

УДК 316.334

## Change of Fundamental Metaphors of Worldviews in Sociology

**Natalia B. Otreshko\***

*National Pedagogical University  
named after M.P.Dragomanov  
9 Pirogova str., Kiev, 03057 Ukraine*

Received 12.07.2013, received in revised form 26.07.2013, accepted 31.07.2013

---

*The article studies main metaphors which contained in scientific patterns of the world of modern sociology. The author maintains that there is the change of main metaphors in the modern sociological theory from the metaphor of social system to metaphors of social network and rhizome. The sociologists who used the metaphor of the system have realized that all of the social processes not random, interlinked. Researches who used the metaphor of the system have described the context of social processes. The metaphor of the network allows to see the permeability of the boundaries of social groups and communities in the modern world. The metaphor of the rhizome is least developed, most philosophical metaphor. It contains the idea of removing boundaries between inside and outside in the analysis of mutual interference individual and mass consciousness.*

*Keywords: scientific patterns of the world, metaphor of social system, metaphor of social network, metaphor of rhizome.*

---

### **Introduction into the research problem**

The world view is a system of representations of reality, accepted in the culture of a particular socio-historical space. The view of the world is formed by both everyday and scientific languages, and provides a basis for the perception of the world by a person as a subject of cognition. The worldview of a subject is constituted by a specific way of interpreting reality, which seems self-evident to him. This way of interpreting reality can be called the world view, dominating in the group and mass consciousness in a particular socio-cultural space.

The fundamental ontological concepts are a kind of taboo in relation to other sources of meanings. With the help of such concepts as “man”, “God”, “nature”, “society” in different views of the world, starting from the religious one, reality, variety of forms of life and existence become simplified and unified. This makes it easier for subjects of action (actors) to orientate themselves the world and in socio-cultural space, creates a universal pattern of existence for the whole of the society.

Two fundamental concepts can be pointed out in the worldviews of social world: social reality and the subject of action / cognition / power. The concept of social reality changes

---

© Siberian Federal University. All rights reserved

\* Corresponding author E-mail address: otreshko71@mail.ru

depending on the historical period in which a certain world view prevailed, as well as the way in which the subjects of cognition saw the foundations of this social reality. Cognition of the surrounding world by a man is not immediate; it is not based on the principle of direct reflection of the objects of the outside world in the mind of the subject. There is a mediator in the mind of the subject of cognition. In the contemporary philosophy of cognition and sociolinguistics this mediator is called a view or image of the world. At the heart of these images there are common sense and scientific ideas, which have become part of the established notions about the world. But the general frame of meaning in views of the world is created by fundamental philosophical metaphors and assumptions that have become truths in different cultures. They lay the foundations for the traditions of the society and the dominant worldview that distinguishes sense from nonsense, reason from insanity in everyday life, as well as in specific areas of knowledge such as science, religion, philosophy.

### **Conceptual basis for the research**

K. Aydukevich, a representative of L'viv-Warsaw school of logical positivism, formulated the following thesis: "all judgments that we accept, and which form the view of the world, are not unambiguously determined by knowledge obtained from our experience, they rather depend on the choice of the conceptual apparatus (totality of concepts) through which we interpret this knowledge" (Ajdukiewicz). This means that, to the extent that the subject of knowledge uses a certain conceptual structure, the data of his experience make him accept or reject certain propositions. In other words, the choice of concepts, with the help of which the subject of cognition describes and analyzes the processes and phenomena of reality, has a direct impact on the results of his cognitive activity. The conceptual apparatus sets

the cognitive matrix, which, on the one hand, is necessary for putting the object of cognition in order, and on the other, it, to some extent, substitutes reality for the cognizing subject.

The theoretical basis of any science is a set of some philosophical axioms, which are often not realized by the researcher. During the period of education they are accepted on faith, because they seem to be conventional and do not require additional proving. However, with the advancement of science, new characteristics of the studied objects are discovered that contradict conventional knowledge, which makes it necessary for the cognizing subject to change the dominant worldview for another one, meeting the standards of scientific knowledge.

In connection with theoretical premise of knowledge in social science, A. Gouldner formulated the conception of basic and domain premises. The peculiarity of this conception is that A. Gouldner connects the definition of the premise, forming the basis for representation of social reality, with interests and preferences of social scientist as representatives of specific social groups of the society which they study.

A. Gouldner defines the basic premise as "the world hypotheses – the basic notions about the world and everything that is in it" (Gouldner, p. 56). One of these hypotheses is the idea of order, the internal cohesion of the world, which is the basis of, firstly, religious, and then scientific thinking. Another world hypothesis is the proposition of the oneness of the substances of being of the world, hidden behind the illusory multiplicity of phenomena. This hypothesis is opposed by the idea of absence of a single world substance, chaotic and dynamic nature of realities as its basic substances of being.

The world hypotheses belong to metaphysics. They are these hypotheses that formed the features of classical scientific knowledge and Western thought. At the classical stage, scientific

knowledge as knowledge of rational-logical type replaces other forms of knowledge as less authentic, thereby establishing a hierarchy of knowledge similar to the social hierarchy.

Among these peculiarities, postmodern researchers have identified several types of centrism: “1) The presumption of presence of deep immanent sense of existence as un general, as well individual events; 2) the presumption of linear determinism, suggesting existence of exhaustive explanation of any phenomenon or process by the outside quasi-cause ; 3) the presumption of expediency as flow of global world process, as well as individual events; 4) the presumption of thinking within the rigid binary (usually interpreted asymmetrically) oppositions”(Mozheiko (2002)).

The first two presumptions can be combined in the concept of logo-centrism, which serves to make sense of live as having the immanent “logic” and subordinated to linear determinism. The phenomenon of Logos in its rationalistic interpretation, according to post-modern philosophy, has actually become a symbol of culture of the Western type, embodying the fundamental values of Western mentality expressed in emphasizing activity of the powerful formal beginning, that is, in fact, the figure of outside causation. The entire Western cultural tradition is considered by post-modernism as “totally logo-centrist, based on the presumption of existence of universal laws of the universe, understood in the spirit of linear determinism” (Mozheiko (2002)).

A slightly different point of view on the basic hypotheses of metaphysics was presented by V. Dilthey. He believed that the metaphysics of Western Christian philosophy had three main components. The first component of metaphysics is the aesthetic and scientific position of Greek philosophy. Its fundamental concepts are: the cosmos as thinking, mathematical and

harmonious structure of the whole of reality, the world’s mind as the basis of the world and connection between substances of beings and human cognition, the deity as the architect or builder of the world, and finally, the world soul, the soul of the constellations, the souls of plants. The common principle that unites all these groups of concepts is that of “the divine mind – a principle to which reasonable in things is related and to which human mind is related, too; this principle allows cognizing the space in its wisdom, its logical, mathematical, harmonious, and immanently expedient order, and at the same time forms the basis and confidence of expediently forming activity of reasonable man”(Dilthey, p.10).

The second component of metaphysics is the Roman element. In it “the starting point of understanding of the world and creating metaphysical concepts is the role of the will under the conditions of rule of freedom, the law, the right and duty. The power of the sovereign supreme will over the whole of the world, delimitation of spheres of domination of individual wills from each other in the legal structure of the society, the law as a rule for this delimitation, reduction of an object to a subordinate thing, external teleology” (Dilthey, p. 13). All the power of thought of the Romans is concentrated in the art and the rules of domination over their own lives and lives of their subjects. “Everywhere there is a desire to establish rules, bring the guiding principles to mind. Instinctively and consciously, expediency, interest and benefits take their place in every sphere of life”(Dilthey, p. 13).

Finally, the third component of metaphysics is a religious motif that dominates metaphysics at the early stages of development of all nations. In the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, the world appears as an emanation of God, His creation and revelation. The basis of unity of the world is found in the greatness of God.

Basing on the above, it can be assumed that the basic hypotheses underlying the classical Western metaphysics are the following:

1) behind the apparent diversity of the world, there is some constant sphere of substances of being, which it is necessary to learn with the help of the Logos; in the scientific version of the Logos is rational knowledge of the essence of phenomena with the help of scientific measurement procedures;

2) social reality, as well as any other natural reality has such basic characteristics as expediency and benefits. Social reality must obey universal principles of law and rights. All members of the society who have the Logos must perform their duty under the law.

3) The world is ruled by the laws of determinism: every phenomenon has its own well-defined causes and its consequences. As a rule, the world is cognizable and can be described with the help of binary oppositions.

Metaphysics is, without a doubt, the epistemological basis of the classical picture of both physical and social worlds. Rejection of metaphysics in positivism meant only visible rejection of hypotheses, temporary suspension of this level of analysis, which did not solve the main problem – the formation of independent sociological basis for scientific analysis. Despite the fact that positivism verbally rejects metaphysical tradition, in fact, it is its direct continuation. In fact, metaphysics comes under methodological criticism only in phenomenology and postmodernism. The current stage of development of socio-humanitarian knowledge can be considered as a stage of overcoming the basic hypotheses of classical Western metaphysics.

In addition to the universal hypotheses of metaphysics, the domain premises are pointed out in the conception of sociological knowledge of A. Gouldner. These are the implicit

fundamental premises with a more limited scope of application than the global hypotheses. For example, the premise that describes the relationship of man and society as premises of objectivism and subjectivism in sociology. Other domain prerequisites concerning the active or passive position of the researcher in relation to the social order are: “Society needs to be corrected, therefore, a sociologist takes an active civic position” or “social problems will sort out themselves, interference with social order only leads to chaos, a sociologist is a scientist, not a politician.”

The peculiarity of domain premises of theories is that they are not initially chosen as technical instruments. They are the “instruments of knowledge/cognition with attritional the load, which is formed early in the course of our socialization in a particular culture and are organized by the structure of our character” (Gouldner, p. 58). Another feature of domain premises is that they combine two elements – reality and its description in theoretical constructs. “The real and the ideal belong to different dimensions, but they are simultaneously constituted and connected in linguistic categories that make up social domains” (Gouldner, p. 60). Such categories as “society”, “power”, “social control”, “individual” or “subject”, indicate what the sociologist takes for real and what he/she does not. If the description of a phenomenon of the social reality does not exist as a concept, it is the same as if it did not exist for sociological theory.

The third characteristic of domain premises in science is that being the product of socialization, and thus endowed with certain methodological arbitrariness, they often “disguise” themselves as reality. Working with their domain premises, a sociologist who seeks to achieve accuracy and correctness of scientific results, according A. Gouldner must have “insight to see what he

believes in, and courage to tell what he sees” (Gouldner, p. 62).

To a great extent, the concept of reality that sociologists have, stems from the domain premises that they have learned in their culture, in the process of education, i.e. scientific professional socialization, but there also exist individual, personal experience that creates a certain mood.

Sociology as an academic science was created by educated representatives of the middle class. They accepted the rules of the game, given as the basis for the social order of the industrial and, later, post-industrial society. Liberalism of academic sociologists is expressed in the following, hidden in relation to the social order, position: “to take the system, work within it, but at the same time try to keep it at some distance” (Gouldner, p. 87). Hence, the critical point of A. Gouldner, who argued that the “dominant forms of academic social sciences base rather on adaptation to alienation of people in modern society than an attempt to overcome it” (Gouldner, p. 81).

To maintain the distance from the alienated social world sociologists create a parallel reality in their theories. In the past, in the religious view of the world reality was divided into the sacred and the profane, and the knowledge of the sacred was available only to the select, who acted as custodians of the spirit of faith. In sociological theories reality is divided into social life of ordinary people, who do not know its laws, and the reality of social scientists who are free from mass prejudices and myths, because they have special knowledge – the knowledge of the hidden mechanisms of social control of the social world. So, in academic sociology there appears the opposition of the intellectual elite and the “ignorant mass”, which should not only be studied, but also educated, and if it resists enlightenment – then its mass consciousness should be manipulated in order to organize an “efficient” society.

**Statement of the problem.** The transition from the classical worldview to the contemporary one in sociology, as well as in all socio-humanitarian knowledge, is the transition from the classical basic metaphors to non-classical and post-nonclassical, according to the classification accepted in philosophy of science under the influence of the conception of V. S. Stepin. In the present research, I adhere to the point of view of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson who claim that “the biggest part of the ordinary human conceptual system is structured by metaphors” (Lakoff, Johnson, p.93). The main metaphor, with the help of which social reality was described in classical sociology, is the metaphor of the society as an organism. In modern sociology there have appeared the metaphors of a social network and rhizomes. The metaphor of the system, in my opinion, can be considered as a variant of transition from the classical to contemporary methods of studying of social reality.

#### **The metaphor of the organism and the system in classical sociology**

The first metaphor which was used in sociology to describe the society was the metaphor of the organism. It was mostly used in the works of A. Comte and G. Spenser, then it was formally rejected, but, in fact, it retains its influence on the contemporary sociological theory of systems.

The idea of similarity of the society to a biological organism was first used when A. Comte divided sociology into “social statics” and “social dynamics”. “Social statics was understood as studying the anatomy of the human society, its parts and their location (similar to the anatomy of the organism (body) with its organs, skeleton and muscles), and social dynamics, according to Comte, was to focus on physiology, that is, the processes that take place within the society (like bodily functions – breathing, metabolism, blood circulation). The final result of the development

of the society was also likened to the result of evolution of the organism (from the embryo to maturity). It was assumed that there existed a stable state of the society, which can be monitored and analyzed independently from the movement of the latter” (Sztompka, p.19).

H. Spencer held the same opinion, in spite of the fact that he changed the terminology. His opposition of “structures” and “functions” was the basis of sociological language for more than a century. The concept of “structure” in the conception H. Spenser implied studying the internal structure, or shape, of the social whole, the concept of “function” implied studying the ways of its functioning or transformation. Like A. Comte, H. Spencer argued that the society can be regarded as a kind of solid substance, tangible entity, in isolation from the processes taking place in it. In other words, he assumed it possible to separate the social structure from its functions. “The methodological heritage of the above-mentioned ideas was opposition of two types of research procedures that are described by Comte: the search for the laws of coexistence (figuring out why certain social phenomena always appear together) and eliciting, in contrast to them, the laws of succession ( establishing why certain social phenomena invariably preceded or, follow one another)”(Sztompka, p.19-20). This division was fixed in most textbooks, which defined “synchronous research” as one in which the society was seen from a static time perspective, and “diachronic (or successive)” research – as the research involving the flow of time and focusing on social changes.

Such approaches had great impact on the contemporary (diachronic) study of social changes. It has inherited the classical organic metaphor and, connected with it, separation and opposition through influential approaches of the XX century, such as the theory of systems, functionalism, or structural functionalism.

“The systemic model of the society, developed as part of this approach, combined and synthesized a set of ideas that are typical for organicism» (Sztompka, p.19). The whole conceptual apparatus commonly used in the analysis of changes, was initially used in the system model, even if scientists do not realize it or do not consider themselves supporters of the systemic and structural-functionalist theories. Only recently the “system model” was opposed by an “alternative image (concept)” of the society, considered from the point of view of a process, but not an element or a social fact. Perhaps it is “owing” to the metaphor of the organism that social systems as theoretical models are usually described in terms of static and have little resemblance to the dynamic models of open of biological and cognitive systems

#### **The metaphor of an open system**

In this study, the criteria for systemic thinking are based on the conception of F. Kapra (Kapra (2003); Kapra (2004)), who believed that modern science is undergoing a fundamental paradigm shift from Cartesian type of thinking to process thinking. The peculiarity of the conception of system thinking by F. Kapra is that it was created as a scientific-popular exposition of the foundations of modern microphysics, biology and cognitive sciences. These foundations were laid in the period from the 30s to the 70s of the twentieth century. In this respect, it becomes obvious that the social and humanitarian sciences still use the metaphor of the system in the traditional meaning of the word—as an organism, but not in the non-classical interpretation of a system as an open field of interaction with the environment.

In his book “The Web of Life” F. Kapra identifies the criteria of the systemic approach:

- ✓ direction of the analysis – from the parts to the whole;

- ✓ shifting the focus of attention from one level of the system to another one in the process of research ;
- ✓ contextual thinking;
- ✓ network thinking.

Let us consider these criteria in more detail.

The first and most general criterion of systemic thinking is the direction of the analysis – from the parts to the whole. “Living systems are integrated entities, whose properties cannot be reduced to the properties of their constituting parts. Their significant or systemic properties are the properties of the whole, which none of the parts possess. New properties emerge from the organizing relations between the parts, that is, from the configuration of regulated relations, which are characteristic of a particular class of organisms or systems. Systemic properties are destroyed when the system is dissected into isolated elements” (Kapra F. (2003)).

All the criteria of systemic thinking, as described in this brief summary, are interdependent. “Nature is viewed as an interconnected web of relationships in which identification of certain patterns as “objects” depends on the observer and the process of learning. This web of relationships is described in the language of the corresponding network of concepts and models, none of which is more fundamental than the others” (Kapra F. (2003)).

In connection with this new approach to science, an important question arises: if everything is connected to everything, how can one hope to understand anything? Since all of the natural and social phenomena are ultimately interconnected, then to explain any of them we will have to understand all the others, which is obviously not possible.

“Discovery of approximate knowledge helps turn the systemic approach into science. This insight is critical to all modern science. The old paradigm is based on the Cartesian

belief in the certainty of scientific knowledge. In the new paradigm it is recognized that all scientific concepts and theories are limited and approximate. Science will never be able to provide full and complete understanding” (Kapra F. (2003)).

It should be noted that the metaphor of a system in cognitive science and physical analysis of the microcosm quickly gives way to the metaphor of the network. The difference between the metaphors of the system and that of a network is first of all in the fact that the boundaries between the system and the external environment, although considered permeable to impact, still exist as a separation of the system from the outside world. The metaphor of the network is more dynamic, it eliminates the problem of overcoming the boundaries and introduces a feeling of decentration of the studied space. Any interactions are equally possible in a network.

#### **Development of the metaphor of the system—autopoiesis.**

In Santiago theory of cognition, the authors of which were the biologists Maturana and Varela, the process of obtaining information in a system is closely related to autopoiesis – self–production of live networks. “The defining characteristic of an autopoietic system is that it undergoes continuous structural changes, while maintaining a web like organizational model. The components of the network constantly generate and transform each other, and it occurs in two different ways. The first type of structural changes is self-renewal. Every living organism constantly renews its cells, dividing, build new structures, its tissues and organs renew their cellular composition continuously and cyclically. But despite these ongoing changes, the body maintains its complex uniqueness, or organizational pattern” (Kapra (2004)).

The second type of structural changes in a living system covers those that create new structures, – establish new connections in an network. These changes are not cyclical, but linear, they occur continuously being caused either by environmental influences, or the internal dynamics of the system. The body stores the memory of the previous structural changes, and any structural change affects the future behavior of the organism, so the behavior of a living organism is dictated by its structure. In Maturana's terminology, it is "structurally determined". Living systems react to external stimuli autonomously, by structural rearrangements, that is, changes in the structure of their relationship with the environment. According to Maturana and Varela, one cannot control a living system – one can only exercise a disturbing influence on it. Moreover, not only does a living system determine itself its future structural changes, it also determines what external stimuli will cause them. In other words, a living system has the freedom to decide what to notice in its environment and what to react to. This is the key point of Santiago theory of cognition. Structural changes in the system are acts of cognition. Determining what kind of impact of the environment will cause its changes, the system sets the limits of its area of the known, in the words of Maturana and Varela, it "gives birth to the world". The authors suggest that autopoiesis is a universal pattern of organization, it is the same for all living systems, regardless of the nature of their components.

*The theory of autopoietic systems  
of social communications of N. Luhmann*

N. Luhmann, a modern author of the theory of systems in sociology, developed a very detailed theory of "social autopoiesis" (Luhmann). At the same time, he strangely believes that, although social networks are autopoietic, they are not living systems.

G. Ritzer identifies four characteristics of the autopoietic system according to N. Luhmann (Ritzer, p.221-222). Autopoietic systems

- ✓ create basic elements, which, in their turn, constitute a system;
- ✓ organize themselves in two ways: they organize their own boundaries and organize their internal structures (they organize their boundaries distinguishing between the system and the external environment);
- ✓ have a self-directed character;
- ✓ are closed systems (meaning that there is no direct connection between the system and the external environment, which is an obvious contradiction to Santiago theory of cognition of Maturana and Varela).

N. Luhmann explains the idea of the closedness of a social system as operational closedness, that is – recursive creation of opportunities for its own operations by means of the results of its own operations.

In my opinion, the main problem of the systemic approach of N. Luhmann is in the attempt to create a non-classical theory, using the classical (as defined by F. Kapra – Cartesian) thinking. Indeed, the very idea of closedness is necessary for N. Luhmann to explain how, several parallel operations can be performed simultaneously in the same space / time without mixing, but rather, being autonomous. Such autonomy is regarded by N. Luman as closedness.

But what it is especially strange, compared to Santiago theory, is N. Luhmann's idea that a "closed social system is different from the individuals who seem to be its constituting elements" (Ritzer, p.223). In N. Luhmann's system an individual as a person and a biological organism is part of the environment in relation to the social system of communication. This is probably the most extreme case of a theoretical description of the idea of alienation of an



individual, but not from his/her own nature, but rather from the social world.

However, the obvious merit of N. Luhmann's theory is that it determines not an individual, social group, or a social institution, but communication as the basic element of the social system. I would like to emphasize that even in the conception of P. Sorokin a process of social interaction was considered to be the basic unit of the society, but the concept of "communication" is broader/wider than the concept of "social interaction" and allows us to simultaneously consider social reality in a variety of contexts. Repeating itself due to countless feedback, communication generates a common system of beliefs, explanations and values – the common semantic context – that is continually maintained by further communications. "Through this common semantic context, individuals acquire distinctness as members of a social network – in such a way the network is building its own border. It is not a physical boundary, it is a boundary of expectations, confidentiality and loyalty, constantly maintained and revised by the network itself" (Kapra (2004)). When researchers consider social systems as communication ones, they take into account the dual nature of human communication.

### **The metaphor of a communication network**

"For centuries, Western scholars and philosophers used the metaphor of the building in relation to knowledge, with its numerous architectural metaphors. In scientific discourse one spoke about fundamental laws or fundamental principles, the basic building blocks or bricks of objects of cognition (Kapra (2003)). In the new scientific thinking the metaphor of a building is replaced by the metaphor of a network. "Since we perceive reality as a network of relationships, so our descriptions form an interconnected network

of concepts and models in which there are no bases» (Kapra (2003)). For most scientists the idea of knowledge as a network – without any solid foundations – is very inconvenient, and today it cannot be said that it is widely spread and accepted. But as the network approach is spreading in the scientific community, the idea of knowledge as a network will undoubtedly find more supporters.

The notion of scientific knowledge as a network of concepts and models, in which no part is more fundamental than another one, was formulated in the 1970s by a physicist Geoffrey Chew in the form of the so-called bootstrap theory. "Bootstrap philosophy not only rejects the idea of the fundamental building blocks of the matter, but does not accept any fundamental entities – neither fundamental constants, nor fundamental laws or equations. The material universe is seen as a dynamic web of interrelated events. No single property of this web is fundamental, all of them are derived from the properties of other parts, and overall coordination of their interrelations determines the structure of the entire web" (Kapra (2003)).

The specific features of social networks are the following:

- ✓ reason as purposefulness in creation of new networks or maintaining the existing ones in connection with the realization of a certain intention;
- ✓ cultural context of social networks;
- ✓ power as a pattern of interaction in the network;
- ✓ symbolic structures of organizing meanings in social networks.

Consideration of social reality in terms of reason inevitably involves consideration of a huge number of inter-related characteristics. The cultural context of a social network is manifested in the following way: "on the one hand, the network continuously generates internal images, thoughts

and meanings, on the other – it is constantly coordinates the behavior of its subjects. Complex dynamics and interconnectedness of these processes leads to the emergence of an integrated system of values, beliefs and rules of behaviour, which we associate with the phenomenon of culture” (Kapra (2003)).

People’s behavior is shaped and limited by their cultural identity, and this, in its turn, strengthens their spirit of belonging. The culture is woven into the lifestyle of people; and its penetrating ability is such that our consciousness does not even notice it. Culturally, the power relations are determined by the agreements about the authority that are part of culture-specific rules of conduct. Such agreements seem to have appeared at fairly early stages of human evolution – with the emergence of first communities.

As the community grows and becomes more complex, the positions of power within it strengthen. In complex communities, conflict resolution and planning of activities can be effective only if the authority and power are organized within the framework of administrative structures. This need for coordination and distribution of power in the long history of human civilization led to the emergence of many forms of social organization. Power, therefore, plays a key role in emergence of social structures.

In biological systems, all structures are material. Processes in biological networks are the processes of producing of material components of the network, and resulting structures are material embodiment of the organizational pattern of the system. All biological structures are constantly changing, so that the process of materialization is continuous.

Social systems produce both material and symbolic components. The processes that support a social network are the processes of

communication which create common meanings for the members of the network and the rules of conduct (the culture of the network), as well as the general body of knowledge. The rules of behavior (both formal and informal) are called social structures.

The metaphor of the social network of communication is now primarily used in the sociology of the information society in the analysis of global communication networks. In the philosophy of postmodernism in the 70s of the twentieth century another metaphor was created, which has not yet received further development in social sciences because of a rather vague (in terms of scientific language) substantiation. It is the metaphor of the rhizome and nomadology as a model conception where this metaphor is a key one. I think the rhizome can act as the ideal type of an open system / network and serve as the development of Geoffrey Chew’s idea of decentration of reality.

#### **Rhizome as the metaphor of social reality in postmodernism**

The term “rhizome” was introduced into philosophy in 1976 by G. Deleuze, F. Guattari in their joint work “Rhizome” – in the context of developing of the basic principles of nomadological project of postmodernism. The concept of “rhizome” expresses the fundamental postmodernist idea about the presumption of destruction of the traditional ideas about the structure as a semantically-centered and firmly defined, as a means of marking a radical alternative to closed and static linear structures. Rhizome is modeled as a non-balanced integrity, without organizational orders, characterized by permanent creative mobility. The main feature of the rhizome is that in relation to it “a clear differentiation of the external and internal to the process of monitoring and research is impossible: rhizome develops, varying, expanding, grabbing,

clutching, taking root, constituting its internal by means of the external” (Usmanova).

Nomadology (from European – nomad) – is a model conception proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, where rhizome is the main metaphor for describing reality. In nomadology a fundamental postmodernist idea was introduced about rejection of presumptions characteristic of classical metaphysics, such as: “a) the presumption of rigidly structural organization of existence; b) space as discretely differentiated by means of semantically and axiologically defining points; c) understanding of determinism as forced causality, causation from outside” (Mozheiko (2001)). Postmodernists argued that the project of classical Western science and philosophy exhausted the potential of interpretation of the modern processes and put forward a nomadological model of reality to replace it.

The authors of the nomadological project used the concept of “rhizome” instead of the traditional category of “structure”. “Rhizome is essentially procedural – it “does not begin and end. It is always in the middle ...” (Usmanova). Nomadological project implies in this context a fundamentally new understanding of organization of space. Using the games, typical for the respective cultures, as expressing specific to these cultures ways of dividing space, Deleuze and Guattari oppose chess, on the one hand, and the nomads’ game (*go*) – on the other. Chess involves coding of space (the organization of the clearly defined space of a game board as a “system of places”) and a rigid determination of correspondences between the figures of constant value and their possible positions – points of placement in a confined space. In contrast, *go* involves the dispersal playing pieces of undifferentiated value on an open surface (throwing pebbles on the sand lends the figures situational value at each moment of

time and situational certainty to configuration of space).

Interpretation of rhizome as a decentralized media turns out to be its interpretation as having creative potential of self-organization. The source for transformation of reality in this case is not external factors, as in the case of the metaphor of a closed system, but the internal potential of constant variation of the rhizome. Chaotic processes leading to constant change are the essence of the rhizome, like a static structure is the essence of the system. The objectification of potential possibilities, the degree of probability which is constantly changing, creates moving forms of self-organization of the rhizome, constructing temporarily relevant relations – “plateaus” between its components. A specific cause of formation of a dissipative plateau is the so-called “paradoxical element”, virtually embodying randomness as such. The essential point of processuality of the rhizome is principal unpredictability of its future states. Such unpredictability forces us to abandon static research models and requires willingness of researchers to track the metamorphosis of the object under study, constantly comparing theoretical models with the data of reality. The principle of postmodernism – anything is possible, is embodied in the metaphor of the rhizome. In the nomadological project of postmodernism it is a model of reality that continues to shape and deepen in the process that develops, improves, renews, every time presenting a new version of its existence.

**Conclusion** . Transition from the metaphor of the organism to the metaphor of the system, and then to the metaphors of the network and rhizome in theoretical sociology can be compared with the general destruction of substantial views of the world in the modern scientific theories. The metaphor of the organism hindered the development of classical sociology for a long time,

because it did not allow researchers to study the dynamics of the society itself, without describing the static structure of the society.

In non-classical sociology the social structure and its elements are replaced by the concept of processes and trends of social reality. The metaphor of the system allows sociologists to realize that all the processes taking place in social reality, are not random, they are interlinked and demand description of the context. The metaphor of the network allows us to see the permeability of the boundaries of social groups and communities in the modern world, and in many ways challenges the idea of closedness of cultures and civilizations from one another. The metaphor of the rhizome is the least developed, rather philosophical and artistic than a scientific metaphor. Its cognitive capacity lies primarily in the idea of removing the boundaries between the inside and the outside in the analysis of both individual and mass consciousness. The metaphor of the rhizome is convenient not as a working concept for sociological research, but as the image of extremely dynamic and scholastic reality, which creates metamorphoses and blurs the boundaries between the world of objects. In addition, the metaphor of the rhizome can be used in the analysis of literary and philosophical

texts, which were written under the influence of postmodernism. The basis of such texts is the play with the classical meanings and senses.

### **Abstract**

This paper studies the basic metaphors in scientific worldviews of modern sociology. The author argues that a change of fundamental metaphors from the metaphor of the system to the metaphors of the network and rhizome is currently taking place in sociology. This is a reflection of the transition from the classical scientific worldview to the modern one. The metaphor of the system allows sociologists to realize that all of the processes taking place in social reality are not random; they are interlinked and must be described in the context. The metaphor of the network allows us to see the permeability of the boundaries of social groups and communities in the modern world, and in many ways challenges the idea of closedness of cultures and civilizations from one another. The metaphor of the rhizome is the least developed, it is mostly philosophical and literary than scientific metaphor. Its cognitive capability lies primarily in the idea of removing the boundaries between the inside and the outside in the analysis of both individual and mass consciousness.

### **References**

1. Ajdukiewicz K. Kartina mira i poniatiinyi apparat (Pattern of World and Scientific Thesaurus) Available at: <http://ru.philosophy.kiev.ua/iphras/phnank2/science8.htm>.
2. Dilthey W. Vozzrenie na mir i issledovanie cheloveka co vremen Vozrozhdenia i Reformatsii (Point of View on World and Human Investigatins Since Renaissance and Reformation) Moscow, Jerusalem, Universitetskaia kniga, 2000. 464 p.
3. Gouldner A.W. Nastupaiushchii krizis zapadnoi sotsiologii (The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology) S-Petersburg, Nauka, 2003. 575 p.
4. Kapra F. Pautina zhizni Novoe ponimanie zhivukh sistem (The Web of Life) Kiev, Sofia, 2003 Available at: [http://www.koob.ru/capra/web\\_of\\_life.rar](http://www.koob.ru/capra/web_of_life.rar).
5. Kapra F. Skrytye svyazi (The Hidden Connections: Integrating the Biological, Cognitive, and Social Dimensions of Life Into a Science of Sustainability) Moscow, Sofia, 2004. Available at: [http://www.koob.ru/books/hidden\\_conections.rar](http://www.koob.ru/books/hidden_conections.rar).

6. Lakoff G., Johnson M. *Metafory, ktorumi my zhivem (Metaphors We live By)* Moscow, LKI, 2008. 256 p.
7. Luhmann N. *Obshchestvo kak sotsialinaia sistema (Society as Social System)* Moscow, Logos, 2004. 232 p.
8. Mozheiko M. *Nomadologiia (Nomadology) Postmodernism Encyclopedia* Minsk, Interpress, 2001 P.524–526. Available at: [http://yanko.lib.ru/books/encycl/post\\_mod\\_encycl.html](http://yanko.lib.ru/books/encycl/post_mod_encycl.html)
9. Mozheiko M. *Klassika-neklassika-postneklassika – istoricheskie tipy filosofstvovaniia (Classic-Nonclassic – Postnonclassic as Historical Types of Philosophy) History of Philosophy Encyclopedia* Minsk, Interpress, 2002 – Available at: [http://yanko.lib.ru/books/encycl/hist\\_of\\_philosophy\\_encycl\\_gricanov.htm](http://yanko.lib.ru/books/encycl/hist_of_philosophy_encycl_gricanov.htm)
10. Ritzer G. *Sovremennye sotsiologicheskie teorii (Modern Sociological Theories)* S-Petersburg, Piter, 2002. 668p.
11. Usmanova A. *Rizoma Postmodernism Encyclopedia* Minsk, Interpress, 2001 P.660-667. Available at: [http://yanko.lib.ru/books/encycl/post\\_mod\\_encycl.html](http://yanko.lib.ru/books/encycl/post_mod_encycl.html)
12. Sztompka P. *Sotsiologiia sotsialnykh izmenenii (Sociology of Social Change)* Moscow, Aspect Press, 1996. 416p.

## **Смена базовых метафор картин мира в социологии**

**Н.Б. Отрешко**

*Национальный педагогический университет*

*им. М.П. Драгоманова*

*Украина 03057, Киев, ул. Пирогова, 9*

---

*В статье изучаются базовые метафоры в научных картинах мира современной социологии. Автор утверждает, что в социологии происходит смена базовых метафор от метафоры системы к метафорам сети и ризомы. Это является отражением перехода от классической научной картины мира к современной. Метафора системы позволяет социологам понять, что все процессы, происходящие в социальной реальности, не случайны, взаимосвязаны и требуют описания контекста происходящего. Метафора сети позволяет увидеть проницаемость границ социальных групп и сообществ в современном мире и во многом ставит под вопрос идею закрытости культур и цивилизаций друг от друга. Метафора ризомы наименее разработанная, скорее философски-художественная, чем научная метафора. Ее познавательная возможность заложена прежде всего в идее снятия границ между внутренним и внешним при анализе как индивидуального, так и массового сознания.*

*Ключевые слова: научная картина мира, метафора системы, метафора сети, метафора ризомы.*

---