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METAMORPHOSES OF THE POSTMODERN DISCOURSE AND CURRENT CHALLENGES NEOMODERNISM

The article analyzes the problems, achievements and contradictions in the genesis of the contemporary postmodern discourse. The author has carried out complex research, systematized and showed the main features and differences of postmodernism and meta-modernism, as well as the role of neoliberal values in their development. The author has considered a new approach to the study of society and politics: neo-modernist discourse with the dominant conservative values, opposing postmodern theory, methodology and practice; he has identified the features of neo-modernism: historicism, patriotism and healthy nationalism, populism, transactionalism and realism in the world politics.

Key words: *discourse, postmodern, neo-modernism, metamodernism.*

Actuality. Postmodern political and cultural approach to the research of society and politics is a kind of paradigm in the research of postmodern society, which is based on neoliberalism. “Postmodernism” continues its transformation under the influence of STR and the emergence of new values; “metamodernism” has emerged within its framework. The postmodern paradigm is opposed by a new alternative approach – “neo-modernism,” focusing more on conservative, historical and national-patriotic values and slogans of populist movements and their leaders.

Tasks. The article raises the problem of complex consideration and political and cultural approaches used to analyze the society and politics of the postmodern era: the transforming paradigm of “postmodernism” (and its transformation – “metamodernism”), as well as the opposing discourse of “neo-modernism”.

Postmodern Paradigm. The concept of “postmodernism” acts as a paradigm approach, including a number of “postmodern” concepts for the appropriate explanation and interpretation of changes in the culture and values of modern social

life. “Post-modern thinking” is aimed at rethinking “of the old (modernist) knowledge”: public criticism of ideologies (“meta-narratives”) legitimizing power, the consideration of the world as a text (the set of characters and their values) with the implicit authorship, the use of such techniques as deconstruction, interpretatively, irony, eclecticism, hyper-sensibility, aestheticization, etc. Postmodern approaches bear the stamp of disappointment in the ideals of the era of Modern with its belief in progress, science, humanism; accompanied by all-penetrating information flows that popularize individualistic hedonistic culture of consumption. The postmodern project is associated with a serious transformation of social institutions in modern conditions. The weakening centralization, hierarchy and discipline change the image of social and political power and communications. Society falls into fragments and begins to look like a mosaic formed by small groups. The public organization drifts towards domination of network structures with a latent control of the center. Power and political communications acquire significant mobility and flexibility. The idea of the ambivalence of power strengthens in the mass consciousness: it can serve as a source of both order and instability.

Postmodern theories focus on the nonlinear socio-cultural dynamics of post-modern realities, their qualitative uncertainty and contradictory potential of self-organization, problems of risks, unexpected social challenges, unstable order and immanent chaos in the global-local society. A. Giddens singled out such features of the postmodern realities as “gaps in knowledge, an increase of centrifugal and disorderly social transformations and fragmentation of identity” [4. P. 150]. Postmodernism is indirectly represented through neoliberalism, feminism, psychoanalysis, critical, including “left” and utopian, concepts of development [2. P. 46].

The views of postmodernists differ depending on their positions and specifics of discourse: cultural studies, social theory and political science. According to the radical direction, the emphasis is on the study of culture and politics of postmodernism almost out of connection with the history and on breaking with the past (J. Baudrillard, G. Deleuze, F. Guattari) [1. P. 214]. Upon complex consideration, postmodernism may be considered as a certain continuation of the previous approaches, their anamnesis (revision); “Mature modern”; “modernity” (Z. Bauman, A. Giddens, J.-F. Liotar, J. Habermas) [10. P. 254]. In this case, modern and postmodern are considered not as separate epochs, but as participants in the long-term and continuous relations with their achievements and uncertainties. “Even in one particular society it can be difficult to intertwine postmodern, modern (of different types) and traditional realities, as well as global, local and enclaves can coexist” [6. P. 7].

The methodology and theories of postmodernism focus on the following features of the meanings of postmodern society:

- an increase of the role of post-material values, mass culture of entertainment and aestheticization of everyday life in the “silent consumer society”; leveling of the distance between the mass and elite consumer through advertising,

glamour, etc.; consideration of the social world as a changing text or inter-text, where it is difficult to determine the author;

- the political and controlling value of information and psychological symbols, codes, meanings, simulacra, advertising, various indices, codes and ratings of influence in the global-local society;

- fragmentation (“clustering”) of social structure; construction of identity on the basis of individual choice; critical analysis of general classical social theories; emphasis on the study of micro-narratives, the use of the methods of “deconstruction,” “rhizome” approach (development in any direction, as in vines), the search of the archaic in modernity, “trace,” etc.; the light of new experiences, understanding of the effects of acceleration time and “compression” of space.

In general, postmodernism implies the expansion of the possibilities of political and cultural designing due to the rapid development of integrated communications and their impact on the consciousness and pre-consciousness of the “silent consumer majority” in the spirit of neoliberalism.

The discourse of postmodernism is defined and imposed by the West which also receives maximum benefits from it. The ultra-liberal “postmodern” path carries the danger of loss of the national identity, dissolution of statehood, chaos and desocialization of politics, etc. In this sense, we can talk about the brilliance and poverty of postmodernism.

Instead of the society of rational knowledge, put forward by the era of modernity, postmodern reality is increasingly using electronic entertainment and consumer products of poor quality. The politics in the XXI century is increasingly turning into the selection and ranking of the symbolic set of identities and the only possible choice is to follow the fashionable media produced symbols, like the kids “bewitched” by the music of the fabulous Piper to be carried away by the sweet sounds and tempting images. Parties, “thought factories” and mass media become designers of identities seeking to “capture symbols” and manage with their assistance. Programmed opinion polls determine politics, tests determine advertising style, questionnaires – the choice of radio music, the results of trial views – the outcome of the films, directed auditions – the choice of “stars” and tastes, telemetry – the content of television programs, etc. In parallel with normative regulation of behavior goes seduction of consumers; instead of ideology – constant advertising; legitimization of the power in many respects is defined by the press-centers and press-bureaus depending on oligarchic structures. Along with “classical” social communities, individuals and groups interacting in network structures are put forward as political subjects. Revolutions according to the Marxist scheme are replaced by managed network interaction of actors. Who actually directs the “color” movements and the strategic goals of their organizers is usually hidden from the public.

Discourse of Metamodernism. The postmodern paradigm is changing due to the Genesis of society, STR and is supplemented by “metamodernism”. This

concept was introduced in 2010 by Dutch philosophers Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker in their work “Notes on Metamodernism”.

The authors of this approach believe that the era of postmodernism is exhausted due to the emergence of new factors such as the global financial crisis and controversial post-crisis development, strengthening of social stratification, intensification of terrorism, an increase in the number of military conflicts, the growing role of the states and civilizations in modern history, etc. If postmodernism was based largely on the neoliberal idea of Fukuyama about the “end of the history”, the “meta-modernism” suggests new, endless and unexpected horizons and prospects. Some authors use the term “post-postmodernism” as a synonym of such approach.

In L. Turner’s “Metamodernist Manifesto” metamodernism is considered as a direction that involves the analysis of possible prospects both within and outside the existing social system and a search for a plurality of incommensurable and elusive horizons. New technologies make it possible to simultaneously perceive and act out events from a variety of positions thus contributing to pluralism and certain democratization in the understanding of history and politics.

The world of “metamodernism” is characterized by:

- expanding virtualization of the social interaction space, when the virtual world replaces reality and new opportunities appear for the manipulation of mass consciousness by the authorities, modern media and individuals;
- construction of engaging social interaction of technological forms created in the network space by some users and modified by others, causing the objects to live independently of their authors;
- recognition of the increasing role of the state in the global space remaining at the same time purely national societies with their own culture and identity;
- trans-sentimentalism or a return to the obvious, civilizational and traditional values [7. P. 59-61].

In general, metamodernism to some extent promotes redefining of the classical postmodernism, “going beyond” it.

Neo-modernist Discourse: Is it a new Comprehension of Values? In connection with the formation of the modern multipolar world order, the postmodern paradigm based on the dominant role of the West in neoliberal globalization, especially in the sphere of the world politics and development of an independent national public policy has come into conflict with modern realities. The world seems to be divided by many dividing lines, which are outside and above the state borders: uncontrolled migration, poverty, enclave in large cities, etc. [3].

The following features of postmodernism were questioned: agnosticism (denial of objective truth); pragmatism, brought to cynicism and possessiveness as the highest value and goal-setting; eclecticism, expressed in the devaluation of any coherent ideological and value systems; anarcho-democracy: denial of any hierarchies, including the state; a certain “right to intervene” in the internal affairs of other countries under any, increasingly not only far-fetched, provoked,

but also created by Western intelligence fake excuses and simulacra; the “right” to undermine the established system of international relations [5].

In these circumstances, a seeming return to a number of provisions of modernity has become inevitable and involved the actualization of some of its classical principles, of course, significantly adapted to the new political reality. In fact, “neomodernism”, a “new modernism”, has appeared largely alternative to a number of principles and the very spirit of classical neoliberal postmodernism.

An important socio-economic reason for the formation of neo-modernist discourse was the growing contradiction between the neoliberal elites and the interests of society, the deteriorating situation of the masses. The neoliberal social contract between the elites and the workers, by virtue of which the position of the latter (both in the US and in the EU) improved every new generation since the end of the last century, is deeply questioned. Grassroots populist movement (Brexit, Grexit, Katalancit, anti-immigrant protests, “yellow jackets” in France), legitimization (election to the power bodies) of populist leaders (presidents in the United States and Brazil, the Italian government and others), the growing popularity of neomodernist parties and movements – all of it actively shapes the political agenda in many countries.

“Neo-modernism” is characterized by the following principles, properties and features:

1. Historicism becomes topical: the appeal of neo-modernists to historical, cultural and civilizational roots is actualized. This is due both to the strengthening of nationalism and ethnocentrism in many countries and an attempt to find a new ideological justification for the existing political system, to substantiate neo-modern realism after decades of domination of post-modern historical relativism. Neo-modernism tends to actualize patriotism, to approve the right of the peoples and ethnic groups to self-determination; to support healthy nationalism, expressed in the preservation of national and civilizational identity of countries, nations and ethnic groups.

2. Transactionalism becomes a trend which supposes a rejection of “universal values” and “common interests” in favor of a rigid focus on national priorities and interaction with other actors in terms of the logic of the zero-sum game or the usual economic (trade) benefits. The logic of neo-modernism and populism implies cooperation and not confrontation of foreign countries with Russia, China and other powers with other civilizational values and national interests.

3. The holism of foreign policy is a phenomenon not subordinating foreign policy to the narrow economic or other private interests, but reducing certain foreign policy guidelines and trends to a single whole; it recognizes the importance of the classical heritage of modernity in the sphere of world politics and the existence of realities of the emerging new world order.

4. In postmodernism, the main dividing line in the world politics was the watershed between democracy and authoritarianism. For most neo-modernists, the question of democracy and authoritarianism takes a back seat, giving way

to the more important issue of the dividing line between order and chaos in the international relations and domestic politics. Slogans and practices of various types of populism are widely used as a means of solving political problems.

Neo-modernist discourse is sharply criticized in neoliberal ruling structures. Populist movements and leaders are seen as a threat to the existing neoliberal order [8]. In this regard, the focus of the plenary presidential session of the World Congress of political scientists in Australia is characteristic: "Boundaries of liberal democracy and the global rise of populism". The session considered the growing actualization of populist policy in the context of neo-modernism and its challenges to the existing neoliberal order and dividing lines [9. P. 29-30].

It is clear that the values and principles of neo-modern discourse can be differently emphasized by different policy actors depending on their interests.

Thus, the formation of neo-modernist discourse marked the development in modern conditions of the trend opposing the traditional neoliberal post-modernist paradigm. An integrated approach to the analysis of modern political and cultural discourses, including neo-modernist discourse, enriches the categorical apparatus of social and humanitarian sciences and helps to better navigate the complex and contradictory development of the society, culture and politics.

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