

Postmodernism and The Project of Modernity: Issues and Debates

Preeti Tiwari

Abstract

Contemporary society is passing through a process of social transformation for last few decades. These changes are so profound and rapid that the existing theoretical and conceptual framework are incapable to analyse these changes. One of the paradigms which emerged in the late 1970s to explain these changes is postmodernism which claims that the 'project of modernity' based on the premises of enlightenment has now been over and a new social order what they call it postmodernism is taking shape in contemporary societies. The present paper explores the major issues and debates in terms of the understanding the notion of modernity in the works of classical sociologist and then further theoretical developments in social theory like structuralism and post-structuralism which raised some pertinent issues regarding the limitations of the dominant perspective of modernity, namely, functionalism. These issues later give became the basis of postmodernism, a theoretical construct which was almost unchallenged till it was responded by Giddens and Habermas who rejected the this notion and asserted the 'project of modernity' is not over and still unfinished. The present paper focuses on these issues.

According to *Dictionary of Sociology* (Abercrombie et. al. 2010: 269), modernism is “a term referring to a movement within the arts in western societies between about 1880 and 1950, represented by figures such as Picasso in Painting, Eliot in Poetry, Joyce in Literature, Stravinsky in Music and the Bauhaus in Architecture”. However, in the field of Social Sciences the term ‘Modernity’ is used to describe the particular attributes of modern industrial society. A major concern of social theory has been ‘the analysis of modernity and its impact on the world’. The notion of modernity is closely linked with the rise of industrial capitalism in the West in last two or three centuries. As a result, all earlier civilizations have become either dissolved or altered beyond recognition by the impact of Modern social forms. Thus, Modernity has been a central phenomenon in the western social sciences.

A number of theories have been propounded to explain the transformation of traditional or pre-modern societies into advanced industrial societies usually called modern societies. The modern social form has an extra-ordinary dynamism. Although, initially it emerged in Europe but gradually it spreads all over the world. After Second World War, it also emerged as a model of development particularly among those countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America having a colonial past. The set of theories propounded to explain the transformation of these societies was termed as modernization

Preeti Tiwari is Research Scholar, Centre for Development Studies, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj-211002, INDIA

theory of development. Its origin can be traced back in the work of two classical social thinkers, namely, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.

Thus, modernism represents to the cultural transformations of modern industrial society particularly in the field of arts, music and literature in last two or three centuries particularly in the western societies. However, social theorists believe that the 'project of modernity' originated with the growth of scientific knowledge in the period called *Renaissance* which gave an impetus to the notion of rationality in pre-modern societies of the Europe. Three important transformations – the agricultural revolution, the commercial revolution and the industrial revolution transformed the European societies into a modern industrial society.

The Project of Modernity

Post-Modernism can be understood in relation to the ideas and concepts such as pre-modernity and modernity as well as in relation to the concept of globalization. In sociological literature, the concept of 'modern world' is used to denote a particular form of social development. Therefore, the concept of modernity has a different meaning in sociology than its usage in everyday life where its meaning is 'the present'. Similarly, the term post-modernism also has the same difficulty. In order to understand the notion of postmodernism, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the terms like pre-modern society and modern society.

a. Pre-modern Society

The concept of pre-modern society in the present context is important for the following reasons: First, in view of the significance of the social change, we need to understand the basic type of society that existed prior to the development of modern society; and second, we need to understand the basic features of this type of society in order to contrast it with the different types of societies that develop from it. In fact, it consists a variety of the societies which cover a range of pre-industrial societies that have exceedingly different socio-economic and political structures such as feudal, tribal and bureaucratic empires (www.sociology.org.uk/p1pmp5a).

The pre-modern society may be distinguished from the modern society in three aspects-economically, politically and culturally. The economic organization of pre-modern societies has a number of distinguishing features (www.sociology.org.uk/p1pmp5a). (a) In these societies, the work is not highly specialized and accordingly the number of different roles that need to be performed in order to produce things is relatively small. As a result, the division of labour is relatively simple (www.sociology.org.uk/p1pmp5a); (b) The productive process in this type of society is pre-industrial as the majority of the population is engaged in the pursuit of agriculture. Therefore, in such a society, ownership of land becomes an important source of economic power; (c) In the absence of machine technology, work is labour intensive and goods cannot be produced at the mass level. Although, agriculture is the main occupation of the majority of the people but certain level of technology is found in these societies. A defining economic characteristic of pre-modern societies is the fact that they are 'pre-industrial': that is based on the use of tools rather than powered machines. Although, in some communities wind and water powered machines have been used but the main difference between these forms of machines and the more familiar types of the modern period is the fact that they are powered by natural elements in contrast to artificially created forms of power such as steam engine, gas-power turbines, electricity and so forth. In case of agriculture, a vast majority of population largely has subsistence based agricultural production. The overall populations tend to be much smaller than in modern societies.

In political terms, a pre-modern society tends to be totalitarian rather than democratic and socially stratified along feudal lives, which is a close system of social mobility based largely on ascribed statuses. The majority of the population has limited political rights and is ruled by a minority of hugely powerful individuals, largely male. The ruling class also owns and controls the

means of economic production (land) as well as cultural/ideological organization. Custom and traditions define and regulate the roles and patterns of relationship in these societies. Another significant feature of pre-modern societies is that they are politically fragmented (www.sociology.org.uk/p1pmp5a).

The social stratification system may vary in these societies right from the slavery to the aristocracy, estates and castes. Early sociologists used dichotomous classifications in order to make a distinction between traditional or pre-modern and modern forms of the society. Tonnies makes a distinction between 'Gemeinschaft' (Community type relationship) and 'Gesellschaft' (Association type relationships). Emile Durkheim, however, makes a distinction between the traditional and modern industrial society by distinguishing between two types of solidarity- mechanic and organic, characterizing these societies respectively (Durkheim 1964). Talcott Parsons emphasized that pre-modern community type relationships are characterized by what he termed particular forms of pattern variables- ascription, affectivity, diffuseness, particularism and collectivity (Parsons 1951).

In pre-modern society religion is the main cultural institution. Social roles and relationships are based around tradition and custom. Individual identity is clearly defined on the basis of family/ clan membership, the ascribed statuses of nobility, clergy, peasantry, caste and so on. Magical belief systems play an important role in the cultural life of these societies (www.sociology.org.uk/p1pmp5a).

b. Classical Theorists and the Notion of Modernity

Most of the earlier sociologists were mainly focus their analysis on the transformation of Europe from feudal to modern industrial society. Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and George Simmel focused their sociological analysis on the processes and factors which gave rise to a new social order i.e. modern social order. They were well aware about the nature and benefits of modern social order but what is most important in their writings was a critique of the problems presented by the modern world. Therefore, it becomes necessary to understand the position of these classical thinkers on modernity.

Karl Marx

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was a political revolutionary and social theorist. He was born and educated in Germany. After finishing his education at Berlin University, he went to Bonn with an expectation of becoming a Professor but because of the reactionary policies of government he dropped the idea of an academic career in the university. He was greatly influenced by the ideas of Hegel. Marx became deeply involved in the Young Hegelian Movement. This group which contained such figures as Bauer and Strauss, were producing a radical critique of Christianity and by implication, a liberal opposition to the Prussian autocracy. Finding a university career close to him by the Prussian Government, Marx moved into journalism and in October 1842 became editor in Cologne of the Influential *Rheinische Zeitung*, a liberal newspaper backed by Rhenish industrialist. Marx's incisive articles, particularly on economic questions, induced the government to close the paper and he decided to immigrate to France, where he associated with French socialists and edited a short-lived newspaper which was intended to form a bridge between Nascent French socialism and the ideas of German Radicals & Hegelians.

However, due to his radical thoughts he was expelled from Paris at the end of 1844 and thereafter he moved to Brussels where he stayed for the next three years, visiting England, then the most advanced industrial country where Engel's family had cotton-spinning industry in Manchester. Early in 1848, Marx moved back to Paris where the revolution first broke out and then on to Germany where he founded again in Cologne the *New Rheinische Zeitung*. However, because of his radical writings the paper was suppressed and he sought refuge in London in May 1849 to begin the 'Long sleepless night of exile' that was to last for the rest of his life (Coser 1971: 43-87; Bottomore 1983).

For Marx, modern social order was mainly a capitalist order –an economy based exploitation of the proletariat and he highlighted negative features of capitalistic order. He focused his work on highlighting the negative effects of the capitalism and proposed and worked for bringing a new social order based on equality after dismantling the capitalist form of economy by the socialistic order. Although, his views contest with other thinkers of his time but largely confined within the framework of the modernity.

Emile Durkheim 1858-1917)

Emile Durkheim is widely acknowledged as a 'founding father' of modern sociology, who helped to define the subject matter and established the autonomy of sociology as a discipline. He taught first at the university of Bordeaux and then at Sorbonne in Paris. He was greatly influenced by the French intellectual tradition of Rousseau, Saint-Simon and Comte. In his pioneering work- *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), he argued against the British writer Herbert Spencer that social order in industrial (modern) societies could not adequately be explained as an outcome of contractual agreements between individuals motivated by self-interests, because the pursuit of self-interest would lead to social instability, as manifest in various forms of social deviance such as suicide. He distinguished the forms of social order found in primitive and modern societies. Mechanical solidarity in primitive societies was based on the common beliefs and consensus found in the *conscience collective*. As societies industrialized, urbanize land became more complex, the increasing division of labour destroyed mechanical solidarity and moral integration, thus rendering the social order problematic. He believed, however, that a new form of order would arise in advanced (modern) societies on the basis of organic solidarity. This would comprise the interdependence of economic ties arising out of differentiation and specialization within the modern economy, a new network of occupational associations such as guilds that would link individuals to the state, and the emergence within these associations of collectively created moral restraints on egoism. Thus, Durkheim focused his analysis on transformation of society from mechanical to organic solidarity and organic solidarity is main characteristic feature of modern society. He also analysed the society as a social organism having a *collective conscience*. He was well aware of the problems aroused due to this transition particularly crisis of moral order but he was firm that through organic solidarity a new moral order will emerge in modern society. His views later laid the foundation of one of the dominated school of sociological analysis known as 'functionalism' or 'functional analysis' which persists in the sociological analysis of modernity in the first half of twentieth century unless it was challenged by postmodernists, structuralists and feminists (Coser 1971: 129-174).

Max Weber(1864-1920)

Max Weber was born on April 21, 1864. His parents descended from a line of Protestants, who had been refugees from catholic persecution in the past but had later become successful entrepreneurs. Weber's parental grand father had been a prosperous linen dealer in Bielefeld, while one of his son's took over and expanded the family business, another, Weber's father, worked for a while in the city government of Berlin and later, as a Magistrate in Erfurt (where Max was born) but then embarked upon a political career in the capital. The young Weber grew up in a cultured bourgeois household. Not only leading politician but leading academic men were among its frequent house guest. Here Weber met at an early age, historians Treitschke, Sybell, Dilthey and Mommsen. Weber is often regarded as the founder of modern sociology because he not only defined sociology as an academic discipline but also developed a number of conceptual and methodological tools for grasping the basic characteristics of a modern, industrial civilization.

For Weber, the most defining problem of the modern world was the expansion of formal rationality at the expense of the other types of rationality and the resulting emergence of the iron cage of rationality. People, increasingly, were being imprisoned in this iron cage. As a result, they

were progressively unable to express some of their most human characteristics. Although, Weber recognized the advantages of the advancement of bureaucracy over earlier organization forms- but he was most concerned with the problems posed by rationalization, a key characteristic of the modern society. He is considered as one of the pioneers who developed a solid theoretical framework for the analysis of modernity in European societies (Coser 1971: 217-260).

Georg Simmel (1858-1918)

Georg Simmel was born on March 1, 1858 in Berlin. "After graduating from Gymnasium, Simmel studied history and philosophy at the university of Berlin with some of the most important academic figures of the day: the historians, Mommsen, Treitschke, Sybel and Droysen, the philosopher's Harms and Zeller, the art historian Hermann Grimm, the Anthropologist Lazarus and Steinthal, and the psychologist Bastian" (Coser 1971: 177). Deeply tied with intellectual milieu of Berlin, he decided to stay at the University of Berlin, where he became *privatdozent* (an unpaid lecturer dependent on students' fees) in 1885. His lectures ranged from logic and the history of philosophy to ethics, social psychology and sociology. He was a very popular lecturer and his lectures soon became leading intellectual events, not only for students but for the cultural elite of Berlin. In 1901, he was granted the rank of *Ausserordentlicher Professor* (a purely honorary title that still did not allow him to take part in academic affairs of the university). However, by now, he was a man of great eminence, whose fame spread not only to other European countries but also in the academic circles of the United States. He was the author of 6 books and more than 70 articles, many of which were translated into English, French, Italian, Polish and Russian. Simmel's sociological method and his programme of study may be set alongside the work of Durkheim in its scholarly importance. Durkheim focused his attention on the social structure that is the larger institutional structure, religious and educational, and on the overall values that bind societies together and create bonds between individuals. In contrast, Simmel's focus was mainly on micro sociological enterprise: his principal concern was with social process. He illuminates the intricate patterns in which individual actors interact with one another through which interaction helps structure and re-structure the social world. His formal sociology, the geometry of social space, provided a preliminary map, which allowed later investigators to locate and often even to predict moves of social actors who are caught in webs of group relations at the same time as they attempt to transcend them.

All these above-mentioned social thinkers can be said to be the theorists of modernity, as they in one or the other way were concerned with the analysis of the origin and growth of the modern society in Europe and developed conceptual and methodological tools to study the ascending modern society. However, they differ from each other in their approach, level of analysis and epistemological orientation. Karl Marx was greatly influenced by Hegelian approach to study the social phenomena particularly his dialectical method which is reflected in the writings of Marx throughout. Durkheim, on the other hand, was greatly influenced by positive philosophy of Saint-Simon and August Comte as well as by the organismic model of Darwinism and founded one of the dominant schools in the discipline of sociology known as functionalism and established a science of society aimed to analyse the evolution of modern industrial society.

Max Weber represented the legacy of German historians and philosophers of his time and was greatly influenced by the idealistic tradition of German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey and attempted to establish sociology as a discipline and presented a profound analysis of the rise of Capitalism in Europe in his famous work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930). In other words, like Durkheim and Marx, he is also a theorist of modernity. However, Georg Simmel has been described by Frisbi (1992) as a modernist and also as a post-modernist by Jaworsky (1997) and Weinstein and Weinstein (1993). According to Frisbi, "Simmel is the first sociologist of 'the modernity' (Frisbi 1992: 59), as he investigated modernity primarily in two major inter-related sites- the city

and the money economy. The city is where modernity is concentrated or intensified, whereas the money economy involves the diffusion of modernity, its extension (Fresbi 1992: 69). In Frisby's view, Simmel concentrates on the experience of modernity. The key elements of that experience—time, space and contingent causality—are central aspects of at least some of the contemporary theories of modernity exemplified in the works of Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, Zigmunt Bauman, Habermas and Manuel Castells.

Although, modernist theory had provided a dominant explanation of the origin and growth of modern industrial society in the West but there were problems with this kind of theorization. Talcott Parsons, an American Sociologist, attained a dominant position not only in American Sociology but also in the Europe. He has developed a theoretical system based on the work of economist Marshall and three prominent sociological thinkers namely: Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Vilfredo Pareto. He has rejected utilitarian theory of Adam Smith and developed a voluntaristic theory of social action. Later on, he developed a theoretical framework called social system for the analysis of modern industrial society, particularly the American society. The Parsonian theory dominated the academic disciplines for about three decades. This theory is also called structural-functional theory and Parsons is considered as an arch functionalist. This theoretical position faced criticism from several quarters particularly in the late 1960s and early 1970s by the theory of structuralism.

i. Structuralism and Post-Structuralism

Structuralism

While Structural-functional theorists recognize that actions are shaped by people's structural circumstances, some of their critics have claimed that these theorists have been insufficiently radical in their understanding of social structure. This criticism, coming from structuralists writers, who hold that structural-functionalists have limited their attention to relatively superficial features of social life—observable social relations, social organizations and social institutions—and have ignored the 'deep structures' that are responsible for them (Scott 1995: 155). These deep structures, it is held, have causal priority over the surface structures or (superficial features of social life) studied by structural-functionalism but a sociologist should focus their attention on the discovery of the deep structures of the social life. Therefore, structuralism posed a problem for structural functional analysis.

This theoretical position of structuralist has its root in the linguistic analysis of Saussure who emphasized on the study of the grammatical structure of speech rather than the surface features of the speech. Borrowing this idea from Saussure, structuralists argue that there is also a 'grammar' to social interaction (Scott 1995: 155)¹⁷. Claude Levi-Strauss has been a central figure to the structuralist tradition. Although his work gave birth to two quite distinct research programs: 'the analysis of cultural codes' and 'the analysis of kinship system' which inspired a distinct branch of Marxism called 'Marxist structuralism' which emphasizes on 'the material structures of social relations', mainly represented in the work of Louis Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas and Maurice Godelier. Although, structural Marxism and structuralism in general are both interested in 'structures', however, each field conceptualizes structure in a different manner. Both schools see structures as 'real' (Albeit invisible), but they differ markedly on the nature of the structure that they consider real. For Levi-Strauss, the focus is on the structure of the mind, whereas for structural-Marxists, it is on the 'underlying structure' of society. What is most important for both is that they reject empiricism and accept a concern for 'underlying invisible structures' (Scott 1995: 155). However, theory of structuralism was criticized on various grounds particularly by Post-Structuralists and a new school of social theory called 'Post-structuralism' emerged.

Post-Structuralism

It is a form of analysis, primarily in literary criticism, particularly associated with French Philosopher Jacques Derrida, often opposed to 'structuralism'. Derrida saw his work as consistent with the real principals of structuralism, in the sense that the fundamental idea is 'that we cannot apprehend reality without the intervention of language' (Abercrombie et.al. 2010: 303). 'This prioritizes the study of language or texts. Texts can be understood only in relation to other texts not in relation to an external reality against which they can be tested or measured. The principle of inter-textuality holds that the meaning of a text is produced in reference to other texts' (Abercrombie et.al. 2010: 303).

Further, 'Post-Structuralism adopted the position of anti-humanism, that is, it criticizes the residual humanism of social theory, which privileged speech over writing. Radical versions of post-structuralism also argue that sociology is no longer feasible as a discipline, because it is based on outmoded notions of the social.' (Abercrombie et.al. 2010: 303).

Derrida, in contrast to the structuralist (especially those who followed the linguistic term and who saw people as being constrained by the structure of language), reduced language to 'writing that does not constrain its subjects'. Furthermore, Derrida also saw social institutions as nothing but writing and therefore as unable to constrain people. In contemporary terms, Derrida de-constructed language and social institutions (Trifonas 1996), and when he had finished, all he found there was writing, while there is still a focus here on language, writing is not a structure that constrains people. Furthermore, while the structuralist saw order and stability in the language system, Derrida sees language as disorderly and unstable. Different contexts give words different meanings. As a result, the language system cannot have the constraining power over people that the structuralist think it does. Furthermore, it is impossible for scientist to search for the underlying laws of language as suggested by the structuralists. Thus, Derrida offers what is ultimately subversive, de-constructive perspective. This sub-version and de-construction become even more important with the emergence of post-modernism. Before we move to Post-modernism it is important to understand fully the views of Derrida and Micheal Foucault on Post-structuralism.

Derrida attacked the dominated western social thought known as *logocentrism* that is *the search for a universal system of thought that reveals what is true, right, and beautiful and so on*. According to Derrida, "this approach has contributed to the historical repression and suppression of writing since Plato" (1978: 196). This has led to the closure not only of philosophy, but also to that of human sciences. This was the reason why Derrida is interested in deconstructing this repression (the source of closure) and thereby freeing writings from the things that enslave it. In other words, it can be said that Derrida focus is on "the de-construction of logocentrism" (1978: 230).

Derrida (1978) discussed at a length the example of the traditional theatre which is theological and a controlled, enslaved theatre. In his own words:

"The stage is theological for as long as its structure, following the entirety of tradition, comports the following elements: an author-creator who, absent and from afar, is armed with a text and keeps watch over, assembles, regulates the time or the meaning of representation... He lets representation represent him through representatives, directors or actors, enslaved interpreters ... who ... more or less directly represent the thought of the "creator". Interpretive slaves who faithfully execute the providential designs of the 'master' ... Finally, the theological stage comports a passive, sealed public, a public of spectators, of consumers of enjoyers" (Derrida 1978: 235).

In contrast to this, Derrida visualized an alternative stage in which "speech will cease to govern the state" (Derrida 1978: 239). On the other hand, "the stage no longer will be governed by authors and texts. The actor will no longer take dictation: the writers will no longer be dictators of what transpires on the stage (Derrida 1978: 247). Although he is not very clear about this alternative

stage but he gives some hint when he says “the theater of cruelty would be an art of difference and of expenditure without economy, without reserve, without return, without history” (Derrida 1978: 239).

It is clear from the above that Derrida emphasizes on the de-construction of the traditional theatre. By implication, he also wants to see society free of the ideas of all the intellectual authorities who have created the dominant discourse. In other words, Derrida wants to see everyone be free to be a writer.

“This theoretical position of the Derrida has implication for the well-known concern of the post-structuralist (as well as of post-modernists): *decentering*. Here Derrida wants the theatre to move away from its traditional ‘center’ its focus on writers (the authorities) and their expectations and wants to give the actors more free play” (Ritzer 2012: 610). This notion can be extended to society as a whole. Derrida, in fact, associates the centre with the answer and therefore ultimately with death. The centre is linked with the absence of that (death) which is essential to Derrida: “Play and difference” (Derrida 1978: 297). In his view, ‘theatre or society without play and difference can be seen as being dead. In contrast, a theatre or a society without a centre would be infinitely open, ongoing and self-reflexive’. Derrida concludes that the future “is neither to be awaited nor to be refound” (Derrida 1978: 300). Here his emphasis is that we are not going to find the future in the past (contrary to the modernists thesis), nor should we passively await our fate. Rather the future is to be found, is being made, is being written, in what we are doing (Ritzer 2012: 612).

From the above discussion it is now clear that Derrida has criticized both the modernism as well as the structuralism in the sense that both the approaches are static in nature and see the individual as a passive actor whose script has already been written and therefore he has no scope to make his future away from the already written script in the existing structure of the society and emphasizes on decentering the structure by the process of de-construction of static structures. In this way, his post-structuralism provides a kind of dynamism to the society which is open and gives opportunity to the individual actors to make their future through their present. However, it is not clear that in what direction society will move after de-construction. How the behavior of the individual members will be regularized after the de-construction of the society. This leads us to move to another important contributor to post-structuralism, namely Michel Foucault.

Michel Foucault

Foucault (1926-1984) who was a French, was particularly influenced intellectually by Marx, Freud and the philosopher Nietzsche. He is usually regarded as Post-structuralist, although he himself would have rejected that label as he would also that of sociologist. In Post-structuralism, we found the idea that the world is created by different kinds of languages, or discourses. These construct the world (society), giving it particular forms (Maynard 1989: 30). “Although the work of Foucault, heavily influenced by the whole structuralist tradition, attempted a complete break with all forms of essentialism (arguments which reduce the complexity of social phenomena to a single dimension are often criticized as essentialist). He rejected all holistic, functionalist and systemic conceptions of social phenomena and in particular he rejected the Althusserian idea of ‘totality’ structured in dominance” (Scott 1995: 184). Foucault’s approach and past structuralism more generally shows a variety of theoretical inputs. This variety makes his work provocative and difficult to handle. His ideas are not simply adopted from other thinkers but are transformed as they are integrated into Foucault’s unusual theoretical orientation. Consequently, he could not be fitted in any of the various schools of social thought. His work is influenced by Weber’s theory of rationalization, Marxian ideas are also found in his work but differ Marxist treatment of power and pre-dominance of one institution (economy) over the others. Although he was also influenced by structuralism but rejected its many assumptions. He was also influenced by phenomenological approach but rejects

the idea of an autonomous, meaning-giving subject. What is most important is that Foucault adopted Nietzsche's interests in the relationship between power and knowledge.

Foucault's view of the 'social' was organized around two elements: the material phenomena of power and the cultural phenomena of discourse. Each of these dimensions of social reality is understood in a de-centered way, as diverse and autonomous agencies and organizations, and the combination of power and discourse is seen in similarly kaleidoscopic terms. While the phenomena of power and discourse are 'structured' and 'structuring', they are not to be seen as structural wholes. In stressing the plurality and diversity ('difference') in material and cultural forms of social life, Foucault rejected the idea that there is an essence or purpose behind society, culture or history. It is for this reason that Foucault saw himself as being a 'Post-structuralist' rather than a 'structuralist'. He abandoned the conception of 'structure' as being too bound up with integrationist style of thought, and he replaced concepts of material and cultural structures (of Althusser and Levi-Strauss) with those of power and discourse.

Power and discourse are inter-dependent elements in the organization of social life while he focused his attention on changing discourse and their impact on formation of individuals, discourses were seen as effected in and through power relations. As Foucault rejected the idea of causal role of active individual subjects, power was not seen in Weberian terms but as the result of mechanisms that operate independently of particular individuals. It is through power that forms of discourse are produced and transformed and it is also through discourse that structures of power are produced and reproduced. Indeed discourse, knowledge and power are so clearly related that Foucault, often wrote of 'power/knowledge'.

Social reality constitutes a highly diverse collection of discourses, of structures of power/knowledge, but there is no overall integration of these into a single 'culture' or 'social system'. Social reality is a disperse regularity of unevenly developing levels of discourse. It comprises intellectual discourses, social organizations, architectural forms, laws and regulations, administrative processes, scientific statements and so on, each having its own specific and distinctive features. Each discourse is carried by a specific social group and it reflects their particular perspective and interests. The clash of discourses reflects the struggle of these groups for power and domination over one another, and the consequent fragmentation of discourse means that there is incommensurability among the various discourses that make up the social world.

The discourses of human sciences themselves figured in Foucault's general studies in methodologies. Psychology, sociology, economics, linguistics and other social sciences were all seen as contributing to the construction of the modern concept of 'man' (Foucault 1966; 1971). Indeed, Foucault stressed that the conception of individual human subject was the product of a very specific set of discourses and that there is, therefore, no warrant for positing 'the individual', as the fundamental unit of analysis in social theory. It is not the case that social processes are the result of individual action. Rather, individuals are the result of social practices rooted in specific form of discourse. Individual subjects are the bearers and the results of power relations. Even such an apparently individual and personnel matter as intimate sexual behavior was seen as the result of a specific discourse of sexuality (Foucault 1976).

Foucault did reject such totalizing ideas as 'history', and 'society', a rejection that aligns him with Lyotard's rejection of 'grand narratives' such as that of 'progress'. He rejected all attempts to impose an overarching pattern on the discontinuities and struggles of social life. Like Derrida he emphasizes that the future is always 'open', never determined, and so there can be no development, no evolution and, in short, no history (Scott 1995: 187). Therefore, we find similarities in the approach and ideas of these two thinkers who have rejected the existentialism prevailed in modern social theory. These seminal ideas of Derrida and Foucault paved the way of another school of social

thought today known as 'Post-Modernism'. Thus, Post-structuralism and Post-Modernism have some common elements in their analysis.

Postmodernism: Origin, Meaning and Definitions

In the past three decades or so, postmodernism and globalization have been two highly contested terms not only in academic discourse but also in everyday discourses as well. There have been many attempts to sort out with some precision exactly what each term means, though, they both remain highly contested. Postmodernism arose at a moment when the notion of modernity, itself, was in various ways called into question. The idea that progress was inevitable, one of the basic tenets of modernization theory as well as of orthodox Marxist thought, was questioned. To some extent, it was due to the growing realization of the unintended consequences of the application of science and technology in order to solve a wide range of problems in the natural and social worlds. In the field of science, ecological and environmental critiques of the use of science and technology posed a challenge to this assumption of modernization theory. In the social field as well, a number of events in Post-war period also raised a question mark on the explanatory power of the theory of modernity.

Almost at the same time, the phenomenon of globalization also accelerated and intensified. The developed industrial nations witnessed the constriction of the manufacturing sector, leading to a process that became known as deindustrialization or the beginning of Post-Fordist economic order, whereas the developing world experienced the relocation of manufacturing plants in their countries (Dasgupta and Kivisto 2014: XII). The shift gave way to a theoretical account of the advent of Postindustrial society. The idea that automation would result in the reduction of workers needed in basic industries, while, no doubt partially correct, was only part of the story, the larger part being relocation of factory and the resultant substitution of workers in wealthy countries with workers from poor countries.

More recently, a counter-part of deindustrialization took off in earnest, the phenomena of downsizing the white color work-force, outsourcing the work to "off shore" locations, which meant the same places that the manufacturing jobs had ended earlier but economic globalization was about more than this. It involved the creation of global markets and the expansion of powerful transnational corporations, no longer rooted in or with allegiances to particular nations or their respective citizens.

The process of economic globalization was intimately connected with both political and cultural globalizations. Politically globalization has debatable implications for the notions of "NationState". The establishment of Supra-national institutions has made the nation state weak. American consumer culture has had parallel impact on global culture. It has exhibited enormous influence on the world. But it has not been a one-way-street resulting in the destruction of local cultures. On the contrary, one can find homogenization, American style side by side with efforts to shore up and strengthen local cultures. Moreover, one can find ample evidence of the interplay between the two, the growing hybridity of cultures.

The modern mass media have been considered as vehicle of Modernity. The basic assumption is that a culture of modernity in due course will replace all the pre-modern cultural forms conceptualized under the term traditional culture. The modern culture emphasizes on conspicuous high mass consumption. These patterns of high mass consumption are created through advertisements of various products among the masses. However, the socio-cultural philosophy of postmodernism "undermines the traditional notion of culture, as something fixed and hierarchical. It favours forms of culture that are transient of a moment, superficially pleasing and appealing to sense rather than reason" (McQuail 2010: 129). In contrast to modern culture, 'postmodern culture is volatile, illogical, kaleidoscopic and hedonistic'; 'It favours emotion over reason' (McQuail 2010:

129). Thus, 'massmedia culture has the advantage of appealing to many senses as well as being associated with novelty and transience' (McQuail 2010: 129). As a result, popular media culture reflects the elements of post-modernist culture.

For McQuail, "The cultural aesthetics of post-modernism involves a rejection of tradition and a search for novelty, invention, momentary enjoyment, nostalgia, playfulness, pastiche and inconsistency" (McQuail 2010: 130). Jameson (1984) refers to Post-modernism as a 'Cultural logic of late Capitalism', even though there is no logic to be found. Gitlin^{44a} suggests that Post-Modernism is specifically North American, capturing many features of American culture. Grossberg et.al. (1998) associate it especially with the process of commercialization of everything. Certainly the post-modern ethos, in view of McQuail (McQuail 2010: 130), 'is much more favourable to commerce than were earlier cultural perspectives'.

Ien Ang (1998) has also underlined the need to distinguish between conservative and critical Post-Modernism as intellectual attitudes. She writes that 'the former does indeed succumb to "anything goes" attitude ...{but} the latter, critical Post-Modernism is motivated by a deep understanding of the limits and failures of what Habermas calls "the unfinished project of Modernity"' (Ien Ang 1998: 78).

Poster (2006: 138) argues that we should use the concept of postmodernity for the cultural study of slow media. Although, "in a manner that makes it suitable for analysis without either a celebratory fanfare or sarcastic smiles".

Post-Modernism, according to Bauman (2014:), 'is not at all the same thing as abandoning systematic social reflection or moral standards. Postmodernism promotes tolerance and diversity, although it demands in return a life lived without guarantees'. Post-Modern tolerance may degenerate into selfishness on the part of those who are affluent, compared with those who are poor, both within the nations and across the world. For tolerance of difference can also become precisely indifference: injustice is simply accepted as a part of a natural order of things, much as it was in pre-modern world. Yet in Bauman's view, the news is certainly not all bad. For the universalizing, tendencies of modernity have in the past often promoted totalitarian power.

As described by Bauman and also by Jean Baudrillard the post-modern order is one that privileges consumption rather than production. The consumer society is one of rapidly changing fashion, the constant creation of obsolescence of goods and a society without history. The object with which consumers are surrounded are not grounded in historical traditions and have no particular relations to the past. 'Profusion' is the most characteristic feature of consumer society. Shops crammed with goods, usually drawn from all parts of the world offer themselves to the buyer. The consumer is surrounded by objects rather than by persons: the accumulation of wealth has as its object the expansion of purchasing power. Objects gain their desirability from their position in the mosaic of other commodities. Action in consumer society has become more or less completely separate from external contexts: it is internally self-sufficient. Thus, a multipurpose drug store or a shopping mall contains a complete kaleidoscope of possible purchase.

Conclusion

There is great diversity among the postmodern thinkers and so it is difficult to offer generalizations on which the majority would agree. Smart (1993) has differentiated among three post-modernist positions:

1. The first, or extreme, post-modernist position is that there has been a radical rupture and modern society has been replaced by a post-modern society. Exponents of this point of view include Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.
2. The second position is that although a change has taken place, post-modernism grows out of, and is continuous with, modernism. This orientation is adhered to by Marxian thinkers such

as Fredric Jameson, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and by post-modern feminists such as Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson.

3. Finally, there is the position adopted by Smart himself, that rather than viewing modernism and post-modernism as epochs, we can see them as engaged in a long running and ongoing set of relationships, with post modernism continually pointing out the limitations of modernism.

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