

ФІЛОСОФІЯ ІСТОРІЇ

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RELIGIOUS CULTURE IN THE CONDITIONS
OF VIRTUALIZATION OF SOCIETY

The urgency of the problem. The article is devoted to the study of the concept of rhizome within the postmodern paradigm, because it is within the latter concept that the rhizome acquires deep meaning, acting as an image of the world, which is characterized by nonlinearity and chaos. In this case, the concept of the rhizome turns out to be the most successful when understanding postmodern philosophy, as a way of knowing / constructing a social system. Therefore, consideration of the rhizome as a model, rhizomatic modeling corresponds to the modern trends of the socio-cultural space.

The purpose of the work is to consider the theoretical and methodological components of the rhizomatic approach in the study of postmodern society. **Tasks:** 1) to study the main features and principles of the rhizome concept formulated by J. Deleuze and F. Guattari; 2) to investigate the implementation of rhizome principles using the example of network society, the Internet; 3) to consider the rhizome as a methodological technique for learning social reality.

The study of the concept of rhizome as a methodological approach to the knowledge of the social environment requires the use of the following **methods**: analysis and synthesis, the system method (considers the rhizome as a complex organism consisting of many elements, it is a certain non-linear system where the beginning and the end are often not detectable), the method comparisons and analogies (makes it possible to compare the principles of the rhizome with the principles of the network society and social organization in general), the synergistic method as a scientific approach, since synergistics studies complex non-linear systems capable of self-organization, which in the case of the rhizome is necessary.

The research results indicate that the characteristic features and principles of the rhizome (openness of structures, anti-hierarchy, decentralization, pluralism, principles of plurality, heterogeneity, cartography and decalcomania) reflect the signs of a modern network society. The electronic network itself at the global level represents a rhizomatic model, the object of which is social reality. It is the rhizomatic modeling that allows to investigate at an interdisciplinary level the cognition/construction of a social system, to reveal its synergistic features both at the external level, and to reveal deep processes.

Key words: network society, postmodern paradigm, principles of heterogeneity and multiplicity, rhizome, rhizomatic modeling, synergetics.

Introduction. Throughout history, religion has been an important factor in the development of society, a unifying link in the processes of social integration, especially in times of crisis. As a system of values, religion not only determines the level of spiritual development of society, but also influences the socio-political system. It is religious values that determine the foundations of ontological existence, contain norms and rules of behavior that have been transmitted and transformed over the centuries,

which together determines religious archetypes. Therefore, the study of modern transformation processes, based largely on the introduction of computer technologies, inevitably leads to questions of their reflection in the sphere of religion, religious consciousness at this time.

If before the advent of computer technologies, a person perceived the world around him based on the dominant system of values, which was supported by religion and, in part, most of them were developed by it, then in our time there is a change in the hierarchy of values, a change in the system of worldview. Virtual reality has significantly expanded the possibilities of a person to realize his abilities. Simulation of social reality is becoming one of the main signs of the virtualization of society. All this creates chaotic, fragmented (clip) thinking. In the Internet space, a person acquires a new image, acts according to certain rules, which often differ from reality as such. The noted processes contribute to the fragmentary assimilation of religious norms, the idea of religion in a modern person is formed on the basis of those images that he sees in the Internet space.

It is impossible not to note in this case the opinion of Darmoriz O., about the formation of a new type of person, who must react with lightning speed to the emergence of new information challenges, technical innovations, rapid changes in socio-cultural development. The Internet blurs the boundaries of national cultures, destroys the isolation of such forms of culture as science, art, philosophy, religion, etc. [1, p. 76].

Another Ukrainian researcher, Sevastyaniv U., even proposed the concept of “virtualized religiosity,” explaining this by the fact that the penetration of virtual reality into all spheres of human life gave grounds to claim the transformation of spirituality and religiosity as a result of such influence. However, this is not a one-sided process, because we are talking about mutual influences, that is, the sacralization of the virtual environment (cyber religions, online churches, web resources of traditional religious institutions, platforms for the implementation of religious sacraments, etc.) [11, p. 12].

That is, in modern science, scientists are making a connection between virtual space and religion, in particular, Petrushkevych M. emphasizes that religious consciousness uses information, so the ways of its distribution in the modern world will depend on the peculiarities of the development of information flows characteristic of a particular community. Modern mass media lie at the root of hegemony / non-violent coercion / domination in modern mass society. And religious communications are part of hegemony, they are changing under the influence of a new era, that is, new mass media (secular). The peculiarities of processes in religious communication should be sought in the information, mass society [10].

In the environment of modern scientific research, one can also encounter such a phenomenon as a “digital church”, the existence of which in cyberspace is noted by Petriya O. [9, p. 61]. This allows us to state the functional changes of religion in society, the emergence of a new form of subjective religiosity, which is syncretic, combines individual and institutionalized religion [3, p. 86]. It is not for nothing that Sevastyaniv U., speaking about modern religion, comes to the conclusion that modern religiosity is determined by the presence and manifestations of the belief attitude of modern man to the supernatural: God, Higher Power, Cosmic Mind [12, p. 643].

Therefore, **the purpose** of the article is to study the impact of the processes of virtualization of society on religious culture, the forms of its expression in cyberspace.

The tasks that need to be solved to achieve the goal are:

- to identify the ontological roots common to religion and virtual reality;
- to expound the interaction of forms of religion and virtual reality;
- to investigate virtual religions and their classification.

Research methods. Studying the impact of the virtualization of society on the sphere of religion requires the use of the following methods: analysis and synthesis, the systemic method (religion acts as a kind of system that responds to any transformational shifts in society, therefore the use of this method within our problem is undeniable); the method of comparison and analogies (allows us to identify common ontological roots between religion and virtual reality), the synergistic method (since synergetics studies complex nonlinear systems capable of self-organization, religion here appears as a complex system that has perceived the spread of information technologies as a new stage of development).

Results and discussion. Speaking about the ontology of religiosity, one should first of all take into account the fact that here we are talking about the sacred as a property inherent in some things (objects of worship), some people (king, priest), some spaces (sanctuary, temple), some moments of time (Resurrection, Christmas). These two types of things – the sacred and the profane – cannot come together: from a collision with the profane, the sacred loses its special qualities. The profane and the sacred must be separated, isolated from each other, and at the same time – they are necessary for life: the first – as the environment in which life unfolds, the second – as that which creates it, as a force on which a person depends and can still decide to capture it and use it in his own interests. Any religious idea of the world is built on the opposition of the sacred and the profane. The peculiarity of our time is precisely the blurring of the boundaries between the sacred and the profane. This is especially noticeable in cyberspace, which represents a symbolic reality [15, p. 233].

Religions, in order not to lose their positions in the world, change the forms of interaction in their politics, responding to the challenges of the external environment. Given that we are talking about our time, we are talking about two of the greatest forces here: scientific and technological progress and the informatization of society [6, p. 13]. New forms of interaction of religion in modern conditions of informatization of society in the environment are a way of identification with those similar to themselves (the loss of the individual's social and personal certainty, identification with others at the sub-conscious level), this is the virtualization of religion, artificial affiliation to religious organizations, consolidation of certain forms of behavior and preservation of unity [6, p. 15]. In the modern world, multipolarity of beliefs is necessary, which entails the harmonious development of both the system of natural and scientific knowledge and society as a whole [14, p. 432].

That is, it is about the fact that religion and virtuality have many common features. Both create an image that is a simulation of reality, in other words, religion to a certain extent acts as virtuality: it is originally organized as a system of phenomena, which is opposed to the spatio-temporal, sensuously given being of man. This spiritual tradition has always represented transcendence (the existence of the afterlife), inherent in human consciousness in general, at least in its historical forms known so far.

When we analyze the religious way of perceiving the world, we use virtual reality as a methodological basis, which includes a number of phenomena, including: computer virtual reality; altered states (religious trance, meditation, ecstasy, enlightenment, etc.). That is, states and phenomena associated with a breakthrough into the unusual and related to the intentional setting and psyche of a person, as well as material factors. M. Zhurba notes that when talking about religious space, first of all we should talk not about knowledge, but about some specific practices (rituals), that is, some esoteric knowledge, actions, interactions between the world and man [2, p. 76]. Therefore, it is not surprising that with the advent of virtual reality, network groups for communication, etc., virtual churches appeared, resources appeared that reflect and consider the phenomena of the irrational, mystical in cyberreality [7, p. 194].

Now, through the information space, a person forms religious consciousness and receives certain religious ideas. An important role is played by the mass media in the formation of religious identity. The mass media currently perform many cultural and social functions of institutionalized religions and provide spiritual guidance, moral orientation, ritual passages and a sense of community and belonging [3, p. 85].

Regarding the latter judgment, researchers Siva T. and Chop T. note that despite the initially hostile attitude of religion to the manifestations of technological development, it later adapted very interestingly to the realities of the modern world. Currently, there are many examples of how religions, even such traditional ones as Catholicism and Islam, use the possibilities of new technologies and the virtual world of the Internet. Cyberspace, which is eclectic in its essence, demonstrates the diversity of religious experience and the possibility of its coexistence in various forms in one space of action [13, p. 63].

Analyzing the functioning of religion in the Internet space, they come to the conclusion that the Internet actually has no restrictions and is open to any religious experiences in a variety of manifestations. Here, people can not only receive information about religions, but also

implement cult practices, express personal opinions, and interact with other believers. Cyber-religion (digital religion) has become an object of study for a new religious studies direction. Although in such a situation, negative features are also observed, which are mostly manifested in the displacement of religion into the gaming sphere, focused on mass culture. The same principle of simulation is manifested, which is aimed at increasing the time for visualization and reducing it to the theoretical part, which corresponds to the ideals of a society of consumption and comfort [13, p. 63].

The virtualization of society contributes to the increasing movement of the religious sphere to the Internet space, where a person can receive information about the most diverse religions of the world, practice them, communicate with other believers. Moreover, the anonymity of participants widespread in networks significantly expands the possibilities of communication regarding a particular religious issue. The Internet also serves as a means of communication for the Church with special groups – with youth, the elderly, people with physical disabilities, with followers of other religions – with all those with whom it would otherwise be difficult to maintain contact [4, p. 21]. It is enough to start with the fact that the locations of certain religious institutions are available on the Internet, including in the form of web pages, which greatly facilitates communication.

Cyberspace has become an ideal sphere for the embodiment of all forms of escapism. Religious experiences, the search for the transcendent should be attributed to internal, personal escapism, which allows a person to be in another reality in his own consciousness, which is accompanied by receiving mystical revelations, a special religious experience. It should be noted that in real life religious escapism is limited by the institutional requirements of official religion, while in virtual space it is absolutely free in its forms of expression [6, p. 14].

Relevant in this case is the statement of Ya. Chekan that the artificially created cyberspace acquires a clearly expressed religious character, almost all existing religions, confessions and denominations find their niche in it. We are talking about the virtualization of religion, which represents a qualitatively new type of religious existence. The informative function of religion is transferred from the usual environment of church life to the virtual world, where it becomes an integral part of the social life of believers [16].

Taking into account the tendency of introducing computer technologies into the sphere of religion, I. Lomashinska and B. Grinchenko distinguish four types of online religious spaces: religion on the Internet, online religion, traditional religion and innovative religion [4, p. 21]. Scientists draw attention to the fact that the Internet has changed the forms and means of worship: the availability of a large amount of accessible religious information makes it possible to study, assimilate, analyze and explore religion conveniently, at one's own pace, which has led to a more personalized approach to religious practice; religious groups have been able to move their churches and temples to virtual real estate, which has led to digital religion and hyper-mediated religious experience. As a result, the Internet has changed the forms and means of practicing religion, created new opportunities for personalized religious practice, formed the phenomenon of digital religion, and also increased the possibilities of its interpretations.

Therefore, some modern scholars point out the need to talk specifically about virtual religions and propose the following classification of them, based on the specifics of the criterion motivating their access to the Internet: Internet religions as virtual religious organizations; cyber religions (religious beliefs based on the deification of technological progress and the sacralization of the Internet); marginal virtual movements that arise in the global computer network as a reaction to protest against some social phenomena, or whose activities contradict current legislation [8, p. 174].

In turn, Melnychuk M. divides cyberreligions into two categories. The first includes some unprecedented phenomena, the creators of which bring a “new understanding of postmodern religiosity” (cosmosophy, digital sophy, technosophy) and others. The researcher calls the second type of cyber-religion a “new cyberreligious movement”, which can be a form of response, reaction, call to action or even rebellion against religions that have taken root in the world outside the Internet [5, p. 55].

Although, at the same time, the author draws attention to the incomplete form of the given typology of cyberreligions, since the intensification of the processes of virtualization of society necessitates its constant updating. In addition, it is necessary to study religion in cyberspace from the standpoint of comparativism, i.e., it means conducting a comparative analysis of different religious traditions at the global level (in different countries and cultures) [5, p. 57].

Conclusions. Religion and virtual reality have a related ontological basis, which is represented by socio-cultural reality and on the basis of which an image is created in both spheres. Both religion and virtual reality do not have clear spatial and temporal boundaries, and both are a product of human consciousness and, on the other hand, contribute to the formation of a certain worldview of a person, an understanding of a person's place in the world. This allows modern researchers to talk about virtuality as a characteristic feature of religion. In essence, cyberspace has become an assistant for the implementation of religiosity within the Internet.

Both religion and virtual reality have many common functional features. In particular, both should comfort a person, compensate for problems in real life with realization in the spiritual world. Transcendentalism is clearly expressed here, because it is an important factor in the interaction of man and the sacred. Therefore, as shown in the work, in our time they are already talking about cyberreligion as one of the forms of implementing religion in the sphere of virtual space. Considering that virtuality creates a space for human self-expression, religiosity must be present, because it is in this way that a simulation replacement of reality as such is possible.

The above fully substantiates the theses of modern scholars about the virtualization of religion. If before the advent of computer technologies, religion was the only tool for creating images of another world, then virtual reality has become an excellent means of embodying ideas about the afterlife, which indicates escapism as a characteristic feature of both virtual reality and religion.

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РЕЛІГІЙНА КУЛЬТУРА В УМОВАХ ВІРТУАЛІЗАЦІЇ СУСПІЛЬСТВА

Актуальність проблеми. Стаття присвячена дослідженню концепції ризому в межах постмодерністської парадигми, адже саме в межах останньої поняття ризому отримує глибинне значення, виступаючи образом світу, для якого характерні риси нелінійності та хаотичності. В данному випадку концепт ризому виявляється найбільш вдалим під час розуміння постсучасної філософії, як спосіб пізнання / конструювання соціальної системи. Відтак розгляд ризому в якості моделі, ризоматичного моделювання відповідають сучасним тенденціям соціокультурного простору.

Метою роботи є розгляд теоретико-методологічних складових ризоматичного підходу у дослідженні постмодерного суспільства. **Завдання:** 1) вивчити головні риси та принципи концепту ризому сформульовані Ж. Дельозом і Ф. Гваттаррі; 2) дослідити реалізацію принципів ризому на прикладі мережевого суспільства, Інтернету; 3) розглянути ризому в якості методологічного прийому пізнання соціальної реальності.

Дослідження концепції ризому як методологічного підходу до пізнання соціального середовища вимагає використання наступних **методів**: аналізу та синтезу, системний метод (розглядає ризому як складний організм, що складається з безлічі елементів, це певна нелінійна система, де найчастіше не можна виявити початок і кінець), метод порівняння та аналогії (дає можливість зіставити принципи ризому з принципами мережевого суспільства та суспільної організації загалом), синергетичний метод як науковий підхід, оскільки синергетика вивчає складні нелінійні системи, здатні до самоорганізації, що у випадку ризому є необхідним.

У **результатах дослідження** зазначається, що характерні риси та принципи ризому (відкритість структур, антиєрархічність, децентралізація, плюралізм, принципи множинності, гетерогенності, картографії та декалькоманії) відображають ознаки сучасного мережевого суспільства. Сама електронна мережа на глобальному рівні представляє ризоматичну модель, об'єктом якої є соціальна реальність. Саме ризоматичне моделювання дозволяє досліджувати на міждисциплінарному рівні пізнання/конструювання соціальної системи, виявити її синергетичні риси як на зовнішньому рівні, так і розкрити глибинні процеси.

Ключові слова: мережеве суспільство, постмодерністська парадигма, принципи гетерогенності та множинності, ризома, ризоматичне моделювання, синергетика.