

Implicature of Postmodernism, Globalisation And Diasporic Culture in the Relevance of Diasporic Theory

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Abstract: This paper attempts to trace the origin, history of the term diaspora in various ages besides, analyzing the art forms and culture of the twentieth century which are classified under two major ‘isms’ namely ‘modernism’ and ‘postmodernism’ a brief look at these two movements has been done and overview of diasporic culture in ‘modernism’ and ‘has been explained with examples in the introductory paragraphs. After the globalization, diasporic culture underwent a major change and those changes have been highlighted and important facts are presented in the later part of the paper. To conclude the global cultural flows and the causes for the global cultural flows such as hybridity, transnationalism, transmigration, cosmopolitanism are stated under separate subheadings. To conclude after summing up the important chapters of the article scope for further study have been hinted upon.

Key Words: Postmodernism, Globalization, Diaspora

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I. Introduction

The term Postmodernism is often applied to the literature, art and cultural changes after World War II (1939 – 45). The Second World War, waged by the Allies (Britain, America, and France) to contain the Expansionist ambition of Nazi Germany and Aided by totalitarian regime of Italy and Japan, brought not only a second wave of wide - scale destruction but also, in its aftermath, the huge colonial empires of Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, which had subjugated one-third of the world’s population. This scenario had a profound impact on literature and culture.

In the term ‘Postmodernism’, from one perspective ‘Post’ preface implies a critical reaction to modernist movements in art and literature. In this sense, the prefix ‘Post’ signifies a knowledge shift in how we see and know the world. It implies the end of modernity and the beginning of something new. This historical conception suggests that the Postmodern comes after the modern and to a certain extent this is the case. But, as with other usage, the ‘Post’ in Postmodernism denotes something other than historical sequence; it denotes a general condition of innovation in technologies of art and writing, and a general transformation of social, cultural, and aesthetic values.

Peter Barry in his book *Beginning Theory* tells, “Without an understanding of modernism, then it is impossible to understand twentieth century culture” (78). Besides, without an understanding of ‘modernism’ it is also impossible to understand ‘postmodernism’.

‘Modernism’ should not to be confused with modernity. Modernity means breaking from old norms, and breaking away from old norms had happened in every age. For example, Classical age norms were broken during medieval age, medieval age norms were broken during renaissance, and it goes on. Whereas ‘modernism’s’ case is different Jim Powell (1988) in his book *Postmodernism for Beginners* states in simple terms about ‘modernism’, “ modernism is a blanket term for an explosion of new styles and trends in the arts in the first half of the twentieth century” (8). By the phrase ‘blanket term’, he means that it is not only just a break away from old norms but also more. That is, it has **cultural implication** too. Critics like Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane has said that the period from 1890 to 1930 may be considered as a period of ‘modernism’. The general mood of that period can be summed up in Irish poet W.B. Yeats’s lines:

Things fall apart; the
Centre cannot hold:
Mere anarchy is loosed
Upon the world.

What fell apart in the 'modernism' were the values of the eighteenth century, the age of reason. In the eighteenth century thinkers believed that, to get rid of misery and to free humanity as well as to keep humanity in progress, the universal values of science, reason and logic are the only ways. For example, Trier Marx believed in materialistic science, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in his historicist science etc.

Further this age witnessed a radical shift from not only the previous age, but from the whole history of arts in various art forms. The art forms of the 'modernism' created a particular way of seeing things and hence they were suffixed with '-isms', the important '-isms' which collectively called as modernism are 'impressionism', 'expressionism', 'cubism' and etc. Unlike 'modernism', which is largely a European one, postmodernism is an international cultural phenomenon. Initially, postmodernism was also a concept primarily of European and American (South as well as North). However, after 1990s, post-modernist wave reached all parts of the world. It is mainly because 1990s witnessed a new wave of Globalisation, which resulted in a fast growth in mass media (television, newspaper, internet etc). Since, Europe and American continents played a vital role in power politics, as well as in media; their culture which was termed as pop culture (popular culture), spread all over the world. Many countries were forced to follow their culture by creating an ideology, and mass media played a dominant role in creating that ideology. That is how postmodern culture became popular all over the world, and to understand postmodernism further and detailed look into Globalisation is needed which the upcoming subheading paragraphs will deal.

Globalization

The term *Globalization* means integration of economies and societies through cross country flows of information, ideas, technologies, good, services, capital, finance and people. Cross border integration can have several dimensions, Cultural, social, political, and economics. In fact, some people fear cultural and social integration even more than economic integration, which is true to certain extent. The fear of *Cultural hegemony* haunts many.

Globalization has been a historical process with ebbs and flows. During the Pre-World War I period of 1870 to 1914, there was a rapid integration of the economies in terms of trade flows, movement of capital and migration of people. The growth of globalization was mainly led by the technological forces in the fields of transport and communication. There were fewer barriers to flow of trade and people across the geographical boundaries. Indeed there were no passports and visa requirements and very few non-tariff barriers and restriction on fund flows. The age of globalization, however, decelerated between the first and the Second World War. The inter war period witnessed the erection of various barriers to restrict free movement of goods and services. Most economies thought that they could thrive better under high protective walls. After World War II, all the leading countries were resolved not to repeat the mistakes they had committed previously by opting for isolation. Although after 1945, there was a drive to increased integration, it took a long time to reach the Pre-World War I level. Most of the developing countries which gained Independence from the colonial rule in the immediate Post-World War II period followed an import substitution industrialization regime. The soviet bloc countries were also shielded from the process of global economic integration. However, times have changed. In last two decades the process of globalization has proceeded with great vigour. The former soviet bloc countries are getting integrated with the global economy. More and more developing countries are turning towards oriented policy of growth.

In India it is globalization which paved way for many private sectors coming in to tap the Indian markets. "In 1993, the congress government of Maharashtra signed a power purchase agreement with Enron. It was the first private power project in India"(Roy, 35). And after that "Between 1991 and 2000 the government approved more than 10,000 investment proposals by foreign companies"(Guha, 699). When many MNCs started investing in India, urban India's growth rose in an ascending order. Especially through the service sector's growth, this had tremendously grown in last two decades. Along with it, software industries contributed a lot to this growth, software industry, "whose revenues grew from a paltry \$197 million in 1990 to \$ 8,000 million in 2000" (Guha, 696). Initially most of the software companies in India aimed at the overseas market. In its early years the industry focused on *body-shopping*, sending engineers on short term visas to work on site in European and American companies. However, with the development of satellite communications and the internet, and the increasing sophistication of the work being done, the emphasis has shifted to *outsourcing*, to the codes being written within India and then sent back overseas.

Postmodern Diasporic Culture

The term 'diaspora' comes from an ancient Greek word 'dia' means "through" and "kpeiro" means "to scatter about", literally the term 'diaspora means "scattering or dispersion". A diaspora is a large group of people with similar cultural background or homeland who have moved to a different part of the world. Initially the term referred to only Jewish exile and their settlement in other parts of the globe. In terms of the Hebrew Bible, this 'exile' denotes the fate of the Israelites who were taken into exile from their kingdom. Diaspora is an

act of migration that has been taking place for thousands of years and continues to take place all over the world. This migration takes place when people can no longer survive in a particular place. Initially people migrated from one place to another in search of food, shelter and work and also for safety from persecution.

In the postmodern age Diaspora, the term lost its meaning or relation to its origin lost its essence as the ideology of diaspora became vast. International migrants and transnational diaspora are also in many ways, the twin faces of late capitalism or global capitalism (Globalisation).

Globalization encourages reactionary or adaptive ethnic, religious, and nationalist cohesion; it also encourages the reactionary racism and bias against migrants that negatively maintains the boundaries of immigrant communities. Finally, the increasing awareness and intergovernmental recognition of human rights has provided a moral platform for diasporic people to claim recognition, compassion, and political validation.

Global Cultural Flows

Arjun Appadurai in his article "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" discussed the relationship among five dimensions of global cultural flows. Here he used the suffix –scape that allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of landscapes that characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles. The terms with common suffix-scape also indicate that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather that they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as substantial groupings and movements, and even face to face groups, such as villagers, neighborhoods, and families. According to Arjun Appadurai, five dimensions of global cultural flows are Ethnoscapes, Technoscapes, Financescapes, Mediascapes and Ideoscapes. In the first 'scape' which is Ethnoscape, the landscape of person who often shift from one place to another example, immigrants, refugees, exiles and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world. Technoscapes, refers to the technological advancements and its impact. Financescapes, refers to global capital and comprises the concepts of currency, market, commodity stock exchange and etc. Ideoscapes, refers to the transfer of different types of ideology through images which are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of the states.

Mobilizing Diasporas in a Global Age

Some of the aspects which have particular bearing on the mobilization of diasporas are a Globalized Economy, New Forms of International Migration, The Development of Cosmopolitan sensibilities, The Revival of Religion as a Focus for social cohesion.

Identity is important for everyone. Most of us question at some point who we are and why we are here. For Diasporic communities are identification bound up with ethnicity, culture and religion. These are important factors for many people, but tend to take on more significance for those who are away from their country of origin or who belong to a minority ethnic group. Social scientists agree that the movement of people from one locale to another in the form of internal or international migration accentuates the importance of identity formation and construction in migratory spaces.

The cultural production and manifestation of migrant identities as an integral part of transnational migratory domains is of scholastic value to the understanding of the layered and intricate social behavioral patterns that migrants continue to forge throughout the world. Social identity is socially constructed and given resonance or meaning within specific cultural genres and domains.

Hybridity

It is by now established that authors writing on diaspora very often engage with the mixed notion of hybridity. In its most recent descriptive and realist usage, hybridity appears as a convenient category at „the edge“ or contact point of diaspora, describing cultural mixture where the diasporized meets the host in the scene of migration. Nikos Papastergiadis(2008) mentions the „twin processes of globalization and migration“. He outlines a development that moves from the assimilation and integration of migrants into the host society of the nation-state towards something more complex in the metropolitan societies of today. Hybridity has been a key part of new modelling, and so it is logically entwined within the coordinates of migrant identity and difference, same or not same, host and guest. The career of the term hybridity as a new cultural politics in the context of diaspora should be examined carefully.

The hybrid is a usefully slippery category, purposefully contested and deployed to claim change. With such loose boundaries, it is curious that the term can be so productive: from its origins in biology, its interlude as syncretism to its reclamation in work on diaspora by authors as different as Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, Iain Chambers, Homi Bhabha and James Clifford. With relation to diaspora, the most conventional accounts assert hybridity as the process of cultural mixing where the diasporic arrivals adopt aspects of the host culture and rework, reform and reconfigure this in production of a new hybrid culture or „hybrid identities“.

Transnationalism

As a paired term to diaspora, transnationalism focuses on various flows and counter flows and the multi-striated connections they give rise to. Transnationalism encompasses not only the movement of people, but also of notions of citizenship, technology, forms of multinational governance, and the mechanisms of global markets. While diasporas are often understood to be a subset of transnational communities, the latter are taken to be an expansion of the overall conceptual scale of the former. As an analytical category transnational communities are understood to transcend diasporas because such communities may not be derived primarily or indeed exclusively from the forms of co-ethnic and cultural identification that are constitutive of diasporas, but rather from elective modes of identification involving class, sexuality, and even professional interest.

The term transnationalism is a loaded term and migration scholars have yet to embrace definitive measurement of this concept (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998; Mahler, 2002). The transnational perspective in migration was articulated by Basch et al. (1994), and Glick Schiller et al. (1992).

Their concept of immigrant transnationalism focused on the idea that migrants transcend the nation-states by manifesting and creating social fields incorporating social, cultural, economic ties not only with the host societies, but also with the migrant-sending communities. For example, migrants, now and before, straddle between the cultures of their host society as well as the cultures of their home societies. Migrants are not bounded by specific cultural and social genres that are constrained by space and locality. Instead, migrants may form broad and encompassing social systems that seek to maintain them in two or multiple sites for social action.

These cross-border ties and relationships are fostered by economic and cultural diffusion, globalization, dispersion of economic and cultural systems of production, and efficient modes of transportation and communication. According to Basch, the term may be used in referring to the multiple processes whereby immigrants are able to create and negotiate transmigrant roles, positions, and statuses that seek to connect them with their home countries as well as to the host societies. These complex networks and supranational institutions are formed expressly to anchor the immigrants to the values, cultures, and beliefs of their home countries even as they map out new trajectories of identities with their migrant host societies.

Transmigration

Transmigration entails manifold socio-economic, political and cultural linkages across boundaries, raises questions about identity (and identification), and rights and entitlements, and problematises „bounded conceptualizations of race, class, ethnicity, and nationalism [we should add culture] which pervade both social science and popular thinking“. Over the past decade there has been much debate about whether, and if so how, contemporary transmigration is a new phenomenon, about its causes, its various forms, and long-term trajectories. Anyone with knowledge of international migration over the past century is bound to have a sense of *déjà vu* when reading about transmigration (Grillo 1998b).

Cosmopolitanism

As a growing set of recent literature demonstrates, cosmopolitanism has become a topic of considerable attention, particularly in light of globalization, new modes of transnational interconnectedness and increasing ethnic diversity. Much interest in cosmopolitanism concerns its ethical or philosophical dimensions, especially regarding questions of how to live as a „citizen of the world“. Other dimensions concern normative political issues that are deemed cosmopolitan, such as global governance structures or forms of international intervention.

With reference to general notions of diaspora (considered here as an imagined community living away from a professed place of origin), however, it is the sociological dimensions of cosmopolitanism which are perhaps of most relevance. Since the 1990s, however, and concomitant with the growth of studies concerning diasporas and transnational communities, social scientists have increasingly drawn attention to characteristics of „working-class cosmopolitans“ such as labour migrants and other non-elites spread throughout global diasporas. This is what some scholars also point to by way of modes of „actually existing cosmopolitanism“, „everyday cosmopolitanism“ and „tactical cosmopolitanism“. Elite or not, of what does such contemporary cosmopolitanism consist?

Drawing on a range of literature, it is suggested that we might understand cosmopolitanism as comprising a combination of attitudes, practices and abilities gathered from experiences of travel or displacement, transnational contact and diasporic identification.

II. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that, Diaspora commonly refers to different kinds of migrant groups who have left their homeland but who continue to share a religious, ethno-national, or national identity. The culture of the diasporic communities are highly influenced because of modernism and postmodernism. Modernism

reflected in culture and art of 1930s and 40s. Whereas, the postmodernism started to spread its web only after 1990s, until then it was largely a European and American phenomenon. In the process of spreading its web and influencing the culture postmodernism used the globalization to an extent in modifying the culture of various diasporic communities, which is evident in the works of various diasporic writers like Jhumpa Lahiri, Salman Rushdie, Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

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