

# Postmodernism and the Question of Identity

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**Abstract**— Instead of making reference to what some theories of mind have claimed, the linguistic turn here is based on the idea that because language is riven with figuration, a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphism, to borrow a phrase from Nietzsche, it cannot accurately represent the world, much less in the way that some theories of mind claim it can. The overwhelming desire to accept the subject's death, a directive that, as Perry Anderson remarked, became the catchphrase of the decade, is a sign of the times. The announcement spread throughout the numerous fields related to structuralist theory.

**Index Terms**—Postmodernism, Gender, Identity, Feminism, Metaphysical.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of beginnings has often been met with skepticism in postmodernist thought. An origin, a transcendental base to which all later occurrences must bow down, resurrects the god that the alleged "death of God" destroyed. A coarser concern with "ends" matches this rejection of origins. Postmodernist conclusions, however, are not always tidy. They are difficult and obstinate, at best making some activities or modes of thought prohibited, and at worst making the latter false, unsustainable, or "no longer feasible." The seemingly suicidal declaration of philosophy's demise is a persistent illustration of this temperament. The upshot of philosophy's direct engagement with postmodernism—call let's it post-Nietzschean continental philosophy for the time being—is a way of thinking that clings to the shadow of its own morality and obsessively imagines its own destruction. However, in contrast to other postmodernist annulments, the reprieve for authorial presence and ideology, for instance, philosophy, was announced in the same sentence as its death sentence. This means that the prospect of regeneration and possibilities to apply philosophical ideas in new ways came along with the end. Philosophy converted the circumstances of its own annihilation into a type of negative capability by becoming fixated on them.

The idea that philosophy is coming to an end has been widely rejected by French philosophers writing after World War II. As one of the "status quo ideals," Luce Irigaray ridiculed it in her writing. According to a statement made by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "the conquering of philosophy has never been a problem for us; it is just boring idle conversation."

Derrida suggests that the closure of the notion of the book makes it possible for it to continue on indefinitely, rather than reaching a more definitive conclusion. Therefore, it is not so much a process of finishing as it is a complicated balancing act between finishing and starting over. In order to successfully pull off this move, philosophical postmodernism has carried out an extensive campaign of deconstruction on western orthodoxies. It has been decided that knowledge is not reliable, and it is no longer the responsibility of philosophy to supply it. The human subject is dispossessed to the point that it appears to no longer exist, and the philosophical consequence of humanism is shown to be a type of hidden tyranny in its own right. The breakdown of narrative logic results in the elimination of one of the fundamental organising concepts of western cognition. Even something as straightforward and basic as differences in sexual orientation are rendered illegitimate and deceptive, while at the same time new and more challenging methods of conceptualising gender are opened up. The concept of the "actual world" is perpetually imprisoned in quotation marks.

The two most prominent proponents of the aforementioned position are Descartes and Hegel. Descartes, whose method of radical scepticism led to the foundationalism claim that a correct beginning could finally be made, and Hegel, whose synthetic approach initially organised the entire tradition into a purposive and dialectical whole and then assumed that it had reached its apogee with no further work to be done, are the two most prominent proponents of the aforementioned position within the philosophical tradition. In the remaining paragraphs of this article, we will investigate the postmodernist response to this

legacy, namely the significant philosophical efforts to expose its gaps, contradictions, and flaws, as well as the efforts undertaken to put a stop to it.

The challenge of naming is an issue that has to be addressed in any discussion of postmodernism or philosophy. To put it another way, the two concepts cannot exist independently for very long. When philosophical thought is combined with aspects drawn from other disciplines, such as sociology, history, psychoanalysis, politics, anthropology, literature, and mythology, the result is known as theory and postmodernism evolves into "post structuralism," which is the phrase most commonly associated with the mixture described in the previous paragraph. It is important to keep in mind that once the concept of the "end of philosophy" has been brought up for discussion, the topic of discussion cannot be limited to philosophical concerns in the same sense that these concerns have generally been acknowledged and understood within the context of the western tradition. The subject matter is also responsible for the development of a manner of writing that represents a revolution on the level of style. In point of fact, what this amount to is the downfall of yet another "orthodoxy," which is the concept that philosophical thinking can be transmitted in the language of proposition and logical argument. The complex, bewildering, and obsessive stylistics of literary modernism are what come to mind when thinking about postmodernism's effect on philosophy. This is truer than when discussing the book or the poetry.

## II. IDENTITY CRISIS

Metaphysical humanism is defined by the want to know, yet this noble tendency can descend into the desire to possess and master, converting otherness and diversity into sameness. Language prompted postmodernists to reject metaphysics. From two antagonistic philosophical sources. Ludwig Wittgenstein's late philosophy within the analytical tradition gave a new style of thinking and terminology "language games," "family resemblances," "forms of life," and the "private language argument" that postmodernism has incorporated and remade in its own image. Continental philosophy and postmodernism are different. This means that words get their meaning from other words, not another linguistic reality. Postmodernists argue that language

creates human identity, not vice versa. Man acts as if he were the maker and master of language, yet language remains man's master. Postmodernism's linguistic shift is anti-humanist, denying humans the instrumental command of language that enables "metaphysical man."

Metaphysics was a postmodernist casualty. Man is the measure of all things, the producer of all meanings, and the autonomous transcendental subject where meaning is incarnated. Man is naturally metaphysical, truth-hungry, and seeks self-enlightenment, therefore human and natural hierarchies can be strictly separated. With this metaphysical lens, man might convert experience into knowledge and his blind, present-based involvements into material for human empowerment. Michel Foucault's historical discourse analysis most consistently predicted the end of man. His anti-humanist spirit is expressed in a single empirico-transcendental doublet: man. Human sciences' proclivity to see man as both origin and evaluative limit created this unusual monster. Taking stock of the scientific paradoxes of the previous 160 years that have rendered man sacrosanct, Foucault declares that if such arrangements disappeared, he would be erased like a face painted in sand at the sea's edge.

In the Anglophone world, anthropocentrism discussions have never been mainstream. The media and academia are debating the links between humans and the natural world and humans and animals. Environment worries, green politics, and speciesism discussions have reduced human sovereignty more than structuralist humanism debates. They share the anti-anthropocentric belief that man is no longer the measure of all things but something to be measured like everything else. Man's dethronement persists, whether as theoretical debate or public anxiety about ecological destruction.

Philosophical postmodernism still has much to give to anthropological deregulation, although in rebarbative language and postulates. Heidegger's animadversions on nature influence postmodern ecology theory. His aversion for human action stems from the indefinite ambition to govern nature and dominate the world. This yearning for domination exhibited via man's technical dominion drove 20th-century environmental practises. Green politics and radical ecology employ Heideggerian arguments to encourage a more benign and harmonious attitude towards the wild world.

Deleuze and Guattari's work is less concerned with harmony, restraint, or human absorption into nature. The twin drive for conflict and property has defined the modern period. Antihuman conflict is being eclipsed by global warfare. Thus, the sullied universe exposes humanity's imprint, the mark of its dominators, the discovered stamp of their control and appropriation. In the past, the social contract conditioned and restricted conflict; now, a natural contract is needed.

To this point, we have heard post-metaphysical, anti-anthropocentric, counter-humanist, non-narrative, and hyper-realist defined as characteristics of philosophical modernism. The postmodern feminist philosophy offers a fork in the road where all of these factors have contributed to a significant degree to the formation and progression of postmodernist styles. In the sphere of philosophy, feminist philosophers such as Irigaray have viewed the tradition as a site of perpetual struggle. The feminist thinkers believe that the intellectual order is indeed the one that has to be questioned and disrupted due to the fact that it covers over sexual difference. There are some parallels to be seen between this situation and Baudrillard's tactic of disruptive immanence, which consisted of becoming more virtual than the virtual.

Butler, who is more concerned with the behavioural idea of gender than with embodied notions of sexual difference, finds the nature of Irigaray's horizon to be problematic. However, this is not the case for Irigaray herself. She asserts that gender is not a static category with predetermined characteristics but rather a contingency that engages in the stylized repetition of activities. It points to instability of identity since there is no gender identity underlying the manifestation of gender.

#### REFERENCE

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