

## EXPANSION AS A CULTURE-CREATING PRINCIPLE OF POST-MODERNITY: SEMANTIC CONTEXTS AND AESTHETIC PRACTICES

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim.** The purpose of the study is to analyse the structural aspects of expansion, which find expression in cultural metaphors and philosophical concepts, the transformation of the content of which is evidence of the emergence of new aesthetic practices.

**Methods.** The research methodology involves the use of a systemic approach and such methods as analytical, comparative, axiological, and hermeneutic to understand the patterns of formation of paradigms of visual culture and contexts of expansion in postmodern culture.

**Results.** The metaphor of glass during the 20<sup>th</sup> century loses its meaning as a source of the effects of refraction of reality in perception, the excessive complexity of which forms a tendency for simplifying and zeroing. The expansion becomes an important principle of cultural dynamics, extends to space and time, communication and identity in the world of the rapid circulation of information and its instant obsolescence. The patterns of expansion are observed in the processes of aestheticisation and aesthetic experience as the breaking out of form, perspective, perception and inclusion of the Self in the profound contexts of collective practices.

**Conclusions.** Through mastering new sensual modalities in the photo, film reality, and the latest Internet technologies, there is an expansion of perception as an expansion of media. Therefore, at the level of identity the practices of focus, concentration, and slow contemplation gain importance. In the cultural aspect, the expansion enables a return to tradition in a new capacity.

**Keywords:** postmodernity, expansion, paradigm of visual culture, aestheticisation, aesthetic practices, modern art, creativity, identity

### INTRODUCTION

Postmodernity, as a future-oriented modernity, manifests itself in innovative cultural practices: new ways of feeling and perceiving in the world of the rapid rotation of information and its immediate obsolescence. Postmodernity demonstrates a wide diversity of perception modes in a multi-level, branched, multiverse reality. Expansion becomes a sign of cultural dynamics and requires the definition of its cultural characteristics at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nonlinear dynamics of cultural processes of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries causes chronological and terminological ambiguity in attempts to explain new states of culture in the leading trends of image creation (in diachronic and synchronic dimensions) when the expansion extends over space and time. We have to look for new oppor-

tunities for a holistic delineation of those processes that include a certain logic of self-disclosure.

We observe how the established forms of the classics loosen, deform, fragment, turn into debris, splinters in the mimicry dissolution of the world. And the beginning of this process is the breakdown of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The hermeticism and existential escapism of this age are associated with disillusionment with the enlightenment project of the culture of the mind. New technical media: photo and film cameras have totally entered cultural practices and forever changed a person's view of the world, and someone's perception of reality. In the discourse of the crisis, the universe of the classics collapsed into a point, then – split in half, forming systemic dichotomies: technotronic – humanitarian, rational – irrational, conscious – unconscious, mass – elitist.

The philosophy of mind since the late nineteenth century contrasted with the philosophy of desire, which is based on visual experience, requiring primarily a psychoanalytic approach, for example, in the analysis of the transformation of dream images or visualisations of neurotic symptoms. That is why changes in the dynamics of culture since the time of Sigmund Freud are traced in the paradigms of visual culture. Visuality has long been a tracing paper of processes taking place in culture. It combines uncompromising theories and views in research discourses, and most importantly, it explains the logic of structuring the world, ways of thinking and image creation.

New states of culture needed to study the here and now phenomena, actual practices from which concepts are born. Concepts reveal the historical context and value dimensions of practices and include the history of images. Due to their aspiration for the future, the semantic gradations of concepts reveal the essence of completely new phenomena. This is especially relevant during the last decades.

We will give examples of the internal dynamics of concepts: concepts of *simulacrum*, *rhizomnity*, and *game*, they demonstrate a significant transformation of their content in a fairly short period of time.

Jean Baudrillard (1994) presents the levels of simulation in the simulacrum in chronological disclosure, from ordinary imitation and copying to self-sufficient simulacra, completely independent of reality. Attention outside the ontological aspects of the simulacrum reveals another cultural situation, where the latter acts as a concentrated unit of the new reality and acquires the status of true. The *rhizome* as a metaphor for the labyrinth-like structure of the world is fundamentally different from the *world tree* of the classics at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Rhizome returns again to the context of the tree, where it is accreted to the tree. The tree is part of the rhizome, or the tree is just a branch on a tree of a more universal scale. From understanding as an ordinary planar branching, the rhizome is now considered in complex processes of self-organisation based on the fractal principle (Mandelbrot, 2002).

In postmodern discourse, culture is perceived as a labyrinthine structure, a branched narrative metaphor, or a huge dynamic palimpsest, the patterns of integrity of which are increasingly difficult to determine. Nicolas Bourriaud suggests that complex social interactions should be viewed from an aesthetic perspective, as a certain structure that unfolds in real time. Therefore, in the era of “synchronised temporalities” (Bourriaud, 2022, p. 7), it is worth turning to the contexts of contemporary art.

In general, transcendence is becoming a feature of the age, no matter what cultural field it concerns. It can be argued that there is an expansion of the contexts of expansion. This feature of the structural dynamics of culture is also demonstrated by the concept of play. The game, which initially reveals its content in a collage of disparate elements, now includes the viewer as an element of the work in the transmedia reality. The viewer becomes a participant in the game, and later – a creator, who oneself acts as an author, recipient and interpreter.

Therefore, the disclosure of semantic gradations of some postmodern concepts indicates that the incessant replay of culture in a huge number of elements without fundamental novelty has remained in the past.

In a disintegrating world, postmodernity focuses on innovations in individual creativity, which through itself forms symbolic codes revealing the deep meanings of history and archetypes of culture. It becomes not enough for a person to participate and experience ready-made forms of someone else’s experience as one’s own. Perhaps nurturing one’s own authenticity is an attempt to return to tradition in a new quality through a search that requires the expansion of aesthetic experience. Then, at the level of the semantic content of the concept, the understanding of expansion as inflation should obscure the understanding of expansion as an attempt to build an identity in the extremely difficult conditions of postmodernity.

The research is aimed at identifying features of cultural states caused by the emergence of aesthetic practices, the leading principle of which is expansion, the definition of their existential basis in the context of creativity and identity, uniqueness and fundamental difference in the dimensions of paradigms of visual culture – modernism, postmodernism, metamodernism.

## RESEARCH VERSIONS OF POST-MODERNITY AND PECULIARITIES OF METHODOLOGY

In order to assess certain phenomena of postmodernity, in particular the cultural dynamics of expansion, we have to pay attention to the regularities in the formation of classical, modernist, and postmodernist paradigms of visual culture.

If the classics have established characteristics, then in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the analytics of culture is faced with contradictions and uncertainty regarding the criteria for evaluating what is happening: modernism is the result

of a worldview break, and postmodernism hides the causes and consequences of self-deception and substitution.

Versions of postmodernism as the *society of the spectacle* (Debord, 1992) and the *empire of the ephemeral* (Lipovetsky, 1994) testify about its important feature: illusiveness, which refers in particular to the illusion of successfully passing the previous stage – modernism.

Authors who tried to comprehend the phenomenon of postmodernism as a state of culture primarily turned to the philosophical understanding of modernity and current cultural practices in the context of their time: *the dehumanisation of art* (Ortega y Gasset, 2019); *loss of trust in metanarratives* (Lyotard, 1984); *the tension between mind and subject* (Touraine, 1992); *the end of faith in progress* (Vattimo, 1991); *semantic instability* (Hassan, 1982); *deconstruction as a principle of archival text analysis* (Derrida, 1973); *radical eclecticism* (Jencks, 1987); *intertextuality* (Eco, 1989, 1994); *dromocratic revolution* (Virilio, 1986); *asynchrony of culture and aesthetic production* (Jameson, 1992); *transculturation* (Hutcheon, 1988, 2000); *the mercurial condition between and beyond* (Turner, 2011) and so on.

Theorists of both modernism and postmodernism describe new trends in culture characterised by the intensification of space and time. At the same time, the outlines of a new discourse are emerging in which artistic and philosophical practices are intertwined, and cultural theory turns to co-creation – literary, architectural, and pictorial.

The appeal to transcendent narratives of art has always accompanied philosophy of culture, but in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the special status of aesthetic practices shapes new theoretical and methodological principles of their research. Arthur Kroker and David Cook (1986) draw on the work of the American artist Eric Fischl in their philosophical research, Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker (2015) collaborates in creative tandem with the British artist and photographer Luke Turner (2011), Jason Josephson Storm (2021) – with the Nigerian art critic, painter and artist Moyo Okediji (Harris & Okediji, 1999) and there are many such tendentious examples.

In research discourses, there are many names for the new state of culture, which cultural philosophers and artists are trying to define through the actual present. The most characteristic in identifying the essence of change is *post-postmodernism* (Eshelman, 2008, Hutcheon, 2002; Nealon, 2012). In 2015, David Rudrum and Nicholas Stavris published an anthology in which they propose to comprehend the paradigm of a new culture that replaces postmodernity. As the compilers note, “a number of offshoots of the postmodern have been striking out in a multitude of new directions from it, and some of these directions seem to run athwart the main postmodern currents” (Rudrum & Stavris, 2015, p. XIII). The anthology presents the concepts of *digimodernism* by Alan Kirby, *hipermodernism* by Gilles Lipovetsky, *altermodernism* by Nicolas Bourriaud, *reformatism* by Raoul Eshelman, *metamodernism* by Robin van den Akker, and others, which describe a

variety of unique visual universes, communicative and aesthetic practices based on the principle of expansion (Rudrum and Stavris, 2015).

Most of the concepts contain the ideas of transcendence (as a reinforcement or change in the trends of the previous stage), resistance to redundancy, and an assessment of the cultural perspectives of redundancy. The concept of simultaneity is important in the context of the problem of expansion, it removes the paradigmatic limitations of both modernism and postmodernism, and changes the attitude to history and identity. This thesis is summarised in the sixth position of Turner's manifesto:

the new technology enables the simultaneous experience and enactment of events from a multiplicity of positions. Far from signalling its demise, these emergent networks facilitate the democratisation of history, illuminating the forking paths along which its grand narratives may navigate the here and now (Turner, 2011, para. 6).

Vermeulen and van den Akker (2015), Alexandra Dumitrescu (2016), Hanzi Freinacht (2017), Seth Abramson (2017) form a discourse of metamodernism, one of the main questions of which is: What is postmodernism?

The ephemerality of postmodernism means a stage that has neither begun nor ended but continues. Its peculiarity lies in the fundamental incompleteness and impossibility of comparing concepts and phenomena due to the lack of an established common field of ideas. The process of constant changes and renewal is also levelling the stability of tradition, the modernist denial of which was transformed into its conditional acceptance on the basis of a tolerant, somewhat indifferent attitude. Metamodernism becomes an attempt at a correct, true return to tradition, through the debunking of illusions. The breadth of interpretations creates the situation when "each should be allowed to use the term however they feel like" (Vermeulen & Van den Akker, 2015, para. 10). Accordingly, Abramson (2017) defines the metamodernism through the concept of "philosophy of culture", and Freinacht (2017) also defines it as "a kind of philosophy, a view of the world" (p. 14). Ultimately, "metamodernism is a term used, by us, to periodise the contemporary and think the present historically" (Vermeulen & van den Akker, 2015).

In philosophical science, chronological and terminological ambiguity makes it difficult to frame the similar processes of postmodernism and metamodernism, to establish their clear boundaries. Metamodernism is interpreted as a latent dimension of postmodernism, the result of the dialogue between modernism and postmodernism, as a particular stage or state of culture.

One of the best researchers of the contradictions of postmodern culture is Wolfgang Iser (1997), who revealed their content in terms of the definition of the new era, subject areas of application, chronology, typological heterogeneity, etc. Illuminating the peculiarities of postmodernism (and metamodernism) culture through the prism of the aesthetic explains the

diversity of reflections of artistic practices through which the era is recognised and its characteristics are outlined.

Ukrainian researchers also pay attention to the aspects of culture and aesthetic practices that no longer coincide with the postmodern model of the world: Yuri Lehenkyi (1995), Olena Onishchenko (2021), Yulia Shabanova (2019), Iryna Petrova (2020), Kateryna Shevchuk (2019), Olena Pavlova (2022), Ihor Pasichnyk (2014), Natalia Golovina (2016) and others.

Therefore, the criticism of postmodernism becomes an impetus for research into the characteristics of the future era. The research on the principle of expansion and its culture-creating role in the paradigms of visual culture encourages us to turn to change the characteristics of aesthetic practices.

Reflecting on the states of culture from the conditional position of postmodernism makes it possible to trace the cultural characteristics of expansion from a certain middle state, based on the patterns and logic of interaction between cultural paradigms, including visual culture.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF EXPANSION IN IMAGE CREATION TRADITIONS: CONTEXTS OF GLASS METAPHOR BY J. ORTEGA Y GASSET

The research on the principle of expansion, its worldview and artistic projections we will consider in the paradigms of visual culture from the viewpoint of the forming traditions of image creation.

### *The classic paradigm of visual culture*

Classics is that wholeness with clear historical logic, sacred art and canons, which tends to express life in the forms of life itself in the ideal visibility of the object of contemplation. The principles of harmony, symmetry, proportion, golden section in the classical perspective determine the peculiarities of artistic representation, which in the Renaissance are enriched with the ideas of humanism and historicism, and in the educational project are supplemented by the ideas of the cultural values of enlightenment rationalism. In its aspiration to the perfect ideal, classical art nevertheless contains the struggle of different tendencies, oscillations between the strict canons of classicism, the dynamism of the Baroque, and the romantic cult of passions and myth-making. It does not create a split, but only enriches the contemplative aesthetics of the art of the ideal, preserves the specificity of high art, a cultural hero – as a model for imitation, a masterpiece – as the embodiment of perfection and a clear understanding, which is not actually an art.

The *Book* and the *World Tree* in this model of the world are metaphors for its structure. The art corresponds to the fixed nature of vision, the simplicity of the gestalt of the world physical model, and “the eye’s intuitive sense of balance” (Arnheim, 2004, p. 19). Expansion appears here as a latent

potentiality of development based on free choice but conditioned by an ideal.

Classical art is about unambiguity and balance, which are manifested in a visually perfect gestalt, when the whole is assembled from parts without a trace. At the same time, the relationships between the parts may be unbalanced in themselves, but “together they all balance one another in the structure of the whole work” (Arnheim, 2004, p. 41). This is the defining essence of classical harmony, which potentially contains an expansion in the movement from the visible to the invisible, because “the straightness of the whole is made up of oscillating parts. It offers us the serenity of life, not of death” (p. 154).

### *The modernist paradigm of visual culture*

To understand the worldview of modernism, it is worth noting that its appearance was marked by a dramatic break of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries: reassessment of values and a radical shift in cultural self-awareness.

With the advent of Dadaism, the principle of meaningfulness, the logic of history is destroyed, the cultural-historical optics narrows to a shred/piece or a fragment of reality available for perception. Representation in modernism is determined by the way of vision, refracted through the author’s consciousness. Visual images of the micro- and macro-world, associated with the scientific discoveries of the microscope and telescope, the practices of preserving images and moving images in new technical media, testify to a fundamental change in the angle of vision, the understanding that the world goes beyond the boundaries of existing physics, the givens of the world in natural perception.

Here, a branch, as a part of a tree, or a branch, as something separate from a tree, acts as a metaphor for the structure of the world. The special meticulousness of the view allows you to consider a branch as a tree, a branch in a group of trees – as a forest or a garden. The image of a branch in these examples is included in the process of fractal expansion, the logic of approaching – remoteness. In general, the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a total change in the point of view, ideas about reality and the principles of its structuring.

José Ortega y Gasset’s glass metaphor demonstrates this change. Let us recall the image of the writing as an *open window* from the early Renaissance. Alberti believed that the best picture resembles what we see through an open window – reality itself. The window connected a person with the material world, in contrast to the spiritual vision of the Middle Ages. Ortega y Gasset (2019) notes that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, artists tried to create artwork almost entirely on the reproduction of reality. Living reality here acts as the essence of aesthetic form. But in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, attention shifted from what is behind the glass to the glass itself.

The glass acts as an object of observation, which plays different roles in the metaphorical sense – seeing through the glass, seeing with the help of



glass, and seeing the glass itself. The gradations of evading reality are like a game that has the subtlest reflections in art from the awareness of a copy to a complete illusion. But why does this glass exist? In Alberti, glass is not yet reflective, and its presence or absence is not about reality itself, but about the way of contacting it.

In an ideal classic, we do not see glass. To see the garden through the glass and the glass itself, according to Ortega y Gasset (2019), are two different operations, "the purer the glass, the less we see it" (p. 10). Most people cannot see simultaneously the external form of the writing and the fact that it is transparent. But this emphasis on the different adjustments of our perception apparatus already testifies to the idea and visual practice of expansion, which the Spanish philosopher understands extremely broadly:

Life is a petty thing unless it is moved by the indomitable urge to extend its boundaries. Only in proportion as we are desirous of living more do we really live. Obstinate to insist on carrying on within the same familiar horizon betrays weakness and a decline of vital energies. Our horizon is a biological line, a living part of our organism. In times of fullness of life it expands, elastically moving in unison almost with our breathing. When the horizon stiffens it is because it has become fossilised and we are growing old (Ortega y Gasset, 2019, p. 24).

The limitation of expansion in modernism is the perception itself, within which different modes of vision are formed.

### *The postmodern paradigm of visual culture*

The boundary between modernism and postmodernism was a gradual transition to further fragmentation of reality, in which the principle of binary changes to polycentricity.

The postmodern paradigm is defined by the emergence of new digital media technologies. The aesthetics of the fragment revealed the functioning of culture through the processes of centrifugation, citation, and playing with fragments, changing the status of the author – from the announcement of one's death to, nevertheless, the continuation of a hidden trickster game with provocations and deceptions. Eclecticism and the dominance of chaos become signs of a new style and image creation. A metaphor for the structure of the world – a rhizome resembles the web of the Internet and modern transmedia, which are arranged according to the principle of expansion. The essence of rhizome growth is non-systematic and unpredictability, spreading, therefore expansion in postmodernism acquires the status of a cultural concept.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (2004), revealing the essence of rhizome, define "the Tree or Root as an image, endlessly develops the law of the One that become two, then of the two that become four..." (p. 5) and describe a new fascicular system characterised by fragmentation and multiplicity. Its openness and the principle of assembly become the basis

of the rhizomatic method, which “can analyse language only by decentring it into other dimensions and other registers” (p. 8). Thus, the rhizome continuously establishes connections, because “an assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections” (p. 9).

This approach allows us not only to deconstruct binary oppositions but also to immerse ourselves in the microscale of nanotechnology, a special style of complex thinking in a world where form is never a fixed pattern.

Back in 1964, Marshall McLuhan described the principle of media expansion through the nervous system, which distinguishes the latest media from, for example, a microscope and a telescope, which locally affect vision. A Canadian researcher talks about “the technological simulation of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society, much as we have already extended our senses and our nerves by the various media” (McLuhan, 1994, p. 3-4). Media tools turn out to be connected with the human body, which is the reason for the self-expansion of the person. *Hot* media, unlike *cold* media, require greater human activity in interaction with the cultural context, which is the reason for the emergence of a new participatory culture and forms of collectivity.

Returning to the metaphor of glass, let’s assume that glass can have different substantial states – be dull, opaque, be a mirror (provided it is coated with amalgam), be broken into fragments, or be soft, fluid, that is, substantially and visually different.

The transparent glass of the classics, almost imperceptible, shows reality as it is. In modernism, glass demonstrates various effects of refracting reality – from the deformation of the grid of coordinates, through which we see various authorial subjectivities, to fragmentation resembling a cut photograph or picture. Attention shifts from the immediacy of perception to the cultural status of the instrument of vision itself. In postmodernism, glass becomes a multiple collection of its many layers, a labyrinth-like structure, a palimpsest.

The metaphor of glass during the 20<sup>th</sup> century loses its meaning as a source of effects of refraction of reality in perception. Their excessive complexity gradually forms a tendency towards simplification and nullification.

Manifesting itself in artistic practice as a guideline for minimalism, it is especially characteristic of postmodernism, which is tired of excess and the incessant acceleration. While minimalism tends to simplify the image, archaisation, which is characteristic of the metamodernist model, tends to disappear the image for the sake of meeting its unknown and invisible essence. And this does not require mediation.

## METAMODERNISM: AESTHETICISATION AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Metamodernism involves two interrelated processes. The first is an attempt to define modernity in the situation of the intersection of historical times and their simultaneous existence in the plane of the rhizome. The second is an attempt to define reality, which in postmodernism replayed in the fragments of culture, palimpsests of historical memory, and ideas of alternative worlds. It would seem that we are resigned to the loss of reality. In metamodernism, the lost and what remains on this side are realised – the Self itself, the identity, which becomes the single point of a new beginning. The spring lost its potential for return, but the cultural subject refusing the game of glass, having lost the support of history, came face to face with ourselves. This is the zeroing from which creativity, choice, and the desire to expand the boundaries begin. And this movement begins with the formation of sensual culture. Imaginary and possible are introduced into the epistemological context, and aesthetics acts as the most complete model of knowledge in an age when “aesthetics becomes an ontology of universal sensuality” (Bondarevska et al., 2009, p. 30).

Contemporary aesthetic education notes changes not only in the field of culture in the direction of informatisation and digitalisation, but also in human perception, revealing “an increased demand for the harmonisation of all his interactions with the world” (Golovina, 2016, p. 104). Therefore, the need for aesthetic knowledge and its rethinking is now an expression of the search for new conditions of integrity and rehabilitation of aesthetics as a whole, “in order to preserve Man and Culture in the world of postculture” (p. 104).

At the beginning of the 2000s, aesthetic problems moved into the sphere of everyday life and social practices, the deployment of experience. During the round table of estheticians of the Kyiv School in 2009, the opinion was expressed that the integrity of aesthetic knowledge is falling apart (Bondarevska et al., 2009). Pasichnyk, a researcher of the texts of the founder of aesthetics, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, believes that the idea of aesthetics in its original meaning was distorted because in the concept of the German philosopher, the realm of aesthetics was narrowed down to the contexts of art. This is due to the inaccuracy of translations of the philosopher’s writings from Latin by Georg Friedrich Meier, but most importantly, with the spirit of rationalism in the Enlightenment (Pasichnyk, 2014).

Welsch, having criticised all traditional definitions, revived the ancient Greek term *αισθητικός* as the thematisation of perception of all kinds, i.e. both sense and mind. From here, the idea of expanding the aesthetic experience turns to the concept of aestheticisation, which can be considered “a stable trend of the development of the modern world” (Welsch, 1997, p. 99).

Aestheticisation is considered in the context of aesthetics, its theoretical flexibility, it grows out of the practices of Dadaists, Surrealists, Expression-

ists, the philosophy of Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin, Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and Jean Baudrillard.

Characteristic for the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century is the research of aestheticisation in connection with the culture of everyday life, the terminology of which was established at the end of the 70s. Thus, de Certeau, studying artistic practices in the context of their expansion into everyday life, calls for the development of a sense of infinity by maintaining an unstable balance between their multiplicity and action (Certeau, 2011).

The emergence of technical, receptive and practical aesthetics meant a significant expansion of aesthetic experience, the designing of art. On the one hand, practical aesthetics blurs art in the context of everyday life, on the other hand, an aesthetic sensitivity is formed to the side of things that allows you to perceive them as artwork. Not only everything that surrounds us acquires the status of art, but also life itself as an existential project, actions, and thoughts. Thinking in images becomes a way to create one's aesthetic universe through aesthetic experience as a way out of the atrophied sensuality of a bored and tired cultural subject of the late 20<sup>th</sup> - early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

The aesthetic experience becomes the central concept of metamodernism. Everything that is playing - comes to life, and becomes part of it. This creates a special culture of experience, which becomes a search for those forms in which a person seeks to express his/her authenticity in the aesthetics of being. There is a transition from experiencing practices to living practices.

Aestheticisation in the concepts of Benjamin and Welsch resonates with the research of McLuhan and Henry Jenkins, ideas of environmental (or ecological) aesthetics of Arnold Berleant, relational aesthetics of Bourriaud, etc. Thus, in the concept of the *aesthetic field* Berleant (2005) reveals aesthetic perception in the direction of dynamic movement and practices of participation, which transforms the aesthetics of contemplation into the aesthetics of involvement. The aesthetics of a social situation operates according to the laws of the dominant space of the environment, when we, as an integral part of an environmental field, "both shape and are formed by the multitude of forces that produce the experimental qualities of the universe we inhabit. These qualities constitute the perceptual domain in which we engage in aesthetic experience" (Berleant, 2005, p. 115).

Bourriaud, being primarily an art critic, considers social interaction in the aesthetic aspect as a certain structure that unfolds in real time. Art, in his opinion, models possible worlds and generates alternative forms of sociality. In his later concept of appropriation, the creative rearrangement of images unfolds in the dimension of cultural scenarios that may seem utopian at first glance, but they only model a harmonious reality devoid of contradictions.

Social aesthetics is characterised by the disclosure of the cultural situation through the concepts of connection and interconnection, and thus

through the study of the features of an open structure. The trends of changes in social aesthetics can be traced in the evolution of Bourriaud's views (*Relational Aesthetics* (1998), *Postproduction. Culture as a Script: The Art of Reprogramming the Modern World* (2003) and in his latest work *Inclusions* (2022)). The context of the study is global changes: climatic and social, in particular, the pandemic situation. According to the researcher, the rise of new technologies "must bring about a new holism, an inclusive approach to the world, a thought immersed in the natural milieu that we have been taught to see as an 'environment'" (Bourriaud, 2022, p. 7). Bourriaud expands the contexts of understanding the environment, or what we interpret as the environment, including micro- and macrocosms, and introduces the idea of an expanded vision of anthropology. An inclusive aesthetics "calls for a training of the gaze, decentered at last, relocated finally within a plurivocal universe that includes nonhumans" (p. 11).

The aesthetics of relationships becomes as integral as possible over time, and art returns to the totems in the depths of the subconscious. Through expansion as deepening, "today, we must explore art history as a network of underground galleries, and future sundered connections" (Bourriaud, 2022, p. 9).

Aestheticisation extends the aesthetic experience to all spheres of human existence and is associated with the disconnection of the form, the disconnection of perspective, the disconnection of perception, and the extension of cultural contexts of the Self into collective practices of belonging. This, of course, affects contemporary art and its visual language and creates an ambiguous situation when "the arsenal of tools, methods, approaches used by traditional aesthetics previously does not allow to fully grasping the essence of much of modern art manifestations" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 97). We agree with the Ukrainian researcher Kateryna Shevchuk (2019) that this should form the new "aesthetic anthropology" (p. 97), which should be understood as a certain systematic conceptualisation.

In the context of aesthetic anthropology, it is important to take into account the potential of visual studies that emerged in the twentieth century and covered all areas of culture and human experience. Speaking about the new visual anthropology and its formation, Olena Pavlova (2022) refers to the tendency to conceptualise the stages of visual culture "taking into account the genesis of optical media" (p. 47). This provides "a definition of the main stages of the formation of the field of visual anthropology and its basic elements, the isolation of which becomes the optics of the field itself" (p. 48).

Thus, the tendencies of conceptualisation and systematisation of aesthetic and visual studies become the basis for a new combination of theory and practice, in particular, the characteristic feature of metamodernism to give birth to philosophical concepts and concepts of artistic works directly from practice.

As a tendency, the connection between theory and artistic practices becomes more and more directly creative over time, and concepts are deter-

mined by the practice and practices themselves. Aesthetic experience is changing and its expansion in metamodernist practices corresponds to the contexts of cultural space as a whole, including in the field of research literally everything that the culturalist idea of global aestheticisation is associated with.

Aestheticisation can be interpreted as a process of intervention in all spheres of human existence, which can be positive or negative. For example, Jean-François Lyotard (1997) defined aestheticisation through a number of concepts, including staging, simulation, and the hegemony of artifacts, which indicates "the loss of the object and the dominance of the imaginary over reality" (p. 87). Welsch (1997) also notes that the "reality as a whole is coming to count increasingly as an aesthetic construct to us" (p. 1). In the global aestheticisation, he observes two processes: "surface aestheticisation" and "deep-seated aestheticisation" (Welsch, 1997, p. 1), and speaks of the movement "from material and social reality over to subjective reality, to the form of individuals' existence" (Welsch, 1997, p. 6). According to Welsch (1997) "the current aestheticisation could even be said to attain its perfection in individuals" (p. 8). This makes it possible to consider aestheticisation not only in the new cultural matrix of hedonism, but also in the conflicts between aesthetic presence and media-semiotic alienation, indicates the presence of implosive processes of culture and the next stage of subjectivism - openness and insecurity.

From the standpoint of structural and semiotic analysis of the work, the concept of openness becomes the subject of Umberto Eco's research. The term was introduced in 1962 in the work of the same name (Eco, 1989). An *open work* encourages the unfolding of the author's version, and turns on the receptive consciousness, thanks to which the writing reveals its ambiguity in the act of perception (Sabadash, 2012). In dynamic open forms, semantic contexts become decisive. Asymmetry and the lack of a centre are related to the image of a labyrinth, which Eco proposed to understand as the branched structure of perception, its liberation from the closed model of writing. Such an open form changes the functions of art and individual creativity and self-expression acquire special importance.

The idea concerning the disconnection of perspective comes from the logic of the formation of perspective constructions (direct linear, reverse, spherical, panoramic, air-tonal, perceptual). The Ukrainian researcher Yurii Lehenkyi makes an attempt to predict the development of the aesthetic universe of the culture at the beginning of the third millennium in order to see the compositional integrity of the culture. He introduces the idea of gravitational perspective, the removal of which plunges us into the world of the first civilisations. The cosmos of modern culture, if such an abstraction is possible, "finds the limit of its world gropingly" (Lehenkyi, 1995, p. 182), at the same time, "if we recall the well-known metaphor of direct perspective, "a window opened to the world", then the new perspective will already be 'a window opened to the sky'" (p. 305). This world of organic cosmicity is

opposed to the cyclopeanness of direct perspective. We are talking about the combination of earthly and heavenly ontologies, because the cosmic (or gravitational) perspective demonstrates "the transfer of perceptual dynamics... to another system of geometry, from Euclidean to non-Euclidean" (Lehenkyi, 1995, p. 309).

In metamodernism, aestheticisation acts as life creation, it is revealed in the dimension of collective experience, archetypes of the past and future which create the culture ahead of us. In a complex, multimedia, ramified reality, attention is directed to borderline phenomena and the exorbitant.

The fractal nature of the new reality does not create contradictions in the disclosure of the individual principle in the collective one: they interact and develop according to the principle of synergy.

### NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE EXPANSION

Any cultural process has positive and negative aspects. Aestheticisation as a spreading of social phenomena is no exception. Therefore, the prospects for expansion can be observed to a greater extent in socially oriented futurological concepts, in particular, in the understanding of the cultural aspects of media convergence.

Expansion as inflation, and entropic decay is the path to the inevitability of the catastrophe of existence. Like a panoramic vision of the structure of a labyrinth with right and wrong moves is the way to awareness. Return to a state in which the error has not yet been committed is the possibility of its correction. In *positive* expansion, inner harmony should dominate over chaos, and sincerity and presence should become the basis of new cultural creation. But - to what extent is this possible in the cultural logic of the Internet era? After all, the subject of *blip* culture (Toffler, 1980) loses the comprehensiveness of vision, the habit of thinking in terms of universals. At the same time, the futurologist positively assessed the prospects of media convergence in the cultural creativity of the future. In his opinion, the leap into the info-sphere "makes social memory both extensive and active" (Toffler, 1980, p. 193). In the days of primordality, when a person was just learning to accumulate images, the volume of memory was unlimited, "it was, in the most literal sense, alive" (p. 193). Using a computer as a model of memory, according to Alvin Toffler makes it possible to get closer to the awareness of the very essence of the creative process. The researcher dreams of the emergence of such a creative environment that will change the work of the brain and a person will be able to be a director, a cameraman, and an actor simultaneously.

According to Fredric Jameson (2007), *negative* expansion is manifested in repetition and missing structure, "in mass culture, repetition effectively volatilises the original object-the "text", the "work of art"" (p. 26). The established object only seems to be absent, in modernism it has not yet completely disappeared:

modernism and mass culture are grasped as a single historical and aesthetic phenomenon has the advantage of positing the survival of the primary text at one of its poles, and thus providing a guide-rail for the bewildering exploration of the aesthetic universe which lies at the other, a message or semiotic bombardment from which the textual referent has disappeared. (Jameson, 2007, p. 27)

The subject of postmodern culture only tries to create a replacement for what is missing in the form of an optical illusion of social harmony, therefore "authentic cultural creation is dependent for its existence on authentic collective life, on the vitality of the "organic" social group in whatever form" (Jameson, 2007, p. 30). Abandoning this experience in mass culture makes identification unreliable. This collectivity of the present, in contrast to the flat mass culture, acts as a new form of media collectivity.

Jenkins (Jenkins et al., 2013), one of the authors of the theory of media convergence (merger and expansion of media), predicted its inevitability and noted that collective practices in these conditions have to be developed, and that "everyone will survive if everyone works together" (p. 30). The author traces the principle of expansion in Spreadable Media from a sticky perception of television to the spreading (Jenkins et al., 2013), studies the laws of interactivity, the commercial interests of the audience, and the creation of communities of interest.

Investigating the intensive development of media convergence, Jenkins (2009) draws attention to spreadability as one of the seven properties of transmedia (continuity, immersion, worldbuilding, seriality, subjectivity, and performance). He also recognises the opposite process – drillability, on the basis of which the practice of transmedia storytelling is formed, which allows the creation of a separate universe through only one media channel. At the same time, the key role is remained by universal convergence, when a person builds one's own personal mythology from different fragments and from different sources of the media space. Jenkins overcomes the moral panic regarding the negative assessment of digitalisation through faith in the peaceful coexistence of old and new media and faith in the collective mind.

In our opinion, the culture-creating aspects of expansion need to be comprehended: being on the verge between different formats of reality, transitional processes and states (fluid – changing – merged – beyond), in which uncertainty is overcome through the self-determination of the Self in collective synergy.

The culture-creating role of expansion acts as an aestheticisation of the border, an exit to the level of the culture of complicity, in which identity is revealed between the individual and the collective. Benjamin (1969) astutely noted that in the age of technical reproduction "exhibition value begins to displace cult value all along the line" (p. 225). The researcher is interested in the perception of a work, "reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction" (p. 239), which was characteristic of the



ancient epic, architecture, and in the twentieth century – cinema. Painting, according to Benjamin (1969), “simply is in no position to present an object for simultaneous collective experience” (p. 234). In addition, psychoanalysis, which is widely used in the analysis of film art, “made analysable things which had heretofore floated along unnoticed in the broad stream of perception” (p. 235). Thus, the film image exposes familiar things and phenomena to a more detailed analysis, expands the boundaries of the perceived and provides us with a huge field of activity where we exercise freedom. Benjamin (1969) notes that “different nature opens itself to the camera than opens to the naked eye – if only because an unconsciously penetrated space is substituted for a space consciously explored by man” (p. 236-237), because the cameraman, unlike the artist, overcomes the natural distance and penetrates deeply into the web of reality when space and time move apart. According to Benjamin (1969), “reception in a state of distraction” is “symptomatic of profound changes in apperception” (p. 240).

The dissipated perception can play a constructive role here as a practice of asymptotic (indirect, bypass) approximation, and therefore – to open up possibilities of choice based on creative intuition and imaginative thinking. Expansion here is the unfolding of the creative process, presence in media narratives, the drift of identity with specific spatiotemporal coordinates when the world is a labyrinth through which you travel.

For modernism and postmodernism, the idea of expansion acts as a search for wholeness developing in the process of becoming, in metamodernism – the whole itself changes in the process of becoming.

The identity of metamodernism reveals the level of individual self-expression through collective experience. But not in the Jungian terms of Ego inflation, when at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the experience of direct contact with archetypes was considered dangerous and destructive for a person. This is an expansion that prompts you to search for the boundaries of reality and your own Self.

Welsch has certain intuitions about the culture-creating role of expansion in varieties of postmodernism. To the version of feuilleton's postmodernism of diffusion, unclear and murky, he assigns researchers who do not resort to new terminology, but still identify typical features of a postmodernism and have the relevant thinking. Sensations, scandals, provocations, and non-creative amusement parks of consumer society are considered here as signs of modernity. *Postmodernism of diffusion* denies concepts and turns to affective states, hedonism, aesthetics of the holiday, it is irrational. In the *postmodernism of precision*, the principle of pleasure and chaos is replaced by attentiveness to nuances and details, to a general vision of contradictions in the plurality of the world. The author defines this state of culture through the concept of responsible indifference and complains about such postmodernism as true, considering the most conceptually convincing description of this position among researchers in Lyotard (Welsch, 1997). Therefore, postmodernism of precision has a completely metamodernist character.

In our opinion, expansion here acts as a certain systemic principle that requires a special focus, composure, concentration from the subject of culture, according to the principle of complementarity – reasonable self-restriction and simplification, keeping the boundaries of the Self by the effort of thought. This is one of the important instruments for fighting the accumulation of illusions.

The expansion of perception requires the ability to control one's own attention, the ability to work with images in their temporal characteristics and mimicry changes, with transmedia transitions to all-seeing and all-presence.

## CONCLUSIONS

With the spread of technical media and digital technologies, the principle of expansion attracts the attention of researchers and manifests itself in palimpsests of memory, structures of identity, artistic creativity, communicative practices, and transmedia effects.

The self-disclosure of the world through deformation, fragmentation and mimicry expresses its fluid and changeable structure in cultural metaphors and philosophical concepts, which are filled with new meanings with the emergence of new aesthetic practices. The metaphor of glass as a way of seeing during the 20<sup>th</sup> century loses its meaning as a source of the effects of refraction of reality in perception, the excessive complexity of which forms a tendency towards simplification and zeroing.

Aestheticization extends the aesthetic experience to all spheres of human existence and is associated with the disconnection of the form, the disconnection of perspective, the disconnection of perception, and the extension of the contexts of the Self into collective practices of belonging. A person becomes a repeater of deeper meanings of history and cultural archetypes, a creator of an aesthetic universe in the absence of an ideal in the classical sense, - a creator of one's own ideal.

The practices of returning to tradition in a new quality create a special culture of experience, which in metamodernism becomes a search for the expression of one's own authenticity in an aesthetic form. From experiencing someone else's knowledge as one's own in the world of ready-made forms there is a transition to the practices of living one's own background, where values are sincerity, presence, and authenticity.

Dissipated perception and polycentricity of attention, caused by the processes of media expansion as an expansion of perception, complementarily contribute to the emergence of curtailing practices – concentration, centeredness, slow contemplation, which determines the general orientation toward reality and not toward illusion.

From expansion as a process of decay, fragmentation, mimicry entropy, there is a transition to fractal expansion in the context of the whole, micro-

and macro-patterns of the dynamic formation of the world. Expansion here does not appear as a chaotic ramification, but a certain systematic principle. In modernism, it is associated with the development of new sensory modalities of technical media, different angles of vision, work with demarcated formats of reality (real – virtual). With digital technologies, not only media but also perception is expanding. Gradually moving away from eclecticism and combinatorial play, attention is drawn to gaps and borders between real and virtual, verbal and visual, optical and tactile, conscious and unconscious, transitional processes and states (fluid - changeable - merged), beyond borders.

The aestheticisation of the border between the external and the internal is the pinnacle and goal when a person becomes an individual creator, a measure of establishing the limits of sensory knowledge of the world. This makes it possible to choose an aesthetic experience that determines involvement in the universal.

Visual systems of a new type are built according to the fractal principle, where the expansion occurs simultaneously with the subjectivations of new spatiotemporal formations, which requires further research.

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