

The Impacts of Post-Modernism on Language and Discipline of History

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Abstract

Postmodernism has altered the dynamic of not just history however also social sciences and humanities. The fundamental proposal of post-modernism has been that culture and society are in transfiguration in that assumptions like objectivities, truths, etc. have shaken. Additionally, another concern of the post-modern approaches to historical view is eradication of peripheries and hierarchal differences between the elite cultures and academic cultures by procedures of De-hierarchization, deconstructions, demystifications, and dereferentialisation. Further, post-modernism typifies demise of cores, represents distrust towards metanarrative and is marked by social formations in that the map and statuses of knowledge are decentered, re-drawn, and reimaged. In nutshell, professional historians assume postmodernism as a unique minority phenomenon, the majority of them are reluctant to acknowledge its views of histories as they perceiving its doctrine so opposing to the understandings and experiences of historic inquiry. The current study is an attempt to inquire the nature of postmodernist challenge with its major

philosophical assumption and it also analyses responses and impacts on knowledge production in different disciplines especially in the discipline of history.

Key words: Postmodernism, Post-structuralism, History, Literature, Deconstruction of Knowledge, Annals School, Postmodernist thinkers, Post-enlightenment era.

Introduction

Postmodernism implies "after the modernist movement" in its literal sense. While "modern" refers to something "connected to the present," different perspectives characterize modernism and postmodernism. Postmodernists contest the rationalist belief that reason will help us understand reality's mysteries. Postmodernism is characterized through a curtailed confidence in modernism, development, and enlightenment reasonableness. Instead, postmodernism refers to new ways of thinking about thought and new forms of comprehending ideas, beliefs, and knowledge. Postmodernism is possibly the gloomiest Western ideology ever to emerge from the mind.¹

Modernism

The Enlightenment is a broad intellectual, cultural, technological, and scientific movement regarded as the beginning of the modern age. It begins in the early 17th century in England (with Francis Bacon, John Lock, and Thomas Hobbes) and ends at the end of the 18th century in France and Germany (with Descartes, Voltaire, Diderot, and Lessing), but can be found all around Europe. Since Europe's Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, it has been assumed that growth in arts, rationality, science, technology, and financial state ensures civilization's accumulative advancement in the direction of its ultimate destiny of excellence.² Further, it is also assumed in modernism that knowledge is the creation of the human mind's activity that adapts the conceptions to this objective actuality.

Postmodernism

Post-modernism is described in a Contemporary Dictionary of Acknowledged Concepts as “a word which has no meaning; could be used as frequently as possible”.³ Postmodernism is a labyrinth of concepts and topics. The word “postmodern” has come in periphery of the philosophical lexicons with 1979 publications of the “Jean-Francois Lyotard's” known as “La Conditions Post-modern (English: *The Post-modern Conditions: The Reports on Knowledges*, 1984)”, in which author uses “Wittgenstein's models of languages game” along with “speech act theory conception” to explain all that he considers a transfiguration of the ground rules for science, art, and literature from the finale of the 19th century.⁴

Postmodern philosophy Began as a critique of Continental philosophy; it was greatly influenced by phenomenology, structuralism, and existentialism, particularly the works of Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. Then, midway through the 19th century, Leopold Von Ranke's comprehensive and rigorous source evaluation and emphasis on using actual documents sparked a historical revolution.

During the 20th century, the French Annales School significantly altered the course of history. The primary focus of the Annals school was the discovery of new objects of historical study. Fernand Braudel desired that the past become more scientific by requiring more quantitative evidence in order to make the field of history less subjective. In addition, he incorporated a socioeconomic and geographical framework to answer historical concerns. Other French historians, such as Philippe Ariès and Michel Foucault, have written about the history of issues like death and sexuality. They desired that history be written on every topic and that every inquiry be asked.⁵

According to Iggers, the fundamental concept of postmodern historiography is the rejection that historical works belong to a genuine historical past. Iggers acknowledged the literary aspects of historical tales and the importance of imagination in recreating them. However, he maintained his belief that these accounts provided insights into a genuine past populated by

actual people. Every historical account, according to Iggers, is a construction, but one that results from a dialogue between the historian and the past. In his work *Metahistory*, Hayden White asserts that "historical narratives are more manufactured than discovered."⁶

Postmodernism denies the underlying reason of history and views it as moral rhetoric. Postmodernist critics of the Enlightenment rely on a lineage of thought that stretches from conservative anti-modernism in the 19th century, through Nietzsche and Heidegger, to the radical right of the 1920s and 1930s. Nietzsche has contested the general applicability of modernist thought. He discussed the multitude of values and the inability to make sensible choices among them. Max Weber opposed the progression-based, unilinear vision of history and avoided universal generalizations.⁷

Postmodernism, like Renaissance humanism, has begun to impact painting, sculpture, and architecture; hence, postmodernism's literary roots developed into painting, dance, architecture, and other art forms. Postmodernism today encompasses all imaginable topics, including science, political affairs, colonization, earlier capitalism, caste, gender, women's liberation, literary critique, ecological damage, religion, and our particular focus, history.⁸

Among postmodernists, a variety of positions develop. Politically, for instance, some draw left-wing, liberal, or even conservative overtones, while others derive none and retreat into pessimism or irony.⁹

Historians assume that the past exists independently of their thoughts. They investigate, analyze, relate, and explain acts, events, ideas, frameworks, and procedures which were segment of the real history in which humans lived. It is a truth that is conceptually linked to the possibility of history, not an assumption or an illusion of language. It is linked as a discipline whose most common motive is to attain and divulge an idea of the complicated life and alteration of previous human societies to the present and future generations.¹⁰

In 'historiography,' the actual events of the past are not checked but rather the changing apprehensions of those events in the works of individual historians. In historiography, realism denotes that the disappeared human past can be used as a reference point and accurately represented through the evidence it has left and that this evidence is unchangeable.¹¹

Postmodernism, on the other hand, contends that what we refer to as knowledges are the particular type of tale, the texts or discourses that fuses text and depictions in a way which seems appealing or valuable to the specific society, or perhaps just to relatively strong people of that culture. It denies the possibility of impartial knowledge since what we know as knowledge that must be created with linguistic as well as various meanings-making tool of specific cultures, and various cultures may view this world into vastly distinguish way, whole of that operate on their term. Finally, this contends that concept that a culture's world-view is generally also true was politic reasonable assumptions for the European imperial ambition in past however has solid philosophical foundation.¹²

Postmodernists have rejected great tales of development and perfection. They presented a formidable challenge to historical theory and denied the general applicability of primarily Eurocentric historical knowledge. In refusing mega accounts, postmodernism prioritizes "mini-narratives" which elucidate tiny behaviors and local events instead of broad, worldly or international abstracts. Postmodern "mini-narratives" never assert universality, truth, logic, or stability. They are circumstantial, tentative, conditional, and ephemeral.

The Relationship between Postmodernism and History

Postmodernism and history have made uneasy patterns. Historians have remained susceptible to bouts of pomophobia.¹³ They have always feared the external critique on their passion, behaving in the manner as reflected in the saying of Samuel Auguste Tissot "They [authors] have been impassioned like lover as one is daring in suggesting to that object of the passions has fault". They have conventionally orchestrated to ignore postmodernism when they have not gone so far as to

attack it, within belief, apparently, which this has been irritant which will vanish as they do not heed to such theorizing. Prof. Norman Davies considered post-modernism as hobbies to those who prioritize research of the historian over research of past-suggesting, amidst other thing, post-modernism may have to do within historian, this has been nothing what-ever need of doing with the history, or/and what with historian do.

Further, ‘literature, art, social theories, philosophy and psychology considered in term of ‘other realm’ sharing post-modern concern of urban and architecture designs; however not mentioning their history himself in the wide-ranged examinations of conditions of post-modernity within 1889s as described Prof. David Harvey. *The Post Modern Reader* was edited by Charles Jencks as ‘An Anthology of a World Movement’ in 1922. The description of that book claimed that postmodernism was already ‘holding entire realms of cultures,’ so entry included in art, literatures, architecture, sociology, film, geography, politics, feminism, sciences, and religions; but history endured vividly apparent through the absences. Additionally, *Icons Critical Dictionaries of Post-modern Thoughts*, has been published into 1998s, containing significant segments dedicated in ‘Culture and History Contexts’ of post-modernism, however while this contains contribution on relationships of post-modernism within philosophies, cultural and critical theory, art, politics, literatures, music and else, no references to the history have been made. The absence of the history has also been vividly evident into contexts of extensive and substantial numbers of the essay described by Zygmunt Bauman, presented into first Chapter. *Into Post-modernity & its Discontent*, he considered practical and theoretical characteristic of post-modernism containing matter of art and time, and fictions, that may barely become unsuccessful in impinging on informed historic study.

In fact, some historians made prominent attempts to face up to the post-modern challenges and to refine the working in constructive way. In contrast, historian continued the traditional as well as enduring distrusts of philosophies and the ‘theory’, considered post-modernism as a foreign & belligerent power.

The above discussion justifies the relationship between history and postmodernism. Further, it also gives various instances that support the pomophobic conclusion. Besides, conservative historians defend some of the postmodernist-challenged principles and concepts fundamental to conventional historiographies, such as facts, sources, causality, and historical objectivity.

Facts

The standard view of history as truth has a solid foundation. While studying history, one is not acquiring the historical statistics rather what exactly the chroniclers have created around it. Hayden White elaborates, "We can never know the true history of the past." Never do facts spontaneously arrange themselves to yield meaning. The historian is responsible for imparting sense through the narrative structure of data. While conventional historians acknowledge that narratives may carry or contain explanations, they do not view them as explanations in and of themselves.¹⁴

The existence of facts and meaning constrains re-description. Nevertheless, most philosophers continue to believe that truth is congruence with the facts and that actual knowledge is the primary objective of the investigation.¹⁵

Alun Munslow says as follows: "The historian is not a free agent, like a sculptor who may take the clay of facts and shape it as he or she pleases." Postmodernists have eliminated the distinction among chief and tributary sources, so erasing inherent history and historiography and denying the prospect of impartial information of the olden times.¹⁶

Causation

E. H. Carr defined the study of history as the study of causes due to the fundamental centrality of the concept of causation to historical comprehension. Postmodernists view history's two rulers to be causation and chronology. As the idea of source is dependent on chronological interval, post-modernists reject not only the concept of cause/source but also the concept of

sequential time. In postmodernist history, no time periods exist. Several post-modernists suggested that the causes of something can only be known by observing its effects. They renounce the pursuit of causes as fruitless and instead pursue an explanation.¹⁷

Historical Neutrality

The postmodernist historical theory asserts that impartial information of the ancient times are impossible since all information is correlative, each idea is just as legitimate, plus a book is nothing more than an endless game of implications. Deconstructionists are of the view of a liberal academic environment that inspires academics to reject the notion that official credentials have an established or set denotation, to claim that the reader provides definition, and to assert that there is no ultimate historical fact.¹⁸ Ankersmit claims, "We no longer have any tents or the past; we only have interpretations of them." Therefore, the objective of postmodernism is to pull the rug out from under science and modernism.¹⁹

De-emphasizing History

Postmodernism questions historical thought's euro centrism or western ethnocentrism. The Eurocentric historians argue that Europeans are distinctively innovative and progressive, and they had distinctively democratic and moral norms that others lacked. They also feel that the teaching of the Christian faith contributed to the distinctive development of Europe.²⁰ Finally, Europe was regarded as the physical and geographical core from which other regions and their inhabitants might be evaluated.²¹

Suppose history is to be viewed as the study of the process of the formation of human civilization. In that case, the process of development in the orient, where the majority of people resided, must be viewed as necessary to the study of history rather than as an expansion or additional dimension. Modernists speak of historical uniformities, and if they can be identified, can they be limited to Europe while the rest of the world is excluded?²²

In world history, there should be no center and periphery. The notion of center and periphery, with the West as the center, should be abandoned. Despite the immense contribution of the West to the ongoing rise of science and technology that is reshaping the world, there cannot be a center and a periphery in world history for an extended period.²³

The effect of Post-modernism on Historiography:

Post-modernism has greatly affected historiography, in a way that it has now made its specific genres of historical texts and formed a prosperous yield shortly. The major structures of post-modernist historiography are:

Indigenous Narratives

Lyotard laid claim to the phrase local narratives, which are old works that have gotten birth following the post-modernist refusal of majestic accounts as power narratives briefed by members of the ruling class. These narratives are the discrete tales narrated by convicts, pupils, laborers, and others. These accounts are usually the form of resistance. Further, they are biased naturally, they hardly proclaim objective past facts or general rationality. Still, post-modernist approach clasps that the aggregation of these indigenous or local narratives is the mode that establishes history.

Extension of the Series of Historical Collections

Richard Evans marks that postmodernist's influence has broadened the array of historical text as well as reinvigorated certain ancient and drowsy topics. For instance, historical text can merely take advantage of the change in orientation of post-modernist from the foundations of a society of separatist activities to the causes and factors of national identity. Further, historiography has proposed a considerable amount of its attention to illogicality, inconceivable notions, and mysticism in mankind while absolutely rejecting belief in logic and growth. Interpretations of various foci, ranging from the general approaches to the micro-politics of existence, have complemented considerably to historical acquaintance.

History as a form of literature

Immensely ailing on the analytic perimeter, post-modernist historiography has, nevertheless, elevated quality text equals to a usual historical custom. Evans has quoted 4 examples: (i) *Simon Schama's Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (ii) *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1921* written by O. Figes (iii) Natalie Zamin Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre* (iv) Robert Darnton's *The Great Cat Massacre*. Though the last 2 quoted workings have been censured for poor controlling of proof, however, the sharpness of the tiniest details infuses new life into the writing.

Reinstatement of the Individual's place in the past

Evans points out that postmodernism has played a pivotal role in reinstating the merit of the individuals of the past, although they were not 'notable persons' rather very ordinary. Undoubtedly, postmodernism has reshaped the world of little men.

Post-modernism & Deconstruction

The preponderance of gloomy mode of delineating post-modernism may be considered a significant juncture in procedure of coming to term with novelty. Anything unhackneyed is encountered initially with whatever is known, which refers to the necessity of defining it in terms of what it is not. However, subsequent to two decades of theorizing about postmodernism, it should be viable to interpret it effectively. Besides the question whether they are 'right' or not, it seems gloomy interpretations are dissatisfying in themselves, like the definitions of the 'woman' as the 'non-man' shall not do eventually. Another aspect may also be pointed out which has doubtlessly played a part to the modes of elucidating post-modernism. The themes of languages folding in to itself, absolute ontological doubt, and the breakdown of hierarchy are familiar of any one with even cursory knowledges of the contemporary development of literary and philosophy theory. During 1970s, the works of Mr. Jacque Derrida were translated into English, which exploring the consequences of illusory

natures of firms ontological centers or fix referents. The issue engrosses central positions in paper ‘La Structures, le sign et lei jeu dan le discours des sciences humaine,’ which presented to seminar in Johns Hopkin University by 1966s (Derrida, 1970), that spot inceptions of stupendous influences on America literary theories. It has been vivid that deconstructions has impacts on the receptions of post-modernism, even when only in-directly. Hence, this was tiny steps from gloomy modes of elucidated post-modernism to discussions of the literary in deconstructive term. In lines with deconstructive question of peripheries between various forms of discourses, literatures, and philosophies are indistinguish interwoven in theory of post-modernism. Various utilizations of term ‘post-modernism’ have been indicative for the fusions. While the views initiated out as terms of literacies periodization, it now serve cross the boards including particular bodies of the philosophic theories and current advancement in the art.

Post Modernism in Education

Postmodernism influences all sorts of discipline, it is illogical to ignore the influence of postmodernism on educations. The evolution of knowledges in frequent ways just going side by side with variation in contents and technique of education. But, throughout history, prime principle of educations are epitome of Enlightenment like the belief of exploring objective and rational truth. Usher and Edwards stated that “educational practice and theory founded on discourses of modernities and self-understanding forged by the discourse’s bases and implicit assumption.” Giroux and Aronowitz (1997) opined that various educators under-pin modernist ideal for the human advancements with the logical idea. Nevertheless, into modern discourses, the knowledges elucidated by whiter man, and then the cultural and historical element need of confront by post-modernist educator. Aronowitz and Giroux (1997) believe that post-modern criticisms are imperative for educator as this challenge the validnesses of Enlightenments ideal in educations and scrutinize if it really serves the advance post modern world. Cobb (2002) argued that Enlightenments put stress on educations. Since the beginning of the 19th century, universal

education has been provided in the United States and around the world. Public education was intended to promote acculturation. Cobb (2002) also thinks that immigrants from various cultures and languages made up the majority of the state's population. The main goal of education was to turn these young people into legitimate American citizens, and this American tradition was a product of the Enlightenment, or, to put it another way, a British Protestant culture that cannot be understood without admitting colonialism. In the field of education, this kind of attitude is still prevalent. But its power was lost. In the postmodern society, economic consideration is crucial to understanding why education is important.

Additionally, although many other scholars see postmodern education theory as primarily pointing toward a consumerist social order, other researchers think it is associated with lifelong learning. Therefore, in order to ensure that society's demands for tolerance for variety are met, postmodern theory has to be used in the education sector.

Postmodernism and linguistic

If we agree with Lyotard's (1979) assertion that the emergence of postmodernism is marked by a shift from reality to fiction and narrative, by a change from the world of encounters to that of language, and by the demise of the three prominent metanarratives of science, religion, and politics and their replacement by local language-games, then the science of linguistics reveals itself in an unsalvageable predicament but in a prosperous position. It must, as a science, accept the general determinism of metanarratives and, at the very least, modify its understanding of truth. Contrarily, the subject topic of the postmodern criticism is unquestionably the science. Therefore, it may be expected to stay largely unaltered, with the result that postmodern linguistics may still exist.

It is obvious that contemporary structural linguistics fits inside the purportedly outdated scientific paradigm. It has every aspect of Galilean science. It might be argued that, contrary to Althusser's assertion, Saussure's core concepts constitute an epistemological rupture that ushers in the linguistic era of

science. Thus, Saussure's "Langue" would be seen as a scientific object, having been generated by the debarring and partitioning out of the unformed fact of language, with reference to the specific scientific activities' abstraction and generalization. It follows that linguistic has technical consequences and is connected to postmodernism, both of which are irrefutable facts.

Modernism VS Postmodernism

Modernists believe in the accepted Master Narratives and metanarratives of history, culture, and national identity prior to World War II (American-European myths of progress). Myths of cultural and ethnic origin are received as fact. In contrast, postmodernists are suspicious of and reject Master Narratives for history and culture. They prefer local tales, the ironic deconstruction of master narratives, and they believe in origin counter-myths. Modernists believe that "Grand Theory" (which totalizes elucidations in history, science, and culture) can present and explain entire knowledge. While postmodernists advocate for the refusal of totalizing theories and the promotion of localizing and contingent theories, totalizing ideas are rejected. Modernists believe in reality beyond media, language, symbols, and representations; originality. While postmodernists believe in hyper reality and visual saturation, simulacra appear more potent than authentic images and texts that lack an original.²⁴

Major Thinkers

Late 20th-century Parisian intellectuals, most of whom were engaged in the May 1968 movement, responded to the crisis of western civilization with the theories of poststructuralism and postmodernism. Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Jean Baudrillard are notable postmodern intellectuals.²⁵

Michel Foucault

Michel Foucault, a profound French philosopher, was born in Poitiers on 15 October 1926. The reason of his death was of

AIDS-related illness in Paris on 25 June 1984 at age 57. Foucault was a philosopher, intellectual, historian, sociologist, and critic. He held the "History of Thought Systems" position at the Collège de France and also lectured at the University of California, Berkeley.

In addition to his contributions to the history of human sexuality, Foucault is best known for his critical analyses of social institutions, particularly psychiatry, medicine, the human sciences, and the criminal justice system. There has been much debate over Foucault's work on power and the connections between power, knowledge, and discourse. Foucault was frequently connected with the structuralist movement in the 1960s. However, Foucault separated himself from structuralism in later years. Foucault consistently opposed the poststructuralist and postmodernist titles, notwithstanding their occasional use to him.²⁶

In a 1982 interview, Foucault said that he would often retort, "Well, do you think I've worked hard all these years to say the same thing and not be changed," to those who would remark, "Well, you thought this a few years ago, but now you say something different."²⁷ "The basic objective of life and work is to become something you were not at the beginning," he said, refusing to identify as a philosopher, historian, structuralist, or Marxist. Similar to this, he preferred not to claim that he was outlining a comprehensive and timeless body of knowledge; rather, he wanted his writings to serve as "a kind of toolbox that others might go through to find a tool that they can use as they see fit in their specific sector." I write for readers and users rather than for an audience. Unfortunately, the majority of Foucault's writings were lost, and his will prohibited the publication of those that could have been missed.²⁸

Foucault stated that it was illusory to believe that historians could reconstruct a true history; historical discourse is a language of the present, serving present goals, and creating a sense for us today from the archeological evidence of previous human activity. Foucault set out to write histories of discourses, a phrase that encompasses language and everything individuals

do to make sense of the world. To the delight of many, he demonstrated that the subjects of modernist scientific inquiry, the same conceptions of self, nation, language, intellect, sex, crime, and normalcy, were themselves unique historical constructs, the results and not the objects of human speech and analysis. He shifted the focus from the so-called 'phenomena' that science was investigating to how science (read: philosophy, psychology, law, and history) produced significant phenomena through its discourses.²⁹

According to Foucault, "it is via the discourses that dominate a period in history and a play in the universe that people acquire their mentality or worldview." He calls it an episteme,³⁰ and he divides time into four epistemes: pre-classical (up to 1650 A.D.), classical (1650-1800), modern (1800-1950), and a genuinely present era that has been forming since around 1950.³¹ The episteme integrates all independent discourses (religious, scientific, historical, etc.) into a more or less coherent framework of thought based on a set of shared assumptions regarding how such knowledge is acquired and utilized.³²

Foucault realizes that in the olden times, there was no order and it was a time of casual fights and endless conflicts but no accords. There is no essential meaning to things, no essential subjects underlying actions, and no indispensable charge for history; all we have are material results and material activities.³³

History is a perspective-based body of knowledge, always written from the present-day vantage point, with contemporary significance. As the Marxist understanding of class struggle, the concept of class itself was Eurocentric, but Marx's application was global. Foucault thought that knowledge is power. He claimed that rationality and science are tools to direct control and rule. The universal truth is power masquerading as the standard of all knowledge. Foucault argues that human language does not merely explain the world; it generates it.³⁴

He states, "Language is oppression", implicating that language was created so that just those who talked it could avoid being oppressed. Then, everyone who does not talk about the language would be victimized. Human behavior cannot be fully explained using law-like causes. The historical material presented by Foucault is excessively selective and skewed, and his judgments are too broad and biased. The analysis concepts of Michel Foucault are oblique, in a manner that results are there at the start already.

Jacques Derrida

Three significant works by the Algerian-French philosopher: *Speech and Phenomena*, *Writing and Difference*, and *Grammatology*.³⁵ Derrida, as the progenitor of deconstruction, developed a method, as opposed to a strategy, for interpreting texts, which he termed deconstruction. As with "postmodernism," the term "deconstruction" has adopted various interpretations in the popular fascination. But, in philosophy, this refers to specific reading and writing practices. With the publication of primarily three works by Jacques Derrida, "*Of Grammatology* (English, 1974), *Writing and Difference* (English, 1978), and *Speech and Phenomena* (English, 1981), (English 1973)," the year 1967 saw the term "phenomena" enter philosophical literature for the first time. Through this alleged "publication blitz," Derrida became firmly established as a key figure in the advanced Paris-based development of philosophy and the human sciences. The word "deconstruction" was added to its vocabulary by it. Although Derrida, like Deleuze and Foucault, does not use the name and objects to any relationship with "-isms," Derrida and deconstruction are often associated with postmodernism. Of the three books released in 1967, "*Of Grammatology*" offers the only unbreakable foundation for dismantling contemporary conceptions of language, especially structuralism and Heidegger's observations on the lack of existence.³⁶

When applied to the social sciences, Derrida's deconstructionism, which is essentially a trend in literary criticism and related fields, is highly hazardous. It undermines

the possibility of positive sciences and their claims to "objective knowledge" regarding the social world. However, deconstruction presents the same epistemological issues for the conventional sciences without denying technological utility. Once the connection between theory and practice is weakened, the approach cannot rely on course for evidence. At the same time, the method can continue regardless of whether the metaphysical assertions of the theory are supported. Derrida's deconstruction is the literary practice of performing a critical reading of philosophers' and writers' texts, so exposing their metaphysical assumptions and unearthing unnoticed contradictions.³⁷

Nothing exists beyond the text, according to Derrida. Derrida deconstructs presupposed binary oppositions and distinctions, such as those between good and evil, mind and body, speech and writing, etc., in which one term is considered superior to the other. He asserts that language is not neutral since its function is to transfer our experience of reality into consciousness, yet language itself is a part of the same spatial and temporal context.³⁸

Derrida is unfamiliar with the historical investigation. His appraisal of historical research is therefore flawed. How can he critique the process of historical inquiry when he has no experience with it? The rejection of the historical text complicates historians' tasks even further. Subjectivity can be resolved if the documents are interpreted objectively.

Jean-Francois Lyotard (b. 1924)

A French intellectual who emerged in the 1960s from a Marxist background. Lyotard rejected Marxism because he viewed it as merely another attempt to impose a set of universalist ideals and values on the world. He termed these attempts metanarratives, and the core of his postmodernism is exposing and questioning these metanarratives.³⁹

Lyotard contends that all parts of contemporary cultures, counting science as the major sort of knowledge, rely on these mega narratives. So, postmodernism is the appraisal of

outstanding records, the cognizance that such records aid to lurk the underlying inconsistencies and imbalances of any social organization or practice. Expressly, any venture to produce “order” necessitates the formation of an equivalent amount of “disorder,” but a “grand narrative” conceals the manufactured nature of these classifications by arguing that “disorder” is genuinely rampageous and undesirable. In contrast, “order” is genuinely logical and desirable. In refusing mega narratives, postmodernism prefers “mini-narratives” that elucidate tiny behaviors and local events instead of wide-ranging or universal ideas. Postmodern “mini-narratives” are always circumstantial, tentative, conditional, and temporary; they never assert universality, truth, logic, or stability. Postmodernism's motto may be “think globally, act locally”; don't bother about mega schemes or mega plans.⁴⁰

The Critique of Postmodern Historical Theory

Postmodernists have attacked and generally damaged the foundations of modernist history. Thus, fundamental terms like 'truth,' 'fact,' and 'objectivity' have been revealed to be, at worst, meaningless and, at best, requiring a radical revision. Although some historians and philosophers adopted postmodernist concepts, the vast majority rejected philosophy's core premises. There are various responses to postmodernism.⁴¹

According to Geoffrey Elton, Postmodernism is a frivolous nihilism that permits any historian to say whatever he wants and undermines the historian's fundamental "claims to being." Lawrence Stone advised chroniclers “to deter at the very first step, the innovative academic boors of their discipline.” Allan Bloom describes it as "the biggest intellectual crisis in history." Richard J. Evans, Under the assault of postmodernist thought, the historical profession is in a crisis. Arthur Marwick stated that postmodernist concepts posed a threat to historical research.

Postmodernists are characterized by their hatred of the past. They challenged the accepted underpinnings of history. But, postmodernism appears to provide substitutes for participating in the universal culture of consumption, where goods and sorts

of knowledge are proposed by forces primarily outside the person's control. These solutions consider every activity unavoidably local, restricted, incomplete, yet practical by rejecting "grand narratives" and concentrating on specific local objectives. Postmodernist politics provides a framework for conceptualizing local circumstances as flexible and unpredictable yet impacted by global tendencies.⁴²

The essence of postmodernism, which has prompted a paradigm shift in contemporary historiography, is that we should avoid highlighting essentialist patterns from the past. Here, history is no longer the reconstruction of what has transpired during the various phases of our lives but rather a continuation of toying with the memory of these events. The frantic, eager, and unrestrained digging into the past, motivated by the desire to find a former reality and reconstruct it scientifically, is no longer the unquestioned responsibility of historians. In postmodernist thought, the emphasis is no longer on the past itself, but on the dissonance between the present and the past, between the current vocabulary used to discuss the past and the history itself.

History or historiography is an independent empirical discipline with centuries-old traditions and a high level of sophistication. Although an ever-increasing number of fundamental changes have happened in every aspect of life and throughout history, their rate of occurrence has slowed. The world faces the ongoing and unanticipated effects of modernity's paradoxes and opportunities. It is the radicalization of modernity, according to Giddens. It likely makes little difference whether we consider ourselves contemporary or postmodern.⁴³

Conclusion

Postmodernism theory has persuaded historians to examine materials more profoundly and consider writings and descriptions in innovative means. Post-modernism has instigated historians to become extra self-reflective, more aware of their prejudices, and also facilitated pioneering numerous latest research fields. Individual humans have been reintroduced into history, where social scientific discipline had

essentially removed them. It fosters the study of several topics, encompassing all general approaches and micro-politics of routine life, and adds significantly to historic conceptions. In a significant way, postmodernist history has reconstructed the world of little-known individuals.

¹ Pip Jones, *Introducing Social Theory* (London: Blackwell, 2003), 155.

² Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London: Routledge, 1997), 182.

³ E. Sreedharan, *A Textbook of Historiography: 500 BC to AD 2000* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2004), 281.

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