

POST MODERNISM AND POST STRUCTURALISM – SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF FREDRIC JAMESON AND JEAN BAUDRILLARD

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Abstract

Post modernism and post structuralism are two intellectual construct use to explain the current happenings in the socio economic and linguistic sphere of the society. The construct has difference its content and execution. Sociologically it denotes the changes in the cultural and social outlook of the people. For Frederic Jameson the content of postmodernism is associated with the late logic of capitalism. Capitalism determines the current pace of post modernity in our cybernetic society. In this hyper real world, the process of simulation redefines the realities in to hyper realities which are not corresponding the actual images. For boudrillard the current happening in the linguistic world is directly or indirectly determines the differences in epistemological quest and linguistic formulations. This study is a descriptive attempt to understand the process of pot modernity and post structuralism within the theoretical preview of Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard.

Key Words: Post modernity, Post structuralism, Hyper-Realitie, Simulations, Capitalism .

Introduction

Post modernism is a way of life used to refer economic, cultural and political conditions of a society after modernity. Some sociologists have believed that in the early 20th century there was a shifting point of modernity to post modernity. Some social critics are of the opinion that the process of modernity ended after the Second World War. Theoretical view of Jürgen Habermas visualized that post modernity as rooted in the principles of rationality and hierarchy of public and cultural life while Jean-François Lyotard understood it as a cultural condition characterized by constant change in the pursuit of progress and development of a society. The literary critic Fredric Jameson identified post modernity with "late capitalism" or "flexible accumulation" of resources or a stage of capitalism following finance capitalism and monopoly capitalism which is characterized by highly mobile labor and capital, and superficial life style. He stressed that modernity is the structural and functional culmination of a capitalistic society.

Post modernity is a condition or a state when a society associated with changes

in institutions, creations and social realities in modern life. It has both political and economic innovations in its content and execution. Post modernism is an aesthetic, literary, political or social philosophy or an "intellectual" phenomenon today. Social scientists and social critics refer it as contemporary culture and economic process including the fragmentation of authority and the commoditization of culture and realities. The process of post modernity can be assessed in the following heads. The first phase of post modernity is associated with the emergence of new media and aesthetic culture. The second phase of post modernity is defined by "digitalism" or the increasing power of personal and digital means of communication including fax machines modems, cable and high speed internet, which has altered the condition of post modernity dramatically. Digital production of information allows individuals to manipulate virtually every aspect of the media environment. This has brought producers into conflict with consumers over intellectual capital and intellectual property, and has led to the creation of a new economy whose supporters argue that the dramatic

fall in information costs will alter society fundamentally.

Post Structuralism

Post structuralism is a movement in philosophy that began in the 1960s. It remains an influence not only in philosophy, but also in a wider range of subjects, including literature, politics, art, cultural criticisms, history and sociology. According to post structuralists, social structure is the product of continuous interplay of languages and corresponding institutions in modern society. Post structuralism is a response to structuralism. Post structuralistic authors believed that the present social structural formation is due to the dynamic effects of communication and languages. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) suggested that meaning of social structure needs to be analyzed within the structure of a whole language rather than by individual words. In his book *Course de-Linguistic General*, Saussure stressed that languages should be studied not only in terms of individual parts but also in terms of relationships between those parts synchronically and diachronically. For Marxists, the truth of human existence could only be understood by the analysis of economic structures. Structural Marxism inquires the hidden and underlying structure of a capitalistic society and its manifestations. They believed that the real pictures of capitalistic societies are formed due to the interdependence of economy, polity and various ideological counterparts. Post Structuralism rejected the view of the self-sufficiency of the structure and the connection of binary oppositions. The main proponents of post structuralism include Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Jean Baudrillard. They studied about the contents of social structure with different epistemological quests and as a modern theoretical understanding. Post structuralism assesses the language as a

great conservative force in human apprehension of the worlds. The relationships between signifier and signified, and its referent makes languages conservative in nature. Post-structuralism deconstructs the traditional notion of social structure and provides an alternative explanation on the social structure. For post-structuralist, the meanings of a text are unstable, changing and contextual, so that it is impossible to construct the laws of interaction and social order. As a movement, post structuralism is closely related to postmodernism.

Contribution of Fredric Jameson in Postmodern Sociology

Jameson, an American literary critic, explains that post modernism as a product of late capitalism. The changes in post modern society are linked with changes in the outlook of capitalism in their socio-cultural transactions. Jameson is concerned with the cultural expressions and aesthetics associated with the different systems of production. In his article Jameson explains the fields of architecture, art and other culturally expressive forms of human ways of interaction in the modern capitalist world. On the background of his intellectual inquisitive power he rightly explained that our current stage of capitalistic expansion and postmodern culture is intimately related to certain technological, economic and political changes. Postmodern culture has difference from modern culture because post modernity has give rise to the formation of purity of social groups with different purchasing power and cultural outlooks. For Jameson new political movements that emerged in postmodern periods subordinated the class war by introducing a new technocratic consciousness among human beings. This process intensified the process of fragmentation and the formation of micro identity groups. Postmodernism is concerned with all surface images and no

substance, there is a loss of the center. In this cybernetic world individuals are no longer anomie, because there is nothing from which one can sever ties. The liberation from the anxiety which characterized anomie may also mean liberation from every other kind of feeling as well. This is not to say that the cultural products of the postmodern era are utterly devoid of feeling, but rather that such feelings are now free-floating and impersonal. Also distinctive of the late capitalist age is its focus on commoditization and the recycling of old images and commodities. Jameson refers to this cultural recycling as historicism—the random cannibalization of all styles of the past. It is an increasing primacy of the 'neo' and a world transformed into sheer images of itself. The actual organic tie of history to past events is being lost.

Baudrillard

Baudrillard was a Marxist in his ideology and criticizing the Marxian capitalistic interpretation of society. The studies of Baudrillard revolve around two issues of postmodern society such as the modern social realities, culture and mass media. According to Baudrillard postmodern society is characterized with simulation and simulacra. This cultural apparatus are longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody; it is the inherent flow of all societies. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real. Baudrillard is not merely suggesting that postmodern culture is artificial, because the concept of artificiality still requires some sense of reality against which to recognize the artifice. His point, rather, is that we have lost all ability to make sense of the distinction between nature and artifice. To clarify his point, he argues that there are three "orders of simulacra": 1) in the first order of simulacra, which he associates with the pre-modern period, the image is a clear counterfeit of the real; the

image is recognized as just an illusion, a place marker for the real; 2) in the second order of simulacra, which Baudrillard associates with the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, the distinctions between the image and the representation begin to break down because of mass production and the proliferation of copies; 3) in the third order of simulacra, which is associated with the postmodern age, we are confronted with a precession of simulacra; that is, the representation precedes and determines the real.

Simulation society is the society denominated by media and sign system and the hyper realities. The words that we speak are not related to the society. In such society the relationships between the word and reality is a myth. This distorted image of modern society fundamentally altered our world. For Baudrillard, in the modern society, people are only visualizing the floating images or the signs, codes, and images are the representation of the modern society. In 1981 Baudrillard explained the concept of simulation as psychosomatic illness composed of contemporary fashion such as fashion, environmental design, opinion polls, theme parks telecommunication and cybernetic manifestation of realities.

Hyper Realities and Simulation in Modern Society

The content of simulation is not produced by reproduced in the modern cybernetic world. It is more real than or more beautiful than beautiful or more true or truer than true. For Baudrillard hyper reality is the product of simulation increases the feeling of reality. Their authenticity creates special effect on the society. He strongly believed that we have moved from capitalist productive society to a neo-capitalist cybernetic world. He gives four stages of simulation and hyper reality in the modern society

In the first order images are reflections of reality composed of a society of mechanical solidarity or the stage of collective consciousness and repressive laws. For Baudrillard in such a society the simulation represented the reality of society. In the second order society production scale was dramatically increased and scientific development reproduces identical objects or forms. In the third the society is dominated by codes of signs and images. The society is controlled and dominated by simulation and in such societies reality is structured according to the codes or modes of production converted into codes of productions. Fourth order society is characterized by fractal, virtual, or cancerous. There is an endless proliferation and diffusions of new artifacts and contents. It is the society with an end of difference of culture characterized by political, transsexual and trans-aesthetics attributes. All the cultural standards are interpreted by the media. It is a society controlled and dominated by simulations. Baudrillard points to a number of phenomena to explain this loss of distinctions between "reality" and the simulacrum:

1. Media Culture: Contemporary media (television, film, magazines, billboards, the Internet) are concerned not just with relaying information or stories but with interpreting our most private selves for us, making us approach each other and the world through the lens of these media images. We therefore no longer acquire goods because of real needs but because of desires that are increasingly defined by commercials and commercialized images, which keep us at one step removed from the reality of our bodies or of the world around us.
2. Exchange-Value: According to Karl Marx, the entrance into capitalist culture meant that we ceased to think of purchased goods in terms of use-value, in terms of the real uses to which an item will be put. Instead, everything began to be translated into how much it is worth, into what it can be exchanged for (its exchange-value). According to Baudrillard, in the postmodern age, we have lost all sense of use-value: "It is all capital." Capitalists, with the help of mass media, are controlling the purchasing power of the people.
3. Multinational capitalism: National identity of a product reaches to multinational identities. According to Baudrillard, it is capital that now defines our identities. We thus continue to lose touch with the material fact of the laborer, who is increasingly invisible to a consumer oriented towards retail outlets or the even more impersonal, the internet.
4. Urbanization: As we continue to develop available geographical locations, we lose touch with any sense of the natural world. Even natural spaces are now understood as "protected". In modern society we are using the natural environmentalists for the consolidation and development of urban area. In the process of urbanization we are populating the fact that we are protecting our natural world.
5. Language and Ideology: Baudrillard illustrates how in such subtle ways language keeps us from accessing "reality." The earlier understanding of ideology was that it hid the truth, that it represented a "false consciousness," as Marxists phrase it, keeping us from seeing the real workings of the state, of economic

forces, or of the dominant groups in power. (This understanding of ideology corresponds to Baudrillard's second order of simulacra.) Postmodernism, on the other hand, understands ideology as the support for our very perception of reality. There is no outside of ideology, according to this view, at least no outside that can be articulated in language. Because we are so reliant on language to structure our perceptions, any representation of reality is always already ideological, always already constructed by simulacra.

Conclusion

The term postmodernism is used to denote the cultural products which appeared newly in the already existing modern culture. Postmodernism and post-structuralism are two important ideological movements responsible for the reconstruction of social life. Both of these processes are complementary to one another. Postmodernism has provided an advanced outlook for understanding of the inherent structures of social of social life. As a reconstructing process it reflected all most all walks of human life by redefining the old cultural standards of modern life. The concept of post modernity warns us against the drawbacks of a depthless society and aura tic culture. The main proponents of postmodern writings are Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard. They explained that post modernity has created a new cultural outlook and living style in modern society. For Jameson post modernity is pluralistic and diverse culture and brings the process of fragmentation. For him every byproduct of post modernity cannot be detached from the influence of capitalism. For Derrida post modernity is fragmentation, conflict and discontinuity. For Michel Foucault post

modernity is linked with power-knowledge relationships. For him post modernity is associated with discourse. This discourse is interpreted with power. In a nutshell all post structuralism is bounded with the interpretation of languages and communication for the reconstruction of new social realities. In an epistemological outlook both post structuralism and post modernity has gained considerable attention to sociologist, linguistics and development of modern society.

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