

**THE COMMUNICATIVE POWER OF VISUALITY:
PHILOSOPHICAL LEGACY AND MODERN METHODS OF
MANIPULATION**

Isaqova Zamirakhon Rukhiddinovna

Doctor of Philosophy (DSc), Professor

Namangan State University, Uzbekistan

phone: +998 91 362 89 37 e-mail: ms.zamirakhonisaqova@gmail.com

Nasrullaev Murodjon Rakhmatilla ugli

researcher

Namangan State University, Uzbekistan

Abstract. *The article analyzes the communicative power of visuality through the prism of philosophy, psychology, and social philosophy, examining the philosophical roots of visual communication, its historical development, and its impact on human consciousness and society. It also explores the essence, methods, and consequences of visual manipulation, and develops ways to combat it, including practical suggestions and recommendations aimed at developing visual literacy, countering visual manipulation, and ensuring information security.*

Keywords: *visuality, communication, philosophy, psychology, society, manipulation, visual manipulation, visual literacy, information security, image, representation, symbol, sign, code, impact.*

Introduction. In the modern world, visuality has become one of the main means of communication. Cinema, television, the Internet, advertising, social networks disseminate information through visual images. It also influences people's minds and reaches the level of controlling their social practice. Such a strong influence of visuality is associated with its communicative capabilities. Visual images are perceived faster and easier than words. Therefore, visual images have a direct impact on human emotions and are stored in memory for a long time.

The communicative power of visuals has long been studied in philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Discussions about the role of visual communication in human thinking date back to ancient Greek philosophy. The ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle were the first to study the influence of visual images on the human mind. While Plato spoke of the “inner artist” within the soul, Aristotle emphasized the impossibility of thinking without images. Their works covered these issues from different angles. In particular, the ancient Greek thinker Plato, describing the ideal state structure in his work “The Republic”, paid great attention to the role of art, including visual art, in education. In his opinion, art can influence a person's moral and aesthetic education, but since it is a shadow of reality, it must be carefully controlled. Plato believed that works of art can lead people away from reality and lead them astray. Plato argues that in the soul, along with the writer, there is also an artist who draws images of things within us. “When, through sight or other senses, a person distinguishes what he has seen or said, he later sees in himself in some way the image of what he has seen and said”¹.

The work “Phaedrus” talks about beauty, love and the art of oratory. According to the thinker, beauty brings a person closer to the divine world and awakens in him a sense of striving for goodness. Visual images, including works of art, allow a person to feel and understand beauty. Plato's work “Sophist” explores the essence of images and their relationship to reality, emphasizing that images can be a reflection of reality, but they can also be false and misleading, therefore, it is necessary to critically evaluate images and check their correspondence to reality.

The ancient Greek thinker Aristotle, in his work “Poetics”, described the essence and functions of the arts, including theater and poetry, and highly appreciated the fact that art allows a person to understand and enjoy reality, affects human emotions, and contributes to his moral education. The work

¹Plato. Sobranie sochineniy v 4 t. T. 2/Obshch.ed. A. F. Loseva, V. F. Asmusa, A. A. Tahoe-Gody; Primech. A. F. Loseva and A. A. Tahoe-Gody; Per. s ancient Greek. M.: Mysl, 1993. – P. 229.

“Rhetoric” describes the rules and methods of oratory. According to the thinker, speech is a means of persuading people and changing their minds. Aristotle emphasized the importance of using visual images in speech, emphasizing that they serve to increase the effectiveness of speech. Aristotle concludes that “the soul never thinks without images”². It is worth noting that this idea gained momentum in the 20th century, especially under the influence of the Austrian scientist and founder of the theory of psychoanalysis, Z. Freud. Z. Freud linked this idea to his theory, revealing that images in dreams are a hidden expression of previous problems and are explained in the process of psychoanalysis.

Also, in the work “Metaphysics”, the thinker described the basic principles and categories of being, noting that human cognition is based on intuition and experience, visual images provide information to a person about the external world, and, accordingly, are of great importance in the process of human cognition. Of course, these works do not cover all the views of the ancient Greek thinkers Plato and Aristotle on visual images. However, the works mentioned allow us to understand their main ideas.

The Middle Ages were a period in human history dominated by religious beliefs and worldviews, and visual communication played an important role in promoting religious teachings and strengthening faith. In conditions of low literacy, scarcity of books, and lack of mass media, visual images were the most effective way to widely disseminate religious ideas. Regarding visual communication in Christianity, the church fathers Aurelius Augustine rightly assessed the importance of visual images in education and propaganda in his work “Confessions”.

The fact that visual communication was the most important means of religious propaganda in the Middle Ages is evidenced by its mission to strengthen religious faith, promote religious teachings, and awaken the religious feelings of believers. In Christianity, visual communication was carried out through icons, frescoes, stained glass windows, and sculptures. Icons are images of Jesus Christ,

²Aristotle . Rhetoric . - M .: [Eksmo - Press](http://Eksmo-Press), 2019. – 256 p .
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the Virgin Mary, and other saints, which were considered a source of prayer and spiritual strength for believers. Frescoes are religious paintings painted on the walls of churches, depicting biblical events and explaining religious teachings. Stained glass windows are religious compositions made of colored glass installed in the windows of churches, bringing light and beauty into the church and strengthening the religious feelings of believers. Statues are statues of saints installed in churches, which served to gain the respect of believers and remind them of divine power.

However, the widespread use of visual communication was accompanied by various contradictions and was limited by religious dogmas. In particular, the anti-pagan movement “iconoclasm” in Christianity opposed the worship of visual images and aimed to destroy icons depicting Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and other saints. Nevertheless, in the Middle Ages, visual communication remained an important means of religious propaganda and made a significant contribution to the formation and development of religious faith. Biblical events and images served as the basis for works of art. As a means of propagating religious teachings and strengthening faith, frescoes depicted religious images painted on the walls of churches, while stained glass compositions of religious content made of colored glass installed in church windows served to enhance religious feelings. In our opinion, visual images were described as a means of bringing a person closer to the divine world.

Islam prohibits the depiction of living beings, humans, and animals. This prohibition was introduced to prevent the worship of visual images. However, in miniature art, this prohibition was sometimes circumvented. Visual communication in Islam was carried out through the art of calligraphy, geometric patterns, and miniatures. Calligraphy is the beautiful writing of verses from the Quran, sayings of wisdom, and other religious texts, which served to express the divine word and emphasize its sanctity. Geometric patterns are complex geometric shapes used to decorate the walls, domes, and other elements of mosques, which served to express the perfection of the divine world and awaken the religious feelings of believers. Miniatures are religious stories, the lives of prophets, and other religious subjects

depicted in manuscripts, which served to convey religious teachings to the general public and increase their religious knowledge.

The Renaissance (14th-16th centuries) is a period of transition from the Middle Ages to the New Era in European history, characterized by a revival of interest in the ancient heritage, the spread of humanist ideas, and the flourishing of art. During this period, works of art were considered not only a means of expressing images of religious content, but also a means of forming a person's aesthetic taste and enriching his spiritual world.

Renaissance thinkers highly valued the influence of art on man. Thus, art encourages man to strive for beauty, enriches his feelings and expands his spiritual world. Works of art help man to understand the meaning of life, himself and the environment.

One of the thinkers who studied the influence of art on man during the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was not only a great artist, but also an anatomist, engineer and scientist. In his opinion, art is a means of studying nature and understanding its laws. His works, such as the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper, deeply express the inner world, feelings and spiritual experiences of man.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) was a sculptor, painter, and architect. His works express the physical and spiritual power of man. His statue of David and the paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel are expressions of human beauty and grandeur. The works of the painter and architect Raphael Santi (1483-1520) are characterized by the triad of harmony, balance, and beauty. His fresco "The School of Athens" beautifully reflects the wisdom and pursuit of knowledge of ancient philosophers.

The philosopher and writer of his time, Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536), praised the moral and spiritual elevation of man through education and enlightenment. The thinker's work "The Praise of Folly" exposes human ignorance and stupidity, calls on man to acquire knowledge and sharpen his intellect. It follows that during the Renaissance, works of art were considered a means of forming a person's aesthetic taste and enriching his spiritual world, and thinkers of

this period highly appreciated the influence of art on man. Their works, advocating the beauty, grandeur, wisdom and desire for knowledge, encourage man to spiritual elevation.

However, the communicative power of visuals, not only for positive purposes, but also as a means of manipulation, is imprinted in real historical events. For example, let's dwell on the mutiny on the Potemkin battleship in 1905. This event was filmed. The scene on the Odessa steps in the film is very famous, in which the tsarist soldiers open fire on peaceful protesters. Although the scene is very impressive, in fact, the events in it were amplified by the director and some facts were changed for dramatic effect. This film is a vivid example of the use of visual manipulation to strengthen revolutionary sentiment and arouse hatred for the tsarist government.

Fascist propaganda in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s is another proof of our idea. The Nazis used visual propaganda very skillfully, promoting the theory of a “master race” through posters, films and photographs. Most terrifyingly, they managed to portray Jews and other “enemies” in a bad light. By showing the power of Germany, they had a powerful manipulative effect on the minds of the population. Leni Riefenstahl's film “Triumph of the Will” is a vivid example of this. Also, the movement against the Vietnam War in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s manipulated the minds of the world's thinking public. During the Vietnam War, photographs and videos showing the horrors of war had a significant impact on public opinion. Eddie Adams' photograph of a Viet Cong prisoner being shot by a South Vietnamese police chief, known as “The Vietnam Massacre”, became a symbol of the anti-war movement. The photograph showed the brutality of war and changed public opinion about it. Another example of manipulation was the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The US and its allies used false information to justify the invasion of Iraq, claiming that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. This information was disseminated primarily through visual means, including fake satellite images and videos. Although the information was later proven to be false,

the manipulation was extremely powerful and, unfortunately, served to increase public support for the war.

The fake news about the chemical attacks in Syria in 2010 is a clear example of what the future holds for Syria. During the Syrian civil war, reports of chemical weapons being used by the government of Bashar al-Assad were widespread. These reports were often accompanied by visual material, including photos and videos of the victims. Some of this material was later found to be fake or had been distorted. This example shows how visual material can be used to spread disinformation and manipulate public opinion.

The 2012 film Uprising, which quickly became a hit, is about the exploits of African war criminal Joseph Kony. A large amount of money was raised to fight him. However, it was later discovered that some of the information presented in the film was outdated and did not fully reflect the complexity of the situation. This example shows how visual media can be used to attract public attention and raise funds, but it is necessary to pay attention to the accuracy and impartiality of the information. Examples such as this one show how the communicative power of visuals can be used for various purposes, including manipulating public opinion and achieving political goals.

In modern society, visual manipulation is widespread in advertising, politics, and the media. Visual manipulation is used to mislead people, provide them with false information, and direct their actions in their own interests. For example, the "Daisy" commercial, which aired during Lyndon Johnson's presidential campaign in the 1964 US presidential election, was very manipulative. In fact, the commercial was built around a very simple story. The commercial depicts a little girl picking flower petals. Then the shot changes abruptly, and a nuclear explosion occurs. Although the commercial does not directly mention Barry Goldwater, the opponent is depicted as a dangerous politician who is ready to use nuclear weapons. This commercial is a classic example of manipulating voters' minds through visual intimidation.

The backlash of manipulation In 2011, Benetton's "UnHate" fashion campaign featured images of world leaders Pope Benedict XVI and Egyptian Imam Ahmed al-Tayyib, as well as Barack Obama and Hu Jintao, hugging and kissing. Although the campaign was intended to combat hate, it was widely criticized as "offensive and manipulative" because it used political and religious imagery to sell its products.

The image of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian refugee boy who drowned at sea during the Syrian civil war in 2014, has been shared around the world, drawing attention to the horrors of war. While the image of the "Syrian boy" reflects reality, its dissemination and use have led to manipulation for political purposes. Some politicians and media outlets have used the image to generate sympathy for the refugees and advance their own political agendas.

Another example is the fake news during the 2016 US presidential election. During the US presidential election, a large number of false messages and visual materials were spread on social media. These messages were used to exert a powerful influence on voters and manipulate their opinions. A clear example of this is the false news and photos spread by Donald Trump supporters about Hillary Clinton's deteriorating health.

The disinformation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 is also a form of manipulation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many false messages and visual materials about the origin of the pandemic, its dangers, and the effectiveness of vaccines were spread on social media. This disinformation caused serious harm to public health and hindered the work of vaccination campaigns. This clearly shows how widespread visual manipulation is in modern society and how serious its consequences are.

As the importance of visual communication in modern society is increasing, it is extremely important to study its philosophical foundations, psychological and social impact, and methods of manipulation. The reasons for this are as follows: first, studying the philosophical foundations of visual communication helps to understand its content and essence, its connection with human knowledge,

morality, and aesthetic values. Philosophical analysis allows us to determine whether visual images can perform various functions, such as reflecting the truth, spreading lies, or influencing human emotions. This is important for assessing the positive and negative aspects of visual communication and using it wisely. Second, studying the psychological impact of visual images helps us understand how they affect human consciousness, perception, attention, memory, emotions, and social relationships. Psychological research allows us to determine how visual images affect human decision-making, beliefs, and attitudes. This is necessary for the effective use of visual communication in education, propaganda, advertising, and other areas. Third, the study of social impact helps to understand how visual communication affects social norms, values, stereotypes, and relationships in society. Social analysis allows us to determine whether visual images can have various consequences, such as increasing social inequality, causing social conflicts, or strengthening social unity. This is necessary for using visual communication to ensure social justice, solve social problems, and achieve social progress. Fourth, the study of the methods of manipulation of visual communication reveals how they are used for purposes such as spreading false information, misleading public opinion, or directing human behavior in their own interests. Identifying methods of manipulation is necessary for the development of visual literacy, the fight against visual manipulation, and ensuring information security.

As the importance of visual communication in modern society grows, this topic is gaining new meaning in the context of the psychoanalytic theory of the Austrian scientist Z. Freud, media philosophy and artificial intelligence technologies. Z. Freud's psychoanalytic theory helps to understand the influence of visual images on the human subconscious. According to Z. Freud, the human mind consists of three parts: consciousness, subconsciousness and unconsciousness. Visual images, especially symbols and metaphors, can directly affect the unconsciousness of a person. Visual images used in advertising, politics and art awaken a person's subconscious desires, fears and dreams. This in turn affects a person's position, decision-making and attitude.

Media philosophy studies the role of visual communication in society, its importance in disseminating information, forming opinions, and creating culture. Media philosophy allows us to determine how visual images can perform various functions, such as reflecting truth, spreading lies, or limiting a person's worldview. This is necessary to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of visual communication and use it wisely.

Artificial intelligence technologies are creating new opportunities in the field of visual communication. With the help of artificial intelligence, it has become easier to create, analyze and distribute visual images. “Deep fake” videos, false messages and propaganda materials created with the help of artificial intelligence are used to manipulate public opinion and achieve political goals. Today, influencing through images is not only a means of artistic expression, but also a mechanism for controlling thinking on a global scale. “Deep fake” videos, dynamic montage methods and algorithmic propaganda have made visual manipulation more subtle than before. At the same time, with the help of artificial intelligence, it is possible to develop visual literacy, detect visual manipulation and ensure information security. This requires new approaches to the study of visual communication, allowing humanity to critically evaluate visual images, resist their influence and use them for the benefit of society.

As for the issue of figurative thinking and its role in verbal communication, the fact that the main mechanism of human consciousness is often expressed not in words, but in visual images is reflected both in empirical philosophy and in modern cognitive research. With the development of modern technologies, the importance of figurative communication is increasing. This process is gradually changing the traditional dominance of verbal communication. Information transmitted through images has a more emotional and immediately perceptible effect, which makes them especially effective in propaganda, advertising, and the media.

For example, road signs are designed in a single system worldwide. Road signs are mainly visual, and signs such as “stop”, “no traffic”, “pedestrian crossing” provide information without any text, that is, only through images. These signs

ensure that they are quickly and easily understandable for drivers and pedestrians. This example shows how important visual communication is in ensuring safety and its superiority over verbal communication. Because a driver or pedestrian does not spend time reading a road sign, as soon as he sees a road sign, he understands its meaning and carries out the appropriate social process.

From a philosophical point of view, the debate about the epistemological status of images was clearly manifested in the discussions of the leading philosophers of the 20th century - Wittgenstein and Price. According to Wittgenstein, images do not have meaning in themselves, they acquire meaning only within the framework of a certain semiotic practice. Price, on the other hand, emphasized the independent significance of mental images, considering them a fundamental component of human thinking. Today, these two approaches - on the one hand, the dependence of images on the context and, on the other, their independent significance in cognitive processes - play an important role in the formation of modern media philosophy and communication theories. The turn associated with the rise of figurative thinking can have a significant impact on the future evolution of human thinking. The dynamic balance between discursive and figurative thinking is defining a new stage in human communication. To understand this process, it is necessary to combine the philosophical heritage with modern media practice.

The evolution of visual communication, from the simple newspaper to cinema, television and the Internet, has led to a fundamental change in human perception. Moving images, in particular, have become the most powerful means of transmitting information. Dynamic formats such as film and animation allow complex concepts to be conveyed in a short time, with a high level of emotional impact. Thousands of facts, ideas and emotions can be harmoniously summarized in a few minutes of video. This makes it especially valuable in education, propaganda and the media. These universal forms of visual communication correspond to the natural working mechanism of the human brain: we tend to

understand the world through images, and we are more quickly and deeply impressed by moving images than by static text.

With the development of modern technologies, methods of visual communication are becoming more and more sophisticated. Virtual reality, interactive animations, and artificial intelligence-based content creation tools are adding new dimensions to visual communication. The important thing is that this powerful tool has the ability to simultaneously transmit information, have an emotional impact, and shape a worldview. Thus, visual communication is now emerging not only as a means of artistic expression, but also as a new paradigm of thinking and perception on a global scale.

The process of perceiving multimedia content is based on the complex interaction of visual and linguistic components. These two languages complement each other, opening up new layers of meaning. Visual elements are usually the first to attract attention and form the main framework of the message. Images that are understandable at first glance can simplify complex linguistic concepts or add new nuances to them. Visual storytelling can be much more effective than verbal expression in some respects: First, it has the ability to directly evoke emotions; second, it can overcome cultural and linguistic barriers; third, it presents abstract concepts in a concrete form.

Interestingly, visual media are particularly effective in conveying meanings that are sometimes difficult or uncomfortable to express in words. This feature is widely used in advertising, journalism, and art. In modern communication, the combination of visual and textual content determines the effectiveness of any message. The interaction of these two languages is shaping new ways of perceiving concepts. Thus, visual speech and storytelling are important. According to Messaris and Abraham, visual framing has the ability to convey meanings that may be uncomfortable or exciting when expressed in language³.

³Messaris, P., Abraham, L.. The role of images in framing news stories. In SD Reese, OH Gandy, Jr., AE Grant (eds.): LEA's communication series. Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world . Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. 2001. - P. 215-226.

The advantages of visual expression over language are manifested in its natural and direct perception. Images provide greater flexibility, as they are not limited by syntactic rules. In addition, the analog nature of visual perception makes it more reliable than linguistic expressions - because images are directly related to the real world and are less dependent on social conventions. The indexical nature of the visual system creates a unique atmosphere of authenticity for it. People tend to trust what they see with their eyes, which makes visual communication particularly effective. Images allow complex concepts to be conveyed in a universal way, overcoming language barriers. However, at the same time, the issue of clarity and unambiguousness of visual expression raises difficult philosophical problems. The multifaceted interpretation of images, while being their strength, can also be a source of ambiguity. The interaction of visual and linguistic means of communication is shaping a new model of perception in the modern information environment.

Van Dijk defines discourse as any act in which information is exchanged. This includes not only verbal interaction, but also any non-verbal interaction such as actions, textual appearance, sounds or images, which are suitable for some form of communication. In all of these structures, the power of action is present, that is, one party controls the other. Thus, visual communication is also a means of influence and is suitable for manipulation. However, it should be noted that discursive structures themselves, whether they are about images, sounds or actions, are not manipulative, what makes them manipulative is the specific communicative situation in which they are used and how the participants in the discourse interpret them. Their interpretation, in turn, depends on their goals, personal status, roles, system of relationships, etc. This means that the same discourse can be considered manipulative in one situation and not in another. Therefore, it can be said that “discourse is judged as “manipulative” primarily based on the context of the participants”⁴.

⁴Van Dijk, Theun. Discourse and Manipulation. In: Discourse and Society 17 (2). London, Sage. 2006. -P. 373.
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Van Dijk's clear example of manipulative discourse is the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which were launched by Western powers after the terrorist attacks of 2001. Here, a positive self-presentation (the “we are good” perspective) and a negative enemy image (the “they are bad” perspective) were implemented. In the process, politicians emphasized in all media that Western values, especially democracy and freedom, were under attack by forces labeled “the devil”.

The fall of the Twin Towers illustrated the concept of danger and terror and expressed it in visual form. This event repeatedly appeared in newspaper headlines and in the opening lines of television programs and was associated with the faces of those suffering, which increased the dramatic effect and was deliberately exaggerated. After that, it was easy to convince the public that the nation was in danger, therefore war was necessary, otherwise disaster would occur. In addition, the need for stricter laws was emphasized, which included restrictions on civil rights. This example clearly shows how manipulation manifests itself in socio-political discourse and what a special role visualization plays.

Visual techniques, including the selection, placement, and sequencing of images, can significantly influence the perception of viewers. For example, close-up images can evoke a positive attitude toward a person or object. This process is called “paraproxemics”⁵, which is the formation of psychological impressions through distance and visual composition. The incorrect presentation of images can lead viewers to make incorrect causal connections. In addition, visual elements in a positive or negative context, based on the principle of association, play an important role in shaping the recipient’s attitude. In non-verbal⁶ and visual communication, the concept of “implicature”⁷ is important, which allows us to

⁵Paraproxemics (Greek: *para* – “next to”, *proxemics* – “distance”) is a field that studies the effect of physical distance between people on communication, and is closely related to psychology, communication, and anthropology. The concept was first introduced by American anthropologist **Edward Hall** in the 1960s.

⁶**Non-verbal** (from English “nonverbal” – “not related to words”) is a form of communication that occurs without the participation of words, conveying information through a person's facial expressions, movements, tone of voice, clothing, and even elements of the environment. It complements or sometimes completely replaces verbal communication.

⁷Implicature is a concept in pragmatic linguistics and philosophy that refers to the implicit meaning that is not directly stated in speech but is conveyed in the process of communication. The concept was first developed by the English philosopher Paul Grice.

understand hidden meanings and informal messages. These techniques are widely used in political discourse, news editorials, and advertising. To develop critical media literacy, it is recommended to compare content from different sources. This approach helps to identify manipulative techniques and raise awareness of them. Through an in-depth analysis of visual communication, it is possible to understand the mechanisms of its influence, as well as how the discourse and images used in the media are purposefully constructed.

Various methods of visual manipulation are widely used in media and communication. One of the main tools for this is the contrast between text and image. The caption or title under a photo has a significant impact on its interpretation. For example, the same photo can have a completely different impression on the viewer when accompanied by different captions. Large and bold headlines in newspapers are also an important element of visual impact. They focus the reader's attention on a specific message, and sometimes they can push aside more important context and put bright but superficial information to the fore. Through such methods, editors can indirectly control how readers think. In video content, the possibilities for manipulation are even wider. With the help of montage, frame sequences, graphics and special effects, certain aspects of reality can be subdued or presented in a completely different way. For example, a brief selection of frames, changing the sound or background music affect the emotions of the viewer. Visual manipulation is the process of manipulating the perception of a recipient through the purposeful arrangement of text, images, and sounds. Understanding and being able to critically evaluate this is an essential skill for correctly interpreting messages in modern media.

So-called “deep fakes” are videos and images that look very similar to the real thing, but are capable of creating false content, leaving the recipient unable to determine whether what they see actually happened or not. A recent example is a video that is computer-generated but shows the faces of real politicians saying things they never said. This, combined with social media, where a piece of information can reach millions of people in seconds, regardless of whether it is true

or false, gives manipulators almost unlimited influence to push information or disinformation that is important to them into the public consciousness. Influencing public opinion is not a new phenomenon, but the tools for doing so have changed. However, it is not yet clear how much power this gives the manipulator, or to what extent the recipients themselves can read “between the lines” and expose false content.

Along with the dynamic development of visual communication, a critical attitude towards it is also developing. Along with the development of technology, consumers' understanding of the media is also improving, which means that they are more likely to detect deception. However, this process occurs asymmetrically, since visual content has the ability to influence the human mind much faster and more deeply. With the widespread use of multimedia, the fact that we are constantly exposed to different interpretations of the same content complicates the ability to detect manipulation. In this context, it is important to recognize that even reputable media can spread false information. The psychological sensitivity of visual materials slows down the process of verifying them, once images are perceived, their impact lasts for a long time and is often more difficult to resist than verbal arguments. It is precisely these properties of visual communication tools that make them particularly valuable for manipulation. The semiotic structure of images, their resemblance to the real world, and their emotional appeal work together to inhibit the recipient's critical thinking. Therefore, special care is required when analyzing visual information. This involves not only logical analysis, but also controlling one's own emotional reactions.

In short, visual communication is a powerful tool that has been developing since ancient times, formed at the intersection of philosophy, psychology and technology. The ethical issues related to its effectiveness are a constant topic of discussion for society. Research into the philosophical roots of visual communication and modern methods of manipulation has shown that figurative thinking is one of the main features of human thinking. From the vision of the “inner artist” in Greek philosophy to today's “deep fake” technologies based on

artificial intelligence, the development process demonstrates the complex evolution of visual communication.

The results of the study show that the powerful influence of visual communication is manifested in its correspondence to natural mechanisms of perception, its relative independence from social conventions, and its emotional impact. With the development of modern technologies, visual manipulation has reached a new level, and influence through subtle methods such as “paraproxemics”, the principle of “association” and “implicature” has become much more effective.

Based on Van Dijk's discourse analysis, it can be said that visual manipulation is often carried out through positive self-expression and the construction of a negative “other”. In this process, the development of media literacy is important, as the ability to critically analyze content from different sources is the most effective tool against visual manipulation.

The future development of visual communication is expected to be associated, in particular, with advances in virtual reality and artificial intelligence technologies. At the same time, its ethical aspects are becoming increasingly relevant. The power of visual influence also requires great responsibility. Like any powerful tool, it can be used for both good and evil. A deep understanding of visual communication and perception of its mechanisms remains a prerequisite for taking an active civic position in the modern world, being able to critically evaluate messages and not get lost in the flow of information. In this regard, it is important to combine the philosophical heritage with modern media practice.

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