
THE SYMPTOMS OF POSTMODERNISM IN MEDIA AND MULTIMEDIA

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Abstract

In this study an attempt was made to portray postmodern reality in the context of the information provided by media and multimedia. This article focuses on the important categories describing social reality of post-modern time. It shows the social context as well as categories that describes the reality of post-modernism. The authors discuss these categories and use the selected media content and multimedia messages to indicate that there are certain positive and negative values. These values allow postmodern man to function in the changing social, cultural or economic reality. The belief in the increasing importance of culture as an essential creativity formula factor transforms the style and manner of human life often significantly and irreversibly.

Keywords: multimedia, postmodernism, consumerism, uniformization, globalization

1. Introduction - destruction of the axio-normative social order as a manifestation of postmodernism

The dominant feature of contemporary culture is postmodernism [1]. According to postmodernists, new man is characterized by:

- radical pluralism understood as an universal and common rule that specifies all forms of human life. Pluralism is a value of positive and integral part of democracy, tolerance and diversity. This allows different form of structures to work side by side. Openness and pluralism give one the right to freedom of self-expression unhampered in all areas of human life;
- anti-totalitarianism understood as attitude guided by rationality which builds a symbolic representation of the world called knowledge.

Indicating the phenomena of postmodernism in the media and multimedia content at the beginning of the article, postmodern man has been characterized as a recipient of postmodern media and multimedia content. Due to a limited nature of this study, attention was paid to the selected press, television, and social media content.

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The axio-normative social order is the order based on an accepted hierarchy of values, determined by human aspirations. From this aspect, human personality can be understood as a continuous formation of moral order, as well as the order in the reality that surrounds people. Based on this, we can distinguish the individual and social order. The subject of the continuous creation of individual order is a human personality; what is meant by this is the harmony of minds, their internal and logical coherence, hierarchy, dominance, bringing the most general rules and thus creating a single image of the world, as well as one's very own place in the world of people. The creation such order within and outside oneself is done throughout the entire human life [2]. It seems that the postmodern reality causes disorder in the axio-normative social and moral order. This means that units and groups many times forget about moral values, they are neglected, or that there is no place for them in the individual or social awareness, which may indicate a lack of basic knowledge on this topic.

Components, constituting disturbance of social-moral order in Polish society were described by Joseph Majka. At first, he mentioned the crisis of truth that indicates hypocrisy growing in the society, manifested, among other things, by:

- ideological field, indoctrination of the young generation;
- falsification the socio-political language - the language of morality;
- building the so-called 'socialist system of values';
- mental opportunism, meaning hypocrisy of expression – expression based on desire;
- lack of responsibility for expressed, declared content. It resulted from the monopoly of power on information, censorship, with the 'right' to a state secret [3].

New socio-moral situation of the period of liberalism and postmodernism, according to many moralists, is characteristic by:

- extreme, not respecting the common good, individualism;
- practical materialism;
- above all, moral relativism.

The main categories around which the activity of man belonging to the liberal system is centred are as follows:

- peculiar understanding of good and evil;
- liberty as an attribute of the human person;
- pluralism as a feature of culture;
- tolerance as a factor regulating social life.

Postmodern morality is based on the belief that every man can do, and neglect anything he wants, because:

- everything has same value ;
- everyone can have his/her own truth;
- everyone can have his/her own moral goals;
- there is no absolute cognitive, ethical, aesthetic standard of good and evil;
- there is no objective truth.

2. The content of youth magazines

The freedom the media enjoys, brings, on the one hand, a number of positive effects, on the other hand, however, several risks emerge. A way of the reception of information or programs is decided on the receivers side.

When it comes to youth magazines, due to their multiplicity and diversity, it is possible to provide only information of a general nature. So they are filled with colourful letters, many photos, especially with music idols. Moreover, they contain celebrity gossips, love and sex stories, films, gossip about actors, cosmetic advices, fashion, as well as advertising.

Topics discussed there may be of interest for the average teenager. Thus we can find there information about: youth music, films, celebrity gossip, and finally, and advice on how to take care of oneself.

However, it is not only the content, but the way it is presented that can arouse controversy. These magazines create postmodern reality, bringing out certain patterns of behaviour and personal modes [4]. According to the analysis of the 'Bravo' magazine, we can say that the following model is being promoted: a girl who cares only about her look: skin, hair, nails, etc. But if a girl meets a boy, at the beginning she should check out what sign of the zodiac he is in [5].

So in youth journals an extremely poor personality ideal is offered. The girl is actually focused only on her physical appearance, which in fact determines her success. Here we see a postmodern model girl, liberated, for whom only appearance is important. It is worth noting that in the analyzed documents intended for the youth, a specific approach to the sexual sphere is presented, which is completely separated from the love, of course, including the love between husband and wife [6]. When considering these topics, social or religious aspects are left out entirely, promoting hedonistic behaviour patterns, easy and effortless, referring to the most superficial human sphere. On the occasion of the presentation of this content, responsibility for one's actions is not mentioned.

3. Postmodern influence of mass media

A Taking into account the role of television, especially the importance of social axiological transfer, designed to promote human and postmodern way of functioning in society, it should be noted that television, like other mass media, influences through the content, as well as by the time that the recipient spends watching it. Thus we can speak here not only about individual impact, but the impact affecting the functioning of the family as well.

While in modernity technology has favoured mastering the nature, postmodernism uses technology to force nature, even where it works properly.

Promoted by the television, particularly through commercials, consumer lifestyle is directly related to industrialization and commercialization. Presented in television programs and commercials, such areas of life as science, culture,

sports, and even religion are subjected to the rules of market game. To make commercialization possible, however, it is necessary to increase the consumption via increasing the number of customers. The consumer of TV programs is encouraged to the consumer lifestyle by constantly perfected art of marketing and advertising industry. So the produced goods are consumed in excess.

The above phenomena are directly related to the process of globalization [7], which is a form of domination and dependency, the essence of which is to surrender the periphery to the normative centre, educating the world in a civilized way [8].

The television, as well as previously analyzed youth magazines, illustrates the phenomenon of postmodernism's axiological and social manifestations, including consumerism, uniformization and globalization.

Advertisements presenting certain patterns, promote consumptive lifestyle, shaping the need for newer products, or looking for new experience [9].

The function of commercials, apart from providing information, inducing, reminding and reinforcing, is also creating in viewer's mind the conviction of belonging to specific communities. Using specific products, one can be classified among the modern, economizing, stress-free, people.

4. Social and educational role of computers and mass media

4.1. The content of computer games

Computer games also need to be analyzed with regard to their content. For a child the boundary between the real world and the one watched on a computer screen is thin and blurred. The impact on the psyche of the individual player is compounded by the more realistic graphics, perfectly matched music and real sound effects. The overall feel of the game is created by sound, colour and image. These elements work together on the psyche of the recipient. The gaming world is different from the real world.

Moreover, the values that are a priority in the games are not always consistent with those in real life. It seems that relativity and relativity of values must have an impact on the life of the 'geek'. We see here some kind of the understanding of good and evil, but in games there is no clear distinction between them. Therefore, the player who performs evil deeds without feeling guilty for it may after a while lose the ability to distinguish between good and evil in real life.

The research carried out in the Department of Educational and Family at the Catholic University of Lublin proves that the values of the 'geek' are actually changing. For 'computer geeks' 'being a good person' does not correctly reflect any value.

Most of the popular computer games contain aggressive, magical, or even pornographic content. Computer games often contain elements of false morality, promoting the lack of accountability, and above all, relativism.

4.2. The Internet and its possibilities in the postmodern world

The Internet is one of the factors that influence not only social attitudes, but the morality of youth - especially as regards their attitude to the good and evil.

The appearance of computers has resulted, on the one hand, in the growth of intellectual work, opportunities, stimulation of cultural and social change, but, on the other hand, it has created an artificial, virtual world that becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish from reality. The Internet also contributes to the loss, even at school and at home, of the student's privacy. Young people are increasingly trying to shut up within the four walls of their room, hoping that in this way they will find a moment for themselves. Meanwhile, connecting to the network makes it more and more difficult for the user to remain anonymous, or spend some time alone.

Contact with peers, parents and teachers, is being increasingly limited, because young people prefer to spend time hanging out in front of the monitor screen. Meanwhile, a life in the world with a multitude of information coming from the network, where every second is so precious, makes the user who does not know how to search for proper content lost. The choice becomes a problem between what is desirable, necessary and what is unnecessary or even harmful. The conclusion is that the use of the computer must be careful, so that the virtual world does not obscure the real one.

5. Information Technologies in communication

Science and technique brought great changes into mutual personal and social communication in the last 25 years. We witness a rapid growth of using cell phones, information and communication technologies, the internet and computers not only at universities, but also at secondary and primary schools, and these technologies victoriously entry preschool institutions as well.

In the hectic development of information and communication technologies, man feels alone and he is not able to independently, without one's help, adapt to these communication changes. It is necessary that society create space for systematic preparation of individuals in order to gain knowledge and skills required for the active and effective usage of new information and communication technologies.

At present there exist higher education institutions providing virtual teaching. Students seek out lectures in the internet, and they are examined via the internet too. The internet is a means of communication between the students and their teacher. They also communicate with other students and teachers through discussion forums.

The virtual world does not only bring the advantages, but also unknown problems whose origin lays in the communication anonymity. It is necessary that pupils and students use information technologies for their benefit and development. Technologies should become pillars of acquiring knowledge and

practical skills which young people will use and successfully apply in the labour market. It is also important they learn how to distinguish risks connected with information technologies and how to prevent and face them [10, 11].

The created cyberspace has become a challenge for the field of Pedagogy and Psychology. Pedagogy is a science dealing not only with education but also upbringing. Right communication is one of the main tools of upbringing which obtains nonpersonal character under the influence of information technologies at present-day. Most of communication among the young is realized by means of cell phones, facebooks, chats, and other information systems in which their direct mutual contact takes a back seat. This phenomenon represents a negative impact of technology on man. By this form of communication, man loses his ability of personal communication, and, moreover, he loses his feeling and empathy.

In these conditions, it becomes important to keep and develop the ability of an individual to communicate in person. It may happen that pupils at primary schools will have to learn to communicate with one another (face to face) in the current dynamics of information and communication technologies development and in the expansion of using newer and newer applications in personal and social life. Nowadays, it is quite clear that teachers will have to look for and develop such forms and methods of education in which the latest information and communication technologies will be applied and, at the same time, mutual contact between the teacher and his pupils as well as among pupils/students themselves will be kept up. One of such methods is a method of interactive education [12].

6. Conclusions

Thus, in addition to the above mentioned, the mass media and multimedia gives us access to the information regarding:

- downfall of morality in the economic sphere — work morality, which manifests itself in the loss of the relationship between responsibilities and rights in the field of economic life;
- downfall of social morality, manifested among other things in such forms as: lethargy in social life, paralysis of creative initiative in social and economic areas;
- powerlessness against the omnipotence of the bureaucracy;
- downfall of morality, manifesting itself in abortion, drug abuse, and common banditry, alcoholism.

Postmodern man works in postmodern times in which the media and multimedia play an undeniable role. To remain an individual, separate entity, with all the qualities making him a person, he should also be aware of the role of the mass media and multimedia.

The improvement of the value of the human personality, in the times of postmodernity, should be carried out:

- on the plane of shaping attitudes - reaching out to human spirituality and the honoured and unchanged traditions and moral standards;
- on the plane of structures - for the healing of the social organism deprived by the previous period and demoralized under the secularizing trends of postmodernism.

Not stopping at the analysis of educational reality, also the one related to the technological and information environment, including information technology, the educators are aware that education does not occur in isolation from the social and moral aspect of society. Not insignificant are also different kinds of cultural, civilization, information influences, including those related to the universality of the mass media, and multimedia, and content transmitted through them, as well as time dedicated to them.

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