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MARXIST INTERPRETATION OF POSTMODERNISM

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A Marxist interpretation of postmodernism critically examines the cultural and ideological shifts associated with postmodernism through the lens of Marxist theory. This approach argues that postmodernism reflects the latest stage of capitalist development, characterized by the fragmentation and commodification of cultural forms and social identities. Marxists contend that postmodernism's emphasis on relativism, skepticism towards grand narratives, and celebration of plurality and difference serve to obscure the material realities of class struggle and economic exploitation. In the Marxist view, postmodernism can be seen as both a product and an instrument of late capitalism. It emerges from the economic transformations that have led to the decline of traditional industrial economies and the rise of a globalized, information-based economy. This transition has fragmented social and cultural life, creating a sense of instability and uncertainty that postmodernism both reflects and reinforces. By focusing on surface over depth, and by privileging the ephemeral and the contingent, postmodernism diverts attention from the enduring structures of economic power and class relations. Moreover, Marxists argue that postmodernism's celebration of consumer culture and its fixation on signs and simulacra contribute to the commodification of everyday life. Cultural products and identities become interchangeable, stripped of historical and social context, and reduced to their market value. This commodification process supports the interests of capital by promoting a culture of consumption and distraction, which undermines collective political action and solidarity. In conclusion, a Marxist interpretation of postmodernism sees it as a cultural logic that reflects and perpetuates the conditions of late capitalism. It critiques postmodernism for its role in obscuring class divisions and for contributing to the commodification of culture, thus hindering the potential for revolutionary social change. This approach seeks to reclaim the potential for revolutionary change by reconnecting cultural critique with the broader struggle against capitalist exploitation and for social justice.

Key words: marxist theory, postmodernism, capitalism, commodification, class struggle, cultural fragmentation

The topic of the article is relevant in modern science and is being quite actively studied by scientists. The research of D. Filk and U. Ram is devoted to the problem of the transformation of Marxism under the influence of postmodernism. To a certain extent, the answer to the question posed can also be found in scientific works devoted to individual representatives of Marxism or postmodernism. An analysis of the uniqueness of postmodernism was carried out in the article.

Marxism, as a philosophical, economic, socio-political doctrine, was formed in the 19th century. during the period of formation and establishment of industrial society in the West. Marxism, as well as, later, postmodernism, had a great influence on art. Stalin's Empire style, socialist realism, most of the Silver Age – all these achievements became possible only in the paradigm of Marxist thinking. The word «postmodernism» has different meanings. A. Toynbee designated a stage in the development of Western civilization. Until the mid-twentieth century, this term was

used to describe new trends in modern art, literature and architecture (Ricoeur, 1981).

In the 1970-80s. Postmodernism began to be understood as a theoretical direction of philosophical and social research that examined the processes of knowledge in a critical manner and in the context of socio-cultural and political development. Characteristic of the end of the twentieth century was the widespread use of this term to define the new era that replaced the era of modernity. Since that time, as a number of researchers note, «the postmodernist view of reality... coincided with the cultural logic of the era of late capitalism and, as such, affects almost all aspects of sociocultural reality.» Frederic Jameson in his book «Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism» points out that postmodernism as a cultural phenomenon came from architecture.

Perry Anderson notes that the term «postmodernism» first appears in Spanish-language literature in Federico De Onis. Filk, noting the ambiguity of the term «postmodernism,» simultaneously highlights the general characteristics of postmodern theories, namely: «distrust of narratives, criticism of the understanding of history as progress,

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the central role of a single collective subject.» We can emphasize criticism of the West as the most important tenet of postmodernism. Postmodernity in the world, according to this author, is most «represented in literary creativity,» and in other areas it has not received development (Mouffe, 2005).

The essence of postmodernism B.F. Slavin presents it as follows. First of all, this is relativism, a rejection «of the category of objective truth and ideas and scientific concepts based on it,» because they represent «a relic of a long-gone era of Enlightenment, the era of Modernity.» As a result, relativism leads to a complete confusion of concepts, to the inability to distinguish between «life and death, good and evil, truth and error, science and utopia.»

In the context of the relativistic methodological basis of postmodernism, Slavin defines it as «a reaction to modern capitalism, where the boundaries of good and evil, truth and error, the beautiful and the ugly have been destroyed.» At the same time, he points to the interest of the dominant spiritual elite of bourgeois society in justifying the fact that socialist theory is not relevant today, «that there have been no classes, exploitation, truth and justice for a long time.» In reality, this author claims, all this exists. But the fact that postmodernism does not answer the question of what can be relied on in knowledge and life, if everything is relative, then exploitation, and the desire for justice, and other ideas of the theory of socialism are proclaimed as outdated statements. Marxism, on the contrary, provides answers to these questions by proposing the method of historical materialism. This is the contradiction, the conflict of these two ideologies. We can talk about the possibility of finding common features between Marxism and postmodernism on the basis of general trends in the study of Marxist ideas. The narrow understanding of Marxism in post-industrial society is gradually fading away (Eagleton 2003).

A new understanding of Marxism is emerging – not dogmatic and discrete, but ideological. Freeing interest in Marxism from class bias opens up prospects for a new understanding of it. Both Marxism and postmodernism criticize capitalism. At the same time, they propose to deal with this reality using various methods. Classical Marxism says that it is necessary to eliminate exploitation by introducing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Postmodernism looks at the problem differently. It is said that there is no meaning in human history, that history has ended, and that a person should treat the reality around him with irony, thereby destroying the existing order.

This idea is consonant with the end of F. Fukuyama's story, when the whole idea of history comes down to the triumph of liberal democracy. Thus, faith in a bright future, which, of course, exists in Marxism, is absent in postmodernism. Based on the work of F. Fukuyama «The End of History and the Last Man,» even the most active neo-Marxists did not find any compelling arguments against the main idea: liberalism has no viable alternatives. However, already in 1993, J. Derrida published his work «Ghosts of Marx.» This was a challenge to the neoliberals, manifesting the collapse of Marxism. The authors, while remaining within the boundaries of their own methodological approaches and original concepts, reveal unexpected perspectives and meanings in Marx's work. An idea of the interaction between Marxism and postmodernism is given by an analysis of the work of the American philosopher Fredric Jameson.

We can classify Jamison's philosophy as «post-modern neo-Marxism», since «it is Marxism that is the main methodological framework of Jamison's political-philosophical project, while postmodernism acts as the thematic center of his political philosophy, and all of his political-philosophical concepts in one way or another degrees are aimed at criticizing postmodernism and late capitalism or are an attempt to find ways out of the postmodern state» (Althusser, 1971).

In Vakhrusheva's interpretation, Jameson's postmodernity is «a space of simulacra that acquires its own existence,» where man as a political subject capable of real political action is destroyed. It follows from this that the methods of political struggle developed in classical Marxism cease to work in the post-modern era. In Jameson's concept of the third stage of capitalism, a synthesis of Marxist and postmodernist attitudes is carried out. According to this concept, the changes taking place in the capitalist system since the mid-twentieth century indicate its entry into the third stage of development, which cannot be interpreted either with the help of Marxist theory or with the help of the Leninist concept of imperialism as the second stage of capitalism.

The Marxist position in Jameson's characterization of modern capitalism is the assertion of the capitalist mode of production as the main determinant of social development. But in late capitalism, capitalist practices, having reached their highest development, «penetrate... into all spheres of culture and sociality, transforming them.» In addition, the role of Marxism is pointed out as a value guide in Jamison's concept,

which is revealed in the use of Marxist concepts such as class consciousness, class struggle, etc (Harvey, 1990).

Jamison's attempt to «return the meaning and relevance to the concepts of Marxist theory in the modern world» is analyzed. Its conclusions boil down to the following points. Jameson adapted Marxism to the study of «postmodern cultural and social forms.» Moreover, in his interpretation, «Marxism and postmodernism are completely different phenomena, irreducible to each other.» Marxism is a methodology for analyzing capitalism as a system, and postmodernism is only «another cultural dominant» that can be successfully studied from the perspective of Marxism. The philosopher evaluates Marxism as a «complex and perfect system» that has the ability to change in accordance with the «demands of modernity», therefore its «reinterpretations at each stage of the development of capitalism» are considered natural.

From all this, we can conclude that Jameson is, first of all, a Marxist theorist who analyzed postmodern culture within the framework of broad Marxist problematics. Thus, in the context of F. Jameson's work, Marxism at each stage of history is transformed under the influence of the changed situation in society and the economy, remaining relevant and in demand. Just like postmodernism, it seeks answers to the challenges of the time, analyzing modernity. Examples of such a transformation of Marxism are the works of G. Marcuse and E. Fromm, which is a synthesis of Marxism and psychoanalysis. G. Marcuse had a negative attitude «towards the all-encompassing social and cultural system of late capitalism,» in which it is not the working class integrated into it, but the marginal layers, in his opinion, that become a truly revolutionary subject (Fukuyama 1992).

Some researchers emphasize Marcuse's great influence on the Western youth movement of the late 1960s. against the bourgeois order. Others note his restrained assessment of these events due to the fact that he gave priority not so much to changes in «external relations of domination, but to the transformation of consciousness» in which they were recorded. From the standpoint of the Marxist concept of alienation as a characteristic of human existence in a capitalist society, in his work «One-Dimensional Man,» Marcuse substantiates the dehumanizing nature of modern industrial society, a society of mass consumption, where all people submit to the same desires, where each individual is controlled, where a person is a slave of false and imposed him from outside the needs.

The problem of capitalist alienation on the basis of critical understanding and synthesis of the teachings of S. Freud and K. Marx was deeply studied by E. Fromm. The philosopher's synthesis is based on social character, formed as a result of the relationship between the psyche of individuals and the socioeconomic structure of society. Fromm calls the contemporary social character of Western man a «market personality», unable to love or hate, which is the maximum result of the alienation of labor. Fromm associates the emergence of a new man and a new society with the transition of man «from pathological consumption to healthy consumption, to maximum decentralization of industry and politics... replacing the bureaucratic method of management with a humanistic one.» In other words, this process, as is thought by Fromm «is in the traditions of Marxism.»

An example of an even more «consistent Marxist approach», in the understanding of this author, is the work «The Society of the Spectacle» (1967), written by the French philosopher Guy Ernest Debord. It examines the contemporary philosopher's «prestigious consumer society» and speaks of the beginning of a new struggle «for the destruction of the machines of permissible consumption,» which is aimed at «the power of workers' councils on an international scale, which denies the spectacular negation of life.» Guy Debord is impressed by the «rational understanding of the forces actually operating in society» in Marxist theory, which determines its close connection «with scientific thought,» albeit in an «overcome» form, «for it is a matter of understanding the struggle, and in no case the law.» This Marxist perspective is applied by Guy Debord to the study of culture, the perception of space, which, according to the philosopher, is increasingly «unified by capitalist production, especially through urbanism.»

We can note that the classical postmodernist position is applied by Guy Debord only in relation to the history of art: «The arts of all civilizations and eras can be understood and accepted all together for the first time. This «collection of memories» of art history, while becoming possible, is also the end of the art world.» In a very Marxist way, Guy Debord formulates the final thesis of the work under consideration about the meaning of «self-liberation of our era,» which consists in getting rid of «the material foundations of converted truth,» which can be done by «the only class capable of becoming the destroyer of all classes, leading all power to the non-alienating form of realized democracy, to the Council» (Marcuse 1964).

Conclusions. From all of the said above we can conclude that the important influence of Marxism on the concepts of G. Marcuse, E. Fromm and G. Debord lies in the perception of its effective nature and the proposal of ways to change the society of prestigious consumption. For postmodernists, for example, T. Veblen, prestigious consumption is rather a curious and even progressive phenomenon of modernity, requiring a historical and anthropological explanation, but not causing much concern. For him, prestigious consumption is not the basis for new forms of alienation, but a property of industrial civilization, which is replacing the prestigious idleness of the elites of traditional society.

It was concluded, that Marxist interpretation of postmodernism offers a critical framework for understanding the cultural and ideological dimensions of contemporary capitalist society. It posits that postmodernism is both a reflection of and a contributor to the dynamics of late capitalism, marked by the fragmentation and commodification of cultural and social forms. This perspective emphasizes how postmodernism's focus on relativism, the rejection of grand narratives, and the celebration of diversity serve to mask the underlying economic structures and class relations that continue to shape society.

Marxist critics argue that the commodification inherent in postmodern culture reduces identities and cultural products to their market value, thereby supporting capitalist interests by fostering a culture

of consumption and distraction. This, in turn, weakens the potential for collective political action and solidarity, which are crucial for challenging economic exploitation and achieving social change. By highlighting these dynamics, the Marxist critique underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing the material realities and class struggles that postmodernism tends to obscure.

The Marxist interpretation of postmodernism offers a robust critique of contemporary cultural and social dynamics by situating them within the framework of late capitalism. Postmodernism, characterized by its skepticism toward grand narratives, emphasis on relativism, and celebration of plurality and difference, is seen by Marxist theorists as both a product and perpetuator of the capitalist mode of production. This interpretation highlights how postmodernism, with its focus on surface appearances and fragmented identities, diverts attention from underlying economic structures and class struggles that shape society.

Ultimately, a Marxist interpretation calls for a deeper analysis of the ways in which cultural forms are intertwined with economic structures, advocating for a more politically engaged and economically aware approach to understanding and transforming society. This approach seeks to reclaim the potential for revolutionary change by reconnecting cultural critique with the broader struggle against capitalist exploitation and for social justice.

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МАРКСИСТСЬКА ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЯ ПОСТМОДЕРНІЗМУ

Анотація

Марксистська інтерпретація постмодернізму критично розглядає культурні та ідеологічні зміни, пов'язані з постмодернізмом, крізь призму марксистської теорії. Цей підхід стверджує, що постмодернізм відображає останній етап капіталістичного розвитку, який характеризується фрагментацією та комерціалізацією культурних форм і соціальних ідентичностей. Марксистські стверджують, що наголос постмодернізму на релятивізмі, скептицизмі до великих наративів і вихвалюванню множинності та відмінності слугують затемненню матеріальних реалій класової боротьби та економічної експлуатації. З точки зору марксистів, постмодернізм можна розглядати як продукт і інструмент пізнього капіталізму. Він виникає в результаті економічних перетворень, які призвели до занепаду традиційної індустріальної економіки та піднесення глобалізованої економіки, заснованої на інформації. Цей перехід фрагментував соціальне та культурне життя, створюючи відчуття нестабільності та невизначеності, яке постмодернізм одночасно відображає та підсилює. Зосереджуючись на поверхні, а не на глибині, і віддаючи перевагу ефемерному та випадковому, постмодернізм відволікає увагу від стійких структур економічної влади та класових відносин. Крім того, марксистські стверджують, що постмодерністське оспівування споживчої культури та її фіксація на знаках і симулякрах сприяє перетворенню повсякденного життя на товар. Культурні продукти та ідентичності стають взаємозамінними, позбавлені історичного та соціального контексту та зведені до ринкової вартості. Цей процес комодифікації підтримує інтереси капіталу, сприяючи культурі споживання та відволікання, що підриває колективні політичні дії та солідарність. Підсумовуючи, марксистська інтерпретація постмодернізму розглядає його як культурну логіку, яка відображає та увічнює умови пізнього капіталізму. Він критикує постмодернізм за його роль у приховуванні класових поділів і за внесок у комерціалізацію культури, таким чином перешкоджаючи потенціалу революційних соціальних змін. Цей підхід прагне від-

новити потенціал революційних змін шляхом поєднання культурної критики з ширшою боротьбою проти капіталістичної експлуатації та за соціальну справедливість.

Ключові слова: марксистська теорія, постмодернізм, капіталізм, комодифікація, класова боротьба, культурна фрагментація

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