

POST MODERNISM AND EDUCATION *

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Main elements of modernism are universality, cartesianism, classification of knowledge, rationalism, divalent logic, consensus, universal language rules, elite culture; on the other hand determiners of post modernism are pluralism, relativism, local facts, narrative knowledge, divalent logic, mass culture, new language systems. Within the scope of these items, we can say that in the process of post modern education the following facts should be considered; respect to individuality, specificity, heterogeneous relationships, an autonomous school, not the education of knowledge but of learning, formation of various ways of interpretation of the world and formation of actions, productivity and innovation.

Key Words: Modernism, post modernism, education, freedom, pluralism, relativism, leadership, paradox, elite/mass culture, estrangement.

Modernism-Modern Ages

The age of wisdom which began in the 18th century brought the concepts of mind's dominance and modernism on the agenda, thus it has led that and the following ages to be considered as modern ages. The main facts (concepts) that has defined the modernism or modern ages are these; rationalism (cartesianist rationalism), logic, scientific (universal) rights, being scientific, algorithmic systematic way of thinking, positivism, universality...

The word 'modern' means; up-to-date, contemporary, new and 'modernism' means modernness and reformation. The content of the concept of modern changes in every age and in every period parallel to 'new' things and expresses transition from the old to the new; modernness is used to examine new things. Because of this reason, while evaluating some certain ages in respect to their innovations we can also describe them with their quality of modernism contrasted to the previous ages. For instance, we can say that 18th century is more modern than

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the Renaissance period or Turkey in 1990s is more modern than Turkey in 1980s.

Moreover, there is a tendency to describe the ages after the Middle Age as modern. This is because in this modern age people gave up their slavery position which had been attributed in the Middle Age; they put themselves and rationalism in center and also because science, scientific way of thinking, positivism influenced all parts of life. *(Kale, 1997: 281-282)*

Modernism has been formed by the thoughts of 18th century Enlightenment era philosophers aiming to improve a universal ethics and an objective science, an art which is autonomous to laws. Some philosophers such as Concorcet wanted to use this privatized culture accumulation to enrich daily life, they imposed function of both controlling natural forces and understanding the world itself, human beings, ethical improvement, the uprightness of the theories and even happiness of people to art and science.

In modern times rights occurring in every fields, theories have become indisputable, whereas individualism, individual qualities were not so important as they had been dissolved in these systems. For instance, art is a field in which typical examples of this can be observed; for example, 'during the baroque patterns. These patterns are so widespread that sometimes they spread over the borders of country or the nation. Vivaldi, Lully and Purcell's being from different nations can not hide their music's being identical. Also, as it is a normative action pattern system, we can not determine the individual characteristics of Gothic architecture. Gothic structures built in the same geographical area during the same age display same qualities. In such an order individualism can be possible in a very restricted framework. Normative systems are so binding that they make everybody join themselves during the period that they are in progress. As these systems are so persuasive they do not have any opponents.' *(Batur, 1997: 66)*

However, all the events have made progress in an adverse way to the hope and ideals of Enlightenment. Every field has been institutionalized step by step; science, ethics and art have been made apart from the world and became authoritative and autonomous institutions. Cognitive, ethical, practical and aesthetic expression and reasoning structures have become to be supervised by some special experts.

People who have been the slaves of God and religion during the middle Age, then became slaves of authorities and facts governed by the modern age.

According to Daniel Bell; 'modernist culture has infected disease to the daily life values.' We can define this disease as exalting the understanding of a reality which can be verified empirically.

With this understanding of reality imposed by modernism, institutions with restrictive rationalism, single shaping order sequences/scopes, facts formed by insoluble mutual dependence between individuals have been created.

According to Max Weber; with rationalism and intellectualism which have

led all these the magic of the world has disappeared and this is the fate of modern period.

'The Latin term "modernus" which appeared in late 5th century describes current Christianity reality opposing to history of worshipping the cross in addition to its ordinary standard meaning in its'today's peculiar'form during that period. The term 'modern' and its derivative term 'modernism' influence a wide social and humanist activity area therefore they can not be evaluated as simple concept, social scientific researches should have to be done. (Batur, 1997: 64)

Modern rationalism has determined the conditions of generally acceptable knowledge and these conditions are; firstly this knowledge (propositions) should be based on evidence or evidences which could be reached by the others, the way to prove should be empirical research, mathematical and logical rationalism. Moreover, inferences stemming from evidence should be clear and consistent. Because main fact of positivist idea is right knowledge's reflecting the truth and it being universal.

When modern philosophy is concerned, generally the process that began with Descartes, went on through Enlightenment and Kant and then last of all (logical) positivism. It covers the period from 17th century to the first half of 20th century. When trends like romanticism and interpretation (hermeneutics) that are contrary to time are set apart, some ideas or beliefs represent the real meaning of the period. The belief in improvement and single objective uprightness in every field, in science and wisdom were the main concepts among the philosophers. (Under, 1997:81)

However, this strict rationalism imposed by positivism put items out of discourse such as the meaning of ethics, religion, culture and life through which rational research and verification can not be performed; or in other words with positivism talking on these items became meaningless. Because when these items are mentioned compromise can not be reached by empirical, objective, logical and mathematical rationalism on the contrary it leads to dispute.

Lyottra calls scientific- empirical knowledge as meta-narrative and according to him 'single knowledge is not meta-narrative, there is also narrative knowledge with the narrations based on freedom, justice, happiness, joy etc. However, this knowledge's legitimate resources have been used up with power and esteem gained by scientific knowledge. Because there is no way to prove the sufficiency of this narrative knowledge and also these can produce neither a technics nor a technology ... (Kale, 1997:285)

The reason why the magic of the world disappeared as Max Weber mentioned or why the values of daily life weakened as Bell mentioned is the situation of narrative knowledge.

It is believed that scientific knowledge is independent from culture and tra-

dition and set apart from subjectivity. It does not change from culture to culture or from one to another. It is . objective and universal. It is above the cultures and subjects. As an information form , it is in the highest position among the entellectual disciplines hierarchy; art, religion, ethics, philosophy etc are in lower rank. Religion and tradition are a mass of prejudice and superstition that obstruct reaching the reality. (Under, 1997: 81)

Post Modernism-Post Modern Ages

Lyotard who opposed to modern rationalism and its monopolisation which has influenced all fields of life has brought participating language games as a method and Habermas who reacted the rationalism of modernism mentioned a compromise based on language. With these methods which were used in case of emergency post modernism started to have been changed.

In his study called 'Bir Tarih Incelemesi' (An Analysis of History) (1933) Arnold Toynbee, claimed that modern period ended with World War I and the following was the post modern period, thus he was the first one to have used the term 'post modern'. (Erinç, 1997:31)

Post modernism appeared as a reaction to modernism and from the end of 1950s it was started to be used and at the beginning of 1980s , the term began to be used widespread.

If we ask the question of 'What is post modernism? ', we can get more than one answer.

Post modernism is the name of a period and at the same time it is the name of a new discourse, a different rationalism, a style, a new idea and a philosophy. We can describe this style as refusing generally acceptable propositions; accepting pluralism and disintegration in scientist groups, knowledge sources and language games; emphasizing and adopting differences and varieties; recreating of linguistic transformation which leads to discussion of the concepts of reality, truth and uprightness; not hesitating or feeling afraid of facing choices that are open to comment ; interpreting the reality as much as possible (infinite); instead of using a definite time and place words, tring to understand reality in its own integrity / autonomy; struggling with the idea that separates people as soul and body opposing the dominance of a single absolute reality.

In the discourse of post modernism, the question of 'What is reality/ right? 'is no more important, the question of how reality or rights have been established throughout the history is important or searching not more right knowledge but forming new rights.

General ethical understandings and principles have lost their validity; source of ethical norms are now real conditions and requirements of time and age.

Post modernism is the work of artists who have courage to criticize the world

in which we experience typical examples to interpret. These find the contradictions and chaos of modernism and reflect them in their works, for instance using the painting of Leonardo 'Son Yemek' (Last Meal) again for today's international leaders or interpreting classical meanings and references within the framework of tomorrow's world. (Erinç, 1997: 41)

In fact, artistic activities opposing mechanic world opinion started to appear in 1960s. For example, Dada wants to reduce a world based on mind to a world of out of mind and uses illogical instead of logic and absurd instead of scientific rational rights. This irrational manner then became more powerful with surrealist declarations of Andre Breton. In the second half of 20th century, reactions to modernism kept on with artistic ways of pop- art, happening, action, painting. For instance, in happening audience- stage relationship disappears thus art participates in reality.

As Beethoven symbolized and deified German militarism in some of his compositions, he is still symbolized with these concepts. However, now in a post modernist manner, a new image by Beethoven is trying to be created as from many different compositions of him, there are different images and all are Beethoven!

Because of these qualities some philosophers accused post modernism of being uncertain and disturbing sometimes some of them consider it as a panic culture.

However, it is better when we consider post modernism as an opposition even shaking, returning to ourselves, our essences; seizing dynamics and as a tendency to questioning.

Education in the Postmodern Age

Sociologists define current social stage as 'post modern society' and communication type as 'computer / visual media'. (Hesapçiođlu, 1998: 97)

When we have a look at the conflicting facts of post modern society and modern society, post modern world should turn its back to the previous /modern education values. For instance, while presenting knowledge, we should put dominance of current knowledge and sciences, rationalism, divalent logic away and should use a variety of languages, methods, divalent logic, aesthetics, imagination, narrative knowledge that enable us to interpret the world in many ways; the aim of language should no more be universality, generally accepted rules but be search of new language ways.

In the education of post modern society where relativism becomes active and daily life is much more important, the process of being informed becomes independent from concrete human and his / her concrete acts and turns into a state in which it can be produced in time and extension as much as required. Knowledge

priority of young and old adults are disappearing in terms of pedagogy because this knowledge and capacity became older within the aged world. Therefore re-learning and education of learning and life's becoming a part of education is in question. (*Hesapçiođlu, 1998:98-100*)

On the other hand, as the most important communicative facts of postmodern society are computer and visual media, learning process becomes independent from knowledge centered teaching methods and it would be composed of less information but a variety of ways of learning (such as imaginary teaching places).

Autonomous schools of postmodern society will have more authority to decide and form than ever while performing its pedagogical task. Moreover classification of men and women will be meaningless and there will not be the education of the role of gender at schools. (*Hesapçiođlu, 1998:101-102*)

To sum up, in the schools of postmodern society relationships bades on ranks will not be determinant; leadership of the managers, group and organization dynamism will be more important; productivity and innovations will be the aim of this organization's communicative process.

These facts will be valid for every institution and organization of postmodern society, therefore current language systems will improve; communication and culture will be democratic; individuals /organization will be free.

Individual will estrange himself from all the element of modern period (and also from oneself) before (or at the same time) considering these facts; all these could be the inevitable consequences of postmodern age....

Conclusion

In postmodern education as Lyotard mentioned, knowledge will not be a set of propositions, it will be means of how to live to listen thus how to learn. Shortly, knowledge will be means of interpeting the reality and one's achiving his /her own rights. In such kind of an education, a group interaction enabling individual originality, diversity and imagination; a continuous dialogue aiming to reach targets by using means will be the base of education.

Briefly, the main aim of this education is not to depend on a single right, single type of discourse but to create pluralist, participating education environments which are in search of new language systems and new interpretations.

According to Ricoeur, we can only understand ourselves by understanding someone else. Therefore, excluding the other prevents not only forming a pluralist understanding but also overcoming a contradiction. In order to get rid of these negative sides that Ricoeur had mentioned, we should turn education into a dialogue by which individuals are provided to perform life long dialogues with realities and rights. This is a consequence transition from elite culture to mass

culture and formation of sub systems. 'Tomorrow... will be another world. There everything is performed in another way.' W. H.Auden

Özet

Modernizmin temel unsurları; evrensellik, bilginin sınıflandırılması, rasyonalizm, uzlaşma, evrensel dil kuralları ve elit kültürdür. Diğer yandan ise postmodernizmin belirleyicileri, çoğulculuk, relativizm, bölgesel gerçekler, nakli bilgiler, mantık, toplum kültürü ve yeni dil sistemleridir. Tüm bu maddeleri göz önüne aldığımızda şunları söyleyebiliriz:

Postmodern eğitim sürecinde bireyselliğe, özelseliğe, heterojen ilişkilere, bilginin değil öğrenmenin eğitime, dünyanın ve eylemlerin yorumlanması için farklı yolların yöntemlerin oluşturulmasına, üretime ve yeniliğe ilgi gösterilmelidir.

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