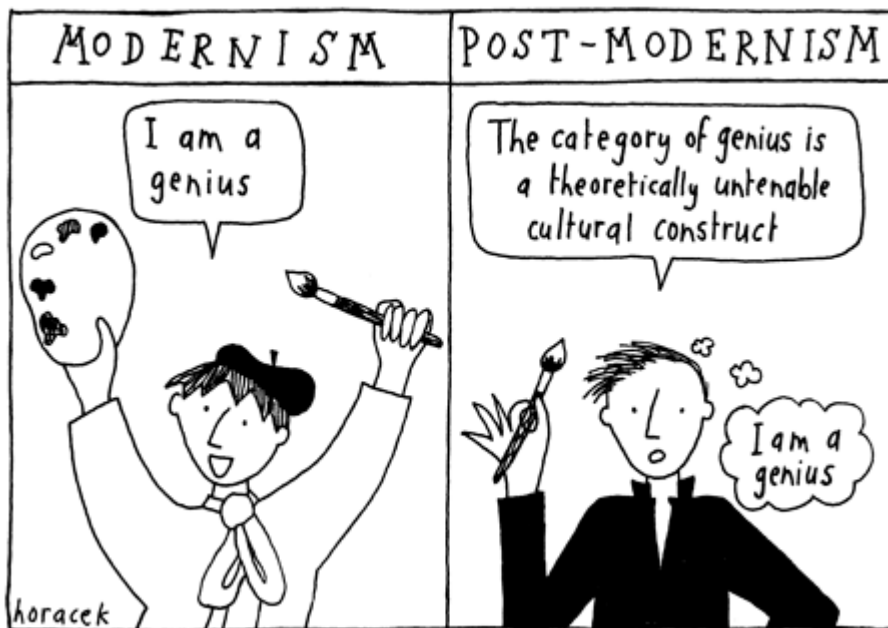


The Postmodernism of Social Justice

Black Label Logic | 5 January, 2017 | by Black Label Logic



In my last post on the [philosophical foundation of SJWs](#), I quickly outlined the differences between two of the major schools of philosophy that sprung from the enlightenment, namely analytic philosophy and continental philosophy. Continental philosophy being a reaction to the perceived issues of enlightenment philosophy, and the veneration of reason as being “cold”, “calculating” and overly “individualistic” to name a few. One could say that men like Immanuel Kant, who laid much of the foundation for postmodernism in his works “*Critique of Pure Reason*” and “*Critique of Practical Reason*“, were men who were comfortable letting reason kill religion and gods, but not comfortable without faith. In a sense, they wanted Religion without Religion.

Kant’s question is quite simple, can reason give us all the answers? The answer he arrived at in *Critique of Pure Reason* is embodied in the quote:

“I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.” Immanuel Kant (*Critique of Pure Reason*)

In a sense, the world to the continental philosophers appeared empty without religion, without the duty that had been, and still is central to the German spirit. A third criticism of the enlightenment was the application of cold-blooded reason and evidence to humans and the human condition. In the same manner that homo economicus is an abstraction that imbues an average human with above average reason and below average emotion, the enlightenment view of humans appeared to the German cadre as being cold and unrealistic.

A Crash Course in Philosophical Directions

In preparation for this post, I picked up a couple of books on postmodernism, because in many ways it is outside of my philosophical field of interest, mainly for the reason that I find it to be both anti-rational and anti-empiricist, which is its intent. To define those terms, a rationalist is a person who relies on logical argument and discourse. An empiricist can also be a rationalist, and quite a few are, but an empiricist also desires factual evidence obtained through observation to lend additional credence to a position. Much of scientific research is based on singular observations leading to the formulation of theories,

which are then tested in experiments.

Perhaps the most significant figure within postmodernism is Jacques Derrida, the inventor of deconstruction, a form of semiotic analysis. It differs from Hegel in that, Derrida sought to avoid reducing oppositions to contradictions, with the end-goal being synthesis of two opposites. Where Hegel's goal was to achieve the synthesis of opposites, Derrida viewed the synthesis of opposites to be inherently impossible.

Postmodernism is a reaction to the prevailing perspectives in philosophy that came out of the enlightenment. Stephen R.C Hicks in his book [1] provides a handy chart to demonstrate the positions of postmodernism relative to modernism (*the analytic philosophy based in the enlightenment*) and pre-modernism (*medieval philosophy*), that I've included with this post.



Explaining postmodernism from Rousseau to Foucault – Stephen R. C. Hicks

As this chart outlines, the major developments in epistemology during the Enlightenment were the adoption of reason and empiricism as the primary drivers of knowledge, as opposed to mysticism and faith, utilizing prophecies and the likes. The major change in metaphysics comes from the transition from forms of realism, to anti-realism, implicit being that postmodernism rejects that there is such a thing as reality. The major change in ethics, is a change from the individualism embraced by modernism back to collectivism, though in a new form. Where pre-modernism was collectivist in terms of family, kin or tribe out of necessity, postmodernism tends to avoid such groupings, instead favoring other criteria, such as class.

In the following three sections, I will cover those which are actually a part of philosophy, namely epistemology, metaphysics and ethics.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief [2] (for the full definition check the source), for the pre-modernists, knowledge and belief came from divine revelation through prophets, or the clerical class. This knowledge was then reviewed and interpreted by the same clerical class, much in the same manner that is done in the Islamic world today, where Islamic theologians debate and form consensus on scripture. This is also no different than the role of the Church in much of Europe and the Americas today.

The modernists were a reaction to this, and exchanged the tools of subjective interpretations of scripture, with reason and empiricism. Rather than rely on the subjective interpretation of reality based on scripture and divine revelation, they sought to objectively determine what was there based on the application of reason to the study of the world around them. From this early work, the scientific method was refined, wherein a contribution to the knowledge base of humanity is made through the discovery of new fact, or exercise of independent critical thought.

For postmodernists, in a sense they seek a return to the epistemology of the pre-modernists, wherein the rigid framework created by modernism in order to eliminate objectivity to a large extent, is rejected, and a new clerical class invented. Subjectivism in an extreme form such as solipsism, is the assertion that one's own mind is the only thing one can be sure exists. Social Subjectivism holds that both truth or morality are social conventions within a group or groups, and as they are mere creations of a group they can be changed by that group. This conflates morality and truth, which are two different things.

Morality, which is a social construct, but which can be "*objectified*" in a sense based on the desired ends. For instance, if one permitted rape, murder and robbery within a social group, that would inevitably lead

to the breakdown of such a group, and thus the moral structure in place to govern interactions between members of that group would be a failed one. Truth on the other hand, is reality as independent of the observer.

Thus, the postmodernists desire to return to pre-modernist epistemology, in a sense, Satan in a new suit.

Metaphysics

The first point is concerned with metaphysics, which is a complicated word for a branch of philosophy that attempts to answer two questions:

A) *Ultimately, what is there?*

B) *What is it like?*

For the pre-modernists, they were concerned with reality, as informed by a super-natural perspective, in essence the true nature of reality was revealed by the word of God(s). The world took many forms, for each group, Greek, Norse, Roman, Abrahamic, Aztec and many others had their own group-shared view of what was there, and what it was like. Divergence from this group-shared view, and acts contrary to it, were often harshly punished, the example of Galileo who was forced under threat of death to recant his testimony that the Earth is in orbit around the Sun, stands out in Western Civilization.

The Enlightenment and thus modernism, was a reaction to this myriad of mangled misconceptions, and sought to straighten it all out through using the faculty of reason. Using logic, reason and empiricism as their tools, they sought to investigate nature to provide evidence, and in lieu of evidence construct clear and consistent arguments for why is there, and what it is like. The goal being to answer the questions in a manner which would unite people in a shared reality. From this view we get works such as Newton's "*Principia Mathematica*", Carl Von Linnaeus' "*Systema Naturae*", and Adam Smith's "*Wealth of Nations*" that at the same time are the foundation works of, and examples of what reason is capable of producing.

The reaction to this, was postmodernism, in an early form, spearheaded by a collection of German philosophers felt as if the new English enlightenment philosophy lacked spirituality, duty, and thus we ended up with the present "anti-realism". Where the modernists sought to establish what was there, and what it is like, in a mind-independent manner, a "*what*" and "*what is it like*" that would form to de-weaponize the many subjective views, held to be objective by various religions. Postmodernists seek to remove the idea that such a shared reality can exist. Anti-realism is when a person denies that such as thing as objective reality exists.

Ethics

In the pre-modern age, ethics were based on the codified ideals revealed to prophets, and centered on the good of the group. From this brand of morality, one gets the 10 Commandments, the Surah and Hadith, and many other laws throughout the ages. The ethics of this era are in many ways Utilitarian, in that they subjugate the individual for the good of the group, which was a necessity at a time, their core argument being that the good of the group is more important than the good of the individual.

The modernist philosophers dealt with the needs of the individual vis-a-vis the needs of the group. "*Leviathan*" by Hobbes is an example of a treatise that covers the invention and subsequent growth of government. Thomas Paine's "*Common Sense*" and "*Rights of Man*" deals with the natural rights each man is endowed from nature, and the role of government in regard to those rights. In effect, any group is

composed of individuals, and each individual should from the group gain enough benefits of membership to justify the rights they have to give up in order to belong to the group. The major difference between the modernists and pre-modernists being the distinction between bribery and coercion as a means to secure group membership.

Postmodernist philosophers wished a return to the group-dynamic held by the pre-modernists, in a different dress. The ideological great-grandfather that came to be was Karl Marx, a man who Wherein the needs of the group outstrip the needs of any one individual. This is reflected in their penchant for socialism/communism as well.

I've written more extensively on the [Morals of Social Justice](#) in an earlier post, so I will not repeat that here.

Summary and Conclusions

The reason why postmodernists and those who hold to the enlightenment principles that have brought on the modern technological age, an age of unprecedented wealth and which continues to lift people out of poverty [3] are always in conflict, is that they are philosophically incompatible. One cannot present evidence to those who reject evidence, reason with those who reject reason, or use ethical principles to debate those who reject ethical principles. Perhaps, the most fundamental difference between the groups is that modernists hold that reality exists regardless of perception, whereas postmodernists regard reality as created by perception.

This is the fundamental facts of counter-movements, oil and water does not mix, collisions between particles and anti-particles annihilate both. The reason why this is a cause for concern is because one of the fundamental reasons for why an objective world view is important is to create a joint foundation for humans based on what is, and what it is like. The time of the Enlightenment philosophers was fraught with sectarian skirmishes, from the Catholic church to Protestant Church, Calvinists, and Puritans, and a range of others, were engaged in near constant violent conflict. Countries, regions and denominations were in an almost constant state of war and therefore by removing some of the sources for such violence through a shared world view. Along with this, the enlightenment provided objective mechanisms for conflict resolution, among others a reliance on evidence and objective but also through discourse.

Postmodernists and the ideologies based on this dead-end of philosophy are prone to relativism for the exact reason above, by rejecting reality and insisting on an epistemology based on subjectivity, no objective rule can exist. Where the justice system of most modern states is based on a single rule-set postmodernists would need to go on a case by case basis. Where the morality of the enlightenment is based on universality, the morality of social justice is based on relativism. The trouble comes when one gets the combination of subjectivity and relativism, where as nothing is true, everything is permitted.

Carl Von Clausewitz is known for the statement "*War is the continuation of politics by other means*", in this case "*Other means*" represents war and conflict, with the weapons of politics being dialogue, diplomacy and discourse. However, one cannot reason without shared foundations and one cannot have shared foundations without a mind-independent approach to determining reality.

As the two positions have no common ground, as they represent matter and antimatter philosophically speaking, one cannot hope to reason with the opposition, one must persuade the public, oust the opposition from positions of power and eliminate their indoctrination centers.

A note:

I recently launched a [Patreon page](#) where I will be posting additional content every month for those who support me and I will do a Google Hangout for the highest tier Patrons (limited to 10 people).

I've also had some requests for consults, which I've declined up until now, but due to demand I've chosen to open up for doing some consults on request. For details please check out my [Consulting and Patreon Page](#)

[As always you can buy my book Gendernomics at Amazon.com as both paperback and Kindle](#)

More Reading

[Explaining postmodernism from Rousseau to Foucault](#) – Stephen R. C. Hicks (I list this for those who want to read more on postmodernism, but listing it does not mean I recommend it)

[Critique of Pure Reason](#) by Immanuel Kant

[A History of Western Philosophy](#) by Bertrand Russell

[My full series on SJW ideology and philosophy](#)

Sources

[1] Explaining postmodernism from Rousseau to Foucault – Stephen R. C. Hicks

[2] <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/>

[3] <https://ourworldindata.org/world-poverty/>

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