# THE PROBLEM OF DISCOURSE IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL ROUTINE<sup>1</sup>

### EL PROBLEMA DEL DISCURSO EN EL CONTEXTO DE LA RUTINA DIGITAL

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#### RECIBIDO: 25/08/2022 ACEPTADO: 17/11/2022

Abstract: Digital routine, associated with the total spread of communication technologies, challenges the existing discursive practices. The genesis of new realities entails not only methodological, but also linguistic problems. In particular, traditional anthropological discourses that claimed to describe a person, define his essence, nature, position in space, etc., are called into question. Posthumanism tries to abandon the usual conceptual and terminological thesaurus (humanistic, anthropocentric) and re-poses the question of a person and his position in the world. Both traditional discourses and trendy posthumanism need philosophical reflection with the formulation of special questions inherent in it. The focus of attention of modern, digital anthropology is a person who has created a new reality and is transforming under the influence of the technological environment. Determining the spectrum and nature of these transformations is an interdisciplinary and, in particular, philosophical problem. The study of new realities requires a clear understanding of all possible directions of philosophical reflection and the possibilities of its conceptual contribution to the solution of anthropological problems. The purpose of the article is to identify potential productive areas of philosophical understanding of anthropological issues in the context of digital routine. The directions of philosophical conceptualization of anthropological issues in digital routine

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The work was supported by the grant of the Presidency of the Russian Federation for young scientists-PhDs MK-2592.2022.2 "Digital Anthropology: Theoretical and Applied Aspects".

correlate with the scientific and philosophical structure (ontological, sociophilosophical, anthropological, axiological levels) and include specific cases of Internet Studies (practical and applied levels). The problem of value transformation in digital culture, the influence of Internet content on socializing mechanisms, modifications of cultural memory, scientific research, the problem of finding a new dimension of subjectivity, assessment of the opportunities and threats of the digital environment, the formation of digital literacy in the conditions of network capitalism, modification of traditional cultural practices are possible directions for interdisciplinary research and, in particular, philosophical practice that responds to the thinking and behavior of the new person.

**Keywords**: digital routine; digital anthropology; digital literacy; Internet Studies; posthumanism; digital identity.

**Resumen**: La rutina digital, asociada a la difusión total de las tecnologías de la comunicación, desafía las prácticas discursivas existentes. La génesis de nuevas realidades conlleva problemas no sólo metodológicos, sino también lingüísticos. En particular, se cuestionan los discursos antropológicos tradicionales que pretendían describir a una persona, definir su esencia, naturaleza, posición en el espacio, etc. El posthumanismo intenta abandonar el tesauro conceptual y terminológico habitual (humanista, antropocéntrico) y vuelve a plantear la cuestión de la persona y su posición en el mundo. Tanto los discursos tradicionales como el poshumanismo de moda necesitan una reflexión filosófica con la formulación de cuestiones especiales inherentes a ella. El foco de atención de la antropología digital moderna es una persona que ha creado una nueva realidad y se está transformando bajo la influencia del entorno tecnológico. Determinar el espectro y la naturaleza de estas transformaciones es un problema interdisciplinario y, en particular, filosófico. El estudio de nuevas realidades requiere una comprensión clara de todas las direcciones posibles de la reflexión filosófica y las posibilidades de su contribución conceptual a la solución de los problemas antropológicos. El propósito del artículo es identificar áreas productivas potenciales de comprensión filosófica de cuestiones antropológicas en el contexto de la rutina digital. Las direcciones de conceptualización filosófica de las cuestiones antropológicas en la rutina digital se correlacionan con la estructura científica y filosófica (niveles ontológicos, sociofilosófico, antropológico, axiológico) e incluyen casos específicos de Estudios de Internet (niveles práctico y aplicado). El problema de la transformación de valores en la cultura digital, la influencia de los contenidos de Internet en los mecanismos de socialización, las modificaciones de la memoria cultural, la investigación

científica, el problema de encontrar una nueva dimensión de la subjetividad, la evaluación de las oportunidades y amenazas del entorno digital, la formación de la alfabetización digital en las condiciones del capitalismo en red, la modificación de las prácticas culturales tradicionales son direcciones posibles para la investigación interdisciplinaria y, en particular, la práctica filosófica que responda al pensamiento y comportamiento de la nueva persona.

**Palabras** clave: rutina digital, antropología digital, alfabetización digital, Estudios de Internet, posthumanismo, identidad digital.

#### Introduction

We are hooked in the space between the real and virtual worlds. Regardless of social and cultural perturbations, the real world defines specific artifacts and various social practices that are implemented by subjects in relation to these artifacts. In contrary, the virtual world is mobile. In the historical development of mankind, it changed the forms of its expression:  $\epsilon i \delta \sigma \zeta$  by Plato, God by Augustine of Hippo or St. Thomas Aquinas, Eurocentric ideas of an enlightened person from Denis Diderot and Voltaire to Immanuel Kant and Georg Hegel. In the 21st century virtuality is expressed in philistine discourse, as a rule, in the digital forms.

Digital transforms a person and transforms his social practices. The transformation can be understood in terminology of crisis. Antonio Guerrero Ruiz remarks that "the absence of a true post-modern culture" forms the crisis of modernity, which is inextricably crisis of subject (Guerrero Ruiz, 2020). The transformation is also presented in the ideas of new generations. Probably the most famous name of the new person from the digital age is digital natives by Marc Prensky (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b). In 2022, the second decade opens from the moment when M. Prensky first divided people into two groups through the prism of their connection with the digital. According to the American educator, the fundamental difference between natives and immigrants is that

digital is their natural habitat; they were already born in the conditions of digital gadgets and the Internet, which is why the language of the digital – computers, video games and the Internet – is their natural language (Prensky, 2001a, p. 1). At the same time, immigrants, no matter how well they mastered this language, speak digital with a clear accent (Prensky, 2001a, p. 2); in other words, on the surface is the effort that digital immigrants expend in addressing the digital language.

In the 21st century M. Prensky's idea remains at the forefront of digital issues in social, humanitarian and educational discourses (Judd, 2018; Kurniawati et al., 2018; Tick, 2018; Zenios & Ioannou, 2018). In current research, educators are moving from the direct idea of digital natives to digital literacy as an anthropological marker of the digital age. Digital literacy is presented not only as intuitively acquired skills, but as a system of interaction between different actors, primarily a person and digital technologies, within which a person (regardless of whether he is a native or an immigrant in the digital) has to be open to new, not only readymade knowledge, but also information (Serres, 2012), has to be in the state of lifelong education (London, 2011).

Guro Hansen Helskog and Michael Noah Weiss in their research raise the issue of education as "the quest for scientific 'evidence based' practice" (Hansen Helskog & Noah Weiss, 2021; Weiss & Helskog, 2022). It presents the imbalance between "techné and poiesis with phronesis and praxis". We are faced with the fact that in the digital reality a person is taught specific skills and competencies, but not a broad vision and understanding of the world.

Myriam García Rodríguez offers a specific case within education – the 1°Cycle of Secondary School "Ethical values" subject, in the "ethical values and their relationship with science and technology" module (García Rodríguez, 2020). The very title of the course spells out the idea that a purely human, in this case – ethical, – sphere takes place in the technical space. It needs to be brought to the surface and brought to the reflection of people, those whom M. Prensky calls natives. In his turn, Leon de Haas offers "a choreographic typology of philosophical practice" in work with both natives and immigrants (de Haas, 2018). He has presented philosophical practice as an effective intuitive tool for working with the consciousness, ideas and problems of a person living in a complex technological environment.

In a technologized space that is becoming more and more digital, we are looking for a place for a person. Its place is not easy to find. In classical humanism, a person existed in a specific  $\tau \delta \pi \sigma c$ ; the place of the demiurge, the creator. A person was on the throne of being. Digital technologies in this context should have become something that strengthens this position. In practice, everything turned out to be more complicated. Digital technologies have anthropological prism. Jürgen Habermas defocused the consolidated this in the thesis that the subject "ended" along with the end of the modern era (Habermas, 2016). Together with humans, gadgets, information, and the networks themselves (primarily the Internet) claim the role of actants today. This raises questions among those who remain in anthropological positions.

Contemporary person cannot be fixed as an "off-the-shelf product". He is becoming, changing and fluid. Almost like a pump that Bruno Latour used to illustrate a non-human agent organizing a social network in the context of actor-network theory. B. Latour used the work by A. Mol and M. de Laet, who study the life of African villages (Latour, 2017). The focus of their study was a pump model common in the African villages – "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump (B Type)". In comparison with other models, the Zimbabwe Bush Pump adapts to the type and shape of the soil where it is installed. From here, B. Latour concluded about the fluidity of the identity of

agents that are able to adapt to changing environmental conditions. The identity of ANT agents, as well as other objects of queer research, is changeable, multiple, flexible and adaptive.

Today we state that there is a computer and digital technologies, and a person remains with them. Contemporary person, living in the digital space, in order to remain a person should reflect on the digital and build a discourse about it. Below are various cases from the social sphere where we can observe the influence of digital.

#### From information to impact content

"Content" has acquired a terminological status in connection with the spread of network technologies that provide user access to information. It should be understood that the word itself arose out of any connection with information technology trends and is actually polysemantic: at the same time, it means "capacity", "volumen", "pleasure", "essence", etc. In the terminological status, "content" refers to the sphere of meaning, not format. In this regard, the correlation of flood or spam with content can be called into question, not without reason. Apparently, this question does not have an unambiguous answer due to the difference between optics and research approaches. The term "content" functions, one way or another, in the classical binary logic of form and content, but the semiosis of the word goes beyond the boundaries of traditional logical schematism, which provokes a well-known collision. "Impact", of course, is not an application to the term, but indicates its functionality and potential. Content literally "influences", but is actually built into marketing programs (and, more broadly, suggestive practices). Obviously, this can be traced in the case of advertising, political and ideological actions, but suggestion is only a special case of influence. The potential impact

of Internet content, apparently, is much more multifaceted and does not come down to purposeful suggestion. In addition to the "screaming" content ("get", "win", "vote", etc.), there is content that, at a first approximation, has a strictly defined entertainment functionality. In the study by Sophia Tikhonova and Denis Artamonov "Historical memory in social media" philosophers have outlined a range of problems associated not only with broadcasting, but with the production of new knowledge, new methodology and research optics in principle. In particular, the question "how to teach digital historians?" is formulated (Tichonova & Artamonov, 2021). This question should not be taken as an exploratory reservation or a hasty judgment; it formulates a well-founded presupposition, the production of historical knowledge is changing here and now. The Internet has already become an alternative archive (meta-archive) and a museum containing much more information than classical repositories. In addition, the network produces and reproduces historical knowledge, no matter how "inconsistent" this knowledge may seem in traditionalist optics. It is no coincidence that the chapters of the book are devoted to video games, memes and demotivators and other media formats that have complex functionality.

In fact, the charge of impact content (often disguised as entertainment) needs research reflection in Internet Studies and a number of other scientific fields. This "entertaining" content (a specific trend that is associated with "cats") can be both purely entertaining in the narrow-minded optics and informing (influencing) in the research one. It is outwardly paradoxical that the formation of digital literacy is hardly possible without the appropriate knowledge of "catsophy" – a complex set of memes and audiovisual formats that accommodates heterogeneous interpretations of current events and trends. Digital Literacy is not reducible to the technical side of things; in the context of digital literacy, a critical attitude to data becomes a necessary skill (Caverly et al., 2019).

According to S. Tikhonova, the "cat revolution" on the Internet correlates with an indefinite, ever-changing spectrum of trends and events and actually forms clusters of interpretations of eventfulness. On a subjective level, many memes are "not funny" simply because they are incomprehensible and require a certain level of training and trend awareness from the consumer. As psychological studies show, the feline "packaging" of network newsmaking, in particular, plays the role of an absorbent and serves as an effective means of attracting attention (and not necessarily for suggestion). The content hidden behind the shell can be much more serious than the packaging itself. The last judgment is, in a certain sense, also true in the context of the formation of historical memory, dispersed in the microformats of the Internet and, traditionally, in books and audiovisual texts.

### History and historical memory from digital sources

Digitalization and mediatization of culture have led to significant innovations not only in the field of storing information about the past (it is well known that the Internet performs, among other things, the function of storing data), but also in the practice of transforming the past. The latter can be interpreted, keeping in mind one of the parts of the famous literary formula: "who controls the present, controls the past." The network, of course, does not implement the usual and historically early methods of control based on the principle of subordination and the functioning of punitive institutions. Instead of direct violence and orders (directives), there is an intensively spreading information "virus" that literally impresses the recipient. Memes, demotivators, gifs, and short stories have – a couple of decades ago, this statement would have actually made no sense – the functionality of storing and broadcasting historical knowledge, as well as constructing images of the past. From what has been said, it does not follow that the indicated microformats have captured the Internet space – the speaker convincingly proved that the media industry has worked and is working along the line of "production" of the past. Meanwhile, they have an obvious advantage in speed: it takes much more time to create the same Indie game or the corresponding corporate product than to create a meme. In turn, microformats, as a rule, do not require significant resource costs from the user, in comparison with the production of a movie or the creation of a game.

The "viral" nature of historical memory on the web is de facto associated with an avalanche of fake-making, that is, literally with the production of deliberately false "events". There is nothing surprising in the fact that in the XXI century the problem of demarcation of reference and simulations of all orders has become aggravated (for example, the so-called "fact checking" is being updated). At the same time, the demonization of new memory practices significantly complicates possible tactical and strategic decisions on the integration of media content into functioning mechanisms of socialization. The same fake-making should not be evaluated solely in terms of manipulation and suggestion: in fact, this is one of the many user practices carried out both in the name of "memorial wars" and for entertainment (Artamonov & Tikhonova, 2022). Learning to work with "viral" formats and simulations of our time is one of the fundamentally important tasks of modern social science and the humanities.

# The problem of subjectivity in digital

In the digital context, an important role is played not even by the digital space itself and the technologies that create it, but by the subject that creates and consumes information on the Internet. The person received the name of the subject in the era of modern times. In 17th century René Descartes, through the prism of radical doubt, wondered about the Self, which is looking for proof of existence not outside, but inside, in its very ability to question (Descartes, 2004). Jürgen Habermas, in his turn, recorded a kind of "fading" of the subject in the time after modernity. The place of the subject in science and culture since the second half of the 19th century began to be trampled more and more, first by social groups (class confrontation), then by nations and peoples (World Wars I and II), and, finally, by technology, which is reflected in the discourse of Science and Technology Studies (Alonso & D'Antonio, 2021).

It seems that a person, having "catch up" with technology, is increasingly moving away from subjectivity, that which affirms his universality as a representative of the human race and at the same time uniqueness (including creative one). The reasons for this estrangement Sergey Borisov sees in the problems what the digital age entails and affirms the digital society. Problems tend to affect young people. In other words, the younger generation growing up in the digital age is not just different, it can be understood as the socalled "problematic". This problem is expressed in several directions:

1. "exit" of young people from the power of traditional mass media;

2. plurality and dispersal of information sources;

3. change (up to simplification) of the language and language structures due to the orientation towards a written symbolic language (including emoji);

4. restructuring of bodily practices (up to immobilization in the case of using stationary devices) and transformation of kinesthetic modes;

5. dispersal and deficit of attention due to work with short texts, animated, video and audio materials, focus on fragments and cuts, not on whole works.

The first two groups of problems S. Borisov identifies as "pseudoproblems", i.e., these are not problems of the youth itself, but of power structures that seek to control and manipulate them. The other three problems make significant adjustments to the structure of the so-called "multiple intelligences" (Howard Gardner), which ultimately "blurs" subjectivity (Borisov, 2021, p. 43).

In order for a person to remain human, it is necessary to preserve the human. The problem of protecting and preserving the humanistic core in a person finds its first outlines in the philosophy of the 20th century. It originates in the context of thinking about technology. Martin Heidegger, in his later essays, had affirmed the slavish dependence of a person on technology. At the same time, he also affirmed that salvation always lies in danger. From this, M. Heidegger concludes that a person must say yes and no to technology at the same time (Heidegger, 1977).

However, the question of practice remains unresolved, how to preserve the humanistic core in a person from the digital age, in a digital native. S. Borisov answers this question following the tradition of philosophical practice (Borisov, 2020). It is possible to educate, develop and preserve the human in a person when a person implements a personal project (Borisov, 2021, p. 44). Philosophical anthropology, among other things, defines existentials in the being of a person. One of them is self-transcendence as a person's ability to go beyond his boundaries. To some extent, the personal project is just about that; it is rooted in the specificity of a person to be dissatisfied with the existing being, to design the desired being and to realize his project, thereby transforming himself.

S. Borisov, moving in the direction of preserving the human, notes that subjectivity cannot be cancelled. This happens due to several reasons: subjectivity is characteristic only of the living; it gathers around the value-semantic core; it is directly related to meaning and presence in their existential understanding. Hence, the tasks of the philosopher are reduced to allowing the subject to speak his own language and, including through philosophical questioning, to help him in determining his personal project.

#### From Surveillance Capitalism to Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is both a phenomenon and a concept. At a phenomenal level, it indicates certain skills that a person should master in the digital age. In a US Joint Forces Command official document from 2001, the global information network is presented as a basic brick in the pyramid of global dominance (*Global Information Grid (GIG). Capstone Requirements Document (CRD)*, 2001). Hence, the possession of the skill of managing the network, more precisely, the content on the network (i.e., digital literacy), – an individual or a group of individuals acquire the ability to manage the whole world.

The antinomic approach in understanding the Internet opens up a range of meanings, from the space of absolute freedom to the place of total control. This idea is not new. Similar reflections can be found in one of the later articles by Gilles Deleuze "Postscriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle" (Deleuze, 1990). The philosopher observes the so-called "electronic evolution" of panopticon. Compared to the classical supervisory systems (factory, school, and prison), it has lost the  $\tau \circ \pi \circ \varsigma$  (as a specific point on the map) and spread out everywhere. In "Modern Times", 1936, Ch. Chaplin's character inserts his card into the "supervisory apparatus" each time, which marks the exact time the worker arrived at the plant and any movements within the plant. This apparatus is a condensed symbol of the capitalist's control over the worker. However, by the end of the 20th century, according to G. Deleuze, direct control apparatuses began to give way to more sophisticated designs. G. Deleuze called them "electronic collars". Perhaps, they are the prototype of our smartphones with geolocation.

Shoshana Zuboff, Harvard professor, In 2018. social psychologist and philosopher, has presented her controversial work "The Age of Surveillance Capitalism" (Zuboff, 2019). The author substantiates the concept of new capitalist practices, which are called "surveillance capitalism". Sh. Zuboff analyzes the business models of digital companies, including Google and Amazon. The analysis takes place in the context of asking, how free the Internet itself is and whether it contributes to the freedom of users. Sh. Zuboff categorically states that "the new economic order claims human experience as a raw material available for free for covert commercial extraction, forecasting and sale logic within which the production of goods and services is subject to a new global architecture of behavior change" (Zuboff, 2019, p. 349). Olga Goriunova comes to similar conclusions in her article on the digital subject which is in position between the sociobiological analogue and digital data (Goriunova, 2019). Using Michel Foucault's understanding the subject through bodily, spiritual, and political practices, she positions the digital subject in the discourse of power. On the one hand, a real person, with a name, body, social status, creates his analogue (in some cases - analogues) in the digital environment. In this context, it is the real person who is the author, the owner of his digital "twins". On the other hand, once in a digital network, information begins to function according to the

laws of the network, not the will of its author. Panopticon comes into play. However, these are not explicit supervisory constructions, as in Jeremy Bentham or Michel Foucault. We are talking about sophisticated management practices that work on the principle of information control, not imprisonment.

It seems that the positions of Sh. Zuboff and O. Goriunova are similar. But they are not. O. Goriunova states that the Internet has a wide political and commercial impact on social actors, up to the fact that "their own" twins are created in the body of the Internet, closely intertwined with their biosociocultural counterparts. At the same time, Sh. Zuboff expresses explicit criticism of digital (at least capitalism), calling the actions of digital companies manipulative. To do this, she uses markers with an easily readable emotional coloring: "human experience as a raw material", "free raw material", "parasitic economic logic". From this point of view, it is easy to go into lengthy reflections on the nature of the Internet itself, to deny the Internet any expression of freedom (especially if we recall that the modern Internet is prototyped by the American military development, ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) and to prolong the myths about American hegemony.

# Transformation of an analog signal into digital in the example of cinema

Cinema is far from just a picture. More precisely, this is not any picture, but only one that can "bewitch". It is kind of a window that "opens" the outside world in front of me. At the same time, I am aware that this is only the outer world from the cinema. The magic of cinema works when the difference between these two windows seems to be erased. This happens for three reasons: cinema "turns on" psychological trust; it works with imagination and emotions; it uses the sensorimotor perceptions of the viewer.

Imagination is an important component in the appeal to any work of art. On imagination in the epistemological context of reflections on a thought experiment Taras Varkhotov writes, "Imagination is a natural boundary of understanding - to understand means to imagine" (Varkhotov, 2020, p. 199). With regard to cinema, the scheme of the work of the imagination is somewhat corrected. It is not so much about understanding, but about accepting the picture that is broadcast through the screen. It is the formula of success for Game of Thrones, "the world of a television series is a system of perceptual objects and events accessible to the viewer's experience that produce a subjectively significant psycho-emotional response" (Varkhotov, 2019, p. 60). In the case of the desired response of the viewer to the cinema, the picture must be consistent with the system of individual and collective representations of the viewer. In relation to what is viewed, a kind of subjective value is formed, which takes shape simultaneously with the development of his existential experience. In the digital age, analog photography retains its attraction for the

In the digital age, analog photography retains its attraction for the viewer on two key grounds, the exclusivity of experience and security, "since the form of presence in the space-time of the screen world is limited by minimal participation (the function of a transcendental observer who does not have the ability to interfere in the course of events, but has the most complete perceptual picture) and allows you to 'exit' at any time (psychologically or literally)" (Varkhotov, 2019, p. 80). In other words, the appeal of analog photography is based on the fact that it is a window into the world, only another world, different from the present. Every time I watch it, I find myself in a different world, thereby experiencing a unique experience, making a new perceptual journey, in which the choice of direction depends on me as a viewer, but development does not. Digital cinema and animation also open up new experiences for the

viewer. However, these experiences are different from those offered by their analog counterpart. To demonstrate the difference between them we can use the illustration with the robot. To a certain extent, the robot is an anthropomorphic tracing paper. Its movements are similar to those of a human, but they are different. This differentiation is rooted in their discreteness. The robot is discrete, the person is continual.

"Trainspotting", 1995, opens up a window into the world of Edinburgh in the 1990s, or rather, into the world of four drug addict friends. Each of them has their own relationship with the next dose of the drug: find, receive, refuse. Danny Boyle directs the moments of the emotional peak in the film through the exact combination of picture and music. The detox scene by Mark Renton (performed by Ewan McGregor), during which a child crawled on the ceiling, has become a cult in cinema world. Probably, its cult status is not only in the originality of the idea itself, but in the way it is executed, what it is aimed at. The viewer experiences deep fear and physical discomfort (up to bodily pain) along with the main character.

"Avatar", 2009, gives us a look at the planet Pandora. There is a house tree, blue cat-faced natives, and flying jellyfish. Babies don't crawl on ceilings in real life either. But the thing is that Danny Boyle set the task of creating for us a window into the everyday life of a drug addict with his hallucinogenic experiences. It is possible that in these experiences there is a place for Pandora and the Na'vi (the name of the humanoid creatures from Avatar), but James Cameron did not create a hallucinogenic picture for the audience, he drew a fantasy image. With this image, the viewer cannot fully correlate himself, he does not experience the effect of psychological presence, he does not have the opportunity to open "his own" window. Therefore, in the line, analog – digital, cinema develops technologically, but can lose a subtle psycho-emotional and sensorimotor connection with the viewer.

# Conclusion

A wide range of problems are associated with the digital routine. These problems are permanently implemented by the integration of relevant technologies into everyday practices, science, economics, politics, and culture. These problems actualize the axiological, social, anthropological optics of research. Philosophy has faced new challenges in comprehending and conceptualizing the changing reality. Like science, philosophy cannot ignore political, economic and socio-cultural transformations, the essence and possible consequences of which have yet to be "grasped" in concepts. Ignoring digitalization is fraught with difficult-to-predict results, but, most likely, one of them could be the encapsulation of philosophical knowledge that functions on the "fuel" of the concepts of the past. The process of diffusion of knowledge and knowledge constructs that is gaining momentum is inevitable: the sciences of the 21st century (and the philosophical sciences in particular) are a metrically unrecordable set of sporadically intersecting domains with dynamic boundaries. In our opinion, the intensive process of mixing sciences does not provide sufficient grounds for alarmist sentiments: the uniqueness of philosophy and its special historical role can be preserved in the context of the digitalization of all spheres of life. However, they are unlikely to be preserved by conservation.

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