

A Humanistic City in the Post-Modern or Post-Structural Thinking*

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ABSTRACT

Postmodern philosophy is considered a legitimate reaction to the uniformity of the general modern-era perspective of the universe. Postmodern philosophy or post-structural thinking reveals that there are some other possible epistemological forms, also. What is already existing is not the only possible form. So, what is the humanistic city in this novel form? It is understood that clarifying the origins, meanings, and multi-faceted functions of the city are also critical topics within the philosophical tradition. Considering cognitive developments and the rise of the era of numerous philosophical thinking movements, it is essential to investigate the topic of a humanistic city that would likewise correspond to these movements and truly help to deal with cities. Here, we discuss the subject of humanism within the context of post-modern and city philosophies. The objective of the present study was to perceive the humanistic city in post-modern philosophical thinking. The present study fell under fundamental research and used the qualitative (descriptive-analytical) approach using post-modern philosophy to reinterpret and elicit the concepts related to the relevant subject (the humanistic city) in the city philosophy. Findings showed that what was thought to have formed separate worlds in the past as a subjective whole along with an objective would culminate in an "other" dogmatism when contradicted each other in the modern era with the rise of Hegel and his Dialectics; however, it would not culminate in dogmatism when contradicted each other in the postmodern era in the form of a fictitious (imaginary) and a perceptual (objective) world, as they would consequently lay the ground for the rise of the "other" or the Third World, i.e., the lived world.

Keywords: Humanism, City, Postmodernism, Poststructuralism.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Humans and humanism, especially in combination with the concept of the city, have always been among the key topics of philosophy for scholars. To answer the question “What is a humanistic city?”, the question must be first examined as to which area it relates. Philosophy provides the most fundamental context to deal with such questions as it redefines meanings. A city has always been an object of study for Humanities; however, the accumulation of intellectual thinking and human-social interactions has led to more recent concepts such as poststructuralism and postmodernism, making the subject of humans in the city problematic. This study aimed to deal with this problem that characteristically takes humans as its core. The main objective here was to understand postmodern and post-structural conditions in the city by emphasizing humanism. For this, the main question of the study was “How would a humanistic city look in poststructuralist thinking or postmodernism philosophy?”

2. Humanism in Post-structural or Postmodern Philosophy

Postmodernism, or what was described by Robertson as the “world’s new conditions” opens up a new horizon into the problems that may arise, thus resulting in new solutions to face the current problems (Ghezelsefli 2008, 139). Although called the era after modernism, postmodernism, as pointed out by McManus (2020), “was and is characterized by its unique forms in the epistemology of skepticism, which is represented in various forms (McManus 2020, 30).

In ancient times, Cratylus argued that the fundamental transformation of objects looks as if not a single step would be taken in a river (not two times, as suggested by Heraclitus). In other words, transformations are so lasting that another river may emerge when taking a step in the first one. For him, this fundamental transformation carried a semantic implication suggesting that no reliable knowledge or perception could be achieved; it is an illusion to strive to gain a clear understanding of the world. Facing this epistemological problem, Cratylus opted to remain “silent”. He avoided discussing truths, though shaking his fingers to make others understand he was hearing what they were saying (Ward 1997, 247).

Postmodern skepticism was a complicated outcome of history which was, on the one hand, a symbol, and, on the other hand, a modern criticism of the socioeconomic formation of the West (D’haen 2006, 5). Today, this skepticism is not caused by the fundamental transformation of nature; rather, it is a transformation within the context of power formation, as viewed by Foucault, or a representational technology by Baudrillard, language games by Lyotard, and language arbitrariness by Derrida. Nature has no power to detach itself from culture, in

general, and in this culture, in specific, thus it fails to consider itself as the pure physical reality apart from humans. It is humans who define (discover/create) it (Martinez 2014, 306). The outcome is that humans express the world and advise all others to see the world as they do and to share this. Humans are not seeking old laws; rather, they associate these laws with them and seek to use them to rule over the world (Ghezelsefli 2008, 146).

The modern idea of “Humans in the center of the world” disintegrates with postmodernism. Following Nietzsche’s thought, Foucault defines the end of humans, ensuing the breakdown of the subject from the social scene and of the sciences. He holds that humans were invented, arguing how, in the 19th century, the disciplining of human bodies would be represented within large contexts such as schools, detention centers, and factories. The disciplining activities led bodies to be utilitarian, obedient, and productive. The human demise relates to a period when subjectivism was suspected by the thoughts of Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx. For Freud and Marx, ego did not rely on focalization as it was the outcome of constructs overshadowing it (Ghezelsefli 2008, 147). Grey points out that humans were ruled out from the very inside of the intellectual creed (Grey 1993, 463). The intellectualism of previous centuries is seen as an ax to the body of fundamentalism; an accumulation of effective destruction of soothing legends by which we sought to find ourselves. Freud suggests that Copernicus was alone the first scholar of generative scholars who believed a soothing basis had disintegrated the traditional worldview. Practically, it transforms the human position and supplants it from the centrality of the world. In later centuries, Darwin claimed, the human’s transcendental position would break down biologically, with Freud subsequently demonstrating that rationality, which used to be regarded as an outstanding property, was originally artificial.

For Kidner, humanism was a function of an ideological goal that was made possible by shifting views from the latent origins of environmental harms to human behavioral characteristics. We indeed call humans the clear agents of environmental destruction; however, linking our behavior to “humanism” is a diversion from the behavioral origin of the industrial system wherein we became socialized (Kidner 2014, 477). Kidner maintains that this was an industry-centered rather than a human-centered phenomenon, i.e., what made humans, on the one hand, and nature, on the other hand, subservient to the economic system, was the “centrality of the industry”. Humanism was always used to be represented as the key agent of environmental destruction. This was thought to be the first speculation to keep the more fundamental basis hidden. This covers the specific representations and those arising from the industrial system which, on the one hand, destroys the environment, and, on the other

hand, exploits humans (Kidner 2014, 465).

In sum, humanism is not specific to any certain intellectual period, as found in various formations and whose content is revealed. Novel and modern humanism could appear with the demise of transcendentalism. In postmodernism, humanism emphasizes freedom; an emphasis apart from any transcendental forms. Humanism is also focused on distinction. Truths are said to be multi-fragmented. There are a multitude of worlds not just a single world we live in; rather a variety of worlds associated with various understandings (Sandu 2011, 39).

2.1. Humanistic City in the Postmodern or Post-structural Philosophy

For Hegel and modern philosophy, a gap is associated with generality. Following modernity, there is always one “other” for postmodernists. In modernism, a city that is characterized by human agency appears to claim development and this involves a gap; one showing itself with a hyphen (-), i.e., “human-non-human”. This term involves theoretical strife to help think about how humans are found separate from objects or non-humans. Hence, this will represent the human-non-human relationship rather than a conflict. This relationship indicates renewed critical thinking about the human category (Roe 2009, 251).

The most fundamental others first involve any objects (nature and technologies). In subsequent stages, however, it also involves humans, too, because we cannot afford to separate the separating thinking. If we separate humans from animals, plants, and their counterparts, we will have separated ourselves in the next stage, i.e., physicians, politicians, employees, engineers, etc. Plato’s *The Republic* also did this, regarding philosophers as mere humans: “A philosopher is like a herdsman responsible for the herd (humans)”. Hence, humans manifest against humans within their inner selves.

What underlies renewed thinking about the human-non-human conflict is a “relational ontology”, i.e., understanding the world as making a group of relations. The critical perception of humans in this ontology continues as if the others in the world will find a proactive power, resulting in the human’s overarching domination, independence, and rationality being problematic (Roe 2009, 251).

The human-non-human relationship involves three analytical subjects: the first is the human-environment relationship; the second is the human-technique (especially biotechnological) relationship, and the third, which covers the two forgoing relationships, is the post-structural theorizing, which eliminates modern dualities, such as nature-society, mind-body, among others (Roe 2009, 252). This reveals three areas of deliberation about a humanistic city, which are primary anti-urbanism, anti-urbanism reconstruction, and urban post-structuralism-deconstruction, with the latter case being our focus of attention.

2.2. Urban Deconstruction

2.2.1. Interaction between Space, Power, and Economics in the City

The interactive relationship between space, power, and economy in (re)structuring city-human requires adopting a more profound approach to the connection between the human with the environment and with the technique. Following the failure of epistemological and ethical approaches, enlightenment led post-structuralists to reveal the dogmatic characteristic of universality. After World War II and under the thinking influence of French scholars such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, the post-structuralist approach turned into the largest development in social theorizing. Urban theories will purely welcome these developments according to human geography, social psychosociology, sociology, and cultural studies. The post-structuralist analyses of the contemporary city rule out the holistic epistemology. These analyses insist that there must be “open” narrations of city phenomena to contain and discuss theoretical conflicts (Parker 2018, 323).

Like deconstruction, the philosophy of differences, and the philosophy of events (Williams 2014), post-structuralism views cities as epistemological formations that involve special discursive strategies. For this approach, a city is seen as a language serving as a map of power (Parker 2014). Foucault argues that the concept of humans is the outcome of the 19th-century constructs of knowledge or certain discursive forms of experiencing the world at a certain time. Knowledge is an outcome of institutions and is identical to the outcome of events in different eras as well as the power and is capable of working for and against anyone. The center of power is seen as located within social processes. Power has no specific place in an institution. For Foucault, social sciences demonstrate the unknown within a known construct; social sciences, he asserts, eliminate the unknown. He wants to put to the test our previous obvious knowledge and reveals the way discourses are made. For instance, sanity and insanity discourses have been used for many centuries and formed our intellectual foundations over time. Foucault, meanwhile, distances historians by expressing historical gaps in different historical eras which, subjected to various procedures, led to various constructs. Constructs evolve and as much they may be regarded as insider and specific to an era or a generation who acted in conformity with it may be regarded as outsiders and strange for another era or generation. Foucault practices deconstruction, challenging the already definite and acceptable substance of constructs. Believing that the meaning comes out of the text and has a flawed and ephemeral power of definition, Foucault explains the gap to argue that there may be other epistemological forms, as well. It is Foucault who leads to rationally conclude that what already

exists is not the single form possible (Bounds 2020, 64). Foucault's views are critical to urban theories; essentially, the deconstruction of previous urban and urbanization narrations led to perceiving the city as different forms, different narrations, and different urban identities (Parker 2018, 327).

2.2.2. Lived-World of Everyday Life as an Important "Other"

Henri Lefebvre, the post-structural philosopher, introduces the subjective space (space epistemology) and the real space (Parker 2018, 68); here, the combination of the imaginary world with the perceptual world will not end up in dogmatism, as it provides an opportunity for the rise of the lived world. In the past and under the influence of modernism, the developmental city made the human world subordinate to a generality. Put otherwise, if critical thinking is said to produce a concrete result, the shift from subjectivism to the post-modern lived world can be thought of as a move to achieve this concrete outcome (Lajevardi 2006, 123). It should be pointed out that there is a difference between the main lived world and our everyday living lived world.

The world gained by experience without differentia, i.e., the main lived world is gained by consciousness without differentia. It simply involves something perceived without differentia, as we perceive it to be as passive and needs to be considered. It is thus apart from any semantic layer that relates to our active perception. The existence of this situation will be very difficult, if not impossible, and may simply be represented by primary humans. A world of this kind will probably remain stable in its position as much as it is stable for all humans. This world, which is not formed by humans and is ready to underlie all human conduct, is not what is accessible by experiences. The world, as Husserl sees it in chaos, is the perfect horizon of the possible experience; it is what previously acted as a foundation for any collective outcome and was likewise formed by collective outcomes. In sum, a lived world is a cultural one; a cultural world that pervades us and differs from other lived worlds. This is the world wherein we constantly "live" (Pickles 2009, 114-115).

2.2.2.1. Everyday Life from Plato to Lefebvre

Concerning philosophy and abstract (including scientific) thinking, everydayness is generally regarded as an appropriate thing as it does not benefit theoretical thinking when it binds us to ordinary, tangible, and ephemeral activities, thus becoming conservative intellectually. Speaking of arts, if everydayness is considered to be the source of aesthetic motivations, the openness and dysfunctionality of aesthetics would not represent everyday life itself; rather, it is an endeavor to go beyond those horizons (Sheringham 2006, 24). If the bond between philosophy, science, and art is to be

adopted, the relationship between everydayness and the present and future can be construed. Relating to the present, everyday life is an endeavor to seize the future, as everyday life is the future itself.

Everyday life has a long history. When Plato sought to found philosophy in the city, Gorgias attempted to reveal that what helped to establish society was everyday life. As the founder of Western Metaphysics, Plato holds a different view of what is real and superior and imaginary and inferior. He conceived of everyday life as inferior, temporary, and ineffective, which was subordinate to the exemplary world. From the early 18th century, however, some developments led to new thinking movements that could shape everyday activity constructs. One of these developments was the emerging role of government authority that advocated people to contemplate more about social manifestations (Sheringham 2006, 24). Sensation, which is the characteristic aspect of our experience intertwined with everydayness and everyday life, will essentially appear where subjected to a menace. Alienation Theory, founded on Marx's primary thinking and influences Lefebvre, is immediately related to the alienation of everyday experience because what was regarded as a commodity was labor power (Sheringham 2006, 26).

There is a well-established relationship between everyday life and Marxism. This German ideology holds that propositions are not arbitrary, selective, or dogmatic, suggesting that the propositions are real and imaginatively abstractable. These propositions, they asserted, were real humans and their activities were material by which they lived (Goonewardena 2008, 118). They were not simply based on reality; rather, they referred to the existing domination overshadowing the relationship between the abstract process and the concrete life. The Russian leading cultural movement supplanted the three gaps on which the social capitalist system was relying: the "gap between life and art", the "gap between society and politics", and the "gap between politics and art". According to this applicable "criticism of gap", a revolution could have involved some political and aesthetic aspects: "government dejection" and "the end of art". This was the primary synthesis of Marxist theories about everyday life, including politics and art and their incorporation into democratic everyday life (Goonewardena 2008, 118).

For John Roberts, the Russian idealist sense of everydayness in post-1917 should not be underestimated, as it was broadened under the intellectual development of the Soviet Culture, which represented it in different forms in the 20th century while overshadowing other everydayness uses. What was once considered to be useless, insignificant, and cliché is now seen as the source of cooperation, interaction, and evolution (Roberts 2006, 20). Leon Trotsky was one of the Marxists who considered everyday life to be the scene of revolution and the

place where socialism could occur. If everyday life is said to have been invented by the 1917 Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet Union, it would not be a true hypothesis. Rather, the heavy price a historical event pays for the existing concept should be viewed. Everyday life carried a negative meaning in the pre-revolution era, especially with György Lukács who revealed the genuineness and non-genuineness of it in the modern era (Goonewardena 2008, 118).

In his 1909 article “The Metaphysics of Tragedy”, Georg Lukács posits that what contradicts everyday life is a superior being with a spirit and a form. For him, the everyday life, as suggested by the article, is a chaos of darkness and illumination:

Nothing is formed perfectly, past voices are intertwined with new and surprising voices, everything is fluid, integrated into another thing, and this integration is unleashed and contaminated: everything will be lost and destroyed; nothing will attain a true life.... Real life is constantly unreal, constantly impossible, within an experimental life. Suddenly, a glimmer occurs; a lightning illuminating the mundane paths of the experimental life; a distressing and seductive but amazing and astonishing thing; an event, an immense movement, a miracle; a kind of fertilization and chaos. One cannot tolerate that, no one will; nobody can live on this highland; man must numb again. To live, one must deny it (Lukács 1974, 152-153).

For Lukács, after a decade and following his conversion to Marxism (especially due to the impacts of commodity objectification discourse on capital), this severe conflict between everyday life and real life, the genuine and the ungentuine, turned into a view where everyday life was overwhelmed by the reification of consciousness; for him, as demonstrated by “History and Class Consciousness” (1923), the rise of real life was associated with praising the proletariat rather than with moments of illumination (Sheringham 2006, 31).

It was Heidegger’s description of reification that led to some similarities with Lukács and resulted in an impressive development of everyday thinking. In line with Lucien Goldman, “Being and Time” owe to Lukács; it is clear that the everydayness load and its negative connotation, provided by Heidegger, had already been represented by Lukács, with the impacts of both on Lefebvre being significant (Sheringham 2006, 31). Contesting Heidegger and Lukács, Lefebvre holds that reducing the everyday life to a superficial, null, and anti-real life has originated from Romanism (especially German version), whereas Lukács believed in unity and continuity; however, Heidegger pessimistically expanded an ontology where the inferior substance of everydayness becomes unattainable (Sheringham 2006, 32).

For Heidegger, everydayness is associated with Dasein (Being). This association is one constrained by an inseparable substance. This everydayness is the same as routineness; here, it is difficult to recognize

Dasein. Being in here is regarded as abandoned. That said, Heidegger stresses seeing Dasein, i.e., where it is ontologically distant. The ontological implications of routine everydayness are continually neglected and it must be accomplished by positive characterization, unless “being” is effectively forgotten. The key is when “Being” is remembered, it will occur in no place other than its place. Heidegger insists on the difficulty of demarcating the existential meaning of “everydayness”, recalling that “we do not usually pay attention to it”. The key factor is temporality. While describing Dasein constructs as the manner of being, Heidegger suggests that Dasein should be viewed as this temporality. If Dasein is conceived of time, this conception has everyday life as its context. Heidegger maintains “Everydayness is temporality itself”. Everydayness reveals the astonishing aspect of temporality whose duality manifests in accumulated and non-accumulated forms. On the one hand, everydayness is day by day; it is not a sum of days or calendar days. On the other hand, it involves a secondary concept of temporal substance. It helps everydayness to signify “how” Dasein should “live in the day”. If Dasein is overwhelmed by everydayness, it is simply through its layers that everydayness can be overwhelmed. Hence, “everydayness is a manner for being”: it involves fragility and weakness, on the one hand, and contains future and dream moments on the other hand; however, if being can dominate everydayness, it will never be able to make it silent (Sheringham 2006, 32-33).

Malcolm Bowie provides an enlightening analogy with psychoanalysis: for Freud, everydayness is a sphere of the sensual faculty where it feels itself in it unconsciously, i.e., where, for Heidegger, it is, at a time, a specifically close place of existence which holds Dasein, as it is ordinary for Dasein to achieve its future and dreamy moments (Bowie 1993, 21-22). Heidegger is inferred to express dream and future moments to introduce some kind of transcendence; however, his discussion mainly reveals how future and dream moments cannot be conceived as being independent of the sphere where they are everlasting. For human beings, everydayness is wholly a sphere of itself (Sheringham 2006, 33).

For Lefebvre, everyday life is not the sphere of non-genuineness as he rises to oppose Heidegger’s pessimism about routines. Lefebvre calls for the positive political power of everyday life and finds non-genuineness on alienation, challenged by critical knowledge. For Michelle Terbich, everyday life is not a waste, as an imitation of perfection, harmony, and sameness is lost and the last remnants of abundance.... the criticism of everyday life has a dual interpretation; it is, at the same time, a dismissal of the non-genuineness and strange thing and the human discovery where it is still laid to rest (Butler 2012, 26). Everyday life is key as an important “other”.

3. CONCLUSION

What is a humanistic city? Will the construction of parks, green spaces, and nature make the city humanistic? Will reducing the street's width and the number of cars, and adding to city pedestrian zones make the city humanistic? What is the position of human perception in perceiving the humanistic city? These are key questions and the whole problem relates to human beings. Once man recognizes himself when he finds himself in an abandoned world; it is the abandonment that leads philosophers to explore him in the world (in general) and urban scholars to explore him in the city (in specific).

This article investigated the problem of humanism within postmodern philosophy. The ancient and

modern philosophy will also lead to a clearer picture of the postmodern humanistic city. Findings showed that what was thought to have formed separate worlds in the past as a subjective whole along with an objective would culminate in an "other" dogmatism when contradicted each other in the modern era with the rise of Hegel and his Dialectics; however, it would not culminate in dogmatism when contradicted each other in the postmodern era in the form of a fictitious (imaginary) and a perceptual (objective) world, as they would consequently lay the ground for the rise of the "other" or the Third World, i.e., the lived world. In sum, a humanistic city is associated with an underlying social understanding of the lived world according to post-structural thinking.

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