

PRODUCING VALUE JUDGMENTS

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The discussion of manifests has never been more topical than today. And it is not just topical in a political nature either. There is something in the past that makes various text-producing groups, not connected with one another and sometimes even unaware of one another, all of a sudden or predictably produce very similar manifest texts. And there is something about these manifests that make them more interesting than any other genre.

On the one hand, manifest is something that manifests, i.e. that makes evident. It is evidence of something that is happening right now, but not in the way it should, that unites a cultural manifest, a political manifest, and a scientific manifest. **On the other hand, a manifest is a statement.** In Russian the word shares its roots with ‘to evince’ and ‘evidence.’ While in the first case we

are speaking of something that, being implicit, becomes open and exposed, in the second case we are saying that this exposition is self-contained — it is a kind of claim for changes, a statement that the state of things should be transformed. This is again a similar feature of a manifest in science and a manifest in politics.

Why is it now that the shift in various spheres of life to such a way of producing meaning has taken place? The thing is that first meanings are always born through manifestation of hidden things. Second, it comes through the need to change something. And this is a manifest form of narrative.

It is important to bare in mind that **manifest is linked with utopian imagination.** When, say, think-tanks suddenly produce a manifest instead of an analysis, when scientists produce manifests instead of research, and when artists produce curator manifests instead of exhibitions and say that by this they have finished their work and are not interested in what comes next — it gives you the feeling of this manifestation, of the manifest method of speaking, and consequently the hope for the desired future comes to the fore. This feeling has nothing to do with the fact that the 2000s were conservative in Russia, and the 2010s are neo-modernistic. It has something to do with the need to give social therapy, to relieve social suffering. An expert is not a manifestor. An expert tries to produce knowledge, true-to-life from some higher point of view.

A manifest assumes a more activist, heroic position, which undermines the opportunity for such a consolidated view, at least, for a while.

The recent reports by the Institute of Contemporary Development and the Center for Strategic Research Foundation are anything but analytic reports.

They are manifests in a sense. If we still try to explicate the logic of a manifest as a type of statement, then we will see that it is a logic of paradoxes. What stands against a paradox? A paradox is confronted by tautology, where tautology is a certain statement aimed at reproducing and making a certain logical order: ‘Law is Law,’ ‘Order is order,’ ‘Dura Lex, sed Lex.’ A paradox is always aimed at undermining such logical reasoning: ‘Law is arbitrary will,’ ‘peace is war.’ And a manifest is always something that tears apart the logic of such existing obviousness to manifest another way of obviousness, to make obvious again.

This means that a manifest applied as an analytic report, instead of offering some logical analysis, counterposes something different. It says: no, it is not so, it should be another way. Consequently, a manifest has an imperative nature. And analytics cannot be imperative. Analytics does not prescribe, and even if it does, its aim is not to produce absolute statements or value judgments. On the contrary, a manifest always produces value judgments. ■

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