

Phenomenon of Modernity in the Context of Culture

Mikhail Vasilevich Kolesnik

Omsk Economical Institute,
Komarov Prospekt, 13, 644012, Omsk, Russia

Abstract: The article addresses the phenomenon of modernity in the context of the culture of the present. Openness of modernity is characterized by volatility and constancy in the same time which we relate to integrity of existence of a man and life of culture. The study is aimed to clarify specifics of modernity phenomenon as combination of specific requirements and conditions which are imposed by culture on a man.

Key words: Modernity man • Context of culture • The present • Openness • Actuality • Innovations • Individualism • Economism • The epoch of changes • Conformism • Formation

INTRODUCTION

Phenomenon of modernity in the context of the culture philosophy can be viewed as construct which is rather complex in meaning by the reason of big time allocated by nature for discourse about modernity and as a result it vagueness. Because modernity, “real historical time does not allow us to escape from its limits; we are “sealed” inside very tightly, because we are doomed to be born and die in modernity limits in a broad sense. Thus, modernity is expressed, first of all, as epoch which is not completed in principle, in other words, its horizon is opened” [1]. This openness of modernity is characterized by volatility and constancy in the same time which we relate to integrity of existence of a man and life of culture. Choosing synonyms to the phenomenon “modernity” we at once recall such words as up-to-dateness, pungency, topicality, newness, immediacy, present day and others [2]. The words say for themselves about problem nature of the phenomenon in question. Generalized character of understanding of modernity is often restricted to critical analysis because modernity as notion of culture philosophy and political theory denotes “problem situation, in which societies find themselves because of breaking and disintegration of the order of superior values which legitimized their rules before, made general world view of the members of such communities full of sense and which were perceived by them as superior and objective ontological reality [3]. You can say that modernity in culture mostly fully realizes itself in the periods of formation of processes which have general

cultural significance, for example, in various high-tech innovations, mass socio-cultural trends, active transformations of society and changes of traditional spiritual values in accordance with present time.

The aim of this study is to find out the specific features of the phenomenon modernity as combination of specific requirements and conditions which are imposed by culture on a man.

The Main Part: Culture can be identified as culture only against sign-symbolic background which is produced by human activity. Thus, context of culture is inevitably determined by human presence [4]. The word ‘context’ derives from Latin ‘contextus’ - close relationship, connection. In linguistics ‘context’ is defined as finished in meaning extract from written or oral speech necessary for establishing of meaning of the word or phrase included in it [5]. Culture context is viewed as relatively finished in meaning and socially fixed segment of existence, which can be considered as semiotic surface, reflecting and clarifying world outlook and world feeling of a man. A man creates reality of culture and in the same time is a product of its reality himself. Culture which has ideal-forming function in different epochs and different forms determines the processes of transformation of existence and formation of cultural integrity of a man. D. Pivovarov points out to the fact, that “since culture is a complex and internally contradictory hierarchy of sacred and profane ideals, it solidarizes people, consolidates their combined activity, being itself a single whole entity” [6].

In order to mark trends of human formation in modernity we should pay attention to the specific features of cultural space of modernity. We shall try to enlist its key features:

- Culture of modernity is “urban” culture, developing in the globalization processes of mankind. “Modernity is characterized by globalism” [7]. This urban character of culture can be extended not only to cultural centers but is realized in the periphery. One of the principles of modernity is expansion, “broadening of coverage, first of all, in space. In other words, it tends to cover more geographic regions and in the end the whole planet. Modernity extends itself into the depth touching the very private, intimate spheres of habitual life (for example, religious beliefs, sexual behaviour, consumers' tastes, leisure etc.)” [8].
- Spiritual orientation is based not on following traditions but, on the contrary, on striving for individuality, alternative views and mindsets, which results in ambition to be “creative” and “competitive”. Individualism is the most frequently observed characteristic of a modern man. “A man is free from obligatory group relationship, he chooses a social circle which he likes, determines his actions himself and bears personal responsibility for his own actions, successes and failures” [8].

In the same time we often observe in seeming individual difference absolutely the same inner contents.

- While making evaluation of one's own or other people's moral or immoral actions the principle of relativity is used. Moral consciousness becomes more “tolerate”.
- Attention of modern man is directed only in future, the past is perceived as library archives to which you should address only in case of urgent need as reference material. This creates lack of confidence and often lack of respect of “children” for the experience of the past and authority of “fathers” - senior generations, which are perceived by children as non-progressive, non modern and non-actual. It may look strange, but on the other hand contemporary young generation becomes so pragmatic and conservative, for example in the context of modern economic values, that the old generation looks as romantics in comparison with it. Here we can talk about new rationalism of modernity-

“rationalism (or calculation and de-personalization of management), the key idea of Weber bureaucracy theory. The most important feature of modernity is also recognized by everybody role of science as a mean of cognition” [9].

- Active use of digital technologies as key instruments of optimization of everyday activity. Because of wide spread and accessibility of limitless Internet virtual reality starts to compete with real world by its captive force.
- High level of intercultural relationship. Elements of high culture are realized on everyday level. But in the same time we observe differentiation in labour sphere, where big number of narrowly-specialized occupations and professions appears which demand different level of craftsmanship, competence and experience, the same situation is in the sphere of consumption with its diversity of opportunities and “life chances” [10].
- Eclectic recognition of ethic and esthetic values on conceptual base of mass culture and ideology of post-modern.
- Stake on “youth spirit” - social priorities of young generation, mobility, optimism and positivism of thinking, as well as self-confidence and emotionality, domination of material over spiritual.
- Making money becomes not only necessity but life purpose because only money can give new level of consumption. Economic position starts to determine not only material but spiritual status of a person as well. P. Shtompka writes that “economism by which we understand domination of economic activity, economic targets and economic criteria over all social life. Modern society is concerned with products, its production, distribution and consumption and of course, with money as single measure and the tool of exchange. Problems of family relations, relations with relatives which were of importance for early primitive societies, or political military issues, typical for traditional agrarian societies (for example, at Middle Ages) are secondary in importance” [8].
- Psychological openness to changes, innovations, fashion trends and socio-cultural transformations demonstrates high level of adaptation in regard to renewal and restyling of cultural space. P. Berger writes that “essential element of modernization is that many spheres of human life which were considered before as determined by destiny now are perceived as depending on choice - individual or a group, or both. This is a Prometheus element of modernity

which was always considered by supporters of traditional religious world-view as rebellion against established by God human order. Modernization is multiplication of choices. One of the most attracting principles of modernity says that things can be different from what they have been before. This is dynamics of modernity, its strong ambition for innovations and revolution. From now on tradition will not be obligatory, status-quo can be changed and future is open horizon" [11].

Modernity is a form of existence of time stipulated by human creative work. This is objectified process of changes actualization. In order to have status "contemporary" a man must create his habitual life, be maximum active, create and explore tools of personal adaptation, be flexible to changes. It is modernity where a man fixes in his labour and entertainment what is understood as "human", sometimes "non-human" in some epoch. Modernity can be only in the epoch of changes. And contemporary man is a man who is constantly changing, "forming". He moves forward together with time, trying to catch its rhythm, he has no time for long thinking because he has to adapt quickly and transform himself in the market of habitual life. Yes, the market is that global model of modernity which includes all modern world. And market relations have gone beyond the economy into human sphere. People ceased to be confused by the fact that they become an object of buying and selling because all contemporary employment is based on it. We sell ourselves to employers and want to get highest price and the employers, on the contrary, are striving to underbid our price to get profit. And work itself has become more than just work - from necessity it became the life purpose. Because the whole environment cries trying to draw our attention with bright masks of advertising: "Buy it and then you will be perfect!" and this programming and stimulation of wishes chases us every day, refining our consumer psychology. When you buy the latest model of a mobile phone, in a week you will know that more advanced phone has appeared and feel that you must buy it by all means, otherwise you will feel like a loser. In modern world consumption is intended for demonstration of one's own social success, competence and up-to-dateness, but in order to consume you need money and you must earn them. That is why main characteristic of contemporary man is high level of competitiveness in labour market. That one who has low level of competitiveness is pushed out of game, became off-line and finds himself in social outskirts. In modern

world which is permeated with economic relations "humane" is manifested not in moral choice but in ability to adjust to any reactive changes in the environment. But conformism is not regarded as negative feature any more, this feature shows the level of modernity of a man, his adaptive capacity.

It comes to that if you are not able to live in the world of changes of modernity you just have to give up and resign yourself to your social destiny. This is the trick of modern liberalism. From very beginning everybody has similar conditions for happiness, as if all people start to run from the same line, but it is not known who will be at finish first, but it is clear that the strongest will win.

CONCLUSION

We believe that notion modernity is most objectively reveals itself in the epoch of changes. People often remember Chinese saying: "God save you from living in times of changes". Traditionally the "epoch of changes" is understood as spiritual absence of single value and sense vector and socio-cultural instability. But in modern world we observe paradox situation. If some time ago people believed that stability is a norm now they are in situation when norm is constant changes. "In most part of the world (both by population and territory) change of "polarity" of one of the most important evaluation criterion of social well-being has happened: stability and changes have exchanged places. Epoch, when absence of changes was perceived as good thing changed for epoch when the good is understood as permanent changes. It is these changes which become the characteristic of proactive development, the advantage in the struggle for survival. And if earlier most people were instinctively watchful for changes today we are more concerned with stability in position and environment. It is perceived as a sign of degradation or lack of competitiveness. [12]. The author of these lines, G. Kireev gives an interesting example from real life: "One of my friends, a manufacturer told about his observation: "Recently I have got a feeling that I work not at real production but in purely experimental workshop: every day we have got some technological, organizational, or technical changes. If there are no changes we perceive it not as a norm but as pathology. And if before such working mode was given a definition "production fever" today such fever is our normal state. Stability of life foundations is provided not by statics, but by speed. Speed which forms vector stability, like when a man rides a bicycle" [12].

Refusal from traditions becomes new tradition of cultural space of modernity and not specific exclusion, but everyday practice, that is why it is perceived as routine. "Boundaries and thresholds, shifts and transformations - this becomes the subject of people's interest who most feared to live in the era of changes." [13]. Changes become not just a period of significant, "earthshaking" changes but a permanent process. Thus, reactive changes become natural state for cultural space of modernity

Inference: Notion " modernity " is most fully realized in periods of formation of processes which have general cultural significance, for example, in various high-tech innovations, fashion trends, active transformation and interpretation of "spiritual" purposes.

In order to self-identify oneself in the status "contemporary" a man must correspond to a certain set of parameters which are formed by cultural space in which a man lives. Modernity is understood by us as a set of necessary requirements which are imposed by culture on a man and which determine vector of thinking in the context of quality and constructiveness of living activity. We can argue that "to be contemporary" means to respond deliberately to conditions of the environment and realize constructively one's own practical activity and life purposes.

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