

ABSTRACT

The thesis deals with the comparison and classification of descriptive theories that seek to describe the state of Western society and culture in the 21st century. In this context, the most frequently invoked term is "postmodernism", which according to many thinkers has already lost its ability to describe society or, according to others, has never even truly described it. This paper is concerned with those theories that are supposed to be either the successors to postmodernism or its surrogate. The research question of the thesis is whether it is possible to find points of contact between the chosen theories, on the basis of which they could be sorted into hyperonymic groups (meta-descriptions) as to map the contemporary thinking about the historical stage of the West in the 21st century. A classification of this kind is potentially fruitful for creating a map of contemporary modes of thinking about society, and the categories delineated should prove to be inherently open for quickly linking emerging theories, or those not included in this thesis, to similar descriptions of society so that their findings can be compared. To lay the foundations for this purpose, the theories of Timothee Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker's metamodernism, Jeffrey Nealon's post-postmodernism, Alan Kirby's digimodernism, Zygmunt Bauman's fluid modernity, and Gilles Lipovetsky and Simon Gottschalk's hypermodernity were selected. A summary of them was made, noting the significant features observed by them and confronting them with each other. In the thesis, tables of traits were created for the purpose of comparison, and based on these tables, several ways to classify the directions were discovered, as well as couple of necessary tasks for future analyses of our times were pointed out in order to improve the understanding of the traits of Western society in the 21st century.