

ІСТОРИКО-ФІЛОСОФСЬКІ ПРОБЛЕМИ ПІЗНАННЯ СОЦІУМУ

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THE DISCOURSE OF THE POSTMODERN IN THE FIELD OF AESTHETICS AND CULTURAL THEORY

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ДИСКУРС ПОСТМОДЕРНУ У СФЕРІ ЕСТЕТИКИ ТА КУЛЬТУРОЛОГІЧНОЇ ТЕОРІЇ

Objective. *Current period in history has been called the postmodern age (or «postmodernity») by many scientists and a lot of contemporary critics are interested in making sense of the period they live. In order to keep clear distinction between postmodernity and postmodernism, every set of modules includes an initial module according to which every critic defines the sense of current postmodern age (postmodernity).*

Methods. *The author uses different theoretic methods, namely analysis, comparative method, scientific literature learning on the problem of research.*

Results. *For two decades the postmodern debates have dominated cultural and intellectual scene in many spheres throughout the world. The author tries to express her position on the age of postmodernism in French aesthetics.*

Scientific novelty. *In view of a wide range of postmodern disputes, we propose explicating the difference between the most significant concepts of postmodernism theory and defining major positions, opinions and limitations.*

Practical value. *Main principles of French aesthetics development can be applied to further understanding of the age of postmodernism.*

Key words: *postmodernism, discourse, aesthetics, modernity.*

My conception of postmodernism is thus not meant to be a monolithic thing but to allow evaluations of other currents within this system-which cannot be measured unless one knows what the system is. In the second I want to propose a dialectical view in which we neither see postmodernism as immoral, frivolous or reprehensible because of its lack of high seriousness, nor as good in the McLuhanist, celebratory sense of the emergence of some wonderful new utopia. Features of both are going on at once.

– Fredric Jameson, “Interview”, in *Flash Art* [5, p. 1].

Stating the problem. In aesthetic and cultural theory, polemics emerged over whether modernism in the arts was or was not dead and what sort of postmodern art was succeeding it. In philosophy, debates erupted concerning whether or not the tradition of modern philosophy had ended, and many began celebrating a new postmodern philosophy associated with Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Rorty, Lyotard, and others.

Eventually, the postmodern assault produced new social and political theories, as well as theoretical attempts to define the multifaceted aspects of the postmodern phenomenon itself.

Advocates of the postmodern turn aggressively criticized traditional culture, theory, and politics, while defenders of the modern tradition responded either by ignoring the new challenger, by attacking it in return, or by attempting to come to terms with and appropriate the new discourses and positions.

Critics of the postmodern turn argued that it was either a passing fad; a specious invention of intellectuals in search of a new discourse and source of cultural capital, or yet another conservative ideology attempting to devalue emancipatory modern theories and values.

But the emerging postmodern discourses and problematic raise issues which resist easy dismissal or facile incorporation into already established paradigms. The concept of postmodernism, in so far as it defines itself in relation to modernism, whether in the form of negative appraisal of the latter as is the case with Jean-Francois Lyotard in France, or in the form of positive evaluation of the latter in relation to the former in the instance of Jurgen Habermas in West Germany, or in the form of a dialectical equipoise between the two as is apparent with Fredric Jameson in the United States, has seized the national imagination of many philosophers and literary critics.

These differential national responses to the experience of postmodernity, to be sure, reflects and is determined, to a large extent, by the legacies of the quality of modernism implanted in the national cultural textures of each particular country. Whereas in France modernism was experienced as a cultural dominant precisely because nearly all artistic schools and literary movements, stretching from Cubism through Surrealism to Dadaism, were converging towards Paris, a Paris about to undergo its last moments as the capital of the nineteenth century, in West Germany, because modernism and the Weimar Republic perished in the catastrophe of 1933, modernism has been understood as a missed political experience derivable from cultural processes, and still different, in America modernism has been experienced as the absence of philosophical sophistication and complexity in the national cultural texture because of the literary emigration of Eliot, Pound and Hemingway.

What is clear is that these different national cultural coordinates of positioning modernism and postmodernism to each other are integrated into the sociological coordinates of these countries' national histories: the fact that in France class conflicts and class struggles are usually fought out to their bitter end, as was the case in 1789; in Germany, the formation of a national state was at a late date and its nature was always a commingling of class impurities which later proved to be unpredictably explosive; and in America, the mythology of the frontier in its history has made

that country not only petulant, but also to believe in limitlessness of its possibilities [5, p. 1].

In view of the wide range of postmodern disputes, we propose to explicate and sort out the differences between the most significant articulations of postmodern theory, and to identify their central positions, insights, and limitations. Yet, as we shall see, there is no unified postmodern theory, or even a coherent set of positions. Rather, one is struck by the diversities between theories often lumped together as 'postmodern' and the plurality – often conflictual – of postmodern positions. One is also struck by the inadequate and undertheorized notion of the 'postmodern' in the theories which adopt, or are identified in, such terms. To clarify some of the key words within the family of concepts of the postmodern, it is useful to distinguish between the discourses of the modern and the postmodern.

To begin, we might distinguish between 'modernity' conceptualized as the modern age and 'post modernity' as an epochal term for describing the period which allegedly follows modernity. There are many discourses of modernity, as there would later be of postmodernity, and the term refers to a variety of economic, political, social, and cultural transformations. Modernity, as theorized by Marx, Weber, and others, is a historical periodizing term which refers to the epoch that follows the 'Middle Ages' or feudalism. For some, modernity is opposed to traditional societies and is characterized by innovation, novelty, and dynamism. The theoretical discourses of modernity from Descartes through the Enlightenment and its progeny championed reason as the source of progress in knowledge and society, as well as the privileged locus of truth and the foundation of systematic knowledge. Reason was deemed competent to discover adequate theoretical and practical norms upon which system of thought and action could be built and society could be restructured. This Enlightenment project is also operative in the American, French, and other democratic revolutions which attempted to overturn the feudal world and to produce a just and egalitarian social order that would embody reason and social progress.

Yet the construction of modernity produced untold suffering and misery for its victims, ranging from the peasantry, proletariat, and artisans oppressed by capitalist industrialization to the exclusion of women from the public sphere, to the genocide of imperialist colonialization. Modernity also produced a set of disciplinary institutions, practices, and discourses which legitimate its modes of domination and control. The 'dialectic of Enlightenment' thus described a process whereby reason turned into its opposite and modernity's promises of liberation masked forms of oppression and domination. Yet defenders of modernity, claim that it has 'unfulfilled potential' and the resources to overcome its limitations and destructive effects.

Postmodern theorists, however, claim that in the contemporary high tech media society, emergent processes of change and transformation are producing a new postmodern society and its advocates claim that the era of postmodernity constitutes a novel state of history and novel sociocultural formation which requires new concepts and theories. Theorists of postmodernity (Baudrillard, Lyotard, Harvey, etc.) claim that technologies such as computers and media, new forms of knowledge, and changes in the socioeconomic systems are producing a postmodern social formation [3, p. 35].

Baudrillard and Lyotard interpret these developments in terms of novel types of information, knowledge, and technologies, while neo-Marxist theorists like Jameson and Harvey interpret the postmodern in terms of development of a higher stage of capitalism marked by a greater degree of capital penetration and homogenization across the globe. These processes are also producing increased cultural fragmentation, changes in the experience of space and time, and new modes of experience, subjectivity, and culture. These conditions provide the socioeconomic and cultural basis for postmodern theory and their analysis provides the perspectives from which postmodern theory can claim to be on the cutting edge of contemporary developments.

In addition to the distinction between modernity and postmodernity in the field of social theory, the discourse of the postmodern plays an important role in the field of aesthetics and cultural theory. Here the debate revolves around distinctions between modernism and postmodernism in the arts. Within this discourse, 'modernism' could be used to describe the art movements of the modern age (impressionism, l'art pour l'art, expression, surrealism, and other avant-garde movements), while 'postmodernism' can describe those diverse aesthetic forms and practices which come after and break with modernism. These forms include the architecture of Robert Venturi and Philip Johnson, the musical experiments of John Cage, the art of Warhol and Rauschenberg, the novels of Pynchon and Ballard, and films like *Blade Runner* or *Blue Velvet*. Debates centre on whether there is or is not a sharp conceptual distinction between modernism and postmodernism and the relative merits and limitations of these movements.

The discourses of the postmodern also appear in the field of theory and focus on the critique of modern theory. Modern theory – ranging from the philosophical project of Descartes, through the Enlightenment, to the social theory of Comte, Marx, Weber and others – is criticized for a foundation of knowledge, for its universalizing and totalizing claims, for its hubris to supply apodictic truth, and for its allegedly fallacious rationalism [2, p. 56].

More specifically, postmodern theory provides a critique of representation and the modern belief that theory mirrors reality, taking instead 'perspectivist' and 'relativist' positions that theories at best provide partial perspectives on their objects, and that all cognitive representations of the world are historically and linguistically mediated. Some postmodern theory accordingly rejects the totalizing macroperspectives on society and history favored by modern theory in favour of microtheory and micropolitics.

Postmodern theory also rejects modern assumptions of social coherence and notions of causality in favour of multiplicity, plurality, fragmentation, and indeterminacy. In addition, postmodern theory abandons the rational and unified subject postulated by much modern theory in favour of a socially and linguistically decentered and fragmented subject. by contract, attack postmodern relativism, irrationalism, and nihilism.

To help clarify and illuminate the confusing and variegated discourse of the postmodern, we shall first provide archaeology of the term, specifying its history, early usages, and conflicting meanings.

Next, we situate the development of contemporary postmodern theory in the context of post-1960's France where the concept of a new postmodern condition became an important theme by the late 1970's. It is a well known fact, that the term "postmodernism" first entered the philosophical lexicon in 1979, with the publication of *The Postmodern Condition* by Jean-François Lyotard. Most famously, in *La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir* (*The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*) (1979), he proposes what he calls an extreme simplification of the "postmodern" as an 'incredulity towards meta-narratives. These meta-narratives – sometimes 'grand narratives' – are grand, large-scale theories and philosophies of the world, such as the progress of history, the knowability of everything by science, and the possibility of absolute freedom. Lyotard argues that we have ceased to believe that narratives of this kind are adequate to represent and contain us all. He points out that no one seemed to agree on what, if anything was real and everyone had their own perspective and story [1, p. 23].

We have become alert to difference, diversity, the incompatibility of our aspirations, beliefs and desires, and for that reason postmodernity are characterized by an abundance of. For this concept Lyotard draws from the notion of 'language-games' found in the work of Wittgenstein. Lyotard notes that it is based on mapping of society according to the concept of the language games.

Conclusion. Aesthetic modernity emerged in the new avant-garde modernist movements and bohemian subcultures, which rebelled against the alienating aspects of industrialization and rationalization, while seeking to transform culture and to find creative self-realization in art. Modernity entered everyday life through the dissemination of modern art, the products of consumer society, new technologies, and new modes of transportation and communication. The dynamics by which modernity produced a new industrial and colonial world can be described as 'modernization' – a term denoting those processes of individualization, secularization, industrialization, cultural differentiation, commodification, urbanization, bureaucratization, and rationalization which together have constituted the modern world.

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Цель. *Наш текущий период в истории был назван многими учеными постсовременным периодом (или «постсовременность»), и многие современные критики были заинтересованы в том, чтобы прочувствовать время, в котором они жили. Чтобы сохранить четкое различие между постсовременностью и постмодернизмом, каждый набор модулей включает первоначальный модуль, по которому каждый критик определяет смысл нашего текущего постсовременного периода (или «постсовременности»).*

Методика. *Автор публикации использует в статье различные теоретические методы, а именно, анализ, сравнительный метод, изучение научной литературы по теме исследования.*

Результаты. *За последние два десятилетия постмодернистские дебаты доминировали на культурной и интеллектуальной сцене во многих областях во всем мире. Автор пытается высказать свою позицию в отношении эпохи постмодерна во французской эстетике.*

Научная новизна. *В связи с широким спектром постмодернистских споров, мы предлагаем в статье разобраться в различиях между наиболее значимыми концептами постмодернистской теории, а также определить центральные позиции, взгляды и ограничения.*

Практическая значимость. *Основные принципы и позиции развития французской эстетики могут быть использованы в применении к будущему пониманию эпохи постмодерна.*

Ключевые слова: *постмодерн, постмодернизм, дискурс, эстетика, современность.*

Мета. *Наш час в історії було названо багатьма вченими постсучасним періодом (або «постсучасністю»), та багато сучасних критиків були зацікавлені в тому, щоб відчутти той час, в якому вони жили. Щоб зберегти чітке розходження між постсучасністю та постмодернізмом, кожен набір модулів містить вихідний модуль, за яким кожен критик визначає зміст поточного постсучасного періоду (або «постсучасності»).*

Методика. *Автор публікації використовує у статті різні теоретичні методи, а саме, аналіз, порівняльний метод, вивчення наукової літератури з теми дослідження.*

Результати. *За останні два десятиліття постмодерні дебати домінували на культурній та інтелектуальній сцені в багатьох галузях у всьому світі. Автор намагається висловити свою позицію відносно епохи постмодерну у французькій естетиці.*

Наукова новизна. *У зв'язку з широким спектром постмодерністських диспутів, ми пропонуємо в статті розібратися у відмінності між найбільш значущими концептами постмодерністської теорії, а також визначити центральні позиції, погляди та обмеження.*

Практична значущість. *Основні принципи та позиції розвитку французької естетики можуть бути використані в застосуванні до майбутнього розуміння епохи постмодерну.*

Ключові слова: *постмодерн, постмодернізм, дискурс, естетика, сучасність.*

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