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Modernism and Post-Modernism

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Abstract:

Modernism and Post-modernism are said to be opposite theories, but have many similarities in following the ideas. Both the theories emphasize parody, irony, and playfulness by rejecting the boundaries between high and low forms of art and rigid genre distinctions. But though post-modernism seems very much like modernism in these ways, it differs from modernism in its attitude toward a lot of trends. Modernism presents fragmentation as something tragic, something to be lamented and mourned as loss. Post-modernism celebrates the idea of fragmentation instead of lamenting on it. This article shows the link between Modernism and Post-modernism.

Keywords: Modernism, Post-Modernism, Class-Art, Culture, alienation, psychological realism

Modernism:

In the general sense, the period before post-modernism is called as modernism. But there are many are many different views or debates among the literary scholars about their links. Some of the thinkers take it as a continuation and some others take as a cancellation of modernism. Modern, in the true literary sense refers to the religious transition of the sixth century. The term modernity is the period of liberal humanism or enlightenment. It is the period of certain corner-stone ideas such as unity, truth, subjectivity, liberty, progress, and metaphysical thoughts. It experienced the philosophy of Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. But in critical areas there is no difference in the terms modern, modernity and modernism.

Modernism came as a shock to the western world with the philosophy of Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin, S. Freud, and James Frazer which dominated all spheres of life and arts like painting, music, architecture, religion, and psycho-analysis. The Avant-Garde movements such as Dadaism, Surrealism, Cubism and Futurism are said to be the early forms of Modernism. Dadaism, founded by Tristam Tzara, a Rumanian

poet in 1917, is a nihilistic movement. It believes in the negative philosophy of life, in absurdity and scandal of human life. Surrealism grew out of Dadaism. Surrealism is to go something beyond realism. It believes in the psychology or mental fantasy to be greater than reality in human life. Futurism and Cubism are miner movements originally applied to painting.

Salient features of Modernism:

1) It has brought novelty and newness in the practice of all the arts

2) As it is a search for deapth in everything, it opposed the middle-class social realism

3) It is something that cut a path into a mass culture

4) Modernism is a search for inward psyche; hence it replaces social realism with psychological realism

5) It was a violent break in politics and political change,

6) It believes in fantasy as a realism in its search for unconscious, so it dismisses rationalism

7) Modernism believes in abstractness in music, painting, and all genres of arts, it is not concerned with content or form

8) It is search for the subjective expressions and characterized by the sense of alienation, which is a dominant theme of modern literature.

Post-Modernism:

Post-Modernism, a disputed term that has occupied much recent debate about contemporary culture since the early 1980s is a term which moves in all directions ranging from anything to anywhere in this post industrial and post world war age. It is not only used by literary theorist but also by politicians, scientists, philosophers, media, socialist and feminists. Post-Modernism is a set of practices, it is state of mind of the society after modernism. It is used in the design of reading, structure of a film, a T.V. commercial, a layout of a page, in fashion, magazines, etc. It is also used in the field of knowledge and metaphysics.

Post-Modernism is believed to be one of the complicated terms or a set of ideas. Post-Modernism has a merged as an area of academic study since the mid 1980s. The term is hard to define because it is a concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study like art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communications, fashion, and technology. It is hard to say when post modernism exactly began. Perhaps the easiest way to start thinking about Post-Modernism is by thinking about modernism.

The term post modernism was probably first used by **Arnold Toynbee** in 1939 in his **'A Study of History'.** According to him the modern period starts probably between 1850 & 1875. It means the origin of Post-Modernism is located not in the 28th century but in the 19th.

We may get the word in two ways, hyphenated Post-Modernism and non-hyphenated Post Modernism. Hyphenated word Post-Modernism means period following in the chronological order after modernism. Whereas non-hyphenated Post Modernism according to **Jean Francois Lyotard** celebrates the conviction that it is both possible necessary to break with the tradition and institute new ways of living and

thinking. Post-Modernism is not related to modernism in the most hyphenated paradise relationship. It is a state of mind and a set of practices which many a time makes the cancellation of modernism. Jean Francois Lyotard is the first scholar who put Post-Modernism in the pigeon-hole of modernism. He is almost the founding father of Post-Modern philosophy. He was conditioned to write his book **The Post-Modern Condition: a Report on Knowledge** in 1986 by the government of Cuba.

The other philosophers of Post-Modernism are Jean Bandrillard, Bergson, Habermas, Fredric Jameson, Felix Guettari, and Galles Deleuze. In literature the post-modernist scholars are Roland Barthers and Ihab Hassan. Post-Modernism as a set of practice is adopted in architecture, painting, literature, and cultural theory.

Post-Modernism is different from modernism in many respects. Modernism expresses lamentation over the loss of certain elements of modernity. Post-Modernism celebrates the loss of certain values of modernity. Secondly, modernism never believes in the coming together of mass art and class art, popular culture, and middle-class culture. While Post-Modernism believes in the slogan **'cross the border and close the gap'.** The gap between these two arts needs to be reduced according to the Post-Modern philosophy. Thirdly modernism makes search for the depth and inward. Post-Modernism believes in simulation that is surface reality.

Post-Modernism merged in different areas at different dates in the west. In late 1950 for art, late 60s for architecture, early 80s for cultural theory, late 80s for social science and late 90s for literature and science including technology. Post modernism also differs from country to country and made on to be applicable to countries such as India and other countries of Asia. However, in general, Post-Modernism has the following salient features.

Salient features of Post-Modernism:

1) Post-Modernism believes in decline of myth in the keystone ideas of modernity of enlightenment. Therefore, it dismisses the grand narratives of enlightenment such as liberty, truth, subjectivity, identity, humanity, progress, faith, belief etc. It replaces the grand narrative with small narratives. Therefore, Post-Modernism believes in 'portion' or 'fractures'.

2) Post-Modernism believes in fragmentation and plurality. It dismisses unity and universalism. It looks for the local, the particulars and the diverse expressions.

3) Post-Modernism resists totalization and legitimization of all sorts. It rejects the philosophy of unity, of reason and of a universal philosophy or in general the stability in any kind of automatization.

4) Post-Modernism does not believe in unity and fixity of any kind because there is not a state of reality at all in this world. So, it believes in college in painting and heterogeneity and pluralism of all kinds.

5) Post-Modernism is characterized by the emergence of quantum physics, the theory of relativity and the modern technology. Hence everything is in a state of flux.

6) Post-Modernism is a matter of style, governed by mass media. It is the age of electronics and cyber cafés and there is the state of virtual reality. So, we have Photo fiction of shifting types such as video, internet, and other fragmentary images.

7) Post-Modernism also replaces the global economic system and capitalization. So, we have the emergence of supermarkets promoted by borderless mass media, electronic media, sky shopping and tale shopping. It is an age of super-jack era, a transition with no variety.

8) Post-Modernism is also a state of culture. The world in the 21st Century has turned into a global village. These appear to be federation of cultures and the world seems like a market place with no fixed rules. This is the world of modern art, Japanese food; Indian clothing with French and America styles all coming together and merging into each other. So Post-Modernism is a condition of culture and a condition of mind. There is death of everything that is rigid, unified, and full of authority.

9) In Post-Modernism there are no heroes or epics or grant narratives. Self hell and one's own resources are to be trusted.

10) Post-Modernism believes a demand and supply concept, money, constant displacement and somehow win attitude is a part of Post-Modern condition. One brand replaces another brand because there is no brand of locality. Post-Modern time is a time of continues displacement.

In literature Post-Modernism is the death of literature and criticism. Writers, such as Ihab Hussan, talks about death of silence or even enthusiasm in literature. It is the vague cry of the purposeless writer in the Post-Modern age. In simple words, it means that the traditional realism in literature is gone. Literature exists only at the level of narrative. Hence there is no death of literature but certainly there is death of 'the literature'.

So Post-Modernism is a state of mind or attitude. It is not a continuation of modernism but it is a set of new ideas, programmes, and philosophy which negates capitalism and unity in all books of life. It entertains raptures and fractions and fragmentations in history, culture, politics, society, and art.

Post-Modernism nursess the terms like small voices or minority voices and promote anti-fundamentalism. Post-Modernism searches pluralism, fragmentation, and raptures in 'faith in everything'. It dismisses unity, rationalism, legitimacy, capitalism, consumerism, and totalization. It stands against the philosophy of enlightenment and raises doubts about truth, individuality, progress, death, democracy, nationalism, and the like. It has faith in surface reality. It is a mode of attitude shaped by new sciences

dominated by the electronic media and global cultures. Post-Modernism makes an emphasis on the death of man, death of history, death of metaphysics and death of culture.

Conclusion:

To conclude Post-Modernism can be understood as a conceptual strategy or a set of strategies to cope with present day realities and human condition. The term then assumes a broad category which tries to interpret analyze or understand the often conflictual, multidimentions of life, experience, knowledge.

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