

Postmodern Openings

ISSN: 2068 – 0236 (print), ISSN: 2069 – 9387
(electronic)

Covered in: Index Copernicus, Ideas RePeC,
EconPapers, Socionet, Ulrich Pro Quest, Cabell,
SSRN, Appreciative Inquiry Commons, Journalseek,
Scipio, CEEOL, EBSCO

TRANSDISCIPLINARITY AND COMMUNICATIVE ACTION. A POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE (EDITORIAL)

Ștefan VLĂDUȚESCU

Postmodern Openings, 2014, Volume 5, Issue 4,
December, pp: 9-14

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://postmodernopenings.com>

Published by:
Lumen Publishing House
On behalf of:
Lumen Research Center in Social and Humanistic
Sciences

Transdisciplinarity and Communicative Action. A Postmodern Perspective (Editorial)

Ștefan VLĂDUȚESCU¹

Abstract

Transdisciplinarity and communicative action are the current fluid and irradiative concepts; are the concepts which support the moving of postmodernity toward transmodernity. The first concept is consecrated by Basarab Nicolescu and the second one is imposed by Jurgen Habermas.

We emphasize that in the contemporary change of paradigm appear new forms of communicative action that complement the old ones, and that through transdisciplinarity and new communicative actions more and more the postmodernism becomes transmodernism.

Keywords: *Communicative action, transdisciplinarity, postmodernity, transmodernity;*

¹ Associate Professor PhD, University of Craiova, Romania,
stefan.vladutescu@yahoo.com

I. The universe of contemporary thought and knowledge is bipolar and bi-paradigmatic. A double conscience of approaches, of theoretical frameworks and of the relativity of theories and canonical sciences chairs this universe. Today we are living in the postmodernity that gradually becomes transmodernity. Amongst the fields of incidence of natural sciences, of social sciences and humanities several breaches have been observed and taken into consideration. There was ascertained that among sciences there are found domains that are not related to any science. Two things became evident: the fact that a division of objects of scientific study of reality is imperfect (objects of study do not represent a strict continuity) and the fact that it is necessary that imperfections be covered or eradicated. Within these breaches, new theories and new sciences have emerged. These sciences and theories seem deconstructive, un-“disciplined” and transdisciplinary. That is how a category of sciences such as the category of social-human sciences gained a distinct profile. As it well known, the cultural, epistemological and methodological characteristic of postmodernism is represented by deconstruction. By deconstruction, postmodernism contributed to the emergence of transdisciplinarity, of transmodernity, and to the raising of awareness concerning the necessity of communication between the two visions, the two paradigms. Parallely, the postmodernism deconstructs disciplinarity, stirs and stimulates transdisciplinarity. Once postmodernism has become canonical by way of communication, this has turned into transmodernity. The deconstruction has brought about re-integration, and postmodernism has fecundated transmodernity. Professors Antonio Sandu and Oana Alina Bradu talk about two “conceptual methodological paradigms”: the postmodern paradigm and the transmodern paradigm. They assert that the postmodern paradigm is “focused on deconstruction” that leads “to the level of identification of constructs that are the basis of comprehension of reality by its subjects” and that the transmodern paradigm has constituted itself as a “re-integrative perspective that focuses on the correlation and interdependence of social subsystems reconstruction social reality” (Bradu & Sandu, 2009, p. 102). In our opinion, the two paradigmatic visions resemble to two successive generations: the postmodernism is the father of transmodernity and nowadays the father and the son are contemporaries.

II. Transdisciplinarity and communicative action are the irradiative concepts, the concepts which move postmodernism. The first is consecrated by Basarab Nicolescu and the second one – by Jurgen Habermas. Basarab Nicolescu synthesizes outlines an idea that precedes him, the idea of transdisciplinarity. He confesses that the term “transdisciplinarity” was introduced by Jean Piaget in 1970 and that it is used subsequently by Edgar Morin and Eric Jantsch. He emphasizes that what he did was to endow the term with a clear and distinct conceptual meaning. First of all, by the concept of transdisciplinarity, there was aimed “the understanding of the human being as totality” and the expression of the idea of existence of “relationships, of identification of relationships between people, cultures, religions, disciplines, everything that unifies, that passes through different zones of the domain of knowledge and everything that is beyond the domain of knowledge” (Nicolescu, 2006). Basarab Nicolescu asserts that there are three levels of reality: the quantum level, the human level and the cosmic level. He postulates that when the attention is directed towards a single level of reality, we have disciplinarity. When two or more levels of reality are taken into account, we can talk about pluridisciplinarity or interdisciplinarity; in these cases, the levels of reality remain separated. When, given the logic of the excluded middle, several levels of reality are studied in their unitary dynamics, we are faced with transdisciplinarity. As we can notice, Nicolescu proposes a model of multidimensional reality. At the same time, he distinguishes between real and reality: “The real means what it is, while reality is liked to human experience” (Nicolescu, 2007, p. 144). The object of transdisciplinary research is represented by all levels of reality and their complementary zones of non-resistance, of transparency. Reality is not only multidimensional, but also multireferential, plural, complex, open as unity. Essentially, transdisciplinarity is a cultural construct based on cooperation in knowledge, and on overcoming barriers between scientific branches (Nicolescu, 2007, pp. 49-57). The practice of transdisciplinarity represents an epistemological unification, that is why, says Basarab Nicolescu, we must seek the unification of the subject and of the object of transdisciplinarity, through the preliminary unification of areas of non-resistance. On this subject, Antonio Sandu and Simona Ușurelu specify: ”The epistemic premise of transdisciplinarity is the existence of a fundamental unit of the world, the theme of the unity of knowledge”

(Sandu & Usurelu, 2012). In other words, transdisciplinary knowledge aims to achieve a multidimensional approach of the unitary reality of the world. A unity of knowledge must correspond to the unity of the world: the world and the knowledge must communicate. They communicate through epistemological subjects; the knowledge relationship is active communication, it is a communicative action.

III. Consubstantial models of communication must be added to ontological, epistemological, axiological and praxiological models of world representation. Such a model is the communicative action model, elaborated by Jurgen Habermas. In the postmodern period, two types of communication models become prominent: one originating from the zone of communications and cybernetics (the linear model – “action” type) and one finding as sources psychology and sociology (the circular model – “interaction” type). Among the major representatives of the circular model, beside the members of Palo Alto School (of psychological orientation) there is situated the well-known German sociologist Jurgen Habermas. In postmodernity, by Communicative Action Theory (Habermas, 1984; Habermas, 1987), focusing on the idea of the individual who manifests himself by communicative actions and on communication as flow which passes through different media, or the public space, Jurgen Habermas contributes to the functional consolidation of transdisciplinarity. According to Habermas, people’s life is made of actions. People spend their life acting, taking actions. The human being exists by his actions. Taxonomically, there can be identified several forms of action: instrumental action, social action, internal action, communicative action etc. The communicative action is based on communicative rationality and consists in an intervention on the world, on knowledge and on the other, through language. Four types of actions are exerted by the individual in society: dramaturgical action, normatively action, teleological action, communicative action (Habermas, 1984, p. 85). In another classification, human actions can be social actions (strategic actions, communicative actions) or nonsocial actions (instrumental actions) (Habermas, 1984, p. 287). Communicative action represents “a type of interaction that is coordinated through speech acts and does not coincide with them” (Habermas, 1984, p. 101). Habermas explains that communicative actions are actions in which two

or more “actors” interact rationally and argumentatively in order to obtain a consensus within an agreement or understanding: ”The concept of communicative action is presented in such a way that the acts of reaching understanding, which link the theologically structured plans of action of different participants and thereby first combine individual acts into an interaction complex, cannot themselves be reduced to teleological actions” (Habermas, 1984, p. 288).

IV. Conclusive we can assert that:

a) in the current change of paradigm appear new forms of communicative action that complement the old ones (Sandu & Unguru, 2014, p. 13), and

b) through transdisciplinarity and new communicative actions more and more the postmodernism becomes transmodernism.

References

- Bradu, O. A., & Sandu, A. (2009). Perspective epistemice si axiologice in supervizarea apreciativă. *Revista de Cercetare și Intervenție Socială*, (24), 95-102.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action: Vol. 1. Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action* (Volume 2). Boston: Beacon.
- Nicolescu, B. (2006). Transdisciplinaritatea – o noua viziune a lumii (Interviu). *Asymetria, revue roumaine de culture, critique et imagination*. Septembrie.
- Nicolescu, B. (2007). *Transdisciplinaritatea. Manifest*. Iași: Editura Junimea.
- Sandu, A., & Usurelu, S. (2012). Postmodernism and Constructionism. Seeing Truth through Different Eyes. *Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională*, (Vol 4/2), 27-43.
- Sandu, A., & Unguru, E. (2014). *Actiune comunicativa, justitie deliberativa si restaurativa*. București: Editura Tritonic.

Biodata



Ștefan VLĂDUȚESCU is a graduate of the Faculty of Philology (University of Craiova), as valedictorian country, with special “Diploma of merit”. Also, is a graduate of Faculty of Law, University of Bucharest. Obtained his doctorate in Philosophy from University of Bucharest. Is Associate Professor at University of Craiova. Is a member of International Association of Communication (ICA), a member of Romanian Writer’s Union, a member of Romanian Association of Press History. Is editor in chief of Annals of University of Craiova. Section Communication. Media, and a member of editorial board of European Scientific Journal, of Neutrosophic Sets and Systems, and of Annals of University of Craiova. Section Linguistics. He is author or co-author of 14 professional books, of 110 scientific papers in Romania and international journals (including ISI/Thompson Reuters articles), and in proceedings of international seminars and conferences.