft, Epic Games, Facebook, etc.) are projecting the creation of a meta-universe, counting on increasing the density of the virtual community, activating their interpersonal connections and managing the time factor in the meta-environment. The main thing in the development of the meta-environment is that commercial interests should not prevail over universal values. The globalisation that will move into the "corporate meta universe" will unite the data sets of social networks, where the competition of the digital economy based on AI will intensify.

An example of the development and testing of the first controlled meta-environment is demonstrated by the People's Republic of China. Development of the virtual platform has started in 2020. China's meta-environment is a virtual city with many buildings and the opportunity to participate in events (e.g. conferences, exhibitions), as well as education, science development. The meta-environment recreates the national landmarks of Chinese culture and replicates the spaces and landscapes of Chinese cities. The project is developed and supervised by the state. Cultural, scientific, educational, business, financial and other projects are being created in the meta-environment and will be implemented by 2027. Metaprojects are also actively developing in other major Chinese cities (Shanghai, Hong Kong, etc.) [12].

Also, in scientific papers on meta-analysis, scientists use the definition of "meta-analysis", which is understood as the synthesis of a set of information and statistical research methods combined with different values of data to summarize an unbiased research result within the same topic [13]. The main point when analysing independent studies is to respect their methodological diversity, and the variance of sampling error for each particular study is almost never the same.

Blockchain-based metasystems have been associated with economic crises. The dynamics of the global financial system, as well as the possibilities of its managerial transformation, have predetermined the development of blockchain technologies capable not only of decentralising control over transactions, but endowing them with declared properties: openness, immutability of data storage, absence of intermediaries, security, built-in protection against attacks, etc., which have also become successfully used in the promotion, storage and transfer of cultural products.

Developers plan that meta-environments or meta-universes will evolve gradually, providing open opportunities for economy, business, creativity in new markets for content creation.

Undoubtedly, the development of metasites raises the questions of lack of legal regulation of this industry, and as a consequence, the possibility of violation of laws and loss of assets [14]. Experts note that the metha market is still in its formation stage and there are no obvious monopolists, but they call to learn to interact today, moving from social networks to metaspaces.

Conclusions. Thus, the analysis of the evolution and content of the definition "meta" demonstrates its presence in different languages (Greek, Latin, Polish, French, Belarusian, etc.) with similar meaning and significance. In the scientific literature the definition of "meta" is insufficiently investigated and is more often

found in the meanings of "meta-environment" and "meta-universe", implying synonymous characteristics. In modern times, with rapidly developing technologies, the technological and practical potential of this phenomenon is ahead of scientific and theoretical research. For the general public the concepts of "meta", "meta-environment" and "meta-universe" are perceived as part of a virtual global culture, capable of modifying scenarios of the future, integrating familiar (creative, financial, scientific, educational and other) areas of human activity into a conglomerate with advanced technologies (AI, blockchain, etc.) of the 21st century, combining them into an autonomous, functional, user-friendly relatively decentralized environment "meta".

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