Conference Paper

Section 3. Dialogue of Cultures: History and Modernity

Visual Culture of Globalism and the Crisis of National Identity

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Abstract

The object of research in this article is the visual culture of globalism as a cause of a crisis of national identity. That is why the author considers these processes within the context of their interconnection typical for the current situation in many societies across different countries.

Keywords: visual culture, globalism, globalization, mass communication, national identity

1. Introduction

Few manifestations of globalization are as visual and widespread as an intensive visualization and virtualization of culture. According to the authors of the book *Global Transformations: Politics, Economy, Culture*, "despite the complexities of inter-societal interactions over the past three thousand years, increasing mobility of images and symbols, extraordinary wide spread of methods of thinking and communication are unique and unprecedented features of late 20th century and the beginning of the new millennium [3, p. 386].

2. Methods

First, it should be noted that thanks to the new communication technologies (digial photo, cinema, TV, multimedia systems, Internet etc.) globalized-age culture becomes visual. Moreover, global cultural streams, whose scope, intensity, diversity and fast spread have surpassed every previous phenomenon, heavily impacted national cultures, national identity and all corresponding institutes. According to V. B. Zvonovsky, this

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leads to the crisis of sociocultural identity including "significant reevaluation of the state's role in identity building [2, p. 314].

What is the cause of national identity crisis? It is the change of context in which national cultures are produced, brought about by the cultural globalization transforming means of such production. Still, we can agree with the researchers who believe that globalization's impact "on the character and efficiency of national cultures, on the power and influence on their ideas, values and content, is still very difficult to determine" [3, p. 387].

3. Representation Strategies and Practices

Contemporary visual culture includes capabilities for processing various representation strategies and practices. At the same time, art practice becomes determined by the general processes of cultural standardization on the one hand – and its decentralization on the other. A. Venkonva, a well-known researcher of this problem, identifies the following major representational channels providing identification in global visualized cultural space:

1. The processing of the idea of national identity. This theme is particularly acute in the works of emigre artists experiencing the trauma of a changed cultural context. Refusing to accept their nomadic status, they build their identity in respect of a concrete culture, and not the idea of culture in general.

2. Psychopathology of politics. A radicalized version of the representational strategy of national identity can be found in the works by the artists who have never changed their place of residence and who develop their identification system within the space of their native culture. Such artists become social critics developing an idiosyncratic version of the psychopathology of politics. Within such practices, art is perceived as a variation of social policy isomorphic in its structures and messages, even though it often presents an opposition to an official state policy.

3. Gender issues, which ceased to be perceived as exotic and became an integral part of contemporary culture. As a result, the novelty impact of gender travesty has been lost. It was replaced by a component of the author's existential stand. Relevant gender theory and art practice are engaged in recapturing private areas from global unified fields. Today gender identification aims, first and foremost, at constructing zones of personal enclosure within globalized cultural space.

4. New mediality. In contemporary culture media are increasingly understood as intermediaries of any kind, and not only as a digital medium facilitating art's engagement

with the challenges of globalized mass media. Contemporary visual culture becomes a part of general processes of design and conceptualization of mass media's manipulative capabilities.

5. New hedonism. New hedonism is reflected in modern art practice first and foremost as a fascination with form. An object's design, quality and technical perfection can bring satisfaction both to its creator and its recipient. Ready-made culture becomes obviously outdated since modern artists and their audience strive for a long-term gratification. Ready-made items satisfy this demand increasingly less, forcing artists to turn to the classical foundations of their profession [1, pp. 278–279].

4. Conclusions

The representation channels listed above create potential opportunities for identification processes. Therefore, dominant visual practices become integrated into the development of emerging foundations of a new culture. This is why current stage of globalization is called a "visual globalism" due to an immense expansion of the visual culture practices characteristic for the contemporary society in many countries.

References

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