ЭССЕ / ESSAYS

NIETZSCHE'S SELF-IMAGE-FORMING
AND ITS REPRESENTATION
IN THE POSTMILLENNIAL MEDIA

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The paper is devoted to the consideration of the theoretical problem of the human image and the mechanisms of its formation, a topic which is of considerable relevance in present-day visual semiotics due to the totalizing visualization processes brought about through the increasing power of media and internet technologies. The visual aspects of the functioning of food as a cultural element in the postmillennial communicative environment are analyzed through the interdisciplinary perspective of philosophy and cultural studies. The authors identify Friedrich Nietzsche's work *Ecce Homo* as one of the most important sources for understanding the processes of self-image-forming in philosophical and cultural studies, and they show that it is a text which explains cultural and anthropological practices that can be applied in 21st century visual anthropology. In *Ecce Homo*, the German thinker reintroduces the continuation and development of the traditions of ancient "self-care" (*epimeleia*), emphasizing the need for the responsible, conscious and individual relationship of a human being to his or her integral image as it emerges in everyday life. Nietzsche demonstrates the key importance of self-image-forming from a primarily medical or even physiological point of view, focusing in detail on the formation of the self through the conscious and authentic use of food practices, living environment, climate, and modes of relaxation. All of these components, especially that of food, are central mechanisms in the formation of the visual image of individuals in contemporary media, focusing not on a critical self-evaluation but instead on an aggressively approved image. The paper argues that it is within Friedrich Nietzsche's everyday practices of lifestyle that we can identify how food, living environment, climate, and modes of relaxation dominate the 21st century self-image-forming of hypermodern postmillennial individuals in their quest for almost unlimited consumption and hypermediation. The authors also discuss the roles of visual food practices in the presentation of human identity and the representation of cultural realities of the postmillennial era in the functioning of hypermodern media.

ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ОБРАЗА ЧЕЛОВЕКА У НИЦШЕ И ЕГО РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ В СОВРЕМЕННЫХ СМИ

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Рассматривается теоретическая проблема человеческого образа и механизмов его формирования, которая является чрезвычайно актуальной для современной визуальной семиотики из-за глобальных процессов визуализации, вызванных повышением влияния СМИ и сопутствующих интернет-технологий. Визуальные аспекты функционирования пищи как культурного феномена в современной коммуникативной среде анализируются в междисциплинарной перспективе философии и культурных исследований. Авторы рассматривают работу Фридриха Ницше «Ecce Homo» в качестве одного из важнейших источников для понимания процессов само-образ-ования человека в философских и культурных исследованиях, показывая, что этот текст, который объясняет культурную и антропологическую практику формирования человеческого образа, может быть очень актуальным для визуальной антропологии в XXI веке. В Ecce Homo немецкий мыслитель продолжает и развивает традиции античной «заботы о себе» (epimeleia), подчеркивая необходимость в ответственном, сознательном и индивидуальном отношении человека к формированию своего образа в повседневной жизни. Ницше демонстрирует ключевую важность само-образ-ования, особенно с медицинской или даже физиологической точки зрения, подробно останавливаясь на самоформировании посредством сознательного отношения к еде, среде обитания, выбору для себя оптимального климата и способов отдыха. Все эти компоненты, особенно еда, являются центральными механизмами для формирования визуального образа человека в современных СМИ, которые фокусируют внимание не на кри-

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[1] Проект: «Иконография античных и средневековых философов в православных храмах: специфика визуальной репрезентации человека в русской культуре».

тической самооценке, а на агрессивно утверждаемом определенном образе. В статье утверждается, что подход Ницше находится в рамках повседневной практики образа жизни, и именно еда, место обитания, климат и режимы отдыха доминируют для само-образ-ования человека XXI века, формируя установки современного постмиллинеального (postmillennial) индивида в его стремлении к почти неограниченному потреблению. Авторы также обсуждают роль и значение визуальных образов продуктов питания в презентации человеческой идентичности и репрезентации культурных реалий постмиллениальной эпохи в функционировании современных СМИ.

Along with Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche is deservedly recognized as one of the key figures in the "anthropological turn" within European philosophy and, more broadly, in the culture of the twentieth century. Much has already been written about his hermeneutical-genealogical method, his conceptualization of the phenomenon of ressentiment, his teachings on the superman, and the values and mechanisms of asserting "will-to-power". Nietzsche's continuing relevance is confirmed by the fact that the sources of almost every fundamental problem (especially related to the human being) which became the *center* of philosophical reflection in the post-Nietzsche period in the 20th century can be found in his writings; this explains why all the most important philosophers of the twentieth century – M. Heidegger, K. Jaspers, J. Bataille, L. Shestov, et al. – wrote about him so much [Markov 2005, 308–758].

At the beginning of the 21st century, *visualization of a person* became such a center. This means the termination of the dependence of the visual image on the linguistic narrative and discourse, by which this image is completely and unconditionally determined, which was obvious, for example, for Roland Barthes [Barthes 1994]. Such acquisition of a visual-plastic image of sovereignty is associated both with new key trends in evolution in modern philosophy and philosophical anthropology[2]

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[2] For example, thanks to the works of J. Habermas, actualizing the problem of communications [Habermas 1981] including visual communications, or the development of the new understanding of the human subject, existence, and aesthetics visual image in the works of the late M. Foucault through the rethinking of the ancient tradition [Foucault 2007].

and with the general process of the visualization of culture and every-day life that has occurred due to technical innovations, primarily the establishment of the virtual world through the spread of the Internet. To this should be added a critical hermeneutic analysis of the everyday existence of a person, revealing the methods and practices of pre-reflective modeling of his or her image by various kinds of linguistic and socio-social institutions of power, on which the French philosophers of the second half of the 20th century made a special emphasis.

It is precisely in the current time that the problem of forming the image of a person, including the potential of the various forms of contemporary media through which it is performed, has become central. On the one hand, a person appears as a *self-organizing*, *self-determining*, and *self-forming* system, which implies that synergetics has an obvious anthropological dimension in addition to its social and scientific dimensions [Vakhnin 2016]. On the other hand, the media, often guided by their economic interests and fulfilling orders of global transnational corporations, *normatively* and *forcibly* impose standards of the human image through, for example, aggressively popularizing and making attractive fashionable presentations of food products, a certain style of clothing, food, leisure, lifestyle in general. Surprisingly, Nietzsche also shows his unique, almost prophetic insight and relevance in this respect – an approach which may be so urgently necessary for us, the people of the digital reality. In this study, therefore, we turn to the German philosopher to actualize and problematize the current problems of understanding the image of a human, the media, and communication in present-day European culture.

In the 21st century, the meaning of food and its perception, signification, and representation are very far removed from the more elemental understanding of food as the essential material for the survival and well-being of human life. The physiological function of food is overwhelmed by its symbolic meaning and social significance. Thus, when dealing with food, the contexts of social status, behavior, cultural identities, emotions, and numerous other features should always be taken into account. It may even be possible to claim that at the end of the 20th century all media became food media and that they have been providing an environment for food signification since then. The media has become both the agent and the transmitter of the construction and representation of food.

However, the cultural representation of food was identified and studied much earlier; for instance, by Roland Barthes, who claimed that "[when man] buys an item of food, consumes it, or serves it, modern

man does not manipulate a simple object in a purely transitive fashion; this item of food sums up and transmits a situation; it constitutes an information; it signifies" [Barthes 2008, 29]. Roland Barthes, who "[w]ith his theory on the layering of visual meaning, laid the foundations for visual semiotics as we know it today" [Aiello 2020, 370] was already aware that food is first consumed as a sign prior to being actually eaten. As a cultural representation, it embodies the processes of preparation, distribution, presentation, and consumption, and these processes are performed in various media communication environments.

In the communicative environments of 21st century media, one should take into account the convergence of old and new technologies in which the distinction between the old mass media of newspaper, magazines, films, radio, television, and the new media of the Internet and mobile phones begins to break down. Contemporary individuals watch films on their smartphones, read comments on news in online blogs, share the best recipes of celebrity chefs on social networks. Visual semiotic research perspectives of the 21st century embrace visual images as cultural products and individuals as consumers of these images, and experts study how culture influences practices of visual communication and how visual communication changes cultural practices [Rose 2016]. In both old and new media, food signifies in the construction and representation of social meanings and relations. The visual signification that dominates all postmillennial media discourses places sociocultural meanings of food above food itself. Identity and lifestyle visual images become more important than the visualization of food content. Therefore, social meanings of food are constructed, presented, and represented as self-expressive identities and lifestyles. Visual discourses of contemporary media communicate, magnify, transmit, and multiply messages carrying food signs of various orders – icons, indexes, symbols but also those of myth and cultural heritage that participate in Nietzsche's self-image-forming of the postmillennial individual.

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Having discovered the central significance of the everyday dimension of human existence, Nietzsche began to consider the human as an integral, phenomenal, sensually perceived, aesthetic (given that the Greek term 'aesthesis' in fact means sensually perceived and perceptible) image formed by a person in the process of a certain orientation and self-organization of one's existence. Of course, such a fundamental philosophical

and anthropological *elevation* of the concept of "image"[3] was influenced by the fundamentally *anti-idealistic principles* of Nietzsche's philosophy and worldview: instead of a transcendental subject *positing experience* (for example, in Kant's works), Nietzsche showed this very subject as *posited by the experience of his existence and being*. It is also necessary to recognize the innovative nature of this rethinking of the foundations of ancient Greek culture and philosophy. One recognizes here the concept of "*self-care*" (Gr. *epimeleia*), which for ancient philosophers was the principle of self-formation by a person of his/her aesthetic image, which is in turn a manifestation of his/her ethical life [Dorofeev 2018]. Although Nietzsche himself, as far as one can determine, did not study the concept of self-care separately, as an expert on ancient Greek culture he was undoubtedly aware of its potential, and we can reasonably suggest that it was Nietzsche who was the first to reveal its central significance and relevance for modern philosophy, approximately a century before Michel Foucault turned to this concept and made it one of the cornerstones of his works at the beginning of the 1980s.

Nietzsche criticized the transcendental subject for the initial, a priori givenness of cogito, offering instead an understanding of man as the result of dynamically developing, functioning, and modeling his image of practices that pre-reflectively organize his daily life and are revealed by the "genealogical" method. Nietzsche's genealogical approach is a direct predecessor of the hermeneutics and archaeology of the human subject, and, understanding the ins and outs of human education, Nietzsche strove to organize the daily mode of his existence in a certain way. In his "genealogy of morality", Nietzsche shows how, without the participation of the person himself, the basic values and the person himself are modeled and organized in history [Nietzsche 1990b]. "Taking care of yourself" means taking care of the daily practices of your life. We can suggest the German philosopher was the *first* to reveal the centrality and relevance of "taking care of yourself" for the modern philosophy in the late 19th century. This was done roughly a century before Foucault when the French philosopher turned to a systematic analysis of this concept in his later works on ancient philosophy and culture devoted to a new understanding of the formation of the human subject in

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[3] One may recall that, in classical European philosophy, an image as a "representation" or phenomenon was always, to a greater or lesser extent, ontologically separated and different from the actual being, the entity which caused it; this created an essentially insurmountable gap between consciousness and being; the image was therefore ontologically secondary, neither independent nor authentic [Slinin 2017, 490–515].

special "practices of selfness" [Foucault 2004, 5–55; Foucault 2007, 4–17][4].

Nietzsche addressed the problem of *human self-image-forming*, i.e. the formation of an individual's image through a system of particularly significant regulatory practices and the organization of the individual's daily life. The problem found its expression in Nietzsche's last completed work, *Ecce Homo* (1888), with its characteristic subtitle "*How To Become What You Are*." However, we should admit here that Nietzsche had addressed the problem of the image even earlier, for example, in his essay "The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music", he dealt with an *aesthetic-metaphysical* understanding of the image (which was revised substantially in the preface to the second edition of this book). In *Ecce Homo*, an autobiographical confession and even partially the testament, Nietzsche presents an *aesthetic-physiological* (*or medical*) understanding of the human image as the result of a person's self-organization by means of important practices of the cores of a person's daily life, an understanding taken from Nietzsche's own personal life experience. This is a manifestation of the devaluation of traditional classical approaches characteristic of the German classical philosophy, the emphasis on their inflation, and, on the contrary, the disclosure of the central importance of what has been underestimated for centuries, making it possible to actualize the later forgotten or misunderstood ancient principles. Nietzsche presents a fundamental philosophical doctrine of *self-image-formation*.

Nietzsche was perhaps the *first* writer since the classical times of Ancient Greece to insist so vigorously on the fundamental connection between philosophy and medicine (although in antiquity this connection was constantly emphasized, and first of all in the context of the culture of "self-care"). For Nietzsche, health is the highest value, and he builds his life as the life of a healthy person ("I pulled myself together. I made myself healthy again" [Nietzsche 1990a, 699]. He self-presents as a doctor, diagnosing himself, and choosing the treatment that best suits his physical personality, which consists in the medical feasibility of a certain

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[4] Foucault himself admitted that among the modern philosophers he was most influenced by Nietzsche: he began to read Nietzsche later and thanks to the works of Heidegger; Nietzsche radically changed his thinking and way of life – Foucault even called himself a "Nietzschean". At the same time, Foucault wrote only one small article about Nietzsche, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (he never wrote about Heidegger, another very significant philosopher for himself). It is very indicative that the article was connected with the project of genealogy, which Foucault formed largely under the influence of Nietzsche [Foucault 2006, 280–282, 291–292]. In this sense, referring to "self-care", "practices of the self", "games of truth", Foucault returns to Nietzsche, criticizing the transcendental subject with his a priori activity and classical metaphysics in general and creating "*the new empiricism of genealogical philosophy*".

lifestyle. If Foucault terms the ancient art of life which is formed by "self-care" as a *diet* [cf. Foucault 2004, 169–197] or a kind of ethical and aesthetic askesis (exercise) that actively includes the medical component, Nietzsche speaks of *hygiene*, his own interpretation of the teachings of the Buddha, the "deep physiologist" whose thinking is so close to Nietzsche's own philosophy in his later period [Nietzsche 1990a, 704]; however, medicine plays a central role in both cases. The focus on physiologically understood health is both the reaction and response of the German philosopher to any claims of "idealism", as well as the essence of the true philosophy of life as "the will to health" [Ibid., 700]. The condition for the realization of the ancient "self-care" is the knowledge of oneself, of one's I; therefore, Plato, who understands this *ayto to ayto* as a soul, considers self-care in *Alcibiades I* as caring for the soul [Dorofeev 2019]. Nietzsche turns the concept of "caring for oneself" towards the body; moreover, it appears not just as caring for the body (this also appears in the Greeks, for example, in the palaestra), but as caring for a physiologically understood body. Here we can see the effect of a "decline", a radical reaction to the centuries-old claims of "idealism", on the one hand, and the result of "genealogical" (hermeneutic) studies that show the complex genesis of the formation of the "high" from the "low" and seek to go to the very source and accept it in all its extra-moral, i.e. physiological, nature, on the other. Therefore, the body here is neither an ideal work of art, as with the Greeks, nor the image of God, as in Orthodox visual anthropology; it is instead a medical object with a complex system of physiological processes.

Nietzsche criticized the transcendental subject for the initial, a priori givenness of cogito. Instead, he offered an understanding of man as the result of practices dynamically developing, functioning, and modeling man's image, practices that pre-reflectively organize man's daily life and are revealed by the "genealogical" method. Nietzsche's genealogical approach is a direct predecessor of the hermeneutics and archaeology of the human subject; understanding the ins and outs of human education, Nietzsche strove to organize the daily mode of his existence in a certain way. In his "genealogy of morality" Nietzsche shows how, without the participation of man himself, the basic values and man himself are modeled and organized in history. Nietzsche wants to create himself freely and sovereignly, which means to consciously self-determine the way of his existence. "Taking care of yourself" means taking care of the daily practices of your life.

It is not surprising that Nietzsche pays such close attention to his physiological self-image-forming, i.e. the diagnosis, formation, and

maintenance of his physiological processes in an optimal state. This attitude towards his image is not that of a dandy aesthete (like, say, Oscar Wilde) or an aesthetic intellectual (like, for example, Marcel Proust), both of whom focused intensely on their appearance, but rather that of a sober doctor who knows the true state of his patient's body. Nietzsche does not welcome dandyism or fanaticism in relation to his physiological image, nor does he strive for the "ideal" of health; he generally saw his calling in the overthrow of any ideals, believing that it was more important for him not to cure, change, improve himself, but instead to accept himself, listen to himself, and come out of himself, even if it results in pain. Therefore, the basis of the self-image-forming of the German philosopher is the ability to "pull himself together" in order to maintain and expand his health, for which the disease itself is only a "stimulus to life" [Nietzsche 1990a, 699–700]. Nietzsche saw this as the courage, honesty, understanding, and grandeur of the *Amor Fati* attitude [Ibid., 705–721]. Such an attentive, impartial, and sober love of self[5] is the most important condition for the implementation of "self-care", and it allows one to diagnose what is central to physiological self-image-forming – food, living environment, climate, and relaxation. In *Esse Homo*, Nietzsche wrote in detail about these four "self-care" practices, understood as the basic mechanisms of "becoming selfness" [Nietzsche 1990a, 708–713].

Using a physiological approach, Nietzsche could not help but start with *food* and *drink*: after all, it is food that first of all determines the quality of digestion, a process to which the philosopher attached particular importance because he had personal problems with it. One needs to eat correctly in a physiological sense, with the full knowledge and understanding of the direct influence of what a person eats on what the person is. Nietzsche seems to have accepted fully the position that "*man is what he eats*" (*Der Mensch ist, was er isst*)[6]. Since a person needs to eat every day, this procedure cannot have a direct impact on the formation of the image of a person "from the inside". The everyday invisibility of this process must be contrasted with a careful care of it, a consciously critical attitude towards oneself and one's body in this aspect. Eating and drinking are not only and not so much a necessary

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[5] The founder of modern philosophical anthropology, Max Scheler, would later remind us of the need to distinguish productive *self-love*, *Selbstliebe*, from negative *ego-love*, *Eigenliebe* or *Egoismus* [Scheler 1994b, 349].

[6] The authorship of this phrase is attributed to Hippocrates and Pythagoras, although it is also often assigned to Ludwig Feuerbach in his review of the book *Popular Doctrine on Nutritional Products* by the philosopher-physiologist Jacob Moleshott. Max Scheler also refers to the phrase coined by Oskar Vogt, a famous neurologist of the first half of the 20th century [cf. Scheler 1994a].

condition for maintaining life, but a means (which may differ depending on their characteristics) of forming a worldview, a value system, value and aesthetic preferences, expressed and defended principles, and the internal and external image of a person. Given this effect of food on a person, one cannot but approach nutrition from the point of view of a specific physiological expediency, unique to each individual; there is no single universal normality. The "low" culture of nutrition (meaning that it is not aesthetic, but rather physiologically justified) appears here as the focus of reality, displacing the "high" culture of "ideals" and "spirit". Moreover, cuisine determines the ethos not only of the individual person, but of the whole nation: Nietzsche himself saw the origin of the German spirit in German cuisine and the upset stomachs which it brought about [Nietzsche 1990a, 709].

Nietzsche, who himself suffered from stomach problems throughout his life, admits that, at the beginning of his involvement in German culture, a culture which placed a greater premium on idealism than on reality, he failed to understand the importance of nutrition for an unacceptably long time, an error which affected his principles: for example, the cuisine of Leipzig did not allow him to recognize and accept his own "*will-to-life*" [Ibid., 708–709], although he later came to believe that the cuisine of Piedmont was the best cuisine for himself. Unlike Immanuel Kant, who loved long symposium dinners in the company of close friends and acquaintances, Nietzsche preferred hearty but fairly quick lunches alone. Alcoholic drinks were almost entirely excluded from the philosopher's gastronomic diet, as was coffee; strong tea was allowed only in the morning, with spring water sufficing for the rest of the day. All of these habits were the result of experienced self-knowledge and physiological self-image-forming; as he wrote, "One needs to know the size of one's stomach" [Ibid., 710].

In addition to nutrition, a physiologically examined lifestyle is determined by an *individual's living environment and its climate*. While the question of the method, mode, and quality of nutrition is largely determined by the individual him-/herself, the living environment is much less dependent on one's own choice. An individual is attached to the place of residence from birth and onward throughout their life by a variety of mechanisms – kin-biographical, family, socio-cultural, economic, psychological, etc., and, naturally, it can be very difficult to break from these factors for various reasons. However, for Nietzsche, single-handedly in life, medical factors, albeit understood very broadly and fundamentally, philosophically and anthropologically, are the determining factors in choosing a place to live: "Nobody is so constituted as to be able to live

everywhere and anywhere; and he who has great duties to perform, which lay claim to all his strength, has, in this respect, a very limited choice. The influence of climate upon the bodily functions, affecting their acceleration or retardation, extends so far, that a blunder in the choice of locality and climate is able not only to alienate a man from his actual duty, but also to withhold it from him altogether, so that he never even comes face to face with it" [Ibid., 710]. Here the hermeneutics of physiological self-image-forming is already moving from the micro level (nutrition) to the macro level. Due to his poor health, Nietzsche was forced from an early age to listen carefully to the voice of his body, clearly understanding the direct and most powerful influence on the state of the microclimate of the environment. Because of this, he could not be tied to one place – having retired to Basel due to his sharply deteriorating health, he began to search frantically for optimal places of living for himself; Nietzsche became a *Wanderer* de jure and de facto, moving within the spaces of the external and internal worlds[7]. Nietzsche's wandering is a physiological event, a physiological process, a journey of a "climate-controlled body" that lives according to the laws of the surrounding world, completely dependent on its climatic processes, and his vision (i.e. his understanding) is the reaction of this hypersensitive body to the landscape surrounding it [Podoroga 1993, 160–166]. Here, of course, the physical suffering of the philosopher, which is noted throughout his short life, played a decisive role.

Nietzsche's movement was required physiologically – both as an individual with a certain type of body and as a thinker (however, these hypostases were inseparable for him): "Remain seated as little as possible, put no trust in any thought that is not born in the open, to the accompaniment of free bodily motion–nor in one in which even the muscles do not celebrate a feast. All prejudices take their origin in the intestines" [Nietzsche 1990a, 710]. Therefore, it was of great importance for him to find a place in which it was physiologically comfortable to move and walk daily (in this connection, one recalls Rilke's Path in Duino – coincidentally, Rilke also embodied the phenomenon of "creative suffering"). As a result of his many wanderings in search of his own topos, Nietzsche spent the first 35 years of his life (until the end of the 1870s) in Naumburg, Schulpfort, various locations in Thuringia, Leipzig, Basel, and Venice: "all these are unfortunate places for my physiology" [Ibid., 711]. Towards the end of his life, he singled out Nice, Turin, Genoa, and Sils Maria as

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[7] By the way, for the ancient Greeks, the choice of a place of residence was not a question determined by "self-care" – they were all tied to their specific policy, and the climate of Ancient Greece was and remains healthy, differing in this from many places in Germany and even more so in Russia.

physiologically acceptable, preferring each of them at certain times of the year. Nietzsche himself repeatedly said that his world (almost in the strictly biological sense of Umwelt at the beginning of the 20th century) is a world of mountains and dry air; of ice, spring water, all of which are transparent, clean, cold. In their own individual ways, these are the conditions that contribute to an efficient metabolism within the body and determine the appearance and development of genius; it is their influence that he most piercingly notes on himself "as if it were a thin and true instrument" [Ibid., 695, 706–707, 710–711]. This is a world in which bacteria, viruses and infections cannot nucleate and multiply, but instead die without appearing. We can say Nietzsche was the founder of *philosophical immunology*, which became so important for humanity in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, including in the political aspect [Markov 2021]. The genealogy of man is revealed here through climatology, meteorology and geographical topography. In all these recommendations, one can see the direct development of the *medical-anthropological topology* which Hippocrates developed in his treatise "Upon Air, Water, and Situation", in which he demonstrated how the geographical conditions of existence – the quality of winds, waters, the nature of the terrain (hills, valleys, wooded vs watery landscapes, etc.), the location of cities and houses, etc. – affect an individual's lifestyle, appearance, voice, character, and even customs and moral principles [Hippocrates 1994].

Finally, the third part of physiological self-image-forming is the choice of the best way in which to *relax*. This is the most important part of life for any person connected with creative and productive activities; it is not just a necessary break but a very important part of a holistic lifestyle determined by physiological "self-care", a condition for the productive recovery of vital energies and forces. Nietzsche understood relaxation as something that "frees one from oneself" [Nietzsche 1990a, 712], and reading was his own form of relaxation. Relaxation cannot be random, arbitrary or chaotic because it is in fact the beginning of a cycle of active self-affirmation, "work". If reading allows one to "walk around other people's sciences and other people's souls" [Ibid.], then it can be regarded as a kind of an openness of spirit in which it initiates new impulses, meanings, horizons that allow it to express itself with renewed vigor. Like in many other respects, Nietzsche gave priority here to French authors, from Michel de Montaigne and Moliere to Stendhal and Guy de Maupassant. Nor was music forgotten here as a form of relaxation, including the works of Richard Wagner, Frederik Chopin, Gioachino Rossini (Nietzsche also ranked his friend Peter Gast and his opera *The Lion of Venice* in this group).

But in the state of "pregnancy of the spirit", which Nietzsche perceived as a pregnancy of the whole organism, it is necessary, on the contrary, to restrict oneself within a kind of quarantine, eliminating the slightest accident or irritation, focusing fully on bearing the foetus and devoting oneself entirely to the self (if Socrates took the interlocutor's birth as a midwife, Nietzsche himself conceived, nurtured, and allowed himself to be born). Despite the fact that Nietzsche notes his own extreme sensitivity, he also suggests that we should encourage "reacting as rarely as possible" [Ibid., 718]. The explanation for this contradiction is that openness and sensitivity characterize one's existence at the stage of relaxation, while isolation and utmost focus on oneself serve the same in the stage of "work".

As one can see, Nietzsche's modeling of one's image by these components – living environment, climate, food, and relaxation – constitutes a clearly conscious and experience-tested system of everyday life practices that even allows an individual not so much to shape oneself (which was characteristic of ancient self-care), but rather to hold and reveal oneself. It was extremely important for Nietzsche to return to oneself and not to lose, not to miss oneself, and to avoid being seduced by some kind of "idea", "ideal", by a speculative principle, by all that can tailor the "I" in one's own pattern, which is external to the I. Therefore, these "little things", which are discussed in the section "Why I Am So Clever", are the most crucial details because they are the "basic conditions of life" [Ibid., 720], less a manifestation of reality, but rather reality itself; consequently, the image of a person which they may imagine is no longer a reflection of reality, but its embodiment. "Consciousness is the surface" [Ibid., 719], a physiologically determined tabula rasa which takes its form depending on the signs instincts apply to it, order it. Moreover, in choosing these "little things", it is necessary to follow not the voice of mind, reason or morality, the varieties of theoretical and religious constructions, but those which are closest to the body, the physiology, and to oneself: instinct, the healthy (because there also exist the unhealthy, that of the medical patient) instinct of self-preservation and self-defense, which we commonly term as taste [Ibid., 717]. Taste is an ability, both in a physiological and aesthetic sense. One can see here that physiological spontaneity, based on a specific order of the self-organization of life (which also needs to be formed in oneself in a process of trial, error, and retreat) in its organic components, turns here into a medical and aesthetic taste aiming at the formation of an individual's self-image. Such a combined ability allows an individual not only to choose what is necessary and optimal for oneself, but – and this is no less important –

to discard everything harmful and infectious. In all this, taste, ordered and supplied by a strictly built system of physiological regulations, is the true basis of the art of living as a path towards Nietzsche's self-image-forming.

2.

Postmillennial 21st century media offer countless examples of representations of Nietzsche's self-image-forming based on the everyday practices of the essential components of food, living environment, climate, and relaxation. In both the old media of the press, film, radio, television, and the new media of the Internet and mobile phone applications, it is food that occupies the central position while intertwining the other three elements, i.e. living environment (represented by location and household), climate, and relaxation (most visibly in an individual's lifestyle). Created and then mediated visual images of food convey the economic, social, political and aesthetic meanings of individuals who participate in the everyday practices of eating, dwelling, and enjoying relaxation activities. They contribute significantly to the profitability of various media industries by buying cookbooks, reading newspaper food supplements and lifestyle magazines, listening to food commercials on radio, watching cooking shows on television, participating in internet food forums, and using food service mobile phone applications.

The physiological function of food – as has been already discussed above in the more complex understanding of hygiene by Nietzsche (1990) and diet by Foucault (2004) – is joined by its symbolic meanings and social significance which penetrate all media discourses, and thus one may find it necessary to study the mediated visual images of food in the contexts of social status, behavior, cultural identities, emotions, and numerous other features, all of which participate in the self-image-forming of a postmillennial person who perceives the cultural and social contexts of nutrition and taste as important factors affecting their food and health choices. The phrase "Man is what he eats", a principle which Nietzsche adopted in full, can be modified in the 21st century into the motto "One is what one watches others eating," or "One is what one posts oneself eating." A hypermodern postmillennial person's everyday practices are, depending on age, media literacy and economic capacity saturated by mediated cultural-visual practices of Gilles Lipovetsky's society of fashion [Lipovetsky 2005], in which consumer goods are replaced by leisure practices driven by the search for novelty, well-being,

and entertainment. In their self-image-forming, they focus on their quality of life; they want to be both interconnected and independent simultaneously. Their social behavior reflects the self-construction which is performed in their acts of their everyday existence, including those of food preparation, consumption, and mediation.

The computer monitor and the mobile phone allow the hypermodern individual to access not only his/her own culinary traditions but also those of other nations. By watching travel reality shows, reading online food blogs, following food posts from exotic destinations on social networks, a hypermodern individual's living environment can transcend the limits of one's locality, region or country. The richness of mediated visual food practices makes a person's life full of diverse lifestyle experiences. At the same time, the hypermodern media impose visual food images in order to instruct people in a somewhat direct manner in their self-image-forming. They instruct their consumers on what they should or should not eat and drink and do in order to be 'healthy' or to eat safely and well. In various mediated discourses, one can also register the presence, albeit much less frequent, of other food-related cultural practices such as waste separation and recycling, food waste, eating disorders or obesity – all of which are in agreement with Lipovetsky's characterization of hypermodern everyday practices as a synthesis of order and disorder, moderation and excess, care, and ignorance [Ibid.]. Hence, postmillennial individuals are hyperconsumers of lifestyle programming and users of social networks; they take care of their health, but they also suffer from bulimia and anorexia; they write blogs addressing environmentalist and third world issues and also visit food porn sites.

Hypermodern individuals' self-image-forming embraces the mediation of visual food preparation, its consumption, and other food related practices serving as a flagship of the culture-ideology of consumerism, as well as mediated concerns about the climate of the Anthropocene – the era of ongoing environmental changes and the instability of ecosystems in the 21st century. Richard Sťahel (2017) argues that an understanding of self-identity and the idea of well-being of individuals in the Anthropocene, driven as they are by the current culture-ideology of consumerism with no limits on arbitrariness in the production and consumption of goods and services, has resulted in the over-production of waste and the devastation of the environment. Sťahel claims that self-identity is built in the global mass media society and that individuals' self-image-forming is performed through global mass media networks overlapping with local, regional, national, and ethnic cultures. Thus, postmillennial individuals' self-image-forming depending on the climate

as one of its four essential pillars is confronted with the need to restrict the freedom of unlimited production and consumption at the global level, and also by the need to re-build self-identity in local, regional, and national eco-systems. The environment, climate, and other ecological issues in the self-image-forming of hypermodern individuals are accompanied by anxiety about the future caused by hypermodern deregulation, resulting in turn in the constant fear of unemployment, the questionable quality of education and training, and changes in healthcare. These concerns find their representation in the consumption of visual food narratives in both old and new media – diet cookbooks, nutrition manuals in food magazines, special physical exercise TV programs, blogs and vlogs about food-related diseases such as bulimia and anorexia.

The individual's self-image-forming takes place within the self-image-forming of a social group (sometimes existing in a virtual media space alone). Mediated visual food practices often participate in the formation of and changes in the group identities of hyperindividuals. Food and its preparation, consumption, and mediation participate in the process of defining individuality and an individual's place in various social groups. Food and cultural food practices communicate meanings of class, ethnicity, religion, and other group affiliations. As examples of these, one can mention food sharing and food solidarity that are linked to class, power, and status; the collective consumption of food with specific meanings related to kinship, e.g. family or social networks; or practices such as feasting with its associated religious meaning. Countless food sites on the Internet, mobile phone restaurant applications, food photo posts on social networks' sites, and online food maps represent a group identity of people belonging to a certain age or gender group, all proving one of the mottos mentioned above – "One is what one watches others eating," or "One is what one posts oneself eating." Postmillennial individuals in their self-image-forming consume all of the above described mediated visual food practices from all types of possible media foodscapes.

Many authors dealing with the postmillennial era [cf. Tomaščíková 2020] agree that the perspective in which it is necessary to analyze visual food practices is that of leisure activities, i.e. the final aspect of self-image-forming: relaxation. In their choice of leisure activities, hypermodern individuals have an almost unlimited number of options provided by lifestyle genres that pervade both traditional and new media and give various platforms for everyday practices. Lifestyle genres cover vast areas of leisure including but not limited to beauty, health, fitness,

fashion, household, pets, and travel – with agents from both the public (celebrities) and the private (vox-pop) sphere, often combined with cultural food practices. In their everyday self-image-forming practices, individuals can search for new healthy recipes on the Internet sites of TV celebrity chefs, vicariously 'travel' to exotic destinations with a famous food blogger without having to leave their sofas at home, or they can be fascinated by photos of meals served in a trendy restaurant posted on their friend's social network page. Although the content of visual food narratives in lifestyle genres is simple, formally repetitive, and often primitive, it nonetheless provides a valuable platform for immediate or subsequent social interaction, either live or mediated, and as such represents a substantial part of the daily practices of individuals in their private and public spheres, all in an entertaining form of relaxation.

Thanks to the dominant role which media play in modern society, Nietzsche's concept of self-image-forming has been dominated by mediated visual food practices during the first two decades of the 21st century. The visual human image has recently been that of the visual image of food and as a producer, consumer, giver, and sharer of food images in both physical and virtual spaces. The mechanism of human image formation and its visualization has also been connected with food narrative mediation in both old and new forms of media. Food has become the element which unites the other three components of self-image-forming, i.e. living environment, climate, and relaxation. The rapid advances in technology and the growing role of the Internet allow the multiplication of visual food practice mediation and secure their constant presence in the everyday practices of hypermodern individuals. The visualization of food practices is an obvious example of culture-consumerism in its most developed form.

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