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Unpacking Postmodernism and Critical Critique

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ABSTRACT

There is a combat between modernism and postmodernism in both literary and non literary world. This article deals with how postmodernism has given impact in literary and cultural world. Lyotard has meticulously explained to the readers about the prefix 'post' in his work. Not only postmodernism a cultural entity but also a cultural product. Nihilism, Skepticism and Marxism also getting celebrations in the postmodern world.

Introduction

The demise of Marxism, which emphasized up on seeking the universality has left a new life to skepticism and nihilism, which were once acclaimed as 'negativity' in social life, but positively they are, whose concept-hoods and the endorsement with postmodernism.

The philosophy of postmodernism can be the extension of skepticism. Skepticism does not accept and question therefore, aforementioned concept 'dubiosity' can be found in postmodernism literature and art. Postmodernism can be found in various fields such as philosophy, politics, feminism, art, architecture, music, literature, law, medicine, science, technology etc. most importantly, the era and its term postmodernism came into being widely only in architecture. The proto-practitioner of this is Charles Jenks in 1970's. modern architecture states and has patchy-mention of international style and a building of glass-raised boxes.

On the contrary, postmodernism architecture establishes hybrid buildings. And it has local colour association, as Jameson mentioned.

In 1980, the postmodernism architecture was made to come into being by Venice Biennale in the influential essay, 'The presence of the past', Jameson says that the Italian architect Paolo has reviled the high modern architect against the programme of modernist (Le Corbusier, Wright, Mies). Two 'Jenks' are seminal philosophers in the scene of postmodernism. One is Jean Baudrillard. And the other one is Jean Francois Lyotard. Jean Francois Lyotard can also be called the father of postmodernism, because he is said to have given a number of definitions and contributions to the development of postmodernism in the world by producing his book which is seminal.

The postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge

Lyotard has explained clearly what is meant by the prefix 'Post'. The 'Post' in postmodernism is not simply that spells out 'Chronology': rather it extends its valuable definition. What Lyotard says is that post may be classified into three indispensable meanings. They are: Inauguration of new art, humanity and Ana.

Lyotard says that the prefix 'post' takes a new life – a new direction. In addition to it, he points out that it is a conversation on discourse on a dialogue. The conversation between the modern and the new one is called counter action that has produced postmodernism. The term 'post' states historical chronology, performances of the traditional way of practicing Christianity and concepts established by the westernization. That is why Lyotard says that the first meaning of Post is "The Inauguration of New Direction". The inauguration of new direction takes place in architecture and in some other arts. The newness of the 'post' is not to depend on the Westernisation; at the same time it may be the extension of modernism; therefore the 'newness' of the 'post' is not embracing the surface level meaning of it. Similarly, the newness of new of postmodernism is trans-modernism. The second meaning of the 'Post' is 'humanity'. Lyotard himself reads out that the modern scientific era is hood-strained. By the advent of techno-scientific world, the sense of humanity is less practiced. At all costs, the technocrats, scientists and the writers of modernism had to establish only the 'universality' and the 'sameness' rather than 'difference'. Lyotard also refers to the place, Auschwitz, where Jew – massacre was perpetrated by Hitler. During the modern period, more scientific developments and mass-killings were done. That is why it is against humanity. In the use of post at the second phase. Lyotard wants to emphasise 'humanity'. Therefore, humanity is celebrated in postmodernism.

The third place of 'post' is 'ana' which means 'analysis', 'Anamnesis'. What does it analyze? What is the cause to analyze? What happened? To answer all these questions, Lyotard used the third phase of meaning that is 'ana'.

The third 'post' analyses what happened and what went wrong in modernism. It also questions some concepts in modernism. Lyotard concludes the essay 'Note on the meaning of Post' in literature that post of postmodernism is not to say that this is not the movement, which welcomes and accepts the situation and contextualizes the previous one. This paper endorses the concept and the ideology of revitalization of modernism and re-examination of modernism. Besides, Lyotard centers his ideas of the 'newness' of new of post in the first place to give the meaning for the prefix 'post'. Therefore at this stage, it is better to understand what 'Post' is in postmodernism.

For the definition of postmodernism, myriads of writers and critics have contributed. But Jean Francois Lyotard has given as clear as crystal that is panoptically accepted.

He adds that knowledge lies in the form of narration. If the narration is difficult to maintain the state of its proper definition or disseminating, narration is falling. Lyotard says, "I define postmodern as incredulity towards metaphysical narratives" (*Postmodern Condition XXIV*).

This definition is well-known to define what is postmodernism. He speaks of 'metanarratives'. Metanarratives do not mean merely the technique of narration, but it is a nihilistic approach towards Marxism. Marxism stands for universality and is based on dialectical materialism. What Lyotard says is meta-narratives that strictly adhere to western religious dogmaticities, authoritarianism, authenticity, claiming reason and all other 'strictness'. Metanarratives can also be called 'grand narratives'. Meta-narration spells out that individual creativity is restricted.

Individual freedom is constrained; that is why Lyotard gives 'humanity' for the second meaning to the prefix 'post' in postmodernism. The antonymic word for meta-narratives is 'little narratives'. Little narrative embraces the individual feelings and 'creativity'.

It is said that little one is better than bigger one. The book *Libidinal Economy* (1974) written by Lyotard is more influential on postmodernism that attacks Marxism and other authoritative narrations. The 'local disorder' is celebrated by the rejection of 'universal order'. As the universal order occupies a higher place, the individual's 'disorder' so called 'creativity' is lost. Therefore, 'creativity' is accepted in postmodernism.

Baudrillard and his Contribution

That is why Baudrillard says, postmodernism is 'anything' it goes: which clearly explains to the people about anything it goes is any 'event' that happens in the world it accepts; the term 'acceptance' is befallen in the postmodern condition.

Jean Francois Lyotard mainly establishes himself in explaining meta-narratives and advocating 'little narrative' and the reintroduction to the sublime. To amplify the voice of Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard contributes himself in capstones of three major concepts that are:

- Simulation/Simulacra,
 - The hyper real, and
 - The implosion of meaning (Lane2000:2)
1. *Simulations*: For simulation he argues the image on the picture seems more real than the real one. So the artificiality makes one feel the absence of the very real experience. To give a more vivid picture of simulation, Baudrillard states three phases:
 - a) *The counterfeit* – this stage explains that a structure or a system of 'classicism' moves from Renaissance to Industrial revolution and that domineering mode destroys reality.
 - b) *Production* – this phase signifies the 'industrial age' which produces infinite

reproducible things. It is mainly facing mass production.

- c) *Simulation* – this term simulation reads out that there is ‘no’ and proper relationship ‘with’ or ‘to’ reality. This leads to ‘hyper reality’.
2. *Hyper Real*: This term shows the ‘loss of the real’. It is a collusion of the real and the image. Advertisements on Television, the image of refined things and the reality are lost. Baudillard exemplifies ‘Disneyland in America’.
3. *The Implosion of meaning*: Taking a cue from this, the implosion of meaning is a meaning of determined concepts but it is a ‘play’. Because the aforementioned two terms also point out the third concept of implosion of meaning.

Leslie Fiedler and his contribution

Therefore postmodernism celebrates ‘the presence of absence’. Leslie Fiedler, an American critic has published one influential essay entitled ‘Cross the Border Close the Gap’. In that essay Leslie Fiedler has given three important elements in the postmodern literature. These elements are:

- *The Western*
- *Science Fiction*
- *Pornography*.

In the essay in the first part ‘Close the Gap Cross the Border’, to which he mentions the earliest English novels such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Pamela*. In *Robinson Crusoe* one can find the adventurous events that stand for something interesting and unreal. Again that ‘event’ is presented in literature after several year in a new paradigm. And then Fiedler takes the three postmodern elements above mentioned and he matches the modern novels or olden novels. This kind of process becomes ‘Closes the gap’.

Therefore, ‘*the western*’ implies that it is not the westernization in philosophy, art and literature. But the western implies that the ‘Red Indian’ and their life and enjoyment. The second element ‘*science fiction*’ signifies that it is also one of the major elements in postmodern novels. When one reads the novel or work based on science functionality, he/she can have some unreality and draw pleasure. The third element is everywhere found among the young world. ‘*Pornography*’ makes people feel something interesting, because, this kind of tendency is from one ‘Psyche’. According to postmodernism, psychic feelings and its tendencies are to be given top priority. This element probably stands for ‘mass culture’. The ‘Age of Eliot’ was over Leslie Fiedler announced in 1969, replaced by the popular culture of American youth with its science fiction, westerns and poronography. (Peter Brooker 1996:83)

T.S. Eliot is one of the most influential writers in modern art especially in literature. Especially his poem ‘The Waste Land’ is a typical example for modernism.

Eliotization in literature is de-eliotized in literature by the emergence of pop are popular culture. Recently, the postmodern condition is based on media space and the rejection of ‘deo space’ and ‘cyber punk’ (David Bell 2007:62). Media space and Deospace are use4d by the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai-media space is equivalent to ‘relativism’. Deospace is equivalent to ‘meta narratives’. Cyber punk is another quasi-genre in science fiction. It originated in 1980’s associated with Gibson, Bruce Sterling. Cyber punk is fully concertrated on new technologies, especially computers and virtual reality. Therefore, it is better comprehended that the postmodern condition is illusion, hyper reality and presence of absence.

In all the arts, the concept of beauty would be dominating. The conventional way of domineering aspect is beauty but the postmodern art is does not accept mostly the cncepthood of beauty. Umberto Eco points out that postmodernism is defined by its inter-textuality and knowingness and by its relation to the past- which postmodernism revisits at any historical moment with irony (Raman Seldon 2005:209). Inter-textuality is also one of the elements in postmodern literature. The relation between present and the past with irony is a parody. Because, what postmodern condition says is that every creator is subjective interpreter. The writing of history is also based on subjectivism. Therefore, the historicity in the history and a novel which has historical narration are parodied. Some critics and novelists are central to the postmodern world. Thomas Pynchon, Ishmael Reed and John Barth are from America. John Fowles, Italo Calvino, Salman Rushdie and Umberto Eco are from Europe. Fredric Jameson, Jurgan Habemas, Hutcheon and Hassan are the intellectual critics.

Conclusion

In the scene of higher intellectualism, postmodern great thinkers Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, Deleuze, Guttaie and Lacan, through their writings and seminal books have shown the other side of the world.

Patricia Waugh is also accepting the voice of Lyotard by giving a new term ‘new humanism’. The second meaning by Lyotard is adopted.

It is better to say that postmodernism celebrates not ‘has’, ‘have’, or ‘got’, Postmodernism celebrates the principle of Schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is not in the real term used in psychology. As Jameson puts Schizophrenia is “an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers which fail to like up into a coherent sequence” (Connor 2004:49).

What Jameson points out is that Schizophrenia is a split personality. It has no relation between though and action which shows lack of cohesiveness, and irregularity; therefore he says that ‘it’ has not logical continuity and relation between past, present and the future. There is no

room for 'the self identity'. Here only Baudrillard's concept of 'anything it goes'. The 'it' and 'it', 'has', by having all these are 'diplo-its' – which means 'two its'. The first 'its' refers to the action of schizophrenia in postmodern world. The second 'its' refers to the postmodern condition which accepts anything.