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**“THE PICTURE OF THE WORLD”
IN THE CONCEPT SPHERE OF CONFLICTOLOGY: NARRATIVES
OF POPULAR CULTURE VS FEMINISM IN POSTMODERN SOCIETY**

The conflict as a specific socio-cultural, political and psychological phenomenon represented both at the level of the individual and in the scope of global geopolitical transformations, is being deeply rooted in the self-consciousness of individuals being the factor of socio-cultural and political dynamics in the modern “picture of the world”. The interaction of the given philosophic processes is complicated and ambivalent, hence follows the aim of the article as accentuation of theoretical and empirical specificity of the “conflict” in the discourses of pop-culture, in general, and feminism, in particular. The conflictological theories of recent years are closely linked with acknowledging discursive nature of theoretical knowledge and narrative features of “living life” practices in postmodernity. The postmodern representation of mass discourses and narratives blocks the production and acceptance of real conflicts, assimilating the plurality of subjects’ provisions according to a single regulatory model, on the one hand, and, on the other, preserving or deepening the contradictions among “interests” and “agendas” of different doctrinal foundations. As conflictology is an interdisciplinary area of knowledge, the methods, used in the analysis, represent complex systematic approaches to the given philosophic and historical process with the stress on the hermeneutical, phenomenological, and social construction techniques. The analysis makes it evident that the sign systems, generated by popular culture, provoke the creation of the illusory reality that distorts the conceptual sphere of the “picture of the world” and blocks the acceptance of real conflicts, deepening the contradictions among “agendas” of the different doctrinal trends.

Key words: knowledge, discourse, neoliberalism, illusory reality, gender, consumerism, sign systems.

The statement of the problem. Theoretical and applied problems of world processes analysis in the aspects of conflictology are one of the main directions among the most important priorities of the Ukrainian scientists today [6]. The conflict as a social phenomenon, as a special type of interaction both at the level of individuals and at the level of geopolitical transformations is initially installed into social and political processes, being the factor of social dynamics and active self-identification of subjects and actors in the modern “picture of the world”. The look at the processes of transformation of the modern society through the prism of the conflictological paradigm allows us to consider the ongoing “chain of events” in the mainstream of “unfinished narratives” – the stories that open up new opportunities, but cannot be written in the general narrative of culture and society “in advance”.

The most authoritative scientists of our time are unanimous that the alarming sense of the future, catastrophic or liberating, at the beginning of the new millennium was replaced by the sense of the limit, the end of “this” or “another”: high art, social class, social democracy, ideology.

Since the 1960’s of the last century scientists have been providing the scanning of the terms “postmodernity” and “postmodernism”, but what it means in practice and theory is still a question that arises manifold debates. The “weird” logic of becoming postmodern is signalled by the Latin origin of “modern”, “modo”, “just now”. “Postmodern” therefore literally means “after just now”; generally speaking, the phenomenon of postmodernity, that “just after now”, has changed the world greatly; postfeminism, mass-media, neoliberal sociocultural concepts, political/economic transformations

are included in this “global shift”. As a result, the future of “classical culture” greatly depends on responses to these challenges.

As far as feminism is concerned, at present feminist scientist are engaged in debates, in which they outline how they understand the relationship among postmodernism, feminism, and popular culture, being preoccupied with the various ways in which feminist concepts, discourses and practices are manifested in culture and science.

One of the first “post-artists”, the post-impressionist P. Cézanne said: “The view contains the Viewer” [1, p. 14]. Here arises the question: “Who is the viewer?”. According to postmodernism logic, the production of knowledge is never “an enterprise” without some personal benefit. As J. Frow puts it, production of knowledge is always formed by the “shareholders” of that production. The latter accounts for the question: “Who are the manufactures of knowledge?” [5, p. 14]. The relationship of the suppliers and users of knowledge to the knowledge, they supply and use, is now tending to assume the form already taken by the relationship of the commodity producers and consumers to the commodities they produce and consume. Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold. This change from the “knower” to the “consumer” of knowledge is the cornerstone of postmodernity, and this is the real historic change, which legitimizes the postmodernism; this very development determines all the successive transformations which gave postmodernism its sense [1, p. 14].

All mentioned above is closely connected with the transformation of the narratives of “high” culture into the “histories” of pop-literature, cinematography, mass media, which is taking place especially vividly in the different forms of the visual arts. Moreover, scientists claim that everything “postmodern” depends on and stems from reproduction. It is about fabricating a sort of knowledge, which although it looks to be expanding and becoming accessible to a vast public on the internet, is in fact becoming industrially controlled. So, when J.-F. Lyotard replaces the traditionally-trained knower with the “knower as consumer”, he is not valorizing either the “new” knower or the novelties of knowledge, but he is implicitly acknowledging the importance of the free market economy. It is worth mentioning that this “new world” does not include the “old” functions of art and literature – the pedagogical and the didactic ones. The teaching function of literature and art was always stressed in classical time; postmodernism has introduced a more complex conception of the relationship between culture and pedagogy, between culture and moral ethics on the whole.

The aim of the work is to accentuate theoretical and empirical foundations for defining the specifics of conflict management in the discourses of popular culture and feminism in postmodernity.

The analysis of scientific research and literature. The feminist position of the early 21st century convincingly demonstrates the actualization of discussions between women’s emancipation and the neoliberal freedom of postmodernity. Postmodernism, rejecting not only biological, but also psychological determinism proclaims the “transgender” age: thus gender as identification with one sex or subject is a fiction. For feminists, the latter means that the first phase of feminism is over. The next phase, developing in the context of gender relations transformation, can change not only the nature of the gender regime, but also the nature of “late” capitalism (labour regimes, working hours, the fight against violence, etc. [4, p. 14]. In all of the above phenomena, the important role belongs to the processes of conflict resolution. It is the conflictological paradigm of postmodern “conditions” closely linked with the constructive approach, constructive understanding of the need to include the analysis of conflicts in the broadest theoretical field that allows us to analyse the exacerbation of conflicts in the global and local planes, that phenomenon, which is taking place before our eyes today [2].

Over the past decades scientists and “policy makers”, analyzing the theory of conflicts and the way of conflict resolution, have been engaged in studying conflict representations in different branches of science and practice. However, researchers note that the changed characters of conflicts, which are often taking the form of radicalization and extremism now, are deeply rooted in an individual’s ideology. Some researchers comment that the psychology is at the center of this transformation. The shift in conflict trends all over the world demands the search for alternative approaches, mechanisms and innovative response. By all means, the latter can be done with the help of the interdisciplinary

research [9]. Undoubtedly, it is worth mentioning that the emergence of the theory of conflictology testifies to the ongoing development of political science, the expansion of the sphere of its theoretical and analytical interests in our country too [15]. The political and military situation in the world that has changed in recent years, the emergence of new sources of threats to the security requires the development of its own research methodology, conceptual updating and approaches to them [8].

Conflicts in cultural representations of feminism are described by scientists in different spheres and at the various levels [13]. The level, which is accentuated here, is pop-culture, that concept of “pop-culture”, which is understood by many professionals and laymen as entertaining masses of people by distracting them and by calling on their common references. As A. Zeisler writes, “when we look at our lives – both personally and collectively – we view them largely through the lens of popular culture, <...> it can never be dismissed as being “just” about entertainment” [16].

Here the conflict, in fact, is about how popular culture depicts feminists and feminism. It is the term “male gaze”, which is significant – namely, the male gaze affects how women view pop culture, and how women view themselves [16, p. 7]. In this connection we can’t but recollect the “lenses of gender” by S. Bem, her theoretical constructions about the system of common cultural lenses included in social institutions, cultural discourses, and everyday conversations. The Lenses of gender, according to S. Bem, not only set the perspective for perception, comprehension and consideration of social reality, but also form social reality itself; being built into public institutions, they always act purposefully, methodically reproducing the “programme” of androcentrism [3, p. 34].

In this paradigm, the place and role of women as social actors have significantly changed lately in our country as a result of the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine [12], which undoubtedly introduces “conflict” into the traditional context of femininity.

The future of feminism as a fundamental issue is also under analytical studies, being in the problematic field of conflicts. Feminist researchers mention that many reasons have been proposed as for why feminism should have ended. Still they are sure that feminism is a success although many gender inequalities remain. However, that very word “gender” opens the “door” to disputes and conflicting debates. Nowadays, when everybody is “embraced in gender dimension”, it is not an easy task to answer the question about how many genders are there in the social “dimension”. “Genders” are dominating, and current changes in gender inequality have been moving in the different directions from that of class or race inequality. It is not about “emancipation”, it is rather about the “sexualities”, and this “trouble” of sexualities is often on a “knife-edge”, supported by intensified version of neoliberalism and the emergent “gendered” social democracy [14].

Moreover in the second decade of the third millennium powerful and high-profile women have been publicly identified as feminists, something that we did not see in the past (C. Bise, Clinton, A.M. Slaughter, Sh. Sandberg). And that phenomenon, having changed the cultural “landscape”, asked for its explanation, in its turn, asked for a new feminist discourse. Feminist scientists began to call this form of feminism neoliberal feminism, which simultaneously accentuates the sociocultural and economic structures shaping our lives [7]. Some scientists understand neoliberalism not just as a set of economic policies, but as a dominant political rationality that “moves and shakes” the management of the state, recasting individuals as human capital into the capital-enhancing agents [1]. Consequently, neoliberalism economically relies on reproduction and care-ware. That means that neoliberalism operates as a kind of pushback to the total conversion of educated and mobile women to generic human capital [7].

The contemporary “postmodern situation”, the nature of postmodernity has been so far in the focus of scientists’ attention for more than 40 years in such fields of knowledge as philosophy, sociology, gender studies, literary criticism, linguistics and still the debates and discussions are going on with the same intensity at present.

The presentation of the main material. Determining the essence of the conceptual sphere of conflict management is by all means a difficult task, which is explained by the ambiguity of this phenomenon understanding: undoubtedly, one should agree with the opinion of analysts that the “conflict” perception of reality is realized at several problem levels. The most general concept of the conflict is determined

as “serious disagreement, argument, controversy of opinions, desires, opposition, deference, clash” [10, p. 189]. As a branch of science dealing with conflicts, conflictology is defined by the way of understanding conflicts including all the related areas, such as conflict resolution, transformation and management, while at the same time it is based on the principles of nonviolence as a paradigm, opposed to the conviction that violence is the way in the conflicts resolve [11]. Conflictology is “by definition” an interdisciplinary area of knowledge, comprehensive knowledge of political philosophy, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, etc. Moreover, it is crossdisciplinary; it is both analytical and synthetic in their essential meanings. Generally speaking, in applying conflictology to popular culture, the “mainstream” message is to create a coherent structure by linking culture and conflicts, which can appear with the perspective of their avoiding “cultural” means.

As it is known, liberal feminism deeply rooted in modernity, in postmodern, liberation of Man; in which women’s emancipation is a “self-legitimate” myth. Feminism in the “situation” of postmodernity is going through complex and ambiguous processes: on the one hand, these are controversial issues regarding modern feminism and its postmodern version, on the other hand, this is the conflict that has been brewing in recent years between feminism and gender studies with their accentuation of the “queer” theories and related “discourses”. The question is the transgender age heralding the end of gender in its traditional sense. The answer to this question is presented differently in the theories of feminism and gender studies. In general, the “sexual” provides the opportunity to consider the fundamental problems of our responses to the challenges of discourses and discursive practices in the modern world, but it is still valid that the sociocultural roles of men and women cannot be understood without analysing the corresponding power systems. Thus, if feminism is a defence of women’s rights, then feminist theory is clearly destabilized, turning into a method. The idea that feminism is irrelevant today intersects with problems whether it is worth dealing with gender categories at all, if we live in the culture of “gender fluidity”, where gender becomes absolutely arbitrary. Undoubtedly, the desire to overthrow the “tyranny of the normal” is evident both in theory and in practices of postmodernism.

At present cultural variation in conflict resolutions, cultural differences not only show major versions but also suggest that new ideas must be transmitted across cultures. As always and everywhere definitions of popular culture depend on who is defining it. W. Benjamin wrote in his famous essay: “The masses see distraction whereas art demands concentration from the spectator” [16, p. 1]. Nowadays, “masses seek distraction” in the simulated reality. In postmodernity an individual tries to achieve “a brave new world” by electronic simulation without any deep thoughts about its being: an individual is always in the state of postmodern transformations, it seems to be a rule now. The latter involves a number of mutations – both anthropological and technological ones. The so-called “connective mutations” arising, caused by a huge flow of immaterial labour, information and other manifestations of “hypomodernism”, which makes the very possibility of collective identity problematic. The existence of different gender identities (ethnicity, race, class, etc.) also fosters resistance to the grounds for collective actions.

And here again we should accentuate the role of cultural narratives. We represent narratives – our own and general cultural ones – using appropriate discourses: the totality of verbal manifestations, which reflect a certain ideology. Thus, since man is a “story-telling animal”, being human means having “stories” and telling them. Ultimately, as postmodern theorists’ state, our entire personal organization is a narrative in its form; the integrity of our “I” is formed by the “history”, organized and meaningful narrative being constructed in the temporal. Equally important, it is fact, that cultures are also narratives, since the narrative is the basic structure of “awareness”. In this case, culture (in the singular) is a concretized narrative placed in the local context. And here arises the issue of consumerism: all tastes and all needs are met by the consumer market.

Scholars assert that an important feature of the free market in late capitalism is its monocultural nature, but it is also important that aesthetic criteria are lacking in the flow of the absolutely dominant mass product. An interesting fact should be noted: the term “image consumerism” appears in the culture of postmodernism. The consumerism aura now extends to everything that

has any “halo”. In this way, culture commodifies representations in order to sell the cultural product and reinforce a certain conformity. As it is known, a characteristic feature of any popular culture is its secondary nature; today this “reproductiveness” is acquiring special dimensions. Reproduction takes the place of reality; we live in what has already been lived, we reproduce what is not reality, but the image, and this is also the specificity of our time. The latter allows J. Baudrillard to draw his famous conclusion that the image representation of a sign goes through four successive historical phases ending with a simulacrum: radical rejection of a sign as a value, meaning reversal and the death of the referent [7, p. 10–11]. It should be emphasized again: the last decades are unique in the respect that all resources of inventions and innovations depend on reproduction: the “game” is to fabricate a kind of something valid, which seems expanding and accessible to a wide audience (for example, thanks to internet resources), but in fact, it is under the constant control of consumerism.

Popular culture provides representations of the world which are inaccurate, as they are self-serving. According to the classical definitions of marxism, this is the nature of any ideology. These representations are encoded into a culturally constructed daily life, where people receive and appropriately act out such imitations, as if they are ontologically inevitable. Culture commodifies representations with the aim of selling a cultural product and reinforcing a certain conformism. Theorists assert that popular culture reproduces a certain view of the world through the representation of consumerism as a whole. Culture constructs meanings for individuals who, in the era of “decentralization” and “fragmentation”, do not have more definite texts, with the help of which they would orient themselves in the postmodern existence. Undoubtedly, there is nothing wrong in meaning cognition through cultural representation, with which we are linked by identification relations: in the postmodern world, identification takes the place of “cultural membership” as a fundamental experience of social sameness and social difference. Today meanings lie in the recognition of one’s “I” in the frozen framework of cultural representation, such framework distorts reality and, therefore, does not ensure meaning the stability of meaning. The latter is the position of postmodernism, in which representations help individuals to validate their subjectivity, extracting it from the culture that “writes us”, and not vice versa.

It is obvious, that mass cultural narratives block an access to higher and more intellectually rich discourses, through which individuals – especially young people – can make sense of the complex interweaving of experiences and practices of postmodern society. And that is why the mission of the scientist-researcher remains so important, that is to carry out his/her historically justified and society-sanctioned function: to search for “truth” involving actors – both men and women – in this search in the contemporary societies.

Conclusions. We live in the epoch that has proclaimed the “end” of various concepts and phenomena: the end of God, the end of the author, the end of feminism, etc., still feminism is not dead. Feminism is still alive, despite declarations that it is over. It is taking new forms, which are by all means, connected with postmodernism, though they are complicated and that makes them unrecognizable at first sight.

Feminist projects intersect with other postmodern projects creating dilemmas in choosing priorities. As a result, the necessity to analyze feminism in the context of postmodern culture development is obvious and valid.

The conflictological theories of recent years are closely linked with acknowledging discursive nature of theoretical knowledge and narrative features of “living life” practices in postmodernity. The postmodern representation of mass discourses and narratives blocks the production and acceptance of real conflicts, assimilating the plurality of subjects’ provisions according to a single regulatory model, on the one hand, and, on the other, preserving or deepening the contradictions among “interests” and “agendas” of different doctrinal foundations.

Nowadays feminist scientists are conducting a three-way debate, in which they outline their understanding of the relationship among postfeminism, popular culture and conflicts; they are preoccupied with the message that postfeminism should be considered as a critical object.

At the same time, the role of sexualities in the postmodern societies, the “postmodernisation of sex” makes the issue of “gender” one of the most valid in the current situation. Postmodern feminist theory – in contrast to gender studies – is currently a symbol of “danger” due to the views of philosophers-feminists on science and culture as social products. Undoubtedly, the narratives of gender and sex in their “conflictological” binary opposition have recently undergone a certain modification, while their conceptual sphere has changed only to a small extent: the main female narratives still represent the dualisms and binary oppositions of conceptual content. The sign system generated by popular culture, provokes the creation of an illusory reality that distorts the conceptual sphere of the “picture of the world”. Further development in line with the analysis of feminism conflictology, gender studies and narratives of popular culture presupposes deep renewal of modern philosophical thought and political theory in the transformations of “post” – postmodernism of the early 21st century.

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«КАРТИНА СВІТУ» У КОНЦЕПТОСФЕРІ КОНФЛІКТОЛОГІЇ: НАРАТИВИ МАСОВОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ VS ФЕМІНІЗМ У СУСПІЛЬСТВІ ПОСТМОДЕРНУ

Конфлікт як специфічний соціокультурний, політичний і психологічний феномен, що існує і на рівні окремого індивіда, і в масштабах глобальних геополітичних трансформацій, є глибоко вкоріненим в індивідуальній самосвідомості й самовизначенні як чинник соціокультурної і політичної динаміки в сучасній «картині світу». Взаємодія вказаних феноменів являє собою складний амбівалентний процес, останнє й пояснює мету цієї роботи: акцептуалізацію теоретичної й емпіричної специфіки «конфлікту» у дискурсах масової культури загалом і фемінізму зокрема. «Конфліктне» сприйняття дійсності реалізується на декількох проблемних рівнях. Конфліктологічна парадигма постсучасних «умов» пов'язана з конструктивним розумінням необхідності включення аналізу конфліктів у найширшому теоретичному полі, що дозволяє аналізувати те загострення конфліктів у глобальному і локальному планах, яке відбувається сьогодні на наших очах. Масова культура дає репрезентації світу, які є неточними, будучи націленими на своє самообслуговування. Оскільки конфліктологія є міждисциплінарною сферою знання, підходи, які використовуються в аналізі, репрезентують комплексну системну методологію з акцептуалізацією герменевтичних, феноменологічних і соціально-конструктивістських прийомів.

Висновки, отримані в результаті аналізу, дозволяють стверджувати, що конфліктологічні теорії останніх років органічно пов'язані з визнанням дискурсивного характеру теоретичного знання і наративних особливостей практики «проживання життя» у постмодерні. Наративи тендеру та статі в їхній «конфліктологічній» бінарній опозиції останнім часом зазнали модифікації, водночас їхня концептосфера змінилася лише незначною мірою: основні жіночі наративи, як і раніше, репрезентують дуальність мислення і бінарні опозиції концептуального змісту. Постмодерна репрезентація масдискурсів і наративів блокує виникнення і прийняття дійсних «конфліктів», знакові системи масової культури провокують створення ілюзорної реальності, яка спотворює концептуальну сферу «картини світу» постмодерну, блокує проблематизацію реальних конфліктів і тим самим поглиблює суперечності в «повістках» різних доктринальних напрямів.

Ключові слова: *знання, дискурс, неолібералізм, ілюзорна реальність, тендер, консюмеризм, система знаків.*