

POSTMODERNISM: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

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Abstract: *While being accompanied by the objective phenomena of technicalization, urbanization, and bureaucratization, industrialization as much as possible involved a person in the universalized life of the community, which turned into the formation of a mass society that standardized social life. The paper discusses the specific features of the postmodern situation: decentering, pluralism, fragmentation, etc. Particular attention is paid to the principle of pluralism, which is considered as a counterweight to the narrowing of the diversity of the life spectrum, standardization and uniformity, to which the stage of modernism has led to at the stage of its completion. It is proved that the term “postmodernism” not only reflects the completeness of a certain historical and worldview period, but also implies a revision of approaches and a change in guidelines in the methodology of cognition and sociocultural practice. The listed features of the postmodernism methodology not only provide an idea of the modern type of thinking that overcomes dogmatism, totalitarianism and unification, but also allows to grasp the actual postmodern nature of current active practices of symbolizing meanings that originate with modern culture, which in their genesis are phenomena that destruct the world of conventional values.*

Keywords: postmodern philosophy, post-industrial society, multiplicity, mass culture, information age.

While being accompanied by the objective phenomena of technicalization, urbanization, and bureaucratization, industrialization as much as possible involved a person in the universalized life of the community, which turned into the formation of a mass society that standardized social life^{1,2,3}. The need to conform to an industrialized society compelled people to accept its “rules of the game”, involving them in the industries of labor, consumption, entertainment, etc. that it creates. This process, in turn, was supplemented by the use of various social technologies to involve people in a mass society that prepared a person

¹ A. Arkhipov, D. Ushakov, “*Functional effectiveness and modern mechanisms for national urban systems globalization: The case of Russia*”, in: *E-Planning and Collaboration: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications*, IGI Global, Pennsylvania, 2018.

² D. Ushakov, S. Chich-Jen, “*Global economy urbanization and urban economy globalization: Forms, factors, results*”, in: *E-Planning and Collaboration: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications*, IGI Global, Pennsylvania, 2018.

³ O. Maltseva, “Dialogue between fashion and laughter: modern and postmodern correlations”, in *S&bid*, 2016, vol. 2, no. 142, p. 79-87. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2016.2\(142\).70577](http://dx.doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2016.2(142).70577)

for a uniform existence (which is characterized by the merging of open and concealed, inspired and lacklustre, ceremonial and casual, marriage and cohabitation, official and unofficial, etc. and the transformation of all this into a single big daily routine), giving rise to the phenomenon of the so-called mass person, mass consciousness, etc. As a result, in conditions of mass society and its corresponding culture, a person is forced to be content with stereotyped answers to existential questions, for example, the question of the purpose and meaning of human life⁴. But even since the times of N.Ya. Danilevsky⁵, thinkers noted that the uniformity and standardization of culture are detrimental to all mankind. To confirm this, we shall cite two quotes, separated from each other by over a century: one belongs to N.Ya. Danilevsky, the other – to L.N. Gumilev⁶.

According to N.Ya. Danilevsky: “The common to all mankind not only does not exist in reality, but also to desire to be such means to be content with a common place, colorlessness, lack of originality – in a word, to be content with intolerable incompleteness. Another matter is universal, which must be distinguished from common (in our case, “common” can be understood as the result of the leveling of industrialized societies by popular culture – NB of A.F. and M.F.)”⁷. By L.N. Gumilev, cultural diversity is the optimal form of human existence: “After all, it is impossible to imagine that there will be one species of trees on Earth, or only one species of animals. The biosphere of everything will be multilayered, diverse and it is only in this diversity that the strength persists. The same applies to culture.”⁸. Both N.Ya. Danilevsky and L.N. Gumilev proceed in their reasoning from the biological law, according to which the key to survival of the living lies in diversity of species, while uniformity, on the contrary, leads to extinction. Extrapolation of biological law to the sociocultural sphere leads to the conclusion that the cultural diversity is of vital necessity.

The development of industrialization gave birth to the phenomenon of mass culture, the main requirement of which was precisely the

⁴ W. Dysard, *The onset of the information age*, Progress, Moscow, 1986.

⁵ N.Ya. Danilevsky, *Russia and Europe: a look at the cultural and political relations of the Slavic world towards the German-Romanesque*, Publishing House “Glagol”, St. Petersburg, 1995.

⁶ L.N. Gumilev, *Ethnogenesis and biosphere of the Earth*, Ayris-Press, Moscow, 1994. Alina R. Gaynutdinova, Sergey A. Zinin, Alfiya F. Galimullina, Marsel I. IbragimovS, „Special features of studying modern Russian poetry at school in the context of Russian and Tatar cultures’ dialogue,” in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 12, p. 380.

⁷ N.Ya. Danilevsky, *Russia and Europe: a look at the cultural and political relations of the Slavic world towards the German-Romanesque*, Publishing House “Glagol”, St. Petersburg, 1995.

⁸ L.N. Gumilev, *Ethnogenesis and biosphere of the Earth*, Ayris-Press, Moscow, 1994.

uniformity that threatens culture (and with it humanity) with extinction. Therefore, here, as a hypothesis, we put forward the proposition that culture has found a way to elude of the destructive uniformity of mass culture, a kind of self-preservation mechanism. The becoming of mass society took place in the 1950s. Around the same time, D. Bell, characterizing the state of American society, started talking about post-industrialism, thereby laying the foundation of the theory of post-industrial society (the main developers of which, in addition to D. Bell, were D. Riesman, A. Toffler, Z. Brzeziński, J. Galbraith, A. Touraine, etc.). If post-industrialism, as a result of the technicalization of labor, at that time was associated by D. Bell with progress, economic growth and increased prosperity, then by the end of the 1960s, to its distinctive features he attributed the mass distribution of creative, intellectual labor, a qualitatively increased volume and the importance of scientific knowledge and information⁹ (including electronic means of its use and dissemination), the development of means of communication, the predominance of services, science, education, culture over industry and agriculture in the structure of the economy^{10,11,12}. Attempts of various researchers to find a precise definition of the current state of such societies led to a wide range of descriptive words that either emphasized one of the sides of societies¹³: “technotronic society” (Z. Brzeziński), “superindustrial civilization” (A. Toffler), “information society” (D. Bell); or employed the prefix “post” to mark the end, the completion of something¹⁴: “postcapitalist society” (R. Dahrendorf), “postcivilization”

⁹ T.V. Portnova, “Practices and methods for actualization of the scientific information in art excursions (Excursions and cultural heritage in the contemporary world”, in *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 2016, vol. 11, no. 14, p. 6690-6696.

¹⁰ D. Bell, *Social framework of the information society. New technocratic wave in the West*. Progress, Moscow, 1986.

¹¹ S. Murinska, O. Aleksandrova, R. Dodonov, “Information warfare: future challenges of Latvia and Ukraine”, in *Skhid*, 2018, vol. 5, no. 157, p. 66-72. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2018.5(157).148661

¹² E.M. Akhmetshin, A.V. Pavlyuk, V.V. Ling, M.V. Mikhailova, R.A. Shichiyakh, A.V. Kozachek, “The use of private start-ups in higher education”, in *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 2019, vol. 22, no. 1, 1528-2651-22-S1-345. Alina R. Gaynutdinova, Sergey A. Zinin, Alfiya F. Galimullina, Marsel I. IbragimovS, „Special features of studying modern Russian poetry at school in the context of Russian and Tatar cultures’ dialogue,” in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 12, p. 380.

¹³ D. Bell, *The coming of post-industrial society*, Doubleday Anchor, New York, 1971; D. Bell, *Beyond modernism. Beyond self. Arts, politics and will*, Basic Books, New York, 1977

¹⁴ J. Derrida, *Position*, D.L., Kyiv, 1996. Dana Shayakhmetova, Aigul Baituova, Kazyna Bekbenbetova, Dosbol Isla, Saule Yerzhanova, „The development of teacher’s

(C. Boulding), “postmodern” (A. Etzioni), “posthistorical” (R. Seidenberg) and others. This terminological diversity reflects the stage of formation of societies of this type, with the result of which theorists have not yet fully developed their image¹⁵.

The concept of postmodernism and post-industrial society

For a philosophical generalization of the totality of changes in society in the second half of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st century, the first group of terms that absolutize a certain side of these societies (primarily scientific and technical) cannot be acceptable. Until a more meaningful term has been found, the most preferable, in our opinion, is the one in which the prefix “post” is used in combination with the name of the previous historical period of “Modern Age”, namely, “postmodernism”. In this term, the prefix “post” reflects the completeness of not only a certain historical, but also worldview period, and also implies a change in approaches in scientific and theoretical knowledge, a revision of orientations in social political practice, etc. That is, through this prefix an attempt is made to comprehensively cover the entire sociocultural space. At the same time, the theory of post-industrialism transforms into a sociological doctrine that expresses the worldview of postmodernism and helps to understand its culture¹⁶.

Postmodernism is attempting to interpret the technological nature of modernity, recognizing that the basis for changing the status of knowledge and the emergence of a special postmodern worldview and worldview are processes of comprehensive information and the desire to break out of the rigid shackles of standardization and uniformity that the modernism period led to at its completion stage¹⁷. An attempt to escape the era of the Modern Age in the second half of the 20th century was a gradual transition from the mass nature of production to small-scale production, which, in essence, led from standardization, which transforms society into a totality, suppresses a particular personality, to diversity in life

multicultural competence in the context of modern higher education,” in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 12, p. 281.

¹⁵ Z.K. Brzezinski, *Between two ages*, Viking Press, New York, 1970.

¹⁶ O. Maltseva, “The phenomenon of the carnivalization of sport in postmodern society”, in *Skhid*, 2018, vol. 1, no. 153, p. 108-120. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2018.1\(153\).127538](http://dx.doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2018.1(153).127538)

¹⁷ E. Akhmetshin, I. Ilyina, V. Kulibanova, T. Teor, “Special aspects of master data-based integrated management of region reputation in modern IT environment”, in *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 2019, vol. 497, no. 1, article no. 012022.

and to the destruction of the primacy of single over the multiple, of common over the individual, of the whole over the particular in philosophy. Thus, the consequences of the demassification of production penetrate into all spheres of public life and are global in nature. According to A. Toffler: “More and more people are realizing that a new culture is forming around us. These are new attitudes towards work, gender, nation, leisure, authority and so on”¹⁸. The element of this new culture, the basis of which is formed by post-industrialism, and the way of understanding of which lies in the postmodern philosophy, is postmodernism.

Postmodern culture is “irreversibly pluralistic”, because it deals not with the reality of the natural or technical world, but with the reality of the world of signs – texts of culture. It “runs away from all forms of monism, unification..., does not tolerate a single universally binding utopia and the many hidden forms of despotism, instead proceeding to proclaim the multiplicity and competition of paradigms”¹⁹. D. Bell emphasized that if, in pre-industrial societies, life primarily constitutes a game with nature, and the natural world is a reality for people; if in industrial societies people – producers of goods exist according to the rules of the game with nature produced by them, and the technical world is a reality for people; then in a post-industrial society that focuses on services, people play with people, and the reality in it becomes “an exclusively social world, without nature and things, tested more by mutual awareness of people than by external reality”²⁰.

The latter type of society is described by an orientation towards diversity and variety, self-realization and enjoyment, which is fully consistent with postmodern culture, since “radical pluralism and the inevitable heterogeneity, diversity and variety of different paradigms constitutes the principle of postmodern society at large, since it is characterized by a multiplicity of conflicting and incoherent criteria”²¹. As A. Giddens wrote: “The contours of the present world that can be designated as postmodern, are very different from those that existed during the period of modernism”²². The culture of postmodernism is generated and is a component of this world – a society making a transition from an industrialized stage to post-industrialism, which, in our opinion,

¹⁸ A. Toffler, *Race, power and culture*, Nauka, Moscow, 1986.

¹⁹ W. Welsch, *Unsere postmoderne moderne*, VCH Acta Humaniora, Weinheim, 1987.

²⁰ D. Bell, *Beyond modernism. Beyond self. Arts, politics and will*, Basic Books, New York, 1977.

²¹ W. Welsch, *Unsere postmoderne moderne*, VCH Acta Humaniora, Weinheim, 1987.

²² A. Giddens, *The consequences of modernity*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990.

can be studied as productively as possible using the postmodern methodology.

Post-industrial society, in contrast to an industrial one, which is aimed at maximum standardization and unification, relies on a fundamentally different technology, which seeks to ensure sociocultural diversity. At the same time, the orientation towards diversity develops into a kind of fundamental foundation of a post-industrial society, on which practically all the components of the sociocultural system are based. The reorientation of society from uniformity to diversity has far-reaching consequences, manifested in the recognition of equivalence, equipollence, simultaneous equal coexistence of various objects, services, goods, professions, phenomena, approaches, lifestyles, points of view, opinions, etc. As a result, the principle of pluralism, which in the postmodern concept becomes one of the main ones, becomes characteristic of the worldview of post-industrial society²³.

“Advance to the truth” in the context of postmodern philosophy involves factoring in the various existing concepts, subject to the unlimited addition of new ones. This is not a generalization, but rather a dialogue, a communication of various forms of understanding, due to which the modernist monologue, characterized by the ideas of the “triad”, “synthesis”, and “sublation”, becomes meaningless. As V.S. Bibler wrote: “In order to understand an object, ... it is necessary to discern it in a double, triple, oftentimes multiplied vision – in the vision of the classical and in the vision of the modern theorist. ... It is necessary to place this object “between” two (or more) universal forms of understanding (not reducible neither to each other nor to any third, “genuinely true understanding”). It is necessary to include it in the process of mutual understanding of different, mutually exclusive and assuming each other spiritual (mental) worlds”²⁴. E. Bauman expressed a somewhat different idea: “The sudden popularity of pluralism is most inherent in our days... Today we live in projects, not in the Project”²⁵.

In a post-industrial society, the principle of decentring should not be equated with anarchy, since it implies only the absence of unity of command, a single governing centre, and not the absence of power as such

²³ D. Ushakov, E. Rubinskaya, “*Reforming of the state immigration policy in the context of globalization: On the example of Russia*”, in: *Immigration and the Current Social, Political, and Economic Climate: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice*, IGI Global, Pennsylvania, 2018.

²⁴ V.S. Bibler, *From science to the logic of culture (two philosophical introductions to the twenty-first century)*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1991.

²⁵ Z. Bauman, “The dispute about postmodernism”, in *Sociological Journal*, 1994, no. 4, p. 69-80.

or restraining moral and ethical standards. In such societies, along with the decentralization process, integration processes are also ongoing, otherwise they would simply have fallen apart. But post-industrial integration is special, because it does not imply the dominance of a single centre, subjugating and imposing its will. The purpose of such integration is the possibility of coordination, which allows the society, both as a whole and its components, to successfully function and develop, since their identity and individual characteristics are taken into account. Ultimately, such state of affairs leads to the fact that the artificial industrial “monolith”, while externally remaining a kind of integrity, was internally fragmented, falling apart in post-industrialism into many separate components, in which the whole does not dominate the components. This fragmentation affected all spheres of life of a modern person, providing freedom of social (both vertical and horizontal) mobility. In combination with the elimination of universals and priorities, not without the help of television, fragmentation turned into a “clip” consciousness for a person who is characterized by superficiality, brevity, crudity of conclusions, a departure from universally significant and permanently reproduced patterns of thinking, jumping from one thought to another, but sometimes also originality, brightness, and attractiveness. The fragmentation of post-industrial society becomes apparent when one looks at their sociocultural space “from the outside”: it manifests itself in “mosaicism”, “fan-shapedness”, “collage”, “complexity” of culture from many different cultures.

Moreover, once marginal cultures (or subcultures) come to the fore, resulting in a paradoxical situation – minorities (whether sexual, national, religious, etc.) in their aggregate end up in the majority. But the fragmentation process is ambivalent: a person has options to choose from and what to join proceeding from their own needs. This is one side of the coin. But, on the other side, the ever-growing number of different subcultures, including “children of computer networks and the Internet”²⁶, seriously complicates this choice. As A. Toffler emphasizes, answering his own question “Is a person ready to deal with the increased choice?”: “The time is approaching when the choice, instead of liberating individuals, becomes so complicated and difficult that it will turn into its

²⁶ A.N. Faleev, M.N. Filatova, “Theory of communication technology M. McLuhan: problems of the digital generation”, in O.M. Smirnova, M.B. Balycheva, L.V. Volkova, N.P. Ryabchun (eds.), *The IV International Scientific Conference Humanitarian Gubkin Readings “Global risks of the digital age and images of the future”*, Moscow, Publishing Center of Gubkin Russian State University of Oil and Gas, 2019, pp. 318-328.

opposite. A time is coming when choice will turn into an excess of choice, and freedom – into a denial of freedom”²⁷.

The complexity, and sometimes the impossibility for a modern person to make the right choice for themselves in a mosaic sociocultural space, is one of the reasons for “dissolving the boundaries” between different subcultures and opposing entities. A striking example of such a “dissolution of boundaries” is “unisex” as a fairly common style in clothing, especially among young people, behaviour and lifestyle, which does not recognize the differences between the sexes. The emergence of “unisex” and similar symbioses captures the ongoing restructuring of society according to other principles that are not based on binary oppositions (winter/summer, day/night, man/woman, truth/lies, subject/object, thing/sign, black/white, etc.). Does this entail a loss of self, anonymity of people? There is still no definite answer to this question, but it already appears possible to register the ongoing changes. One of the varieties of bizarre integration and fragmentation in a post-industrial society is eclecticism, which becomes the main attribute of its culture. According to J.F. Lyotard: “Eclecticism is a zero degree of general culture: they listen to reggae on the radio, watch Western movies at the cinema, go to McDonald’s diner for lunch, eat out in the restaurant with local cuisine for dinner, use Parisian perfume in Tokyo and wear retro-style clothes in Hong Kong... becoming kitsch, art contributes to the ignorance of the patrons’ taste. Artists, owners of art galleries, critics, and the public flock wherever “something is happening”. However, the true reality of this “something is happening” is the reality of money: in the absence of aesthetic criteria, it is possible and useful to determine the value of works of art by the profit that they make. Such a reality brings together all, even the most controversial tendencies in art, provided that these tendencies and needs have purchasing power”²⁸. V.S. Bibler believed that in the 20th century a new type of society was formed, which he called the society of culture, in which the latter declared its claims to a dominant position among other spheres of public life. In the 20th century, as the philosopher claims: “It is discovered that in the single space of consciousness swarm various spiritual and cultural spectra”, which are “not distributed along the Hegelian ladder of sublation and ascension”, they are simultaneous and “make sense only in relation to each other, in real dialogical

²⁷ A. Toffler, *Future shock*, Random House, New York, 1970.

²⁸ J.F. Lyotard, “Answering question: what is postmodern”, in *The Postmodern Explained to Children*, Sydney, Power Publications, 1992, pp. 1-9; J.F. Lyotard, *The state of postmodernism*, Ladamir, Moscow, 1998.

communication with each other, only in the vital culture for my cultural being”²⁹.

Description of the main approaches of the cultural phenomena research methodology

The development of theoretical approaches based on “dialogue communication” has shown dramatic changes in understanding the surrounding sociocultural reality. Having developed in a philosophical direction, these approaches at the end of the second half of the 20th century became the basis of the postmodern methodology. It is based on the ideas of the decay of unity and the promotion of multiplicity and is aimed at creating an ontology associated with open dynamic systems that develop non-linearly, upon the description of which the concepts of classical philosophy, which is based on binary oppositions, are not applicable. For this reason, within the framework of this “counter-philosophical discourse”, attempts are made to escape the juxtaposition of black and white, phenomenon and the world, one’s own and another’s, object and subject, idea and objective, signified and signifier, good and evil, etc. It affirms the “openness” of knowledge, upon which the only legitimation is that which enables the creation of new meanings, production of new ideas³⁰. Within the framework of the postmodern methodology, “scientific” is considered only as one of the interpretations. With that, all attempts to adequately describe the interpreted phenomena founder on the impossibility of finding such an angle of view that would allow factoring in all levels and faces, aspects and features of these phenomena. Thus, a forced fixation of only certain features takes place while completely ignoring others. The analysis is carried out not of the phenomena themselves in their multifaceted completeness, but only of their specific side, face, level of their essence. This suggests the conclusion that all our knowledge of reality, all our ideas about it, derive from our diverse systems of representation³¹. And, therefore, “the world for us is a

²⁹ V.S. Bibler, “About the essence of dialogue”, in *Philosophy Issues*, 1989, no. 7, p. 140-153.

³⁰ K.R. Nurgali, J.K. Kishkenbaeva, “Nomadism as a way of life in the Kazakh literature and culture by the example of the modern Kazakh novels”, in *Life Science Journal*, 2013, vol. 10, no. 12, p. 738-741.

³¹ Ch. Brooke-Rose, *The dissolution of character in the novel. reconstructing individualism: autonomy, individuality, and the self in western thought*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1986.

Mystery, and we cannot rule over it and order it to appear in its fullness and unconcealedness”³².

According to M. Heidegger, a philosopher who has largely prepared the advent of postmodernism, no theoretical concept can exhaustively outline a concept of the phenomenon under study, being able to reveal it only from a certain angle. In fairness, we shall note that F. Nietzsche³³ wrote about this long before M. Heidegger: “Confidence that only one single interpretation of the world has a right to exist, namely one that justifies your own existence... an interpretation that allows only that which can be calculated, counted, weighed, which can be seen and perceived – such an interpretation is sheer ignorance and stupidity, if not mental illness, idiocy”³⁴. And more: “It is not given to us to see what is happening around the corner: but curiosity is consuming us, we want to know what other intellects and prospects exist; for example, can any beings perceive time in the opposite direction, or alternately in one or the other (which would set a completely different direction of life and a different concept of cause and effect). But I believe that now, sitting in our corner, we, at least, would not have the ridiculous idea to insolently assert that only those prospects have a right to exist that come from our corner”³⁵.

The most important characteristic of the postmodern perception of the world is the attitude to reality as an object of awareness, the results of which are registered and noted not just verbally by voice, but are recorded primarily in writing, in the text. Ultimately, the world itself appears as a text filled with different meanings. Reading of sociocultural “worlds – texts”, clarification and comprehension of their conceptual interpretations caused the need to develop new methodological approaches. Among the latter, we highlight the “deconstruction” strategy proposed by J. Derrida, aimed at creating a “new concept of writing”³⁶, the meaning of which becomes open, pluralistic, as well as “text analysis” and “reading-writing” substantiated by R. Barthes. J. Derrida, with the aim of revealing the polysemy of the text and demonstrating the lack of its unique meaning, contributed to the development of deconstructivism, which is usually interpreted as the technique of critical analysis. R. Barthes’ concept of text analysis and, first of all, his latest works are devoted to “reading-writing”. They are

³² M. Heidegger, *Conversation on a country road*, Vysshaya Shkola, Moscow, 1991.

³³ K. Nurgali, K. Assanov, G. Shashkina, M. Zhumabekov, F. Kultursynova, “The concept of dionysism in the legacy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Vyacheslav Ivanov”, in *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 2018, vol. 14, no. 2, p. 99-108.

³⁴ F. Nietzsche, *Compositions (vol. 2)*, Mysl, Moscow, 1990.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, 1990.

³⁶ J. Derrida, *Position*, D.L., Kyiv, 1996.

connected with the transition from understanding the object of literary criticism, which is considered as a “structure”, to understanding the object as a “text”, in which you can always find a specific property of the language – the ability to give birth to new meanings. These works of the mentioned author became the most significant contribution to the development of deconstructivism³⁷. Addressing the metaphorical essay in his work “S/Z”, R. Barthes laid the foundations of an intertextual analysis of a literary text, which includes, any other text apart from literary. According to the philosopher, it is precisely the intertextuality that is the prerequisite for creating a text and its inherent characteristic. He writes: “Each text is an intertext; other texts are present in it at various levels in more or less recognizable forms: texts of the preceding culture and texts of the surrounding culture. Each text is a new fabric woven from old quotes”³⁸. This situation is especially important in the postmodern perception of the world, when knowledge of previous texts becomes a prerequisite for the perception of a new text, the identification of its polysemy. To clarify the essence of the text studied by him through intertextual analysis, the “reader” provides his own interpretation of its meaning, which, according to R. Barthes, is “not in its certain “interpretation”, but in the diagrammatic totality of its readings, in their multiple system”³⁹.

It is “reading-writing” that is a specifically postmodern kind of interpretation based on “expanding intertextuality”, during which the interpreter’s personal “thesaurus” interacts with the text under study in all the variety of its intertextual connections, thereby allowing to create an “internal image” of the work, and by building up new meanings, how to “continue” it, overcoming the monosemy of a “strictly scientific” approach⁴⁰. The interpreter in the process of intertextual “reading-writing” perceives the postmodern text as a certain system that allows game freedom for the creation of a new meaning, which “...is now no longer a matter of generally recognized reality, but rather the epistemological and ontological problem of an isolated individual in an arbitrary and fragmented world”⁴¹. As a result, there are as many interpretations as there are “researching readers” of the text, which are not passive but active, and

³⁷ I.P. Ilyin, *Postmodernism from its beginnings to the end of the century: the evolution of scientific myth*, Intrada, Moscow, 1998.

³⁸ R. Barthes, *S/Z*, Akademicheskij Proekt, Moscow, 1994.

³⁹ I.P. Ilyin, *Poststructuralism. Deconstructivism. Postmodernism*, Intrada, Moscow, 1997.

⁴⁰ A. Afanasev, R. Mukhametshina, D. Tolbayeva, K. Nurgali, “Leo Tolstoy’s sphere of concepts in the development of women’s education”, in *Opcion*, 2019, vol. 35, no. 22, p. 906-920.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 1997.

which enter into co-creation with the author of the work, multiplying the meanings that are potentially embedded in it each in its own way. Thus, by R. Barthes, the postmodern text contributes to the “birth of the reader”, implicitly carrying the idea of the plurality of truth, which cannot be exhausted.

The direct implementation of these ideas, the main postulate of which can be an aphorism: “Truth is only a means, and it is not one”, as well as the “deconstruction” of everything “that connects the concepts and norms of science with ontology, with logocentrism” led to the abolition of the periphery and centre with the simultaneous introduction of de-hierarchization (including the value-based one) and differentiation⁴². The application of J. Derrida’s “deconstruction” strategy to the text, the abolition of the “dictatorship of sense and meaning” with its help caused the sublation of binary oppositions and led to the departure from strict determinism by “dispersing” the meaning in a constant game of differences. The rigidly rational and deterministic world with once and for all parameters has been replaced, the “centred structure” has been replaced by self-organizing chaos in which “there is no centre ...where there is an endless play of symbolic substitutions”⁴³. This turned into a multiplicity of cultural attitudes, the abolition of the importance of authority and tradition, the power of chance over the universal, the supremacy of difference over identity, the relativization of the conventional ideals of Truth and Beauty.

Thus, the main features of postmodernism as an upcoming reality include pluralism, decentring, uncertainty, discontinuity, fragmentation, the absence of binary oppositions, variability, eclecticism. We shall add to this that the transition of industrial societies to post-industrialism (and with it the postmodern situation) is accompanied by a gradual transition to a new methodology for studying cultural phenomena – the methodology of postmodernism. The listed features of the postmodernism methodology not only provide an idea of the modern type of thinking that overcomes dogmatism, totalitarianism and unification, but also allows to grasp the actual postmodern nature of current active practices of symbolizing meanings that originate with modern culture, which in their genesis are phenomena that destruct the world of conventional values. By counterbalancing uniformity, narrowing the diversity of the life spectrum, actively advocating for multiplicity and diversification, the coexistence of heterogeneous elements, in recognizing

⁴² J. Derrida, *Position*, D.L., Kyiv, 1996.

⁴³ J. Derrida, *Letter and difference*, Akademicheskij Proekt, Moscow, 2000.

and encouraging the diversity of modern life projects, philosophical concepts and scientific theories, postmodernism aims to search for individually responsible solutions so that in the world of semantic multiplicity and uncertainty, life does not lose all the wealth of its colours.