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ECONOMIC CULTURE AND MEDIA AESTHETICS: THINGS IN COMMON

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Abstract

The formation of economic culture is an urgent issue facing the mass media. The present article is devoted to the mass media implementation of the phenomena. The article examines the issue of the interaction between media aesthetics and economic culture. The research's theoretical and methodological basis is represented by a set of scientific studies devoted to researching various issues of modernization of domestic culture and economy, the interaction of economic institutions with the norms and values of culture, and media aesthetics and visual image. The research is based on the principles of rational knowledge – general philosophical, cultural, and general scientific principles of analysis, as well as comparison and generalization methods; and systemic method. The analysis of economic materials from the ria.ru website is carried out. The visual language is the most accurate in the transmission of economic information. The following observation is important since attention is focused not only on the visual presentation of materials but also on their emotional expression. The set of media aesthetic factors, including visual content design, undoubtedly affect the perception of economic information and, accordingly, the formation of economic culture.

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1. Introduction

Currently, the issues of researching economic culture are quite relevant. This is primarily due to globalization, by which the author means creating a global financial and information space based on computer technologies. At the same time, economic information occupies a key place in this process. The leading positions in disseminating economic knowledge belong to the media, particularly the mass media. Journalistic materials contain information about the economy's situation, the most significant market events, investment and economic potential, etc. There is a completely different view of information when information becomes an event that changes the system's state, the picture of the world. Accordingly, the text intended for the mass media is transformed, and the ways of its presentation and perception-consumption. Established trends and digital technologies influence the form and content of publications in the media today. They are actively mastered by practicing journalists due to their relevance. This allows to change the principles of relationship with the addressee. The audience is constantly being offered new, interesting and diverse formats. Not only digital technologies influence the formation of new types of media text, the visual language of media. In the authors' opinion, these trends include: panmediatization, visualization, the strengthening of the role of context, the dominance of polycode publications in the media, and, consequently, the strengthening of the role of the aesthetic component in media communication. All these tendencies are manifested in the ways, techniques, means of presenting information, and therefore there is a need to talk about media aesthetics (Krotz, 2007; Manovich, 2001; Mitchell, 2015; Topchii, 2018; Topchii, 2019; Zagidullina, 2017; Zagidullina, 2019a; Zagidullina, 2019b;). In our opinion, media aesthetics makes it possible to form an economic culture among the modern consumer of media content.

2. Problem Statement

At present, the issues of the formation of economic culture are acquiring special significance. The crisis situation requires an understanding of the state of affairs, on this depends on the adequacy of the decisions made. The well-being of each family depends on the level of development of the economic culture. In this regard, the present study's objective seems relevant both from the theoretical and from the practical side. The issue of the presented study is formed at the junction of practical and theoretical interest. Firstly, how the features of the media aesthetic potential of journalistic texts form the reader's economic culture. Secondly, it is necessary to study the features of modern economic culture and media aesthetics. Media aesthetics – its techniques and features – should be considered in detail concerning the formation of new knowledge for the reader and independent reading of journalistic material meanings. In connection with these practical issues, theoretical ones – about the relationship between economic culture and media aesthetics – acquire special attention.

3. Research Questions

3.1. The concept of economic culture

Considering the issues of the formation of economic culture, it is certainly worthwhile to dwell on the concept itself more attentively. Various authors refer to the definition of the designated term. Thus, Morozov, considering the issue of economic culture and values, defines this concept as follows:

“economic culture is not only a part or “kind” of culture along with its other types <...>, but it is also a “projection” of the whole culture in the sphere of economics and economic transactions, because the whole culture, all its values and norms are manifested in one way or another, and work in the field of economics” (Morozov, 2017, p. 136).

Characterizing the concepts and essence of economic culture and values, Morozov (2017) notes that since economic culture is a system of values, norms, needs and interests that determine the economic behavior of a person, then the reality of economic freedom of a producer in a market is carried out through one's economic culture (p. 140). According to the researcher, economic culture performs the following functions: communicative, regulatory, innovative, and integrative (Morozov, 2017, p. 141). Minervin is a researcher in the field of economic culture. The scientist offers a definition that includes three parts: the main approaches to defining the designated concept: axiological (value); economic culture as "social memory"; understanding of economic culture as a special characteristic of economic behavior and activity. The author states that economic culture is a combination of traditional and innovative knowledge, social and spiritual values and norms, values that regulate people's economic behavior and their labour activity (Morozov, 2017, p. 136). It is difficult to disagree with the proposed approach. According to Zaslavskaya and Ryvkina, economic culture should be considered as a set of social values and norms that are regulators of economic behavior and play the role of social memory of economic development (Morozov, 2017, p. 137).

The types of economic culture are discussed in the article *Results of Innovational Activities of Russian Regions in View of the Types of Economic Culture* (Treshchevsky et al., 2017). The article *Genesis of economic culture formation* (Mamanazarov et al., 2017) is devoted to modern concepts and the theory of the formation of economic culture. The authors also consider the stages of the formation of economic culture.

Summarizing all the above, the author of the present study accepts the following definition of economic culture: it is a part of the general culture of society and the individual, manifested both in the process of management (within a company, region, country), and in economic relations between people and in economic thinking. The main component of economic culture is the process of humanization, harmonization of relations between society and nature, an appeal to man <...>. In the space of economic culture, a person is considered a source, a subject of physiological, material, and social, high spiritual needs, which one satisfies both in the economic sphere and outside it (Lopukhov, 2017).

3.2. The concept of media aesthetics

The term *media aesthetics* is introduced in the early 1990s. About the same time as the concept of *new media*. The study *Media Aesthetics, Simulation, and the New Media* (Schröter, 2019) is devoted to the relationship between the discourse of media aesthetics and the spread of digital media, the issues of computer modeling and its relation to media aesthetics. The authors of the article *Media Aesthetics* (Contreras & Ortúñoz, 2018) reveal aesthetics based on the interference of technology in creative artistic processes, revealing how the creativity of new media experiments with forms characteristic of postmodern thinking. Bernd (2020) manifests the ways of thinking applying various forms of art, new forms of aesthetic research and presentation.

Considering the concept of media aesthetics, the author of the present study adheres to the opinion of Zagidullina (2016): "media aesthetics is increasingly turning towards the concepts that are close to visual types of arts, on the one hand; media aesthetics is built around materialized emotions that acquire a certain visual appearance, on the other" (p. 49). The scientist considers media aesthetics

"as a significant condition of communication": "the development of web technologies has led to the facilitation of the appliance of a variety of tools that make it possible to create unique polycode media objects that combine different types of content (visual-figurative, visual-textual, auditory) <...> Several aspects are of particular interest to the researchers: socio-institutional (crowding out of professionals by amateurs); socially creative (massification of creative technologies); socio-psychological (specificity of mass creativity in clip culture)" (Zagidullina, 2017, p. 102).

Considering that polycode also forms new aesthetic relations in the process of communication, and it is specifically about media aesthetics, which is dominated by "ergonomics of interaction between the user's consciousness and content <...>, but the main thing is the interface that provides this interaction and limits it ("soft", which "rules", according to Manovich)" (Zagidullina, 2019a, p. 151). The creators of a modern visual image take into account all these features of mass communication, which is manifested in design decisions that determine the characteristics of a polycode media text's perception. How it is implemented in practice, will be presented at the example of specific journalistic materials further in the present article.

3.3. The role of the media in the formation of economic culture

Present world is word of media. Accordingly, it is the media that influence the formation of value orientations in the consumers' informing. It is impossible to overestimate the role of the media in shaping the economic culture of the population. The scientific community responds to the existing issues. There are several articles discussing in one way or another. Thus, Tarkhanova (2019) devoted the research to business-oriented publications' role in the formation of economic thinking and behavior. Demina deSeveral articles are discussing journalism issues. Considering the specifics of economic mass communication, the scientist combines economic issues covered by the media into three groups (according to the levels of economic activity): 1) macroeconomic (the forecast of the inflation rate;

economy increase or decrease; unemployment rate; state economic politics, etc.); 2) meso- and microeconomic (what professions are in demand on the labor market; what are the economic prospects of the region or industry, what is the company's policy, etc.); 3) consumer (what is the quality of goods, prices, places of sale, discount system, etc.) (Demina, 2012). The article by Kazun (2017) provides a systematization of information about economic news in academic literature, describes the interaction between information in the media, public opinion and the real state of affairs.

However, the author of the present article has not found any studies presenting the interaction between media aesthetics and economic culture. This is the novelty of the present research.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to consider the media's role in the dissemination of economic knowledge, as a necessary part of economic culture.

The research is based on the principles of rational knowledge. General philosophical, cultural and general scientific principles of analysis are applied. There are also comparison and generalization methods; and systemic method. When analyzing the research's empirical base, the method of content analysis and case studies are applied. Analysis, synthesis, description, observation, comparison, generalization, and forecasting are applied at the generalization stage.

Thus, the present research methodology is complex due to its effectiveness in revealing the topic of the presented research.

5. Research Methods

The research is based on the principles of rational knowledge. General philosophical, cultural and general scientific principles of analysis are applied. There are also comparison and generalization methods; and systemic method. When analyzing the research's empirical base, the method of content analysis and case studies are applied. Analysis, synthesis, description, observation, comparison, generalization, and forecasting are applied at the generalization stage.

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6. Findings

This paragraph presents the results of the journalistic materials analysis. The purpose of which is to observe the interaction between the media-aesthetic potential of a journalistic text and its content – an economic theme – the formation of a reader's economic culture. The ways of transferring economic information in journalistic materials are considered. The importance of the formation of a visual image is emphasized.

The article "*New industrial policy of Russia: come on, it's no-brainer to build new factories*" is published on the website of the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (KP) (Kuznetsov, 2016) states that two years of trade restrictions have given rise to incentives in Russia to build large, modern factories. Sanctions, down-rated domestic currency (rouble) and government support have done its good: import

substitution has begun actively in the country. New large-scale industries began to appear. Moreover, those that have not been built since Soviet times, such as mining and processing plants. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* has decided to find out how business invests in the development of the country's economy and how this will affect the Russians' wallets.

The author has created a longread in the form of a book. The entire text is structured in seven chapters. Each chapter is a text on a specific topic, an expert commentary, and a KP memo card. With their help, we seem to go through all the stages of the development of the "book" plot, from the exposition to the denouement. High-resolution photographs were applied to visualize the content, thereby creating the effect of being on the spot. In addition to photos, there are galleries, numerical charts, ratings, timeline, videos. The color scheme corresponds to the corporate colors that are present on the KP *bird* logo. Among the technical means that contribute to the text's perception, the author of the present study highlights design techniques in making up links, quotes, and division into blocks. The proposed pictures in terms of meaning are built logically and have a high resolution, which enhances what you see. The set of design tools used has a positive effect on forming the visual image of the specified journalistic text: the perception of the text is simplified and facilitated, the author's idea is read. This allows realizing the media-aesthetic potential of journalistic work in the forming of the reader's economic culture.

Another material we have considered, *The Ensign Bearer Bogatyr*, posted on LENTA.RU (Gorodishcheva, 2020) returns the audience to the history of the thirties of the last century. In the 1930s, the Soviet Union seized by a fever – in the decade of rapid industrialization, reports of new labour exploits of the common people for the sake of building communism and a bright future thundered everywhere. The first of them was a miner from Donbass Aleksey Stakhanov. 85 years ago, he set a record for coal production per shift and the next morning woke up famous throughout the world. He was presented with apartments and cars, drove around the Union, he became Stalin's favorite, but in the end he could not stand fame and drank himself to death. The surname Stakhanov, which gave the name to the Trudovik movement, became a common noun and continued to exist separately from it. The text is divided into blocks, hyperlinks are used. To create a visual image, font selection of quotes and numerical data, photographs are used. The material looks minimalistic, but this does not diminish interest in it. Archived photos help to feel more deeply in history. The minimum number of quotes and numbers does not distract from the text, which has an easy-to-read font and hyperlinks to information and historical sites. It is due to these funds that the material does not seem insipid and impersonal. They are aimed at arousing in us a more vivid emotion and imbued with that era. The media-aesthetic content of this text occurs not only through the use of technical means. This is also achieved thanks to the chosen format of journalistic material – storytelling. Thanks to storytelling, this material is personalized. The reader is immersed in the history of a person, imbued with his fate, empathizes. In this case, it is thanks to the text that the journalistic work's emotional effect is achieved. At the same time, the role of visual elements cannot be overestimated. To create a visual image, high-quality pictures were used: they attract the eye and attention, show pronounced emotions of people, locations, and the massiveness of the event. The text is divided into blocks accompanied by links; quotes; inserts with numbers: a special form of writing numbers catches the reader's attention; photographs: black and white "live" photographs are found in the course of all journalistic material. Photos from the USSR times are harmoniously inscribed in the

material, Lenin's quote looks unusual in the text, the insert with a number indicating the amount of coal mined in one shift is personally amazing Stakhanov. Colors are corporate colors of *LENTA.RU* (black and white). Discreet, laconic, minimalist. The proposed combination of media aesthetic means undoubtedly serves not only to achieve the author's goal, but also affects the formation of the reader's economic culture.

The following material, considered as an empirical base, is posted on *MEDUZA* website. The title of the material is promising: *Russia has recognized bitcoin and has banned cryptocurrency bribes. Were they not punished for that before?* (Dmitriev, 2020). The material is dedicated to the Federal Law of July 31, 2020 N 259-FZ, adopted by the Russian Parliament *On digital financial assets, digital currency and on amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation*. The article reveals the law's essence and the introduction of a new ban on cryptocurrency bribery. The text is presented in the form of information blocks, each of which is a question-answer form. The cards' format is applied: six blocks of text, united by one topic, but answering different questions. The fifth card stands out from the general text: "That is, now officials will not be able to take bribes with cryptocurrency?" Note that this item is the smallest in terms of volume (which already stands out from the general text). Maybe the author did not intend to focus on this paragraph, but raising the question and specifying bribes among officials attracts attention. The reader may be interested in a link within the material to an article from the same heading "Analysis". The entry is graphically highlighted with a darker frame and attracts with the heading: *Sex with a boss is now a non-property bribe. Can you go to jail for that?* The topic of harassment still provokes heated discussions among Internet users, so this link to a publication that explains a non-property bribe's concept looks quite clickbait. A clear and structured design of the cards creates a confidential and businesslike impression, although stylistically the author tries not to use complex designs. The developers also understood that many modern readers are intimidated by large volumes of texts, so they "hid" some material fragments under the "More" button. When creating a visual image, the absence of photos and videos is compensated by the presence of links to third-party sources (the full text of the law, sites with a new cryptocurrency, publications from Telegram, etc.); explanation of terminology through a special pop-up window (tokens, stablecoins, etc.); a button for more detailed information ("What is the essence of the division?", "BC on bribing in tokens"); highlighting important points inside the text in pastel yellow; an internal hyperlink separated from the general text block; collapsible blocks; font features (style, colour, etc.).

Deliberate minimalism in the design serves to form a positive image of the proposed text. Everything is clearly marked and spelled out, looks normal, but convenient for the audience. And even a huge number of special terms do not look intrusive and do not complicate information perception. All terms are highlighted in a colour that is pleasing to the reader's eyes. Thus, the author focuses on the fact that here you need to be careful – to familiarize yourself with the concept of a word if it is new to you. When formatting the text, colours corresponding to the edition are used. In general, we can talk about the observance of the corporate minimalist style of the publication: the absence of photographs, videos, laconic colours and fonts. Format of cards and consistent corporate colours of the edition (black, gray, dark gold). It is also worth noting that there is a small navigation box to the left of the text, which helps the reader quickly navigate the publication. It is noteworthy that it is not static, but moves along the page

following the reader. The combination of color, font emphasis and the form of presentation of the material – not a solid text, but separate blocks indicated by the heading – serve both the realization of the author's conceived and the formation of a culture, in this case, economic.

The material *Rouble zone. Who lives better – Belarus or Russia?* (Makurin, 2020), published on *Argumenty i Fakty* website. In the publication, the author compares food prices and incomes of citizens of Belarus and Russia. The journalist seems to justify Russia and says that the financial well-being of Belarusians only seems at first glance. He reinforces his position with voluminous quotes from political scientists and infographics. The presented infographics ("Brother Economies: the results of Russia and Belarus") can be classified as comparative. It depicts the economic factors of the above countries: the weighted average dollar against the national currency; GDP per capita by purchasing power priority; average accrued salary; average old-age pension; average per capita money income of the population; poverty rate in 2018. Data for Russia are shown in blue, and for Belarus – in orange. The first two comparison factors are shown as line graphs, while the rest are shown as pie charts. The infographics are static, supplemented by a graphic drawing of the Belarusian currency, writing materials (pencil and pen), and graphics that are not related to the publication topic. The visual image of the publication as a whole is formed through the use of a comprehensive set of visualization tools. These are: the image of the Belarusian and Russian flags as one whole; using comparative infographics; citing quotes from political experts (Vasily Koltashov and Andrey Suzdal'tsev); introduction of internal hyperlinks with photographs (three materials similar on this topic); demarcation of the text into micro-topics with capacious headings ("Where are the salaries higher?", "Dual economy", "We tackled, but did not catch"); company names and respondents' names in bold. Most of the reader's attention is concentrated on the infographics, it is here that the main data are presented, which may be enough to understand the topic. A big role, in our opinion, is played by the formulation of the name of this multimedia tool: "Brothers Economies". That is, despite the opposition, the publication reminds that Russia and Belarus were previously part of a single state – the USSR. The reader's second point of attention is the internal hyperlink with a striking heading: *376 kilos of potatoes or 111 liters of beer. What will the pension in Belarus be enough for.* Accordingly, the photo shows the Belarusian currency. This article is most noticeable, as it is literally between two paragraphs of text and does not look foreign. People are interested in money, especially if it is translated into a food equivalent. Thus, they have the opportunity to compare salaries and, as the text of the article shows, to make sure that not everything is bad in Russia. From the publication, if you quickly scroll through it, the titles of the microtopics stand out. Subheadings are in larger bold and appear to the left of the body text. They not only divide the text into three components, but also add emotional flavor. For example, "They maneuvered, but did not catch." The author appeals to all the well-known tongue twister, while using an ironic message. At the same time, despite the use of a large arsenal of visual and multimedia tools, the publication looks somewhat unfinished. This is facilitated by an unjustified amount of "air" – there is a feeling of empty lines. This is also facilitated by a large number of voluminous quotes. The infographics seem too cluttered (an abundance of secondary graphic objects) and stand out from the publication's general style (there are no corporate colors and fonts). Nevertheless, this publication is an important fragment in the formation of the reader's economic culture.

Summarizing the above, the description and analysis of journalistic materials, the author of the present study denotes that *Komsomolskaya Pravda* emphasizes colourful and bright visuals. For *LENTA.RU* text is the priority. From the presented visual elements, one can single out "live photos". A feature of the *Meduza* edition is the minimalism of the design. The economic topic is no exception. At the same time, the editors manage to make their works attractive to the reader. This is achieved through typography and presentation of the material (for example, question and answer). Arguments and facts use their own techniques, which, in our opinion, are less successful from an aesthetic point of view than those of the publications presented above. Nevertheless, the content of the material and the goals set by the author are clear to the reader.

Thus, after analyzing economic materials – materials containing a range of economic issues and problems – we came to the conclusion that the visual language in the transmission of economic information is the most in demand. In this case, the following observation is important – attention is focused not only on the visual presentation of materials, but also on their emotional expression. Consequently, the media aesthetics of a journalistic text is an important factor in the formation of the reader's economic culture.

7. Conclusion

The total of media aesthetic factors, including visual content design, undoubtedly affect the perception and understanding of economic information and, accordingly, the formation of economic culture.

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