D. Saparova¹* , **G. Kapysheva¹** , **Y. Engel²** , **D. Nigmanova¹**

¹Sarsen Amanzholov East Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan, Ust-Kamenogorsk
²Kazakh American free university, Kazakhstan, Ust-Kamenogorsk
*e-mail: dinarasapar1113@inbox.ru

ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM IN THE DIGITAL CULTURE

The modern era of the Internet and origin of digital culture are mainly explained by its postmodern character, in particular its risomatic structure. Decentralized and heterogenic network structure allows many network connections and the number of users to appear around the world. This changes the nature of human interaction in relational system from «human-human" to «human-technology-human". In this regard, the understanding of the place of human, his main condition for functioning and development – possession of freedom, obtain the special relevance. Having freedom allows a person to transform the world around him, to create in accordance with the tasks and goals set in front of him. The definition "freedom" in the Erich Fromm's book "Escape from freedom" becomes relevant in the modern digital time. Modern culture forms the valuable guidelines of the Internet environment and allows a person to choose and determine life meanings in the digital space independently, however, due to the strengthening of information and communication flows in social patterns, it is increasingly immersed in a state of detachment from its own being. The paradox of the escape and possession of the freedom has been analysed by the eminent scientist and the answer is given, which is helpful for the current digital society.

Key words: Digital culture, digital space, freedom, escape from freedom.

Д.Р. Сапарова¹*, Г.Қ. Капышева¹, Ю.О. Энгель², Д.Қ. Нигманова¹
¹Сәрсен Аманжолов атындағы Шығыс Қазақстан университеті, Қазақстан, Өскемен қ.
²Қазақстан -Американдық еркін университеті, Қазақстан, Өскемен қ.
*e-mail: dinarasapar1113@inbox.ru

Цифрлық мәдениеттегі бостандықтан қашу

Интернеттің қазіргі дәуірі және цифрлық мәдениеттің пайда болуы негізінен оның постмодерндік сипатына, атап айтқанда оның ризоматикалық құрылымына байланысты. Орталықтандырылмаған және гетерогенді желі құрылымы бүкіл әлемде көптеген желілік қосылыстар мен пайдаланушылар санының пайда болуына мүмкіндік береді. Бұл «адам-адам» қарым-қатынас жүйесіндегі адамның өзара әрекеттесу сипатын «адам-технология-адам» деп өзгертеді. Осыған байланысты адамның орны, оның жұмыс істеуі мен дамуының басты шарты – еркіндікке ие болу туралы түсінік ерекше өзектілікке ие болады. Еркіндікке ие болу адамға қоршаған әлемді өзгертуге, оның алдына қойылған міндеттер мен мақсаттарға сәйкес жасауға мүмкіндік береді. Эрих Фроммның «Бостандықтан қашу» кітабындағы «бостандық» анықтамасы қазіргі цифрлық уақытта өзекті болып отыр. Қазіргі заманғы мәдениет интернет-ортаның құндылық бағдарларын қалыптастырады және адамға цифрлық кеңістіктегі өмірлік мағыналарды дербес таңдауға және анықтауға мүмкіндік береді, бірақ әлеуметтік құрылымдардағы ақпараттық және коммуникациялық ағындардың күшеюіне байланысты ол өз өмірінен алшақтау жағдайына көбірек енеді. Ұшу және еркіндікке ие болу парадоксын көрнекті ғалымдар талдап, қазіргі цифрлық қоғам үшін пайдалы жауап берді.

Түйін сөздер: Сандық мәдениет, цифрлық кеңістік, бостандық, бостандықтан қашу.

Д.Р. Сапарова¹*, Г.К. Капышева¹, Ю.О. Энгель², Д.К. Нигманова¹
¹Восточно-Казахстанский университет имени Сарсена Аманжолова, Казахстан, г. Усть-Каменогорск
²Казахстанско-Американский свободный университет, Казахстан, г. Усть-Каменогорск
*e-mail: dinarasapar1113@inbox.ru

Бегство от свободы в цифровой культуре

Эра Интернета и возникновение цифровой культуры во многом объясняются ее постмодернистским характером, а именно ее ризоматической структурой. Децентрализованная и гетерогенная структура сети позволяет появляться множеству сетевых связей по всему миру, и количеству пользователей. Это меняет характер взаимодействия человека в системе отношений от «человек-человек» к «человек-техника-человек». В этой связи особую актуальность приобретает

понимание места личности, и ее главное условие функционирования и развития – обладание свободой. Обладание свободой позволяет личности преобразовывать окружающий мир, творить в соответствии с поставленными задачами и целями. Определение «свобода» в книге Эриха Фромма «Бегство от свободы» становится актуальным в современное цифровое время.

Современная культура формирует ценные ориентиры интернет-среды и позволяет человеку самостоятельно выбирать и определять смыслы жизни в цифровом пространстве, однако в связи с усилением информационно-коммуникационных потоков в социальных паттернах она все больше погружается в состояние отстраненности от собственного бытия. Парадокс бегства и обладания свободой был проанализирован выдающимся ученым Эрихом Фромм и дан ответ, который полезен для нынешнего цифрового общества.

Ключевые слова: Цифровая культура, цифровое пространство, свобода, бегство от свободы.

Introduction

In the digital period, this concept takes on a new interpretation. Digital technology has fundamentally changed the way to produce and distribute cultural products. First of all, this refers to the Internet, which is increasingly used to distribute various cultural products through the same information vehicle. Under these conditions, the phenomenon of freedom takes on a new meaning and carries a different value.

The concept «freedom» itself is associated with independence, the absence of restrictions. In the philosophical understanding, «freedom» is the possibility of the human to express his will in the conditions of awareness of the laws of nature and society development (Ilyichev 1983:595). In the context of digital revolution, the concept of freedom becomes synonymous with the word – autonomy and independence in obtaining and processing information through digital technologies. A modern young man does not imagine his life without technology, gadgets, social networks. UNESCO emphasizes: «Cultural consumption has increased, the range of products has expanded, and now the «product» has become a carrier of information for most types of cultural experience. Globalization has led to the internationalization of flows of goods and services, as well as to the global exchange of ideas, people and capital. Cultural diversity and mutual penetration of cultures created new products, new customs and multiple identities «(Bogatyreva, 2018:166).

The complicated and contradictory nature of social and cultural transformations, globalization processes that allow multi-vector nature and multiculturalism in politics, economics, education, as well as processes of robotization, computerization and automation of production, accompanied by an increase in the number of launched drones that makes total control over human life, put modern society and man in front of a difficult choice. Erich Fromm writes about the difficulties of choice, the search for freedom and in the final result escape from it. The famous work of a thinker of the 20th century turned out to be relevant for modern digital culture and the place of a man in it. According to the philosophical dictionary, the concept of freedom means a creative, personal force that gives expansion for self-expression, the choice of the road where you go. The philosopher and researcher Erich Fromm in his work «Escape from Freedom» analyzes the essence of human subjectivity, thinks about the paradox of the desire to find freedom by man and escape from it in search of the meaning of personal existence. Freedom brought a person independence and rationality of his existence, but at the same time isolated him, deprived him of a sense of security and a sense of self-care, awakened in him a sense of powerlessness and anxiety. Any thought or idea approved by the majority becomes a guide for a person; a person dissolves into it, accepts it and works on it according to given patterns.

At the same time, he hides his opinion deep inside himself and the feeling of subtraction is entrenched in him, a human is faced with a choice: either to get rid of freedom with the help of new dependence, new subordination, or to grow to the full realization of positive freedom based on the individuality of everyone. «...he became free from external bonds that would prevent him from acting and thinking as he sees proper. He would be free to behave of his own free will if he knew what he wanted, what he thought, how he felt. However, he does not know. He agrees with anonymous authority and becomes a person who is not him. Despite external optimism and initiative, modern person is obsessed with a deep sense of powerlessness, which makes him look as if he paralyzed at coming up disaster» (Fromm, 2022:245).

A similar idea of subtraction and self-searching is expressed by Sherry Turkle in the article «Escape from Conversation» (Turkle 2021). The Internet space exists primarily as a means of communication in the information era. In the digital space, a person is given a unique opportunity to represent himself, his feelings, abilities, and implementation to life of many desires. A virtual environment with its multiplicity of spaces allows a person to wander in many different topics, being in search of necessary answers, locations, entertainment, while being in several virtual streams. This leads to the fact that the more a person is fond of unreal, well-masked as reality virtual world, the more subtracted his existence in the real world, the freedom becomes a burden that drives a person into even more isolated digital space.

According to M. Castells, «Internet is a universal social space of free communication» (Castells 2020). The culture of creating Internet network supposes interaction – consumers and users – creators of Internet. Such interaction, according to Castells, is based on four links of the same chain. First of all, the Internet space proclaims the power of technique and meritocratic culture (that means scientific technological progress as a solution to problems of a social, economic, political nature). Moreover, Castells calls, as we believe, two important characteristics of such a culture. They are freedom and openness. Anyone can create novation, make technological progress, but the higher the progress in numbers, the deeper the feeling of dependence, alienation from real life.

Our observations of teenagers, members of the digital generation, showed that the perception of children «actively using of social networks» becomes less sensual, less material. Real communication is minimized, while the expression of emotions is symbolized in memes and emoji. Scientists note the modern state of children is deprivation, that is, the limitation in receiving sensory signals associated with the surrounding world. It is believed that excessive social media use leads to atrophy of emotions, a feeling of your body and its capabilities, which can lead to the problem of identity and the formation of your Self.

Sherry Turkle reminds her readers of the damage of empathy and attention to each other. Active consumption of social networks leads to the loss of the ability to conduct a live conversation, listen to another person, talk about their thoughts, goals, desires, a person runs from real conversation, hiding in the world of social networks like in cocoon. Already, the modern generation is called the followers of the silent generation, according to the theory of N. Hove and W. Strauss. Only in the 30s and 40s the silent generation preferred not to openly express their opinion in connection with the political and economic difficulties of that time, and the modern generation simply does not know how to express their feelings and conduct a conversation if the conversation comes down to shortened phrases and emoji.

Virtual reality has given a person the cultural tools with which he tries to socialize in society. A virtual environment, like a virtual simulator, gives its options for living in various life situations, where a person can make their choice. The real world is very categorical and narrow. A person lives within a framework beyond which he cannot go. Such a feature of the Internet as anonymity allows Internet users to create a network identity that can have both positive and negative transformations on its owner. Naumova E.I. calls Media «a prosthesis, a continuation of a person in the world» (Naumova, 2020). Virtual life provides new ways of gaining freedom, but as soon as a person gains freedom, it begins to burden him, make him responsible, work on himself, which does not always bring pleasure to the owner of freedom. Technology keeps us quiet, leading to a crisis of empathy, a breakdown in human communication, and an escape from conversation. In real life, there is no exact answer to what the result will be, so a person, who is afraid to face the undesirable result and its consequences, is looking for calm and stability in the digital space of the Internet.

Escape from freedom and from conversation is two paradoxical phrases. Freedom, like conversation, is two integral parts of a person's life, the value of which is unconditional. However, why does a person escape from them in the modern world of new technologies? After new technologies there come new threats to humanity. Data loss, digital footprint and control over a human privacy make Internet space users as victims, hostages of the digital era. Recent events related to COVID-19 pandemic have shown that the Internet in Kazakhstan has a number of problems related to access and low speed, which did not allow providing online education for schoolchildren in Kazakhstan. Despite these problems, the society of Kazakhstan can be called network, and consumers – active actors, global networks of which have changed the balance of private and public spheres of human life, which in turn led to the formation of completely new ways of

identifying individuals: there is an increasing degree of individualization, concentration of a person on his own lifestyle.

In this regard, according to concepts of «Escape from freedom,» «Escape from conversation» we conclude that the digital space, as a communication environment, has no geographical, national, political, economic, cultural barriers; its main characteristic is interactivity, freedom of choice and total control. No matter how contradictory these characteristics seem to us, they reflect the modern trend: the Internet favors establishment of interpersonal connections. Online and offline communications are almost indistinguishable from each other, it creates a culture of communication on the network, etiquette and ethics (without offence, curses and ridicule). The ethics of communication supposes responsibility for writing text, messages, compliance with the norms and rules of communication. The cultural space of a digit gives its participant a sense of belonging and a sense of freedom. However, the destruction of such a digital space for a person lies in the loss of identity, loss of self. «...modern man lives the illusion as if he knows what he wants, although in fact he wants what is expected of him» (Fromm 2022:242). Modern man lives in the world of social networks, which means in the world of illusions, where filled content (with our permission), virtual pages, virtual purchases create an illusory life in which society is represented by «machines living with the illusion that each of them is an independent individual». Such a short-term sense of belonging to a digital society gives self-confidence, deprives fear of risk of responsibility for setting and fulfilling their own goals, therefore, it makes a person escape from what he has been striving for centuries, «on the way» losing himself, his identity, his integrity. In an attempt to escape from freedom, from responsibility, a person deprives himself of salvation in the form of human communication, hiding behind big technologies.

According to Sherry Turkle, «it is the escape from loneliness in technology, plays a central role in changing of our state of mind. Privacy is a state in which the ability to self-searching, the real obsession for relationships and the sense of value other people is born. Avoiding loneliness, «patching» hours of privacy with spending time in social networks and virtual communication, we deprive ourselves of the following: we stop reflecting, consciously choose isolation and stop truly appreciating people: as if we are using them as spare parts to maintain our fragile sense of self. We are starting to believe that the constant connection will make us less lonely. But we are in danger because it actually means the opposite. If we cannot exist alone, we will become lonelier. And if we don't teach children to be one-on-one with themselves, they only have to experience loneliness» (Yukai Du, 2015).

Well, a person is social, loneliness is destructive for him, the Internet gives a temporary feeling of security sense, a sense of belonging to society, to friends, separation along with all digital space.

This brings us to the conclusion of the current new world order, in which the daily life of people is represented by multi-level forms of involvement, the world has become like one large conglomerate of information, ideas, things, entangled in networks. The concept of mixed reality or the foresight of the future by Stanislav Lem (Lem, 1968), shows a picture that technology wins over nature. Civilization has transformed culture, making it digital, artificial from the position of «substitute», turns into technological power.

Especially digital culture is expressed in modern youth. The active use of social platforms (Facebook, VKontakte, Odnoklassniki, Instagram, Telegram) by young people in the post-Soviet space as tools of daily communication not only initiates a change in the spatial-time context of interpersonal communication, but also transforms the personal identity of the user (constructed during virtual communication), modes and settings of interpersonal interaction. The transformations, taking place in society, are reflected in the formation of our identity. P. Levi, in his book «Cyber culture» confirms that «a new space of knowledge» in a techno-communicable culture «(Levi, 222) becomes transparent, physical and people living in such a culture today» try on «both its capabilities and its negative impacts, and living in a technological space invented by a man, a man is under influence of Internet content, trends and social networks. A person, who is closer more and more to digital space, begins to feel protected by invisible bots that determine the interests, desires, needs of a person. Freedom, in contrast, forces to take an active position in building life guidelines, which is often difficult to do.

Sending and receiving videos and audio reports to tell friends about spending time has become an important part of the dialogue between friends. Let's give an example: in his article, Orlov M.O. wonders whether online communication has value and what is more primary online or offline communication. Using as an example – a student sitting in a lesson and simultaneously chatting with a friend in a

smartphone. The act of communication in a virtual space is more valuable to him than participating in a boring (in his opinion) lesson. Orlov M.O. writes: «online communication becomes more genuine than offline communication, and even creates a conflict between the subjects of virtual and real processes» (Orlov, 2019:485). Interesting results of this research showed numerous interviews with adolescents. The purpose of social media is in the importance of communication and the value of friendship. The social life of a teenager appears in two contradictory sides: On the one hand, you can have 100-1000 friends in virtual social platforms and be in contact with them 24/7, on the other hand, there is a possibility that in real life the teenager is left alone with himself, with his view of life, with his fears and desires, hopes and disappointments. And it is hard to accept reality then.

Another discovery was made by Swiss colleagues: this is the dependence of «likes» and «subscribers.» «Even if I don't know that person, I'll sign up because my friend signed up» (Lena, 15). Through the functions «Like,» «Lena subscribed to you» or «Lena online,» «Lena removed you from her subscribers,» a person can easily identify what opinion Lena has about you. Considering the social network and instant messengers as a communication tool, many teenagers transfer the criteria for communication in life to virtual reality. So, if two friends met on the street and asked how things were going, a conversation would definitely begin. Usually the conversation is supported by emotions and assessment of events. In correspondence, these criteria are replaced by symbols and pictures (emoji). From the activity of correspondence, you can understand how much friends trust each other. In observation diary of Swiss teen Ann, emotional state describes. Her friend, when asked how she was doing, answered just well and did not continue the conversation further, which greatly upset Anh. For herself, she concluded that her friend does not trust her, does not want to communicate and tell more detailed information (Lilian, 2018:85).

Thus, social platforms form attitudes towards people and towards themselves. The number of likes (preferably positive), comments, share a post, the number of followers – these social media functions that make it possible to feel «yours,» belong to a media society, be confident in yourself, than not a «well-fed and well-dressed machine» (Lilian, 2018:85).

Thus, the main idea of escaping from the conversation is to lose the skill of conducting a live dialogue with each other, the whole act of communication is expressed in text, short message, added with emoji and visual pictures. It urges a person not to communicate, but to talk, «by creating space for conversation, we regain each other as well as ourselves».

In «Escape from freedom,» Erich Fromm has a solution that becomes relevant to modern network society. He considers the concept of freedom-spontaneity «Positive freedom consists in the spontaneous activity of a complete, holistic personality»(Fromm 2022:248). Each person in one situation or another faced this feeling of spontaneity, free will of expression, a free act of creative activity. It is at the moments of spontaneity that a person experiences joy and feeling of happiness, as well as a child spontaneously reacts to external irritation. In modern conditions a person is free when he can enjoy his work in any field of activity, whether personal or professional, where the final result is undoubtedly not in the value of the product, but in obtaining satisfaction from spontaneous, which means free creative activity. «Doubts were born of his isolation and rejection of life; when an individual can live not as a result of enforcement, not as a machine, but spontaneously, doubts are disappeared «»(Fromm 2022:248).

Thus, the humanization of the cultural digital space, specifically the realization of the creative principle of a person, his involvement in activity with the achievement of a specific result, taking into account his characteristics, should contribute to the construction of new meanings, and a lively dialogue between all participants will bring a sense of understanding and awareness of their place in this space.

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