

Chapter 2

A Conceptual Framework for Postmodernism

Abstract Some general concepts and ideas characterise postmodernist discourse. This is what you might call an analytical tool or *apparatus criticus*. Though, as a whole, it is impossible to assert the absolute accuracy of the borders between the concepts mentioned below, it is however necessary to underline the standard mission of the concepts used for the characteristics of a postmodernist paradigm, in particular, the terms “postmodernism”, “postmodern”, “postmodernity”, “postmodernisation”, and “postcontemporaneity”. If postmodernity is focused on the social and political reflections of this philosophy in a society, postmodernism is a cultural and intellectual phenomenon. Hence, we can speak about a condition, that is postmodern, and about postmodernism as the intellectual phenomenon. The postmodernist philosophy in this measurement creates a theoretical basis, or, in other words, a basis of postmodernism. Hence, postmodernism is a philosophical and ideological projection of postmodernity. Summarising the positions, it is possible to notice that postmodernism expresses a philosophical measurement that the postmodern and postmodernity are social, and that postmodernisation is a social and economic measurement of a concept that, in our opinion, testifies to the interdisciplinary character of the phenomenon “postmodernism” and its complex character.

Keywords Concept · Narratology · Derivatives · Postmodernism · Postmodernity · Postmodernisation · Postcontemporaneity

Some general concepts and ideas characterise postmodernist discourse, and are what you might call an analytical tool or *apparatus criticus*.

Though on the whole it is impossible to assert the absolute accuracy of the borders between the concepts mentioned below, it is however necessary to underline the standard mission of the concepts used to characterise a postmodernist paradigm, in particular the terms “postmodernism”, “postmodern”, “postmodernity”, “postmodernisation”, and “postcontemporaneity”.

Postmodernity literally means “after modernity”, and symbolises a new condition that the modern society and culture enters. In this new condition the forms of

technology and information have changed, consumption has replaced manufacture, image has replaced a reality, and a fragmentation has replaced the whole, meta-narratives have begun to be refused, and popular culture has started to occupy a leading position (Saribay 2001, 5).

As a whole, postmodernity is characterised as a postcontemporary condition or a condition of postcontemporaneity that is, in turn, independent of the comprehension of the given fact and its art development (Rubtsov 2011).

The term “postmodernity” is used in several different senses. The widest use of postmodernity—in particular referring to postmodernist art and architecture—is defined as a condition of the postmodern (that follows the modern or has arisen as a reaction to it). It is also used for the description of a period in architecture that began in the 1950s as a reply to the withdrawal from the categorical division of styles, and a reaction to ideas about “high” and “low” art and the global village.

In philosophy and critical theory, postmodernity expresses a situation or conditions in society that have arisen after the modern. Many theorists of postmodernity consider postmodernity as the historical situation specifying the end of modernity (defined as the period/condition identified with the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment).

Postmodern means the postmodernist condition of a society, a consequence of information technology, globalisation, differentiations of lifestyles, hyper-consumption, chaotisation of the financial markets and public benefit, obsolescence of the nation state and the traditional course of life (Turner 1996, 83; 1999, 51).

The postmodern is characterised as the phenomenon creating the inevitable postcontemporaneity (Rubtsov 2011).

If postmodernity is focused on the social and political reflections of postmodernism in a society, postmodernism is a cultural and intellectual phenomenon. Along with a postmodernist condition, which is the expression of economic, political, and social measurements, there is a postmodernism that is an expression of positions and approaches that have arisen as a reaction to modernism in architecture and other art forms, as well as philosophy, religion, society, and culture. Hence, we can speak about a condition that is postmodern, and about postmodernism as the intellectual phenomenon.

In this connection, it is also defined “as a trend in creativity and a reflection”, which is characterised by self-identification and special language (Ibid.).

If postmodernity describes a condition of existence or a condition, or is connected with institutes and changes in conditions (Giddens 1990), postmodernism expresses aesthetic, literary, political, and social philosophy. The problem of postmodernity, in a Lyotardian interpretation, is a problem of expression of thought, first of all in such spheres as art, literature, philosophy, and policy (Lyotard 1986, 118). The postmodernist philosophy in this measurement creates a theoretical basis, or, in other words, a basis for postmodernism.

The term “postmodernism” connected with the term “postmodernity” expresses the currents and philosophy that have arisen as a reaction to modernism or in

response to a condition of the postmodern. Postmodernism means the philosophical criticism of “great narratives” (Turner 1999, 51).

Thus, if the postmodern condition testifies to the general condition that has arisen in connection with social, economic, and political orderings appearing after the Second World War, postmodern philosophy shows a philosophical/theoretical background of positions and tendencies in postmodernism.

Hence, postmodernism is a philosophical and ideological projection of postmodernity (Bolay 2003, 63).

Postmodernism is not directed at a concrete ideology, doctrine, or philosophy. In the main, the theoretical ground on which all doctrines and philosophical ideas are constructed is problematised.

Modernism corresponds to the cultural phenomenon and meaning of modernity (modern); postmodernism corresponds to postmodernity (postmodern). According to one of the approaches, the formulation and legitimation noted in philosophical measurement is called postmodernism, and a distribution in non-Western societies is called postmodernisation (Saribay 2001, 5).

The term “postmodernisation” designates the new shape of modernisation, which doesn’t mean a change of identity in which course there is no loss of national sociocultural bases (e.g., Japan and Southeast Asia). However, this problem profile is beyond our research.

Summarising positions, it is possible to notice that postmodernism expresses a philosophical measurement that the postmodern and postmodernity are social measurements, and postmodernisation is a social and economic measurement of a concept that, in our opinion, testifies to the interdisciplinary character of the phenomenon of “postmodernism” and its complex nature.

The concept of “interdisciplinarity” is one of the main features of a modern scientific and intellectual activity (*Mejdistsiplinarnost v naukakh i filosofii* 2010, 6).

The given attitude of postmodern is expressed in a “decomposition of a principle of legitimacy of knowledge”: “this decomposition proceeds in speculative games, weakening communications of encyclopaedic structure in which each science should take the place ... Disciplines disappear, and the interpenetration of sciences occurs on their borders that lead to an occurrence of new territories”. The noted position removes the idea of delimitation as areas in one discipline, and creates joint disciplines including the way classifying natural sciences and the humanities; “thus the assertion of the narrative nature of any knowledge by postmodernism deprives their differentiation of the intra-scientific basis” (Mojejko and Mayboroda 2001, 80).

The absorption of knowledge from others, including the natural sciences, when an analysis subject becomes an unexpected and sporadic fluctuation initiated by disorganisation, chaos, and disorder observed in social and cultural realities, makes a basis for postmodernist paradigms (Kravchenko 2007, 38).

The idea of interdisciplinarity contacts an epoch of delegitimation and the empiricism caused by it. The attitude to knowledge is seen in that of the owners of a material towards those who receive its results. Owing to “brainstorming”, they

influence productivity positively without having a meta-narrative or a meta-language for an expression of the purpose of knowledge and its purposeful use.

The interdisciplinary approach to postmodernism results from a postmodernist complex. Along with a cultural postmodernism, it consists of a philosophical-theoretical (actually the Method) component known as deconstruction, where it is possible to note linguistic (Derrida), epistemological (Lyotard), social (Deleuze, Guattari, Baudrillard), and power-political (Foucault) aspects. The historical measurement of deconstruction is seen in poststructuralism, and postmodernism as the social theory is seen in radical pluralism (Grechko 2000, 171).

Hence, the integration function of postmodernism focuses on a dialogue between disciplines and, accordingly, the “frontier nature” caused by its formation “on philosophical borders”, which, according to Derrida, are seen in the above-mentioned (Mojejko and Mayboroda 2001, 81).

Postmodernism, being beyond culture, is shown in all spheres of public life. Differing from modernism in a certain case, or in a positive or negative sense, it covers all political and material/social changes, and both intellectual and theoretical products and cultural practices.

All these measurements, as well as the polysemanticity of the concept of the “postmodern”, cause the cultural, sociological, and philosophical analyses of the postmodern and its indicators in societies. Hence, the necessity of the complex approach to problems of public changes demands the interdisciplinary establishment of studies.

Cultural character is caused by its occurrence first in art, and then in other spheres.

Postmodern theories cause the analysis of a social reflection of the postmodern without actually being sociological, and “incorporate achievements of a variety of disciplines—anthropology, mathematics, social synergy, linguistics, and especially semiotics including not only language, but also other sign and symbolical systems, etc” (Kravchenko 2007, 640).

Hence, the interdisciplinarity of the postmodern, in our opinion, may be dictated by such typological signs as the synthetical character or syncretism, and its conceptual apparatus.

As follows from the above, in our opinion, postmodernism focuses on the social sphere.

The original tradition of the social analysis in the 1980s–1990s, incorporating new areas of scientific research, began to represent a conceptual (postmodernist) discourse, and was used with regard to many spheres not differing in the unity and heterogeneity of problematics.

The obviousness of the influence of postmodernist theories on modern sociological thought explains the initial interest in socially significant problems (Ibid., 641).

The social reflections of the postmodern expressed in such spheres of a society as religion, policy, culture, and the economy make up the basic apparatus of discourse.

Besides those noted, there are also sociological, religious, political, and economic measurements of the postmodern. The focus of our analysis is on the indicators of the postmodern measured in social, philosophical, cultural, religious, and political projections of what will be questioned further.

Postmodernism characterises an axiological accent on the philosophical comprehension of a problem of language. In the postmodern, its role in culture is reinterpreted. The use of the methodological apparatus of linguistics for an explanation of a social reality is typical of postmodernists, in particular Foucault and Derrida.

At the same time, we can see that postmodernism has a language. A certain set of concepts and terms, among which are “especially postmodernist” ones that accept specific semantic colouring in a postmodernist context, is characteristic.

In a postmodern lexicon the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics are attributed, “a specific character of mutual relations between elements; type of connection between signifier and signified; a special character of use in speech practices” (Rubtsov 2011).

One of the important concepts of postmodernism is the discourse. In Foucauldian interpretations, the discourse is, “first of all, the certain establishment causing a mode of existence of objects”. The discourse in this sense has a similarity to the concept of context (Foucault 2002, 285).

At the same time, a dialogue of argumentation is also called discourse. If we consider consensus as an unattainable horizon it will not represent the end of a discussion, only one condition. In this case, the discussion comes to an end in parody.

The term “episteme”, coined by Foucault in a philosophical way, is a wider concept rather than a discourse representing a system of thinking and scientific theorising characteristic of the concrete historical period. According Foucault, episteme, which in translation means “knowledge”, is a vision. At the same time, it is close to the meaning of a problematics concept.

“Concept” and “narrative” are the other concepts of a postmodernist narratology.

Postmodernism, the postmodern condition, and the philosophy of the postmodern, or, in a more specific sense, poststructuralist philosophy, can be considered in different senses and contexts. It is possible to emphasise the scientific, philosophical, cultural, social, religious, anthropological, and economic measurements of postmodernism.

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