



Why Internal Feuding and Tormenting Each Other So Vehement? On the Dialectic Relations between Post-modernity and Modernity

Youxi Yue

School of Chinese Literature and Journalism

Shandong University of Technology

Zibo 255091, China

E-mail: youxiyue@yahoo.com.cn

Abstract

In the article, by means of close analyzing and summarizing the two different kinds of cultural structures and forms, it is demonstrated that there are not only much differences, but also inner continuity and the logic of development and change between post-modernity and modernity. So it is also demonstrated that post-modernity is a kind of modernity, too, and it is not the end of modernity, but is the modernity of a coming times and a new phase that modernity develops. Therefore, post-modernity is the ego-pondering and self-transcending of modernity.

Keywords: Modernism, Modernity, Post-modernism, Avant-garde, Post-modernity, Self-transcendence

What is the relationship between modernity and post-modernity? It is not only a hot theory spot, but a difficult one. To sum up, academics have two points on this issue: the fracture theory and the continuous theory. The former refers to radicals and neo-conservatives who like singing paeans for post-modernism, advocating the theory that there is an internal logic fault between modernity and post-modernity and insisting they are two distinct social characteristics, while the latter refers to the moderate post-modernists or anti-post-modernists, who think though there are great differences between post-modernity and modernity, but there is a certain internal continuity and development Logic between them. Gilles, an English, pointed out, from Jameson on, the relations between modernism and post-modernism defined by post-modernists can be divided into four: (1) Since post-modernists are keen on aesthetic prevalence, there is a fracture between post-modernism and high modernism, and post-modernists rejected high modernism. (2) Post-modernism is the end of modernism, and modernism is dead. (3) Post-modernism developed from some more radical factions (such as Dadaism) of modernism movement, but it is different from modernism. (4) Post-modernism strengthens the tendency of modernism and are still developing within the orbit of modernism. The former two are the fracture theory, the latter two are the continuous theory. However, I believe that the relationship between the modernism and post-modernism is not a pure entire opposition, or post-modernism has replaced the modernism simply. We should be dialectical from two latitudes to see that there are not only fractures and differences, but also complicated historical ties between them.

Post-modernism and modernism, after all, are two different cultural structures and forms, so there are fractures and differences between them indeed. In the West, there are many scholars who have put forward their own unique views on the different characteristics of post-modernism and modernism. Calinescu, an American, believes that post-modernists revolt to the nature of monism (or dualism) of modern theory, which shows a rejuvenation of pluralism, and the pluralism is an initiation. The post-modernists have admitted the following facts: There are many principles that can not be reverted, so there are a lot of the worlds. Lyotard, a German, believes that post-modernists abandon metanarrative (the narrative of liberation and the narrative of Enlightenment), change their pursuit of the unity of common view to that of differences, pluralism, incommensurability and local determinism. Baudrillard, a French, points out from the perspective of symbol production that post-modern society is the end of modern society, namely the production society changes to the consumption society. The technical logic of imitation rules all, and the reality is replaced by hyperreality. Lash, a British post-modern theorist, also takes an in-depth research on the distinction between modernism and post-modernism. He believes that the modernist culture is not only a differentiation culture, but also a speech culture, because theory, ethics and art gradually get their legalization, language also accounts for the fundamental status in it, and reason (the reality principle) is the basic principle. However, post-modernist culture is a differentiation culture. The various borders and characteristics brought out in the modern era are blurred, and even integrated. Post-modernist culture takes images as its core, and images replace the role of language. The desire (the principle of happiness) has

become its basic principles. Jameson also pays attention to the differences between modernism and post-modernism. In his view, modernism is the model of the time depth, while post-modernism is the model of the space plane; Modernism is the anxiety of subject centralization, while post-modernism is the subject fragmentation of de-centralization; Modernism advocates aesthetic ideas of self-discipline, while post-modernism tends to the consumer logic of commercial society; Modernism has personalized style, while post-modernism has no style, and so on. then it is not the modern style, and so on. He also divided the history into such stages as state capitalism—realism, monopoly capitalism—modernism, advanced capitalism —post-modernism, and the post-modernism is taken as a new stage of capitalism. All these post-modern theory not only shows the difference and fracture between post-modernism and modernism, but also reflects the diversity and complexity of the post-modernism itself.

There are fractures between post-modernism and modern, but to a certain extent, there are also the complex links between them indeed. In fact, modernity that came into being and developed with the emergence and development of capitalism has internal tension of opposing itself from the date of its birth. In the prophase of modernity, modernity has brought lots of uncivilized, or even very brutal consequences, but in general modernity mainly opposes tradition, but not evidently opposes itself. Only in its medium-term when it came out as a more typical, systemic ideal, extremes meeting, does modernity evidently change into its opposition, reflect and criticize itself strongly, and sink into a dilemma of love-hate. In other words, the modernity family contains two different forces from the very beginning indeed, which we here called "conservative forces" and "opposition forces". The former is a loyal supporter of the modernity, which protects the family's modernity system wholeheartedly and loyally, while the latter is the modernity family's a black sheep, which has an internal structure of the impulse against its family's modernity system. Only because they were very young and their personalities were not yet clear in the prophase of modernity, did they put their family interests to fight against "foreign invasion", tradition in the first place. So the contradiction between their family and their enemy was given top priority, and the conflicts within the family were alleviated, and they could unite to fight against their enemies unanimously. However, with their growing maturity, their personalities became clearer and clearer. To the medium-term of modernity, the traditional forces that they jointly oppose were insignificant to them, and the contradiction between the family and their enemies retreated to second-line, and the shortcomings of conservative forces exposed gradually, the contradictions within the family growing protruding, the arrogance of the opposition forces growing obvious, so the opposition and the conservative forces fought against each other and "revolution" openly with sword in hand, with the spearhead in both directions and with parted ways. Thus, conservatives and their opposition forces erected their banners, and each of them became a king on its own hill. Two hostile armies were composed. The family was divided into two opposing camps, namely conservative camp and the opposition camp, which is what we call broad modernism and narrow modernism.

In the inspection of broad modernism history, some careful western scholars noted that the modernity family was not a "monolithic" without gap, but has had many internal contradictions since its family came into being. Rousseau was not only the first people who began to use the concept modernity in the world, but also the first thinker to reflect on and challenge it. When he criticized capitalism modernity, Marx pointed out that the development of capitalism productivity was the great progress of humankind history, but it also caused an unprecedented class oppression, which made the socialist possible. Weber also exposed the inherent contradictions of capitalism modernity from another point of view. He said that modernity not only caused the rationalization of social life and bureaucracy of management, but also inevitably led to the repression and obedience, and made the rationalization become the dead "iron cage." In the big modernity family, with the development of modernity, the reactionary nature of conservative forces exposed gradually, while the opposition forces became stronger and stronger, its wings fuller and fuller, the contradictions within the family intensifying increasingly. As a result, the whole modernity family split into two antagonistic camps. Furthermore, the struggle between the two camps has been intensified. Conservative camp did its best to safeguard the institution of the family, while the opposition camp tried its best to rebel against the system of the family. Enlightenment modernity that western scholars put forth is a banner of the conservative camp, pursuing precision, clarity and unity in mathematical sense and metaphysics and absoluteness. Rationalization and tool reason are its basic representation, which specifically shows modernization of social life. Calinescu believes that the modernity is the inevitable product of capitalism development, scientific and technological progress, industrial revolution and the rapid changes of economy and society. Wellmer believes that the modernity is the process in which the continuously developing rationalization, bureaucratization and tool reason erode social life and modernism of Utopianism, scientism and foundationalism. However, the banner of cultural modernity (or aesthetic modernity), Calinescu called, was erected up in the opposition camp. The modernity was born in the modernity family, sucking the milk of modernity and growing up, but it was ungrateful, even biting the hand that feeds one, and embarked on a road opposed to modernity. Its inherent requirement is to comprehensively reject the former bourgeois modernity, and it is a drastic negative sentiment. Wellmer called it "romantic modernity" on a history perspective. Wellmer and Calinescu surveyed modernity on different perspectives, but they got the same point from different way. That is to say, they respectively took modern art as the basic representation of "aesthetic modernity" and "romantic modernity".

Since they were separated from the modernity family and became an independent king, the opposition forces were further divided into two different forces, that is to say, modernism formed two opposing camps, modernism and post-modernism. Lyotard said that post-modernism is the refusal of the Enlightenment Movement and the metanarrative that has developed since the French Revolution happened, and the declaration of war to totality, so as to safeguard the dignity of difference. Post-modernism is not a concept for history periodization or the end of modernity, but the self-transcendence and self-reflection of modernity. He said: "Only a work is post-modern, can it become modern. According to this, post-modernism is not the modernism to be the downfall, but the modernism at an early state, this state is the perseverance . "That is to say, post-modernity is always contained in modernity, because modernity (time) has an impulse beyond their own in itself, and has already continuously bred its post-modernity. Post-modernity is not a new era, but the rewriting of the characteristics of modernity, and above all it is the rewriting of requirement that modernity based the foundation of its legitimacy on the plan of humanity liberation achieved through science and technology, which has began in modernity itself in very early time. Biirger, a German scholar, who is known as the contributor making the greatest contribution to the research on modernism, pointed out that there are some dissonant voices in the theme of modernism, which are reflected in Dadaism and surrealism eminently. Traditionally, people tended to take modernism and avant-garde (mainly the Dadaism and surrealism) as the same phenomenon, in fact ignored a number of important differences between them. In his view, the classic forms of modernism are symbolism and aestheticism, and their basic characteristics are the pursuit of aesthetic self-discipline. The aesthetic self-discipline shows separation of art and life practice in bourgeois society, which is the fundamental reason why the modernist art is institutionalized. On the contrary, avant-garde opposes self-discipline in nature, which is a negative of the art institutionalization in bourgeois society, and the art of avant-garde pursues the correlation between art and life practice. Clearly, the basic standard distinguishing modernism and avant-garde apart is art self-discipline, that is, whether the art is institutionalized, and whether the art is separated from life practice. The difference between Avant-garde and modernism is the difference between post-modernism and modernism that Lyotard told.

Thus, modernity contains post-modernity, or there are two types of modernity. Furthermore, there are two types of modernism. One is the modernism whose representative is aestheticism and symbolism, and they continue to be institutionalized, gradually losing the modernity's self-criticism and reflection functions, while the other is the avant-garde, which rejected the art self-discipline and advocated the contact between art and life practice and rewrote modernity itself. It is post-modernism. Bauman, a British sociologist, summed up brilliantly: "Post-modernity does not necessarily mean the end of modernity, or the shame that modernity has been rejected. Post-modernity is that the modern spirit watches itself carefully, soberly for a long time and its own situation and the past labor, but it does not completely like the things that was seen and feel the urgent need for a change. Post-modernity is the modernity of the era that is coming: This kind of modernity watches itself from a distance but not from its inside, compiles a list of its own gains and losses, takes a psychological analysis of itself, looks for the intents that has never before expressed clearly, and finds that these intentions are inconsistent with each other and inconsistent. Post-modernity is the modernity which reaches a compromise with the impossibility. It is a self-monitoring modernity and abandon the things purposely that has been done unconsciously." The various characterization of post-modernity Bauman described, in fact, is the "rewriting" of modernity that Lyotard told out. However, it is not that this "rewriting" had not begun until modernity was dead. It has begun since the early stage of modernity. We know that the modernity started its family with the opposition of tradition and the opposition forces of the family are recalcitrant. So the forces have opposed the conservatives since the family started. But after the tradition was opposed, the opposition forces went on to oppose its family and modernity itself. Post-modernism precisely inherited such a rebellious "glorious" tradition, so it not only came from modernity, but also objected to modernity. Therefore, in this sense, post-modernity is the initial stage of modernism, and it is the rewriting and rebellion of modernity.

To sum up, post-modernity is also a kind of modernity. It does not mean the end of modernity, but is the modernity in the approaching era. It is the new stage of self-reflection, self-rewriting, self-transcendence and self-development of modernity. Post-modernity and modernity have the relations of continuation and development. There are differences and contact between them. They are a dialectical unity.

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