

Pregledni rad

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FROM MODERNISM TOWARDS POST-MODERNISM – RATIONALISM AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT ERA**

Abstract: Modernism and post-modernism are predestined to have a common denominator. Spiritual precursors of post-modernism appear with the development of rationalism and the enlightenment era. It will have proven later on that post-modernists wished to impose themselves as a total opposition to modernism, but they could not avoid the fact that post-modernism originated from modernism. In the oeuvres of post-modernists it is woven the social and philosophical thought of Bacon, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Voltaire and later on, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Weber, which shortened the way from modernism toward post-modernism.

Independently of the fact whether they are for inductive and deductive method of research, empirists started doubting in the supreme value of reason, and they gave some importance to language and text including the anti-historicity. Post-modernists turned the comprehensions of modernists upside down so as to reveal rational core in that mystical envelope. In the measure in which reason was taking win over faith and mysticism, in the same measure post-modernism was replacing modernism, but not with the aim to eliminate it but to give some modernistic categories a new quality.

Key words: Modernism, post-modernism, empirism, rationalism, enlightenment era, precursors.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Modern era means the so-called new age arisen from the Ancient and medieval period. Some comprehended modern era as the one of the enlightenment (l'âge de lumière), which lasted from the Renaissance to the 19th century. Others thought it was about period which started from the American and French revolution. It is interesting to say that in Germany modernism just started in 1880, since national state had been emerged then; the process of industrialization was

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accelerated and class structure dissolved the ordinance one. Post-modernism was also seen as the rational cultural phenomenon appeared in the 1960s of the 20th century in France. It got its importance by addressing the following topics

- truth,
- language and its relation toward thought and the world,
- reason, science and technology,
- human nature and that „self“,
- relations of the individual and group,
- power and oppression and
- creativity and aesthetics (Linn, 1996: xiii).

So, post-modernism is inseparable from the modern and in order to understand it well, it is indispensable to study it from the point of view of different scientific disciplines. For example, in order to understand why post-modernists attack the belief in reason, it is not enough to focus only on the literature from the era of rationalism but it is indispensable to focus on architecture, social and ecological facts which pushed the world towards „rational order“. Post-modernists put in the centre of their analysis language since language speaks more on man than vice versa. As per Derrida, „There is nothing beyond the text“ (Derrida, 1974: 215).

1. MODERNISM OPPOSITE POST-MODERNISM FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF RATIONALISM AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT ERA

The enlightenment era with its liberation-related principles meant the establishment of the society based on the principles of social contract, freedom, equality and justice. These were its guiding ideas and political revolutions were the form of their realization.

Spiritual precursors of modernism may be found in the oeuvres of Bacon, Descartes and Locke, but Kant, Hume, Nietzsche and Heidegger effected the critique of modernism and created themselves as the spiritual precursors of post-modernism. Saussure and Wittgenstein only speeded up the road toward post-modernism which could not be explained without Derrida, Bart, Foucault, Lyotard and Baudrillard. Modern thinkers believe in reason and individualism. By explaining the transition from modernism toward post-modernism we have to rely on language and its role in human life in order to give the answer to the question how the human sees himself.

Modern thinkers start from nature instead of super-natural which pre-modern philosophers rely on. Perception and reason are considered as human means of knowledge while pre-modern thinkers see that in tradition, faith and mysticism. The character of the individuals is formed by human autonomy and capacities while pre-modern philosophers see that in dependence and primal

sin. The individual is seen in the context of the whole of reality while for pre-modern philosophers the individual is subjugated to some higher political, social and religious authority (Hicks, 2004: 8). The modern achieves its maturity in the time of the enlightenment era. Pre-modernism dominated over 1000 years (400–1400). Renaissance and reformation initiated revolutions from the 17th and 18th century. In such circumstances the modern was being created.

Central themes the enlightenment era initiated tackled the whole progress of society. All human images were put at higher level so as to enhance the human existence itself. For Hobbes, the guiding idea was stable and safe society, for Bayle it was more tolerated society while for Descartes it was the domination of reason. The new view on the world was created – Spinoza reduced it to one substance: spirit and body, material and intellect. It is about individual substances viewed from different aspects. The society in such circumstances becomes more resistant to church authorities, autocracy and oligarchy, and from other point of view it becomes more democratic and equal. In that way the distinction of philosophy and theology is made. These changes will have become more practical.

2. BACON'S RENEWAL OF SCIENCE AND DESCARTES' RATIONALISM

For Francis Bacon, human power lies in knowledge and master of nature. The task of science is to master nature and put it under control by putting it in the human's service of purposeful shaping of social life. On the ruins of medieval society, new scientific approach to knowledge of nature started getting out of the frames of medieval philosophy. Everyday perception is not sufficient to reach veritable knowledge of nature. The experience has to be deprived of fallacies, which are called idols by Bacon. The science on fallacies is set up analogously on wrong conclusions in old dialectics (Vindelband, 2011: 287).

The first fallacy is the idol of genus (*idola tribus*), the fallacy which was given with human being in general, where we put order and harmony with things and considered ourselves as the measure for outer world; in addition, the idol of the cave (*idola specus*), as per which the individual in accordance with his capacities and life position is to be found in his cave. This cave is similar to Plato's since it is about the limits of human knowledge. The square idols (*idola fori*) are fallacies caused by people's traffic, especially by speech; we rely on the word to which we attribute a concept. Finally, idols of theatre are taken over from human history on the basis of belief and we repeat them without judging them. These attitudes made Bacon fiercely polemic against the authority's dominance and antropomofrism of the earlier philosophy wishing to accept the reality impartially. Accidental perceptions are forbidden – they ought to be set and supplemented by experiment (Vindelband, 2011: 287).

As regards method, the only correct one is the inductive method, out of which it is progressed toward axioms and other phenomena are explained. The transition toward general and the most general should be slow in order to avoid errors. The phenomena are researched as per their shape, and those shapes are nothing but Plato's ideas. These phenomena are appeared in *tabuli praesentiae* where many cases are exposed, but in *tabuli absentiae* are researched cases where phenomenon disappears and finally in *tabuli graduum* different strength are compared along which phenomenon with the strength of their accompanying phenomena sets in (Vindelband, 2011: 288). Out of the mentioned it can be seen that induction for Bacon is not a mere enumeration but a complex procedure of abstraction based on still present scholastic way of thinking.

So, Bacon advocated general application of one principle, since science must turn from indefinite discussion on concepts to things themselves, that it can be built only on power and the rise to the abstract may be gradual and cautious. Bacon introduces utilitarian motives saying that at the basic aim of science is the creation of benefits for man by means of world knowledge. Postmodernists (Faucalut) will turn upside down this Bacon's thought saying that the power is knowledge. The power is capable of creating a new ideology.

Descartes' insist on reason is rationalistic but Bacon's and Locke's empiristic, which makes them competitive. Nevertheless, what is typical to all of them is the central status of reason as something objective and competitive with regards to faith and mysticism of earlier period. Reason is the feature of individual, and the individual itself becomes a key theme of ethics. Reason is connected to ethical individuals and their social consequences: each has got the right to free judgement, individual rights, political rights, restriction of governmental power etc. These are real off springs of political revolutions.

Descartes maintains that man is a unique being endowed with reason and such uniqueness should be nurtured. All mentioned is put into the context of knowledge in order to master the nature. The main outcome is the creation of better living conditions for the individual. It may be concluded that Descartes went in accordance with new age concept of science opposite to medieval dogmas. Later on, the post-modernists will oppose such concept of knowledge, which will not be achieved and will not have any foundation in accordance with nihilistic philosophy. Human being has got linguistic capacity to create the world by means of „re-description“; that is the reason why human being is unique. Its essence is imaginative capacity to create the world by means of words (Linn, 1996: 3). By thorough study of Descartes' philosophy we conclude it is a so-called world crusade against one-sided opinion spurred by scientific-technological revolution. It is the reaction to medieval crusade which was giving the incentive to ignorance, intolerance and drastic religious wars.

New crusade march in philosophy starts with famous Descartes catchword „Cogito, ergo, sum“, by which begins the era of the modern. A great twist in Western philosophy is commenced by the search for the certainty of all things – from wisdom toward reason. Knowledge is *primus motor* of our lives since knowledge is something certain, and the certainty itself gives the fundament to the real. Knowledge is much more worth than reality and morality. In order to reach knowledge, we are supposed to use a new method. Descartes debates on method in the second part of *the Treatise on Method*. It is the method of systematic doubt. Descartes made the conclusion all his images on the outer world were full of doubts. Doubt is always present no matter we are dreaming or we are awake. Doubt is stronger than reason: the fundament of all existent is to be found in doubt and dreaming or being awake are of less importance. The individual is doubting inevitably. The existence of doubt is the indicator of the existence of something and it is that „self“. It doubts since there is no mental activity in case there is no the individual who is thinking. From there, Descartes derives the sentence „I think, so I am“ which is the fundament of Descartes' cognition theory. Man is a special kind of creature in the universe since he has got a rational structure which singles him out from his milieu. In case he manages to reconcile his rational structure and his acts, he will be able to win all „animal passions“. Passions do not go together with rational thoughts.

If we consider the reason as the means of nature master, thus in that way applied epistemology gives the birth to science. Out of that we make the conclusion that individualism and science are the consequence of reason epistemology. If we go any further, individualism applied to politics gives the birth to liberal democracy. Liberalism is the principle of individual freedom, but the democracy represents the principle of decentralization of political power toward the individuals (political revolutions from 1776 and 1789). The overthrowing of feudal regime enabled practical spread of liberal individual ideas to all human beings (elimination of slavery). The good of individual is the condition of good to all people.

Individualism may be applied to economy, and thus, it gives birth to free market based on capitalist socio-economic relations. The individual is free to make decisions as per different issues: production, consumption and commerce in general. Mercantile feudal commerce is declining giving rise to specialisation, labour division and a series of protectionist measures; these attitudes were advocated by Adam Smith whose oeuvre *The Wealth of Nations* was considered as the beginning of modern economy. In addition, the application of reason and individualism on religion led to the decline of faith, mysticism and superstitions.

Post-modernism appears as a total opposition to the enlightenment era. In the measure modern world speaks about reason, freedom and progress, post-modern opposes it. It criticizes basic premises of modernism: reason and individualism. The whole philosophy of the enlightenment era relied on them.

The subject of attack are also consequences of the philosophy of the enlightenment era personified in capitalism, liberal form of government, science and technology. Instead of experience and reason with modernists, there is linguistic social subjectivism with post-modernists. Instead individual identity and autonomy there is grouping. Instead harmony and interaction there is conflict. Instead scientific-technological achievements there are doubt and open hostilities.

At the end of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th century there is the polarization between the enlightenment and counter-enlightenment eras: Anglo-American culture supported it, but German denied it. Germans doubted in the enlightenment era even before the French revolution since relationship of the enlightenment era toward religion, moral and philosophy had bothered them. The enlightenment era is reproached for undermining the traditional religion. A majority of enlighteners were deists and abandoned a traditional concept of God. God was not the creator of the world any longer, but mathematician who designed the whole universe like Kepler and Newton (Hicks, 2004: 25). Thanks to deism, God was transformed into distinctive architect; it became abstraction and not the being which built-up people morally. The loss of faith is the consequence of such comprehension.

Reason is the feature of the individual and with the help of education, science and technology the individual will be able to realize its life objectives. In case the individual encourages himself to calculate with his gains, the objectives become short-term and egoistic. Social element is lost since relying on reason and individualism confronts to collective-psychological principles of Rousseau. The objective of the enlightenment era adversaries is the return of faith, duties and ethnical identity which was put aside by the enlighteners.

3. THE ENLIGHTENING SPIRIT OF LOCKE, HUME AND VOLTAIRE

As regards the empirists, they also advocated the existence of foundation, so causal-consequential relation. Locke, in his oeuvre, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, said that „The aim of his research was something original, certain and enlarged human knowledge all incorporated with the degree of belief, thinking and feelings“ (Locke, 1959: 7). Empirists hold the attitude that knowledge based on reason is not enough and it should be supplemented with experience. Rationalist attitude on the denial of experience should be thrown out independently of the fact that some ideas are in our thought from birth. Those facts created the clash between rationalists and empirists. A common guiding idea is the fact we should strive toward knowledge and enter causal-consequential relation of all existent. As per modernist's thought, our view on the world is more determined by essential nature than by language and its meaning. Reason may

serve as the knowledge source together with tradition, religion and imagination (Linn, 1996: 5). By these attitudes Locke directly opposes post-modernists. The importance of reason will be undermined later on by Hume. The objective of knowledge is to come to pure one by reveal of scientific truth in order to eliminate ignorance and oppression. Including the acquired knowledge, the progress will be ensured. Progress will be inevitable.

Descartes attacked scholastics by the attempt to apply methods and standards developed in natural sciences, while Locke wished to emancipate philosophy from the same. Philosophy is attributed abstract meanings any longer but is considered as discipline based on the power of empiric contemplation and common sense judgement. Locke advocates the contemplation of natural world and sees man as the subject of nature. He is not the proponent of deductive reasoning taken from premises *a priori*. Some importance is given to language since numerous cardinal mistakes occur from the wrong nomenclature of things. Common sense should not be believed too much, but some subjective difficulties should be taken into account. Theology and metaphysics are not the way of truthful knowledge acquisition but via the study of its nature which, reasonably led, may set it free from ignorance and vanity (Berlin, 2017: 20). By this Locke inserted a small worm of doubt into the veracity of reason, which paved him the way toward post-modernism.

By explaining of his knowledge theory of the innate ideas, Locke advocates cognitive-theoretic and psychogenetic approach. Basic question he raises is whether soul during its appearance brings with it ready knowledge or not? Locke answers this question negatively (Vindelband, 2011: 336). Based on the mentioned he develops his thesis on no *innate principles in the mind* in the first half of his Essays. This assertion was not directed toward Descartes but against the English Neo-Platonists. The innate ideas cannot be valid implicitly. The reason lies in the fact soul at birth remains imprinted (*tabula rasa*) or in original: *white paper void of all characters* (Vindelband, 2011: 336). Locke maintains all our ideas arise from experience. He distinguishes simple or complex ideas under the hypothesis these second arise from the previous ones. There are two sources for simple ideas: sensations and reflections in the form of outer or inner perception. Sensations are ideas on corporal world, but reflection are the activity of soul itself. Sensation is the cause and necessary condition of each reflection. So, Locke is essential for post-modernism because of the fact he did not give to reason a decisive role in knowledge acquisition. He is nominalist and gives some importance to language, which will be largely accepted by post-modernists. Finally, all such condition is explained by logic – science on signs, semiotics.

Hume is considered to be a great advocate of modern, but its great critic as well. By his famous attitude that all ideas arise from experience, Hume indicates the great limitations of reason. Reason is not capable of answering to questions of truthfulness of many things such as: our „self“, which remains the same

during the time, inevitability of causal-consequential relations, some regularities will repeat (sunrise in the morning), existence of material and spiritual substances (atom, God, individual thinking) etc. It is important to notice such ideas are not based on reason but on human nature.

As regards our „self“, it is, for Hume, unchanged. In case we take for example introspection, impressions, passions and ideas they are subject to change, but not at permanent basis. Impressions and ideas are more changeable than that „self“. Its role is to unify impressions and ideas. We are not able to answer whether there is “self” due to the lack of evidence since there is no a rational form of knowledge (Linn, 1996: 10). These Hume’s comprehensions are important for post-modernism since the “self” is not founded on direct introspection. It may be the consequence of private associations where the individual invokes the past events. The idea of causal-consequential event is not actual any longer. It is necessary to have experience that subsequent event causes the previous one (Hume, 1958: 11).

The experience from the past events says that the nature is uniform so that our inductive conclusion from special to individual is based on that supposition. In case the nature changed in the past, it would do it in the future as well. No matter of rational evidences, believe in causal-consequential relations, which means the sequence of some events will be continued in the future. We believe in ideas on that events which connect us from psychological point of view. We must not neglect the experience on that events. Our experience on the real event produces the idea on the feeling acquisition we will be the witnesses on other events. To sum up, the idea on the two events connection does not come from outer world but from ourselves, which was subject to outer world impact. The key is in animal nature of man but not in reason.

Is reason aware on the outer world? In order to reveal whether God or material exist independently of us, we have to come out of our minds on the world and encounter them since they are beyond our thoughts. Since we do not have evidence on the existence of necessary bonds beyond our thoughts, then it is impossible to find out whether God or material exist. Is there the knowledge which is so certain that none reasonable man would doubt in it? The answer is negative since the thoughts on some event entail some feelings (Hume, 1958: 469). Should we take for example the murder, we activate our feeling on that event right now – there is natural feeling on the non-approval on that act which accompanies our idea on murder. The non-approval feeling has the impact on the projection on the wrong act so that for moral judgement it is necessary to include feelings and passions. For Hume, „Reason should be the slave of passion“ (Hume, 1958: 145). Hume approached post-modernism even in that time by making the separation of reason from the nature and from the roots of moral life since the existence of imagination is the condition of man’s survival.

Despite pessimistic trends, the faith in man and his capacities to create wealth and new technologies which will enhance the productivity together with new political and legal institutions, prevailed. Where ignorance and superstition are strong enough, it is less probable to accept supreme value of reason. Reason made a great step forward as per Voltaire's opinion but only among the elite „*Chez un petit nombre de sages*“, while other part of humanity does not deserve to be enlightened.

He expressed his opinions in accordance with the principles of deism, which was close to atheism. Reason was breaking all barriers coming from Christian dogmas since it was a supreme instance in judgement. People, burdened with religious delusions, could not see a real essence and importance of reason. The church opposed reason and it should have been destroyed (Sunjakov, 2008: 25-50). Voltaire's attitude toward church was ambivalent: he criticized it without rejecting religion. He glorified God not in the sense of personality but as the original transcendental cause of all existent (Sunjakov, 2008: 25-50).

God is the original cause of all existent, but not the matter since it cannot move by itself. Deism played more important role in the denying of the position of clergy and church than atheism due to the fact by denying God, atheism denies the idea of Supreme Being as well. Hence, the idea of sovereignty is derived and it is more appropriate to the idea of deism from atheism. From God we come to people as the sovereignty holder, by which Voltaire approaches Rousseau. Deism is the condition of tolerance in which Voltaire persuaded himself during his stay in England. The basic thread which led Voltaire was an immediate relation between God and people without the mediator embodied in church. Based on the mentioned, Voltaire criticized indirect democracy, which will be accepted by post-modernists in terms of criticism of much-praised indirect democracy. He was delighted by market-oriented English society in the spirit of liberalism, which will contribute to subsequent freedom of the individual. Out of economic activity, Voltaire reaches the issue of the form of government: it is about mixture of aristocratic-democratic-monarchist government. People ought to be in submissive position. People are equal as the individuals but not as per their social position. The equality is hard to be achieved so that Voltaire departed from the principles of the French revolution (*égalité, fraternité, liberté*). Such assertion had impact on Girondine's Constitution from 1791, while the subsequent Montagnar's Constitution abolished such division. Rousseau's idea on equality was accepted. The best form of government is the enlightened absolutism.

FINAL REMARKS

Although modernism, based on reason and enlightenment, and post-modernism are to be found in opposition to each other, some common denominator among them may be found. On the other hand, some modern thinkers

by their indication to the restrictions of reason were gradually paving the way toward post-modernism.

Locke, although typically modern thinker, started indicating to the importance of words and language in inter human communication. Post-modernists will derive from that a famous sentence „post-modern condition“ (Lyotard) and game theory. Furthermore, they will subvert the myth on Meta narratives (Marxism, Christianity) and put in the first place small narratives (petits récits). By further analysis they will reach the conclusions that the issues of causality, authorship and intention will become irrelevant. We are coming to the so-called *No Man's Land*. On the other hand, we could not reach post-modern non-historicity without going through modern historicity.

Hume was one of the first modernists who inserted the worm of doubt in the supreme value of reason since all ideas arise from experience. Hume does not believe in causal-consequential relation until it is checked by experience. Liberal belief on compassion and integrity of social groups with different ideological premises is not actual. Voltaire also slightly doubts in supreme value of reason and attributes it only to the elite.

What post-modernists will accept from modernists will be the idea of direct democracy. Rousseau's principle of such form of government will be applied to Montagnar's constitution, which will be a great challenge to post-modernists since Western form of indirect democracy fell into crisis.

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Срђан Ж. СЛОВИЋ

ОД МОДЕРНИЗМА КА ПОСТМОДЕРНИЗМУ –
РАЦИОНАЛИЗАМ И ПРОСВЕТИТЕЉСТВО

САЖЕТАК

Модернизам и постмодернизам су предодређени да имају свој заједнички именитељ. Духовне претече постмодернизма јављају се са појавом рационализма и просветитељства. Касније ће се испостаавити да је постмодернизам желео да се наметне као тотални атипод модернизму, али никако није могао да пренебрегне чињеницу да потиче из модернизма. У делима постмодерниста је уткана друштвена и филозофска мисао Бејкона, Декарта, Лока, Хјума, Волтера а касније Хајдегера, Ничеа, Витгенштајна и Вебера, који су скратили пут од модернизма ка постмодернизму.

Независно од тога да ли су за индуктивну или дедуктивну методеу истраживања, емпиристи су почели да полако сумњају у врховну вредност разума, а одређени значај су давали језику и тексту уз скрајњивање историчности. Постмодернисти су схватања модерниста окренули на тумбе и у том мистичном омоту открили рационално језгро. Ако за пример узмемо категорије знања и моћи, можемо посведочити о односу Бејкоовог и Фукоовог схватања ових категорија. За Бејкона, знање је моћ, а за Фузкоа је то оброто: моћ производи знање. Дакле, у оној мери у којој је разум односио победу над вером и мистицизмом, у истој мери је постмодернизам смењивао модернизам, али не да га тотално уклони, већ да одређеним модернистичким категоријама да нови квалитет.

Кључне речи: модернизам, постмодернизам, емпиризам, рационализам, просветитељство, претече.