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Post-Modernism and Cultural Policy

Sergei B. Sinetskiy*

*Chelyabinsk Institute of Economics and Law
named after M.V. Ladoshin,
63 Energetikov st., Chelyabinsk, 454135 Russia¹*

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The article is devoted to the study of peculiarities of the implementation of cultural policy in the situation of uncertainty that is caused by the transformations of public consciousness under the influence of new information technologies. The author considers the range of problems connected with the opposition modernism – post-modernism in the context of transforming human activity and arguments of traditionalistic and futuristic culturological trends.

Keywords: Modern cultural policy, an information technology, post-modernism, an informational-communicative revolution.

Introduction

First of all it's important to understand what the object of consideration is, that is hidden behind the invariant "post"-modernism. According to our opinion it's significant to distinguish in principle:

1. The science-philosophical trend, representatives of which, studying and interpreting the modern reality, determine created theoretical constructions with the term "postmodern".

2. The reality itself as cogitative, activity and behavior processes performed by people (individuals as well as groups), the real objective reality in its self-sufficiency and authenticity.

The science – the product of human activity – under the limited capabilities of a human being to reflect and apprehend the outer world adequately can't claim to have exhaustive and verity of its results. With respect to post-modernism the scientific discussions about its

genetic characteristics haven't been ceased since the moment of canonization of this phenomenon (60 – 70s of the XX century). However the analysis of various scientific ideas and conclusions not equal as to their methodological bases allow to envisage the phenomenon in its reflection in the public intellect, to sight its though mosaic but at the same time the most voluminous portrait.

The reality in turn is always a little bit meager than a scientific theory. However the reality is always localized in space and time. "Affixment to the settings", empirical apprehending of concrete manifestation of the common allow to act successfully "here and now".

Thereby it's possible to speak about the synthesis of the theoretical and the empirical, the abstract and the concrete as a condition of adequate understanding of what is going on.

Such a differentiation is accepted in policy where the subject of the action occupies the

* Corresponding author E-mail address: sbs62@mail.ru

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“above” position. When it’s required to provide control not only the situation itself in real-time, but also its sign and symbolic reflection by various interpreting systems (mass media, scientific and expert communities, “artists” and so on). In our case it’s a position of a cultural politician presupposed the presence “beyond the screen”, and therefore, partly pretending to the role of the producer and the director of that what is accepted to call socio-cultural projects.

We understand the modern cultural policy as a purposeful, prospectively (long-termly) oriented activity that provides the development of the society (its part) in the network of groundedly selected and artificially implemented cultural norms, promotion of values. Subtended in this definition claim doesn’t allow to ignore the post-modern trend of reorganization of the society. At the same time it’s important to distinguish only those out of the great diversity of scientific points of view that characterize the post-modernism maximum functionally especially for the sphere of cultural policy.

Point of view

We proceed from the possibility of consideration of the post-modernism in different functional dimensions. Let’s represent this functionality according to the principle “from the simple to the complicated”:

1. The post-modernism as a sign. Actually, in the first place, it is a sign (one of signs) indicating some (frequently they are difficult to formalize) change taking place in the society, a new cultural situation, a process of renewing of vital paradigms and so on. In such a sense (that is reflected in the name of the sign, as the prefix “post” generally means nothing) we deal with the purely cultural phenomenon of “naming”. Naming (attribution, normalization) is one of the cultural mechanisms of regulation of the reality since, firstly, it testifies to the effect of rational reflection of “the new” or

“the unknown” and, secondly, of the beginning of the process of its mastering by the consciousness. In such a sense “the post-modernism” is merely “a sign of the uncertainty”, temporally used till the moment when the essence, which is marked by it, is defined. Exactly the same thing happened, for example, to the sign “the post-industrial” which was substituted by the sign “informational” [society] after the approach of the certainty.

2. “The post-modernism” as a theory. Empirically fixed facts of newness are gradually systematized according to different criteria, colligated, placed into different contexts, integrated to the logic of causative-consecutive connections. On the assumption of this there appears a harmonious, systematic picture of the reality – a theory which more or less precisely reflects the regularities of the appearance, existence and vanishing of new phenomena in the culture and society.

3. “The post-modernism” as an ideology. As opposed to a scientific theory, an ideology tends not to an objective reflection of the reality but to an active transformation of the reality on the basis of own imperatives. Important is not that fact how these imperatives appear: they may be a product of “pure creation” or may be based on the objectively existing patterns of thought and action. It is important that these imperatives are positioned as choiceless. For apologists an ideology is not so much an object for analysis as a subject of transformations, it doesn’t need a critical assessment but it does need bearers (adherents). If a scientific theory is an instrument of world perception then an ideology is a way of thinking, a fundamental basis of new practices. The post-modernism today is becoming exactly a new ideology, a new socio-cultural project (Dugin A. “Geopolitics of the post-modern”, 2007).

Evidently neither a theory nor an ideology of the post-modernism is comprehensive (as well as a sign itself has analogues). They are situated in the

competitive field of social conceptions. However the revolution in the informational technologies in combination with globalization provide the post-modern project with obvious advantages.

The general range of problems connecting with the post-modernism consist in unobviousness of its cultural status. Moreover, in some pretension to out-super-culture. There is some vagueness in the fact whether the post-modernism destroys just non-topical (obsolescent) content of culture or transforms the mechanism of cultural succession – a tradition, for example. A peculiarity of the situation is that the impulse of the post-modern vector is set by the information-technological revolution which was a manifestation of philosophical law of transition from quantity to quality. Thousands of units of knowledge produced by educational systems of different countries, thousands of discordant ideas, thousands of separate experiences, gradually accumulating, have amassed gigantic energetic potential of creativity. And this potential due to the power of obvious social order has been realized in the sphere of communicative technologies (in broad sense – communications). It could be realized in any other sphere, for example, in the professional art, restoration of nature (in broad sense – ecology), individual vital practices. However in the point of bifurcation the line of development has turned there where it has turned.

The paradox is that the informational-communicative revolution is a process though “artificial” i.e. originating from the cultural sphere but at the same time uncontrollable due to the fact that traditional (modernistic) élites lack corresponding will and organization. The cultural consequences of this (and actually another) revolution depend upon:

- firstly, self-reproducing qualities of culture. However exactly these qualities are weakened today by dynamics (in broad sense – informational-technological revolution);

- secondly, cultural politicians taking upon themselves to a certain extent functions of adjusters of socio-cultural processes in the conditions of cultural uncertainty.

Thereby the post-modernism emerges in the situation of weakening of mechanisms of reproducing of cultural authenticity. Such weakening in its turn is a consequence of changes of the character of existence itself, key characteristics of which in the first half of the XXI century became informationality, dynamics, virtuality. Such a situation, by the way, was observed in Russia near the events of 1917, when the cultural mechanisms, supporting social stability, were also unbalanced. The order was restored at the incredibly high price by new élites and on the new ideological basis. Nowadays the matter is not only Russia but also the whole cultural space of the modernism, subject to the expansion of the post-modernism. Thereby the topic of combination “artificial” and “natural” in the creation of a new socio-cultural system becomes principal. Having in mind, that the truth is always somewhere in the middle, we, though, have to put a question about such a combination under the weakness of traditional cultures and disadaptability of national élites. Under such a combination there arises the uncertainty of expenses which can be experienced by the majority of humanity:

- under the change of cultural paradigms (in so called transitional period);

- after the inculcation of the new post-modernistic paradigm.

In such a sense, cultural politicians objectively pretend to the role of new élites, and the modern cultural policy begins (or, at least, is thought) to fulfil a twofold role:

- firstly, a traditional one, connecting with the rational interference in the natural processes of cultural evolution;

- secondly, a new one, connecting with the enculturation of the post-modernism (as a practice).

Example

When the post-modernism is said about like a new epoch it's usually pointed to the following genetic criteria of this phenomenon:

- the pluralism, the determination towards the interminable diversity of ideas, opinions, forms of self-actualization... (Toffler);
- the decentering, the absence of the single or "major" centre (information, governing, fashion), "the mosaicity of the society" (Z.Bauman);
- the polystylisticity of social practices, overcoming the universality, typicalness, stereotyping (M.Tournier);
- the rejection of tradition as an instrument of reproduction (T.Matyash);
- the derivation from the scientific and technological advance, from new information technologies (V.Jemelin).

Here we can also add, for example, such notions as "fragmentation" (of the society), "filmlooping" (of the consciousness),

"demassification" (of the production) which are often used to characterize the post-modernism... Thus comparing the above-mentioned characteristics with the traditional characteristics of classical modernism it is possible to form the following typology of oppositions (Table).

It is natural that given characteristics at different degree of intensity can be observed in both types of society. We have cited them having rendered them some absolute for more obviousness. Such a typology allows to determine the cultural policy on the assumption of peculiarities of the situation existing in the region – the object of influence.

Every element is estimated according to the intensity of manifestation of the characteristics peculiar to modernistic and post-modernistic mentality. The approach to one of the poles lets a cultural politician choose maximum effective means of influence upon the situation particularly in the concrete region. Beforehand, however, it is necessary to conduct a detailed study of the situation on the assumption of the objective peculiarities of the region - the object of cultural policy. These are the features that cannot be disregarded:

Table

Characteristics of modernism	Characterised elements	Characteristics of post-modernism
Analyticity, structuring, inclusiveness	Peculiarities of human consciousness	Filmlooping, simplicity, surcharge
Intransigence, dominance, assumption of violence	Peculiarities of ideological guidelines of a personality	Tolerance, pluralistic, denial of violence
Integrity, entirety, centralization	Peculiarities of social organization	Mosaicity, fragmentariness, decentering
Traditionalism, domineering of basic culture, monostylisticity	Peculiarities of culture	Overcoming of tradition, polyculture, polystylisticity
Empiricism, complementarity, steadiness	Peculiarities of communication	Virtuality, extravagance, dynamics
Predictability, projectivity, artificiality	Peculiarities of perception of the future	Uncertainty, mysteriousness, superentity
Team spirit, functionality, manufacturability	Peculiarities of activity	Individualism, symbolism, creativity

- the degree of urbanization of the region.

It is known that the mentality of inhabitants of megalopolises, of small towns and village settlements is essentially different. The larger and the more densely populated the territory is, the more probable the post-modernistic trends will prevail here;

- the labour characteristics, the economic structure. People included into the large industrial production, small commodity (exclusive) factory or agricultural production also have unequal consciousness;

- the history of the region (it is possible as an administrative-territorial institution), the degree of settled way of life or migration dynamics of the population. The regions with the sustained history, not rapid speed of migration, established culture are usually not alike very much with anew created ones (“new cities”) which are inhabited by migrants from different places who are not limited by the traditional norms of communal life. The post-modernism settles easier exactly in new regions;

- information technologies prevailing in the region. The representatives of the regions with the developed information technologies as a rule possess more explicit post-modernistic consciousness than those who live in the conditions of the pre-informational (industrial) society;

- age structure of the population. It is evident that the regions with numerous young generation are intrinsically ready for more radical changes and intricate ways of self-actualization (that is a characteristic of post-modernism) than the regions where the senior generation (more conservative, traditionalistically aiming) domineers.

In the real practice it is necessary to consider also multitude of peculiarities of a region on the whole as well as separate target groups which should be influenced upon in the first place.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly the world is changing under the influence of scientific and technological advance including intensive development of information technologies. Not just the content of these or those cultures but also the value-normative construction of culture itself are put to the severe test. Some methodological premises of adherents of the post-modernism have already got the postulates that prejudice fundamental statements of various sciences. It concerns both the factual denial of a tradition as a basic mechanism of socio-cultural succession and doubt of the human ability to build one’s future rationally. As V.Emelin writes in his article “Post-modernism: problems and perspectives”: “The attempts to subordinate socio-political reality to the single rules of play never end successfully as the practice shows. The reality, be it society or nature, resists any imposed limits on it, it always throws off fetters of directions alien to it, and not fitting Procrustean bed, no matter, it resume its normal course some time or other”. (Jemelin 1999). However it’s exactly a reformatory struggle with the reality (initially it’s a purely physical one – with the nature, then it’s a substitution of sign-symbolic similarity for certain fragments of the reality, after that it’s a transference of basic activity to the assumed, artificially created space and creation of the so-called “virtual reality”) that is a genetic property of a human being. In this sense the post-modernism itself is not more than a result of another “victory” of a human over his own previous achievement – the modernism (that itself came up to take the place of the pre-modern).

Whereas the cultural policy was and still remains, on the one hand, an instrument of reformation of the reality (“the intrusion of the new”), on the other hand, an instrument of preserving of the traditional (“resuming its normal course”). In any case, manageability

is better than chaos and predictability is better than uncertainty. The sensible combination of the imbalance of new and old, past and future, tradition and innovation appear in the present.

And that means that the process of harmonization of life itself (of building parity) is still under control of people that undoubtedly gives us a chance and opens new perspectives.