WUT 2020
10ᵗʰ International Conference "Word, Utterance, Text: Cognitive, Pragmatic and Cultural Aspects"

TEXT IN POSTMODERNISM SPACE

Tatiana Bokova (a)*, Victoria Malakhova (b)

*Corresponding author

(a) Russian Academy of Education, Expert of Start up Infrastructure Development Department, Moscow City University, Moscow, Russia, tnbokova@mail.ru
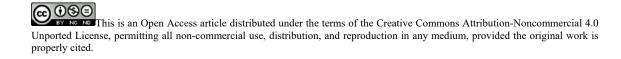(b)Volgograd State Socio-pedagogical University, Volgograd, 27 Lenin prospect, Russia, victory710@mail.ru

Abstract

Text is one of the main concepts in the philosophy of postmodernism. According to the postmodern concept of one of its founders, J. Derrida, "the world is a text", "text is the only possible model of reality". The paper analyzes the deep categories that allow us to reveal the text, its essence — the categories "concept" and "narrative". In this context, the concept is understood as a personal act of "grasping" meanings from the textual reality of interaction, and the narrative indicates the processality, the constant reproduction of the textual, linguistic reality. An attempt is made to identify the role of hermeneutical text analysis in postmodernism, since the procedure of understanding is not only interpretation and search for meaning, but also an ontological category which is in tune with the spirit of postmodernism. Hermeneutical analysis of the text also actualizes the active role of the subject, the category of "dialogue" and "polylogue". The authors deliberately did not oppose the views of J. Derrida and H.- G. Gadamer, so as not to limit the space of understanding of the text, since Gadamer shares Derrida's belief that the text no longer depends on its author, that the concept of the text is not conceivable without interpretation, however, a philosophical text addresses not writing, but speech and speaking. The ontological nature of understanding is revealed through the correlation with the categories of interpretation, meaning, and value.

Keywords: Postmodernism, text, narrative, rhizome, nomadology.

1. Introduction

It is indisputable that time and epoch influence society, culture, and education as a part of society. The speed and direction of changes in the modern world are increasingly considered in the categories of postmodernism. Most researchers believe that postmodernism, on the one hand, reflects the spirit of the new era, and on the other hand, adequately comprehends the new era, gives a new vision of modernity (Ivanova & Elkina, 2016).

The term "postmodernism" most often refers to structurally similar phenomena in world social life and culture of the XX century. Such a broad definition has a right to exist, because even among postmodernists there is no agreement in understanding the phenomenon of postmodernism itself. On the one hand, it is important: should we define it at all, since everything in the world is constantly flowing and changing? On the other hand, any term is a social and individual construct and, consequently, there can be many definitions of postmodernism, since the more of them, the more fully the essence of the phenomenon will be revealed. We believe that postmodernism is a special way of reflecting the main trends and guidelines of a society that has reached a certain level of development.

Postmodernism as a complex ideological trend is the quintessence of this spirit of time, since it most adequately reflects the worldview associated with a sense of unacceptability of the previously dominant ideas about the world and man in the new socio-cultural realities (Emelin, 2017). Eco (2007) suggested that postmodernism is not a chronologically fixed phenomenon, but a certain spiritual state. He stated that any era has its own postmodernism. The multiplicity of interpretations encoded in postmodernism, the change of spiritual orientations, and pluralistic attitudes to the interpretation of history made postmodernism a form of social life with its instability, unpredictability, and the risk of reversibility.

2. Problem Statement

It is important for us to refer to one construct by Deleuze (2010). In the work "Logics of meaning", he proposed a model concept of reality in the form of intercultural, interindividual interactions, expressed in the concept of "nomadology". Nomadology is, on the one hand, a certain concept, a "plan" of the reality of intersubjective interactions (meanings, languages, interpretations, opinions); on the other hand, it is a certain attitude to the construction of a centered, discrete, differentiated interaction space.

According to Deleuze (2010), any oppositions (*male − female, teacher-student, past-future*) give reality frozen forms, as if "blocking" the active space of its creation by many participants. Reality as a space of interactions is always intersubjective, since the meaning itself is the point of binding the variety of other meanings that exist here and now.

To explain this phenomenon, postmodernists introduce the "concept". In this context, the concept is understood as a personal act of "grasping" meanings from the textual reality of interaction. Reality consists of multiplicity, points of "meanings" that are correlated with other meanings, constantly born from each other, giving it "volume" or "superficiality". This is a kind of microenvironment in which the same meanings are born between individuals, in other words, a space of understanding appears. A

concept is an instantaneous event, a kind of singularity that is born in the space of infinite interactions and cannot be constant, since it is not bound to any signifiers (signs, people, body, etc.).

3. Research Questions

The study of the postmodernism philosophy influence on the text.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the impact of postmodernism key trends on the text.

5. Research Methods

Methods of logical and system analysis, theoretical analysis, the selection of sources, the study and analysis of literature, conceptual analysis, synthesis, systematization and classification of information, the formulation of conclusions and their testing at scientific conferences.

6. Findings

Interacting with each other, concepts form a "horizon of events" or a "desert of reality" (according to the famous statement of R. Barth), which in itself does not mean anything, but is significant by its interpretations. Reality is an endlessly reproducing history of events in which the points of view and interpretations of certain people are significant. The whole reality does not exist objectively (outside), but in the minds of those who perceive it. The "nobody's" version of reality can claim more objective power, since other versions are only human creations. The whole reality exists in the minds of those who perceive it. Thus, no version of reality can claim to be completely objective, because all variants are a human creation.

Postmodern concepts absolutize the role of the subject in cognition, attach special importance to the subject's ability to interpret the world, build their knowledge, and attach their own meaning to phenomena and events, regardless of what others think about them. Let's take a vivid example of different approaches to the study of history. For example, if in modernism history is usually considered as something remote in time and space, then in postmodernism it is accepted as a method of learning based on interpretation. This means that students must learn to interpret historical events as if they were participating in them. This gives rise to two approaches to the study and understanding of history: the first are from the positions of logical positivism and analytical philosophy and protect the chronological study of history, and the second — its existentialist reading in the form of a multi-discursive interpretation depending on cultural, scientific and other ideas and their own experience. Postmodern education content theorists challenge those who argue that historical interpretation should confirm the knowledge and values of the dominant modernist paradigm. Postmodernism celebrates eclecticism, innovation, revision, irony, and subjectivity in interpreting history (Malakhova & Bokova, 2019).

Postmodernists reduce the study of history to "perspectives on history" that may be different for different people. For example, one writer had an e-mail conversation about postmodern history with a

high school student. The student said that when studying the bombing of Pearl Harbor, they were first shown a film about what was happening, expressing the American point of view, and then − a film presented from the position of the Japanese. "History looks at all points of view, doesn't it?" she asked. In response, the writer agreed that there are different views on history and knowing the views of different sides is important. At this point, the student stopped the conversation, because to answer "yes", it was necessary to object to the postmodern ideology with which she agreed, and draw a conclusion that she was not ready to accept (Bokova, 2017).

Theoretically, it should be explained that some analog of rhizomatic reality is the concept of narrative, the use of which, in our opinion, gives an understanding of the principles of the rhizomatic system of learning. The narrative indicates a process, a constant reproduction of textual and linguistic reality. The constant reproduction of texts and language structures does not affect the reality and the subjects themselves, but only organizes some symbolic activity between them, creates a space for playing and creative interaction. Any interactions of subjects "become" a hypertext, which is a game space of language (the space of language games, according to Wittgenstein (2018) – a flexible dynamic co-creation through language influences, manipulation with the help of language. A narrative is a space of concepts, a kind of sign system that affects the subjects of interaction, for example, for the purpose of manipulation.

If we apply narrative discourse to pedagogical communication based on the triad "teacher — learning material – student", then in each element the narrative appears as the most important "learning tool". The teacher acts as a "repeater" or as the creator of the narrative. In the latter case, he\she can use stories from personal experience, achieving a double effect: 1) to give a vivid illustration of the topic being studied, making it understandable; 2) qualitatively change the relationship with students, which is facilitated by the transformation of the narrator at the same time into the character of the story and the emergence of a personal perspective. The educational material of almost any discipline includes its history, an overview of the current state, biographies of major scientists and the history of their discoveries. When the teacher maintains a balance between generalizations and details and is able to find their own analogies and connections, the rule of structuring the narrative arises – the selection of facts and their organization in "episodes of the story". With this balance of generalization (objectification) and detail (individual evaluation component), the goal of the message is achieved — a complete image of the phenomenon is created. Students, building a narrative on the topic of research (project), consciously acquire new knowledge, that is, develop cognitive abilities, and unconsciously – a group narrative identity (communication skills).The postmodern paradigm, on the one hand, supports the principle of continuous learning, and on the other hand, the variability of the learning process. Any learning process is a way of organizing people's lives, so training should always be contextual and dialogical (Pluzhnikova, 2017).

Marinosyan (2018) notes that education at school should be organized by the teacher on the principle of "adhoc". A teacher (a new teacher) is known to be professionally trained, rather erudite, methodologically and technologically equipped to be able to view the current time, to build the parallels between natural and social processes relevantly, academic disciplines, to establish the relationship between events, occurring in the past and proceeding in the present, discuss possible scenarios for the further development of the topic under consideration.

Thus, the narrative project acts as an infinite reproduction of statements that only point to something without telling about it, and fix the process of self-realization as a way of a narrative (or, according to R. Barth, a "communicating") text existence. It is important to refer to the metha-narrative here. Lyotard (1994) understands metha-narrative as the principle of building historical or other narrative events in a certain structural sequence.

Therefore, according to the postmodern view, it is necessary to leave such metha-narratives, since any of them restricts thinking. So, in 1976, the American writer Federman published a novel that can be read at the reader's discretion (it has the title: "At your discretion") from any place, shuffling the unnumbered and unstitched pages. This aleatoric literature soon became computer-based, it can only be read on the display: you press a button and you are transferred to the character's prehistory, you press another one and you change the bad end into the good one or vice versa.

So, we can confirm that the category of text is one of the key ones for the philosophy of postmodernism. The category of a text cannot be separated from its interpretation, understanding, and search for meaning, so the philosophy of postmodernism turns to such a philosophical direction as hermeneutics. Interpretation allows you to fully present the text of culture at all levels of its structure, to penetrate into its deep meaning, to structure the unclear, contradictory forms of the work, to understand the author's character and psychology.

The problem of text analysis in postmodernism is considered in a number of studies (Artashkina & Tsareva, 2018; Emelin, 2017; Rubtsova, 2018 etc.). For postmodernism, hermeneutical analysis as non-rational is a priority. Modern philosophical hermeneutics seeks to justify the existential aspect of the problem of understanding based on the idea of the primacy of language both in the creation of the world and in the learning of its truths. In our opinion, a prerequisite for hermeneutical understanding is the representation of the object to be interpreted as a text. The physical implementation of this text is not essential, only this condition is essential – to be a text or to be considered as a text.

Indeed, postmodernist theorists follow the basic tenets of the hermeneutical method. Yet the essence of the "postmodern turn to hermeneutics" is not only in this. First, the hermeneutical method in postmodernism takes precedence over other methods of cognition. This attention to the hermeneutical method determines its use in many scientific disciplines. Second, in the philosophy of postmodernism, hermeneutics is not so much an art of interpreting texts as an ontological teaching. The concept of text gets an ontological meaning and is considered as a universal substance. Third, in postmodernism, hermeneutics replaces epistemology. Some theorists of postmodernism develop M. Heidegger's idea about the dominance of hermeneutics over epistemology: the understanding and interpretation make up the existential structure of existence (Heidegger, 1993). Understanding is interpreted not only as a way of learning, but also as a way of human existence. The postmodernists' appeal to philosophical hermeneutics is caused by the desire to prove that human existence consists in understanding. From this point of view, in the philosophy of postmodernism, the hermeneutical method as an effective way of learning existence has an ontological meaning.

Understanding arises as an individual realization of the individual cognitive capabilities. The ability to understand reality, natural and social, to understand other people and oneself, the texts of culture — this ability is the basis of human consciousness existence. The result of understanding is not

necessarily the ultimate truth. Understanding is plural, it exists in a variety of ways, each of which reflects a particular facet of objective reality. The procedure of understanding is considered by us mainly as a specific form of the cognitive correlation "subject – subject" and, accordingly, the main "situation of understanding" is a dialogue.

The meanings that the individual ascribes to objects of understanding, he draws from his inner world-the world of individual consciousness, which forms the basis of understanding. This world of individual consciousness is called "individual semantic context". In our opinion, this definition is not quite correct, it is more logical to use the concept of "individual semantic continuum", since in our view, "individual semantic context" is such a meaning, such a sense that the subject of understanding attributes to a specific unit of understanding. Further on, we will use this term to refer to the "world of individual consciousness", a set of individual semantic contexts. The individual semantic continuum can be represented as a system of interrelated semantic units, the content of which is determined by their place in the context, that is, connections with other units and the relationship to the individual "self". When an individual encounters language expressions, texts, cultural objects, and natural phenomena, he or she seems to include them in his or her inner continuum, associating certain semantic units with them, and thus giving them interpretation and meaning.

It is important to note that if each individual has his\her own semantic context and the contexts of different individuals are different, if, further, the interpretation and meaning of all things are determined by the individual context, then different individuals will attach different contents and meaning to the same words, texts, and objects. But then the question arises about the possibility of communication in general. The solution to this problem should be found in the nature of the individual semantic continuum as a set of individual contexts. This continuum, or spiritual world of the individual, is a reflection of the real world in which we live. And this objective real world is one for all. Therefore, we can talk about similarity (but not about absolute coincidence!) of individual contexts. Here it is necessary to take into account the similarity of cultures and social structures of societies. When they differ, there is a "gap in the internal cultural bonds", which exacerbates the problem of understanding. The content of each semantic unit of the individual continuum can be represented as a set of characteristics that represent the individual's knowledge and beliefs about an object, or, in other words, the correlation of this semantic unit with other units of the context and the individual Self. The characteristics of semantic units are divided into two groups: general, or, social, and individual. General characteristics embody what the individual has learned and the social knowledge, while individual one reflects his\her personal experience, beliefs, attitudes to things.

The individual semantic continuum is an open system that is constantly changing throughout the life of the individual. His knowledge grows and changes; the individual includes new statements in his continuum, and refuses to accept some of the earlier ones. All this has an impact on individual semantic units and on the continuum as a whole. Interaction with reality, the individual imposes his own individual context on it and thus understands it, filling objects and phenomena of the surrounding world with meaning. In the process of understanding, an individual associates a word, action, or object with some semantic unit from its context. Thus, there is an interpretation, an endowment of meaning. If he succeeds,

the individual believes that he has understood the object. When an individual can't interpret an object, give it a meaning, he believes that he didn't understand the object.

In the scientific literature, it is quite common to find comments about the need to distinguish between *knowledge* and *understanding*.

To understand is to gain knowledge. Such knowledge, which reflects the essence of things, connects something previously unknown with the already known, turns previously disparate into a system. Still this is not the essence of understanding: the system that includes new knowledge is functional and effective. It is a system focused on the application of knowledge. In other words, understanding acts as the appropriation of knowledge and its conversion into an integral part of the psychological mechanism that regulates activity in accordance with the requirements of practice. As a result of understanding, knowledge becomes part of the inner world of the individual and affects the regulation of his activity.

The closest in content to the concept of "understanding" is the concept of "meaning". We define understanding, first of all, as a procedure for understanding – identifying and reconstructing meaning, as well as meaning formation, since this interpretation opens up broad prospects for considering understanding not only in the context of cognition, but also in the context of the evaluation activity of consciousness, and, even more broadly, in the social and ontological context.

It can be said that comprehension and understanding take place only in the context of purposeful activity and are conditioned by a great variety of explicit and extremely difficult to mediate goals pursued by a person and values associated with them. The more complex the goals are, the deeper one needs to penetrate into the essence of phenomena and the greater degree of understanding of the world is achieved. Reflecting on human understanding, Thus, to understand is to evaluate, to match with some value. A value is usually understood very narrowly: as a certain kind of property, namely the property of an object to meet the goals of a person or even particularly important goals. A narrow interpretation of values leads, in the end, to the opposition of truth and value approaches to reality, to the formation of a gap between natural science and humanitarian knowledge.

Value, as well as truth, is not a property, but a correlation between thought and reality. A thought and its object can have two different correlations: truth and value. In the first case, the starting point is reality, and thought acts as its description in terms of truth concepts. A thought is true if it corresponds to the fragment of reality it describes – this is the classic definition of truth. In the case of a value correlation, on the contrary, the starting point is a thought that functions as a project, plan, or standard. Compliance with reality is considered in the evaluation concepts. An object that corresponds to the thought expressed about it and meets the requirements imposed on it is considered positively valuable. The value records the object's compliance with the requirements imposed on it by the subject. This correspondence is revealed in the process of understanding.

In the interpretation and understanding of the literary text, the reader's activity is aimed at identifying ways of depicting and understanding reality, which allows him to form an idea of the artistic code that is being implemented in the work. Obtaining such a code is one of the conditions for understanding the received aesthetic information, which leads to the comprehension of a "foreign" word,

a "foreign" consciousness, and this emphasizes the idea of dialogic interaction carried out at different levels.

Mastering a "foreign" word becomes a part of the process of perception and understanding of a literary text, is an incentive for self-generation of meaning and its comprehension in a work of art, and it becomes more significant in the context of modern artistic communication. It is possible to trace in various elements of the text, in particular, on the basis of the analysis of the intertextual dialogue that presented in the form of complex forms of text (e.g., design a "text about text") in the stories of "new realism". This defines genre and compositional specificity of works, determines a high level of creative reflection of the reader in the process of perception of the text and creates a fertile ground for sense-creation.

7.   Conclusion

Analysis of the text as of one of the leading categories of postmodernism leads to the conclusion that in postmodernism, all reality is thought of as text, discourse, and narrative. "Narrative", "textuality", and "intertextuality" are the most important concepts used by postmodernism to describe modern reality, the main words of its language. "Nothing exists outside of the text," says J. Derrida. The culture of any historical period appears as a sum of texts, or intertext. Understanding texts is possible only in the "discursive field of culture". In other words, they can only be understood in connection with other texts, but not in connection with any "literal" meaning or normative truth. (Agabekova, 2018). The unavoidable presence of previous texts-intertextuality does not allow any text to consider itself autonomous. Deconstruction as a general method of postmodern analysis, applicable to the analysis of any cultural phenomenon, any text, inevitably turns into a multi-meaning and endless interpretive process that relativizes any text, any concept, and therefore deprives the meaning of the problem of truth. Thus, language turns out to be a non-permanent medium; it cannot directly carry meaning or truth. In turn, the category of "narrative" indicates the processality, the constant reproduction of textual and linguistic reality. The constant reproduction of texts and language structures does not affect the reality and the subjects themselves, but only organizes some symbolic activity between them, creates a space for playing and creative interaction. One of the vectors in the philosophy of postmodernism is the appeal to hermeneutics as a methodology, since the ontological nature of understanding is not only associated with finding meaning, but also actualizes its existence character.

Acknowledgments

References

Agabekova, U. R. (2018). *Zhak Derrida kak osnovatel' teorii dekonstruktivizma* [Jacques Derrida as the founder of the theory of deconstructivism]. *Balkan Scientific review*, *1,* 5-7.

Artashkina, T. A., & Tsareva, N. A. (2018). *Germenevtika kak metodologiya epokhi postmoderna i postpostmoderna* [Hermeneutics as a Methodology of Post-Modern and Post-Post-Modern Eras]. *Music Scholarship*, *3*, 128-136.

Bokova, T. N. (2017). *Al'ternativnyye shkoly SSHA kak postmodernistskiy didakticheskiy proyekt* [Alternative schools in the USA as a postmodern didactic project]: monograph. IET.

Deleuze, G. (2010). *Logika smysla* [The logic of sensation]. Academic project.

Eco, U. (2007). *Imya rozy.* [The name of the rose]. Symposium.

Emelin, V. A. (2017). *Krizis postmodernizma i poterya ustoychivoy identichnosti* [Crisis of postmodernism and loss of sustainable identity]. *National psychological journal, 2*(26), 5-15. http://doi.org/10.11621/npj.2017.0202

Heidegger, M. (1993). *Vremya i bytiye* [Time and Being]. Articles and speeches. Republic.

Ivanova, S. V., & Elkina, I. M. (2016). Postmodernizm i kachestvo obrazovaniya [Postmodernism and the quality of education*]. Values and meanings, 1*(46), 115-124.

Lyotard, J. -F. (1994). *Otvet na vopros: chto takoye postmodern?* [The answer to the question: what is postmodern?] *Foreign Literature*, 47–61.

Malakhova, V. G., & Bokova, T. N. (2019). *Osobennosti obrazovaniya v informatsionnom obshchestve* [Features of education in the information society]. *Alma Mater, 11*, 35-40. https://doi.org/10.20339/AM.11-19.036

Marinosyan, T. (2018). *Sub"yekt-ob"yekt obrazovatel'nogo protsessa v realiyakh sovremennosti, ili ipaliases → ∞* [Subject-Object of the Educational Process in the Realities of Contemporaneity, or IP Aliases → ∞]. *Philosophical Sciences*, *6,* 7-30 https://doi.org/10.30727/0235-1188-2018-6-7-3

Pluzhnikova, N. N. (2017). *Postmodernizm i yego idei v sovremennoy filosofii obrazovaniya* [Postmodernism and its ideas in the modern philosophy of education]: *Materials of the international scientific conference "Actual problems of history, philosophy and linguistics",* 173-178.

Rubtsova, S. P. (2018). *Tekst v postmodernizme: transformatsiya i perspektivy* [Text and Postmodernism: transformation and perspective]. *Bulletin of Voronezh State University*, *4*, 128-133.

Wittgenstein, L. (2018). Encyclopedia of Philosophy Language-games and Family Resemblance. Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/#Lan