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From Modern Closure to Postmodern Openings. Editorial

Bogdan POPOVENIUC[1]

Abstract: Postmodernism is a literary invention, a very creative and expressive artistic current widespread across domains of philosophy, the arts, and architecture. Its main intellectual characteristics are a general relativism - from epistemology to moral - and the promotion of subjectivism by criticism of modernity's pillars of universalism and objectivity. Post-modernity is the alleged correspondent state of the society and culture we live in. But the state of a society is other than the critique of that society. It is said that we live in a post-modern era, and many acclaim this brand because it supposedly represent a new state of social evolution characterized by a free individual, liberation of the emotions and expressions from the reason constraints and so on.

Keywords: *modern closure*, *postmodern openings*, *editorial*, *modernity*, *postmodernity*.

The understanding of what means post-modernity and if we actually live in a postmodern age rise some difficulties because there is a superposition between thinking, thinking about thinking, thinking about reality and reality itself when we talk about our own culture.

Firstly, there is the thinking about cultural reality of what we label post-modern society: culture as sum of the artistic and material artifact, social institutions and the system of norms and knowledge which supports it. We can label this *discursive post-modernity*. At this level there are a huge collection of artworks, literary, anthropological, sociological and philosophical products, which radically detach from modern perspective of thinking and promote the postmodernist standpoint. Postmodernism is very widespread amongst cultural elites, in academia and art world of developed parts of the globe. We definitely can state there is a strong post-modern cultural current, but this not entails the whole culture is post-modern too.

Secondly, it is the thinking about itself, let's say the philosophical debate about the meaning and grounds of human consciousness in the world. At this level, the post-modern endeavor implies the deconstruction of reason itself. It is an self-reflexive process of questioning the very reason that makes

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the reason. We can label this the *Cartesian post-modernity* or rational deconstructivism. In this question there is also a very evident trend to skepticism, critics, irony or rejection of modern ideals of reason as universalism, absolute truth, and objective reality and the related cultural construction of grand narratives, all-inclusive ideologies, human nature, moral universalism and social progress.

These first two meanings are more or less theoretical and cultural (in the narrow sense of the word) and even if our period would comply with these standards we still can't call it post-modern, as long as this perspective is not true for the majority of the population and for the most major social and economic processes.

Thirdly, it is the thinking (in itself) as process of using abstract ideas. Post-modern thought means to apprehend reality, not just to use post-modern concepts and presuppositions to depict reality as in the first premise. We can label it *perspectival prost-modernity*. It is referring to the way in which people actually think. From this perspective we can speak about our times to be post-modern if people conceive themselves and the social realities around them in postmodernist manner and act accordingly. In this sense, we live in a post-modern culture if "the collective programming of the human mind" (Hofstede, 1984, p. 21) held post-modern values.

Fourthly, it is the culture itself as real object. We can label it *cultural post-modernity*. It is referring to the post-modern basic assumptions majority of the people shares and live accordingly. The post-modern culture can be perceived in its historical continuity, in the present social norms (rules or way of behaving, ideals and values plus behaviour), in psychological aspects of style of problem solving, learning, habit, self-conception (Me-Self), basic structure of social organization or the majority of products, artifact, ideas and symbols.

We would life in post-modern era if the premises 3 and 4 are fulfilled. That is: the post-modern perspective is the dominant way of thinking, not only amongst the cultural elites, and the social reality is organized and moves according to the post-modern structure.

From the last two premises we can see there is no place for a post-modern society nowadays. The global order is still based on the economic and political institutions of modernity. There was many changes in the progress of modern way of social organization for sure. The tremendous technological development changed dramatically the relations and structure of social relations, but the principles of development are the same.

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Technological progress, based on the same rational principle of possibility to attain the most efficient way to organize the economy and society, is the main drive of global development. There is no postmodernity, but only a development, although in a unexpected way, of modernity or, if it is preferred, the closing stage of modernity which reached the global level. The technical progress in conjunction with the domination of scientific knowledge are the main characteristics of modernity which acts as driving force for the present global order. Present industrialism and scientific progress are the practical expression of modern belief in reason. What is now called by some postmodernity is only a natural consequence of the progress of modernity, beyond what past people have envisaged. The society is more than ever regulated by rational intelligent streams of organized practices, interactions between people rational mediated by digital communication and artificial intelligence assists the entire human activity from management to leisure time. The triumph of reason is, if we drop the anthropocentric pre-modern vestige perspective, the triumph of reason on everything else: emotion, prejudices, subjectivity. So, a reason without subject is the natural completion of modernity and the creation of general artificial intelligence (GAI) represents its touchstone. Intelligent devices spreads in all areas of the human dominion and the dream of creating GAI is closer than ever. This achievement would represent the sheer materialization of the ideal of modernity.

The cultural rebellion from literature and arts, and some parts of philosophy against this implacable progress of things is more a cultural reaction to the unfulfilled promises of modernity. But the new cultural religion of postmodernity, the proclamation of absolute freedom of individual, the ability of subject to create itself and so on are, in this moment, still desiderative thinking and not a cultural achievement.

Definitely there is a part of truth in this image of post-modern changes. Modernity seems to reach its limits. The unimagined level of technological progress, which has made possible the global village, is a very concrete image of modern closure. Globalization and technological progress have pushed the balance of modern order to the edge. The organization of economy, political institution and culture based on the values and principles of modernity reached their limits. The global order had become instable, because the modern institution as nation-state, capital based economy became ineffective, if not prejudicial, at global scale.

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At the economic level, the late capitalism principles of free-market, extended to the global level, erodes the capacity of national states to provides the legal and stable framework for the societies. The state power weakens in the face of global corporations and is unable to deal with the new trans-national economic powers and fluxes. When the embassy of the one of the most progressive and advance nation, as Sweden, posts an overt advertising for one of their big corporation when it takes a public attitude on a political event in Romania, is a sign that *something is rotten with the state*, an obvious imbalance in the development of modern state political institution and economic power of global private corporates promoted by free market.[2]

At the political level, the ideals and promises of modernity were already compromised since the middle of the last century. The two world wars and the rise of communist and totalitarian regimes proved the wrongness of modernity's social thinking. Communism[3] was the desired completion of the absolute instituting of reason at social level, granting the equality, freedom and power for all, but failed in horror.

At cultural level modernity failed too, because instead of an enlighten epoch for all we are witnessing to a resurrection of superstitious, prejudices, illiteracy, manipulation and propaganda. Science was the concrete expression, the cultural manifestation of such belief in reason. The belief in science was the new religion proposed, but it failed to give the promise land. The distinct feature of scientific discourse made him vulnerable unlike religious and political ones. The science pretends to offer only verifiable truths, and ask for completely obedience to rational and empirical supported assertions. The scientific truth should be verifiable, falsifiable, measured, and observed predicted and proved. And a better life for anyone, good political regimes, economic prosperity for all, and cultural enlighten crowds are still desiderates.

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[2] Here it is the statement posted on Facebook page of the Embassy of Sweden:
"Impressed by former PM Dacian Ciolos hat from yesterday's TV images?
It's a Swedish Fjällräven hat! Since 1964 Fjällräven has provided Sweden with reliable and fashionable outdoor gear. Nowadays, you can spot Fjällräven products all over the world. Surely you recognize the classic "Kånken" - back pack, yet another loved product from Fjällräven. If you fancy this garment, follow this link: https://www.fjallraven.com/
Here you can find more Fjällräven products, and discover for yourself why Swedes have been loving this gear for generations."

[3] The Nazism and Communism, although they are both products of modern political thinking, they not share the same rationale. Nazism had a rizomatic modern-postmodern origin blending on modern reason preeminence at the level of social structure and the Nietzschean perspective of the supremacy of subject, which is a post-modern canon.

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The modernity is about to implode under the pressure of global processes and technological advancement. The economic principles dictates the political regulations, environmental standards, educational policies, and controls the information. Illiberal democracies and authoritarian regimes flourishes. From the rational cultivated self-directed individual ideal of modernity remained only an over-inflated over-specialized and outer-directed individual. While the post-modern openings are kept at the level of cultural elites' discourse.

Another argument about the post-modern openings delay rests in its structural aspect as critical discourse. Post-modernism, as an expression of cultural frustration, lack a constructive dimension. Its foundations are not suitable for constructing a new global order. On subjectivity, relativism, ascendancy of rights over duties, is impossible to cultivate a proactive ethics, a glocal perspective and a species responsibility, which are the compulsory cultural features for a sustainable development of human race in the trail of technological advancement and under the auspices of global existential risks.

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