

## Discourse as the Problem and Method of Philosophy

*Leonid Jorjovich Petryakov*

Yaroslavl State Technical University, Yaroslavl, Russia

---

**Abstract:** Discourse as a philosophical problem is considered in the article. The origin of the discourse from the practice of relations between people and between people and the world defines many of its features. In particular, the discourse is able to influence, to cheat, to provoke a struggle of ideas, to create stereotypes of thinking, to falsify knowledge. These problems are considered by many modern philosophers. But the proposed solutions, as a rule, substitute discourse by something else. Creating a method, giving qualities of discourse to philosophical notions is an adequate basis of consideration of the problems caused by the discourse. This method supposes the identification of the implicit relationship to the fact, of multilevel system of rules, situations and their transformations in the discourse. Research results can be used for the analysis of social discourses and for the formation of the responsible attitude to it.

---

**Key words:** Discourse • Practice • Rule • Fact • Situation • Interpreted • Strategy

---

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of "discourse" is widely used by linguists, but it is a little mastered by philosophers, though they [1], [2] introduced the discourse into the broad scientific use. What might be a discursive paradigm of philosophy? How will the world look like if its discourses constitute an ontology?

Let us consider the basic philosophical approaches to understanding the discursive reality. Intrinsic social role playing by different people and filling by a somewhat different content in different historical periods: the "revolutionary discourse", "order of discourse", "cognitive discourse", "discourse of wealth", "discourse of popularity," etc can be called discourse. On the other hand, a specific communicative activity-related phenomena, associated with complex effects on the subject of traditions, social and professional standards, rules of language, speech and behavior can be called discourse. So, we can say that Russian writers of the middle XIX – beginning of XX centuries were under the influence of a "populist" discourse, despite the fact that their political views could be opposed. Foucault showed a similar, problem-methodological unity of in the history of science. He also showed the ability to define the discourses based on the unity of the author, the subject

of unity, unity of method and pointed to the lack of this unity. His "methodological plan is to approach the analysis of discourses through the location of statements that function with constitutive effects" [3].

**Method:** Discursive method consists in identifying the discursive wave of relevance of events, knowledge, facts in their unity and in explaining the dynamic structure of this discursive reality. The specificity of the method consists in the fact that its universality is achieved not through synthesis but through the individualization of discourses.

**The Main Part:** Other approaches to the understanding and definition of discourse are possible. But pluralism as a methodological device partitioning the whole into parts will characterize all of them. The unity of the world is a variety of his discourses. Discourse as a philosophical method denies former monistic systems based on the classical concepts of life, matter, essence. Modernist notions of structure and function and even post-modern: the surface, the game, deconstruction are not sufficient to describe it. Discursive reality can only be described by pluralistic systems such as atoms and the void of Democritus, monads of Leibniz. Monad, as discourse, is closed on itself and it is reasonable. Formal logic of

Aristotle is no longer valid in the description of monads, as discourses, Ultimate reality here is not the unequal relationship between the individual and the common but potentially equal relationship between the different scale, force of impact, the stage of development discourses. Discourses are like air bubbles in a boiling pot: their volume depends on the amount of external pressure from other discourses. And the time of life depends on thickness of the surface covering material world that is diminished at volume increasing. Discourses-bubbles, unlike drops and vortices, coexist with each other, not merging and not isolating completely. Analysis of discursive reality does not imply eclecticism. It is based on the external ontological monism: "everything is discourse."

The relationship between individual discourse but not between the individual and society can be understood as the basis of the world because each person on their own can create a new discourse and thus leave or destroy the old one. Individual, as well as society as a whole, is equally affected by any of the existing discourses, while remaining indifferent to it without noticing it as a discourse. It makes a problem that is not sufficiently meaningful today. Proposals of well-known philosophers, "to direct discourse against discourse" by giving its values [4] Habermas), a special science "mediology" [5] (R. Debray), or a value-neutral discourse of "cyborg" [6] (D. Harvey) represent actions in line with the old, formal logical paradigms. And a philosopher, observing these phenomena is «the Socratic mediator between different discourses» [7] R. Rorty wrote. You can add the - silent mediator, since all of the voices belong to discourses.

A professional ethics and literary etiquette, explored by D.S. Likhachev [8] can be a meaningful discourse analogy, since they carry many of the signs of discourse: the limitations of existence in space and time, the dependence on external factors, internal ordering of the relations between the constituent units. But at the same time, this is a definite decision ordering the contradiction that is justified in rejecting that decision, as the paradigm of Genesis in the poem of Parmenides rejects Nothingness. This is a dogmatic way, provoking the emergence of other solutions, as his double. Examples include opposition muskulinnogo and gender discourses, racist and anti-racist, etc. Even discourse, given by a series of books about Harry Potter can be easily countered to discourse of books about the girl with the dragon tattoo. This incessant "shadow boxing", which with the help of discourse involved the whole society, was shown by D. Swift as the conflict of "the sharp end

of the eggs" with "the blunt end of eggs". It is another problem of discursive reality. The content of each monad, according to Leibniz [9], is the view of the world: stones have a dim view and cats have a clear one. Similarly, each discourse has a certain vision of reality, supported by its structure.

Discourse can be represented as a complex social and informational education, like nesting dolls: its center is a fact with a strong attitude of this subject to this fact, the next layer is a rule usually justified by the application of this relationship to other facts, the third layer is a conceptual-shaped form of the expression of this rule, the fourth may be the scope of this rule, a situation that allows the rule. Any layer following by the first camouflages the relation to the fact. Discourse lies. This is the third problem of discourse. Its essence is hidden and, at the same time it is realized in its existence.

For example, the museum discourse is conflicting with the church discourse in the problem of the preferential use of monuments and works of art. The museum discourse is clearly talking about the study and preservation of monuments in its original form. But the church discourse is demanding to refer them to the proprietor. Essentially they express the same attitude to this monument of antiquity as contrasted to modernity. The museum discourse supposes the attitude to the monument as to a unit of ancient time contrasted to modern reality. And the church discourse considers it as a unit of religious practice. To lose the old unit, making it the subject of daily practice - is to deprive oneself a clear, factual History, preferring the mythological History or meta-history. Clearly giving the unit to one or another proprietor we do not think that we can lose our History.

In the study of discourse, we are dealing with separation of History of facts from the History of the interpretation of these facts since these two Histories are subjected to different intentions and various domestic laws. The first History tells us about the sequence of events and engagement of events with each other. It is open to time, it is incomplete and contradictory. And so it is in principle interpretable and multivalent. The second History is meta-history. Its objects, like Euclidean geometry objects and objects of other geometries, are subjected to reflexive mathematical laws: they are complete, consistent, the axiom of choice operates there, etc. The idea (in the Kantian sense of the word [10]) takes the role of mediator between fact and interpretation, consciousness and history. To discover the nature of the relevance of our interpretation, we have to find a "vanishing point" of different philosophical theories and

even theories opposite in their direction. In a formal, methodical way, this point should indicate the common nature of thought. Just as in Hegel [11], three logical areas: cerebral, negative-dialectical and speculative work together and at the same time, define the unity of thought and action. Discourse moves and realizes sense made by imagination in practice. As a result, instead of a continuous movement, characteristic for the "history of ideas" in the discourse of reality we have to deal with the discontinuity of individual traditions.

The duality of discourse is defined by its origin from daily practice, the success of which was realized and secured by the introduction of specific rules. At the bottom, the subject-practical level rules are this technology and technical manuals, answering the question of how to do something? At the top, the social level, the rules are social meanings, answering the question: why do it? Discursive rules of relevance, answering the question: why? and how? are between them. there are actually. The importance of discourse can serve to reality learning and can prevent it. At the last case waves of importance, popularity of some ideas affirm some false reality. The discourse becomes an epiphenomenon or an active subject. As a subject of signs and symbolic activities, it is able to produce new images, ideas that are not related directly to the material or ideal reality and lead to its iconic clog. Such a discourse produces pseudo knowledge, illusory and imaginary facts and information, replacing knowledge about real events by them. This is the fourth problem of discursive reality. We can specify a number of other problems: automatism, lack of control over the process of discursive people, its deep connection with language and speech, the manipulation of visual images, the use of strategies and heuristics.

Adequate response to the imposed problems will not be repression and substitution of discourse with something else easier for understanding but mastering it as a method of learning a new reality. This involves mastering the qualities of discourse, expressing it in notions and constructing philosophical discourse theory. In particular, the formal-logical consequence, based on the categories of general, special and individual, in relation to the discourse reality must be replaced by a more adequate logic of the situation. The common in it is not a quality inherent to things, but the algorithm, the sequence of development of certain qualities in individuals – participants of the situation, ie, plot. Philosopher should «oppose some dictionaries against the other ones» [12]. But this approach, limiting our vision of a set of subjects, is not sufficient to understand the

discursive reality properly. The same history, for example, the fairy tale "Cinderella" can be played in different ways. Cinderella becomes a princess in Christian discourse, it can also be a rebellious slave in the pagan and the Nietzschean discourse, she can escape from her stepmother, revenge her or die in a hypothetical discourse of justice. Discursive reality can not be reduced to a set of well-known stories, it is shaping up as a dialogue of interpretations of these themes in different discourses and not only in Christian one. At this reality situations are undergoing transformation, their development is fundamentally multivariate. And discourses can change themselves in these situations.

Discursive approach offers advantages in comparison with classical and non-classical philosophical methods. In particular, it removes the contradiction between subject and object and makes a difference in the formulation of philosophical problems: it reveals the fundamental problem not at the level of concepts, but on the level of activity, the practice receiving the expression in concepts. The identification of these problems and their partial removal should serve as a balance between practitioners and the rules governing them. And discursive philosophy is to discover the hidden rules that have a significant impact on the practice and the balance of practice and regulations. We find the combined effect of externally opposing trends and we identify a number of key points where the action of these forces creates a unity of their resultant strength in the discourse.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Discursive reality is like a foam, consisting of separate bubbles - discourses interacting with each other on a limited base.
- Each of discourses empowers the captured people by a special attitude to the world and to each other, «paints» the world in its color.
- Discursive «foam» can be stable, can grow and decay. One discourse can preempt other and «rule».
- Mastering discourse as a philosophical method will create a new conceptual framework for the description of complex social phenomena.

## REFERENCES

1. Foucault, M., 1969. *L' Archeologie du savoir*. Paris.
2. Kozhevnikov, A., 2007. *Introduction to the reading of Hegel. The idea of death in the philosophy of Hegel*. Moscow.

3. Graham, Linda J., 2011. The Product of Text and 'Other' Statements: Discourse analysis and the critical use of Foucault. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 43(6): 663-674.
4. Habermas, J., 2000. Moral consciousness and communicative action. SPb.
5. Debray Regis, 1999. Croire, voir, faire. Trauverses, Paris, Ed. Odile Jacob, coll. "Le Champ Mediologique".
6. Donna Haraway, 1991. "A Cyborg Manifesto. Science, Technology and Socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century," in Simians, cyborgs and women: the reinvention of nature (New York; Routledge, 1991), pp: 149-181.
7. Rorty R., 1979. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Princeton, pp: 317.7.
8. Likhachev, D.S., 1979. Poetics of the ancient Russian literature M.: Nauka, pp: 376C.
9. Leibniz, 1984. Century Works in four volumes: the So-3.- M: Thought, 734 C. - Filos. heritage. The so-92.
10. Kant, I., 2007. Critique of pure reason/Per. with it. N. Losskey verified and edited by C.G. Arzakanyan and M.I. Itkin; note. C.G. Arzakanyan. - M: Eksmo.
11. Hegel G.V.F., 1970. Science of logic, volume 1. Moscow.
12. Rorty, R., 1991. Philosophical papers Cambridge, 1: 14.8.