

A Critical Examination of Postmodernism Based on Religious and Moral Values Education

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Abstract

Postmodernism, born under western secular conditions, has the following characteristics: it emphasizes pluralism and relativism and rejects any certain belief and absolute value; it conflicts with essentialism, and considers human identity to be a social construct; it rejects the idea that values are based on developmental realities and also rejects the essential influence of human actions on human destiny. Using a descriptive method, this research will provide a critical examination of postmodernism based on moral and religious values education. In educational goals, postmodernism emphasizes the institutionalization of pluralism, the strengthening of self-organized morality in learners and in educational principles, avoiding dogmatism, fighting against systematicity and emphasizing on individual freedoms. In educational methods, it emphasizes learner-centered discourse, serious attention to the marginalized people, and the denial of pattern-based ability. Postmodernism, despite enjoying a series of strong points, such as “fighting against globalization”, “fighting against scientism” and “emphasizing dynamism”, has many weaknesses too. The most important one of them is the intellectual failure and an overt contradiction with thought, ignorance of certain realities and knowledge, and the existence of intrinsic and constant values.

Keywords: postmodernism, education, values, meta-narratives, relativism, pluralism

1. Introduction

Postmodernism is one of intellectual currents that had the greatest prominence in and effect on various areas including education in the contemporary era. Since this thought appeared out of the age of information, it was not limited to the West but extended to various regions across the globe including Islamic countries. As a result, today, not only is it a serious topic in scientific circles, but it is also a serious topic in various political, social, educational, and many other areas. Nevertheless, postmodernism is not a systematic school of thought whose intellectual framework and educational implications can be precisely and definitively expressed, but as the nature of this movement requires, it constantly changes form and contains different trends. Thus, there is controversy in the definition of postmodernism and its relation with modernism regarding a precise determination of its pioneers and branches and its educational implications in particular.

2. The Nature of Postmodernism

2.1 *Postmodernism = Post-Modernism*

A number of experts believe that due to the fundamental differences between modernism and postmodernism, “postmodernism” is in fact “post-modernism” which means a novel movement that appeared after modernism. While modernism emphasizes realities and the discovery of realities, postmodernism emphasizes the instability of everything and the creation of realities. Modernism believes in certainty, necessity and meta-narrative, while, in postmodernist view, under no circumstances should any mention of these categories be made. Particularly in the area of values, moralities, politics, and education no mention should be made of universal and constant theoretical foundations. Values are relative things that differ from culture to culture. Therefore, the postmodernism movement is actually the era after modernism and a type of transition from it. Some supporters of this version of postmodernism believe that it was initiated by Richard Rorty’s writings (Rahnama, 2009; Poosshafei, 2009; Shoarinezhad, 2009).

2.2 Postmodernism: A Part of Western Modernity

Given the essentials of the fundamental and humanist commonalities and the growth of these two ideas, some people argue that postmodernism is a part of modernity that, with a critical approach to some of its claims, has been somehow differently reproduced or restructured. Therefore, postmodernism, being a special prospect on the criticism, explanation, and extension of modernism and in contrast with modernism, negatively emphasizes on wholeness and meta-narratives and by doing so, it wants to create a balance in it and modifies the humanist moralities dominating the West in more moderate ways. According to Gitlin, if modernism has destroyed the older unity and itself is collapsing, then postmodernism is fascinated by modernism's remainders and is a parasite of it (Ozmen, 2007).

In the view of these people, although the birthplace for this thought was France and its most prominent characters are Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard, philosophers like Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, and other philosophers like Sandrys Peirce, William James, and John Dewey of the 19th century pragmatism philosophers, are, in a sense, among the postmodernism founders. The reason is that some postmodern thoughts especially the criticism of modernism and taking a stand against it are obvious in their thoughts. Therefore, although postmodernism has serious and fundamental differences with modernism, it does not mean that it ignores it but rather they have common features in their senses and nature. In fact, postmodern feeds on modern ideas and thoughts and while rejecting some modern elements, accepts many other of its elements (Ozmen, 2007; Poorshafei, 2009).

3. The Nature of Values Education

Postmodernism has not entered into values education in a definite way and because of not offering any proven theories; it attacked values education for its systematic and dependence on certain beliefs and values. Therefore, a comprehensive and preventive definition of values education cannot be expected from this school of thought. But since this thought has intentionally or unintentionally changed into an ideology with special philosophical fundamentals in various areas of ontology, epistemology, anthropology and axiology, then values education can be discussed from special postmodernism viewpoints.

4. Philosophical Fundamentals of Postmodernism View of Values Education

Talking about values education in this school would be a contradiction. More contradictory than that would be talking about philosophical fundamentals of values education due to the fact that a school of thought that is fundamentally against foundationalism and its identity consists of meta-narratives is apparently indifferent to such matters. But since philosophy can only be rejected by philosophy, then postmodernists have unwantedly and against their own claims, admitted some philosophical fundamentals. In investigating and criticizing their view of values education, attention to these fundamentals is of utmost importance. Therefore, in the following, we will briefly describe the most important philosophical fundamentals of postmodernism.

4.1 Fundamentals of Ontology

No trace of proven ontology topics can be found in the works of postmodern thinkers and these thinkers are fully against these topics. Ontology topics are not important for them, and negligence of metaphysical topics is one of the principles of postmodernism. Therefore, the interpretation of ontology about postmodernism is neglectful and it should not be used by its general meaning.

4.1.1 Reality as a Constructed Matter and Not as an Objective One

Denial of objective reality that is independent of human minds and, instead, a belief in realities as inter-mind and social constructs are of postmodernism fundamentals. In postmodernists view, all creatures have a constructed and ever changing identity causing them to lack any constant identity. Facts are constructible and not discoverable. For this reason, in the postmodern philosophical ideas, philosophical causality, necessity, and totality give their place to luck, incident, and fortune. (Farmahini, 2010; Nodings, 1995).

4.1.2 Pluralism

Denial of pre-experimental, definite, and everlasting realities is the belief in pluralism. Thus, in different areas including ontology, pluralism is considered as one of the most important postmodern philosophical fundamentals. More than any other school, postmodernism conflicts with "totality" and its related topics and considers it to be fully nonexistent even in human mind. Therefore, they reject any totality and universal values. Postmodernism rejects any constant and singular reality because of its post-constructivist background and it also rejects any parallelism or similarity (Farmahini, 2010; Ozmen, 2007).

4.1.3 Materialism

Postmodernism considers humans as the center of all realities, knowledge, and values, and rejects any belief in paranormal and metaphysical truth. In this school, any discussion about the singular and eternal existence of the God or other singular or constant creatures is fully rejected. Whatever exists in this universe is a tangible object with locally and socially constructed realities. Therefore, postmodernists seriously reject theological beliefs in divine religions and all propose that are based on them. Postmodernists do not implicitly talk about materialism, rather, it discusses morality and religiousness. Their aims, however, are a natural religion and theology that are constructed by and are resulted from human communities and their desires. They believe in nothing beyond the normal world and there is no trace of spiritual and material dualism (Farmahini, 2010; Poorshafei, 2008).

4.1.4 Philosophy of Language Originality

Although postmodernism rejects analytical philosophy because it is fascinated by empiricism and objectivism, it attributes the highest importance to “language” in educational and theoretical discussions. Language is so important for postmodernists that it has the equal position of reason in modernism for them. The reason is that, given the deviation of postmodernists from objectivism to “mutual mentality”, human thought and mentality and consequently educational and moral values are formed and expressed by language. Language in this sense is not merely a communicational tool, rather, it is basically everything. We find our mentality through language, think by language, and identify values and communicate them through language. For this reason, human relations are fully mixed with language. Under the influence of Wittgenstein’s language games, postmodernists believe that “meaning” is not dependent on words; rather, it is dependent on the kind of relation we make among words and the kind of context we create. Therefore, a word, based on the frame within which it is placed, takes different and even opposite meanings. Speech is not fully equal and synonymous with language, rather, various speeches can be created in a language so that vocabularies can be combined in different ways and different relations are made among them (Farmahini, 2010; Ozmen, 2006; Poorshafei, 2009).

4.2 Epistemological Fundamentals

As was stated, postmodernism denies philosophical fundamentals instead of expressing its own philosophical fundamentals. Hence, postmodernism emphasizes knowledge socialism instead of epistemology in epistemological discussions and approves the close relationship between knowledge and power. For this reason, in a sense, postmodernism accepts transition from epistemology or at least, the collapse of dogmatic and traditional spiritual systems (Noddings, 1995, p. 27).

The most important epistemological fundamentals of this school are briefly expressed below.

4.2.1 Attention to Concrete Matters and Rejection of Objectivism

Objectivism is one of the basic elements of modern scientific methodology and is based on the presumption that it is possible to have a “free observation of theory”. Scientists emphasize that researchers should free themselves from all presumptions, beliefs and values, look for objective realities and observe and experience objects as they are and acquire a series of certain scientific rules. In investigating natural science and social science topics, researchers should only focus on objective realities without any value judgment and presumption (Ritzer, 2001, p. 35).

In contrast with scientists, postmodernist do not accept objectivism and rather emphasize “mutual mentality”. In their opinion, human being is a social creature that grows up in a society with its own special cultures, goals and values. For this reason, he has his special presumptions and goals at any work. These issues surely affect his studies and researches (Beheshti, 2009, p. 282). Noddings (1995, p. 282) argues that “any attempt to remove personal pre-judgments and mental orientations, requires another mental orientation.”

Sensory perception and observation cannot be the foundations of the certainty; because it is clear that observation is not a neutral matter. As some philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Popper and Hanson have also stated, observation is a “loaded” or “theoretical” matter, that means, what a viewer sees via observation is influenced by his knowledge background and accepted values. The idea of Duhem and Quine titled “Auxiliary presumptions”, shows the fact that human knowledge is an interconnected network present in all human observations and influences it (Philips, 2000). According to them, reality is more complicated than what we imagine. Reality is not an objective and predetermined issue that easily emerges out of thought, rather, a human being forms realities in accordance with his or her own needs, values and cultural traditions. Therefore, reality is a constructed matter and can never be independent from social values, rather it itself is a social matter resulting from these beliefs (Poorshafei, 2009).

4.2.2 Relativism

Postmodernists reject any constant, definite and universal belief and instead, consider knowledge to be relative, local and fully influenced by special cultures and values. They do not even consider mathematical rules as being general and universal and consider them as similar to a total that have a relative totality compared to other propositions (Noddings, 1995). Accordingly, no paradigm is more logical than the other. Lyotard used the phrase “empirical science paranormal justification” to say that we should doubt a story until it defines empirical science as a knowledge production framework. He introduced the well-known term of “meta-narratives” to emphasize that there is no theory, interpretation, perception, knowledge etc., that is, constant and definite (Faramahini, 2010; Philips, 2000; Tajik, 2005).

Postmodernists believe that beliefs can be strong or firm so that they seem beyond a perspective and are considered as a definite theory. But, actually these very apparently firm beliefs can be false beliefs; because what may seem definite on the surface, can actually be a misunderstanding. Even beliefs that seem obvious can actually be false. Humorist H. L. Mencken says: “The most expensive stupidity is that we romantically believe in something untrue. This is human’s main job” (Philips, 2000, p. 4).

4.2.3 Pluralism

Popper believed that the definite truth will never fall in the grasp of human. John Dewey, used Popper’s theory in his logic book titled “Theoretical Research” and introduced the term “justified firmness and decisiveness” for this fundamental. Reasonableness” means that a researcher should convince the other side that there is enough evidence for the reasonableness of the research. Dewey meant that we should look for beliefs that are reasonably convincing; i.e. beliefs that are supported enough to be treated with full trust. But being reasonable or better does not mean that this certain belief or method, is unchangeable and unique (Philips, 2000). Postmodernists, influenced by this idea, believe in pluralism. Since they believe in sociology of knowledge more than they believe in epistemology, they do not even believe in the higher reasonableness of a belief and knowledge compared to another belief, and believe that all beliefs and knowledge are created under special conditions and hold true under those very conditions (Poorshafei, 2009).

4.3 *Fundamentals of Anthropology*

4.3.1 Denial of Common Nature

Postmodernism rejects the common origin of humans just as it rejects any constant and definite truth in ontology topics. They believe that human identity is constructed by national and local culture and is specifically influenced by three key cultural features of gender, social class, and race. A human, depending on where he is born and in what society and culture he is grown up and what value and educational system he has accepted, is different from other humans in nature and reality. And this same human is different from himself in his nature and reality, in the future or the past. Therefore, not only humans do not share a common nature, but there are different realities within a person and no single reality that remains with him throughout his life and protects his personal unity exists. Actually, postmodernism is the collapse of the subject (human). The subject in postmodernism lives in the present and has no meaningful linkage to his past or future (Faramahini, 2009; Poorshafei, 2008).

4.3.2 Self-Belief as a Social-Cultural Identity

Although postmodernists emphasize personal freedom against systems governing the world and consider themselves as an anti-imperialist and anti-monarchy school, due to the decisive impacts they consider on a dominant society and culture, they are trapped inside social determinism to some extent. In other words, although it accepts authority as a personal characteristic and does not accept theological determinism, still it considers human to be solved in society and the culture governing the society and hence, considers human to be a constructed and forced thing. Postmodernists are against the theory of “person” or “I” or “independent self” and, instead, speak of “self” as a “social-cultural identity”. For this reason, no real and original “self” is identifiable; rather, there is always a need to identify social relation networks to understand individuals’ behavior and identity. To know a person, we should know the greater social-cultural milieu involving him (Beheshti, 2010).

4.3.3 Denial of Reason’s Position as an Indicator of Humanity

Usually thinkers consider reason as the main human indicator and the highest level of being and, therefore, consider perceptions of reason as being fully valid. In the modern era, by pushing away revelation as the source of perceptions, reason apparently took a special position and value and with the introduction of Cartesian subjectivism, human became the origin and center of everything for possessing reason. Thus, belief in the

authority of wisdom is one of the modern era's fundamental characteristics. But with the precise investigations of Kant in criticizing practical and theoretical reason and then with the investigations of Nietzsche and other humanist philosophers and the serious works of Max Weber in criticizing reason, finally, reason lost its authority and became the subject of criticism. With the use of the critiques, postmodernists fully challenged the authority and validity of reason and degraded it to the level of an observer highly influenced by several external factors. Thus, they completely removed totality, necessity, and certainty that were the most important achievements of rationalism and considered feelings and emotions parallel to reason (Farmahini, 2010; Poorshafei, 2009).

4.4 Fundamentals of Axiology

4.4.1 Relativism

Postmodernism rejects universal moral and spiritual values and accepts the relativity of all values in all areas. Therefore, no specific value preference exists. Everyone should order their own values, value preferences, and approaches (Tajik, 2005; Rahnama, 2009). Morality and education are not fundamental topics and cannot have objective criteria. Richard Rorty refers to contingent moral nature and by rejecting fundamentalism, replaces it with activism. In this school, similar to the activism school of Dewey, the main component of morality is the concept of "experience". Emphasis on experience, relativity of moralities, and their fluid nature and rejection of absolute values, are of the fundamental similarities with the school of John Dewey concerning moral and educational matters (Rahnama, 2008).

4.4.2 Pluralism

Within the universe, there is not one value or source for values; rather, there are numerous values and various sources for values. Human is free to accept values that he feels can reflect his "social self" and his equal group better. Social groups can proportional to time, location, culture, gender, race etc., quantify their values and create a consistent mixture out of the numerous existing values (Poorshafei, 2009).

Postmodernism criticizes modern education due to its focus on the center and negligence of boundaries and margins and rejects its universal claim concerning the lawfulness of history, European-centeredness, and globalization. Basically some postmodernists such as Henry Giroux have titled their educational system as boundary education system. In this system, it is believed that teachers live inside social, political, and cultural boundaries that are multiple and plural (Farmahini, 2010).

4.4.3 Externalism

In postmodern thinking, there are no natural, internal, and intrinsic values; rather, values are selected through social and cultural factors and discussions. Basically, postmodernism does not believe in any common nature for human beings to recognize him as the source of values; rather, the values a human selects are constructed matters. Therefore, being a modest and suitable human is fully time- and location-based and depends on social, cultural, and historic conditions (Poorshafei, 2009).

5. Educational Goals of Postmodernism

5.1 Institutionalization of Pluralism

Believing in pluralism, postmodernists claim that human life has no certain and fatal goal, rather any society will have variable and fluid goals based on the values it has selected. Education should try to institutionalize pluralism and acceptance of various cultures within learners and therefore develop social adaptability (Poorshafei, 2009; Rahnama, 2009).

According to postmodernism, western societies that try for cultural homogenization and globalization, consider the current educational conditions as being necessary and unchangeable and emphasize that teachers should also adapt to this very system. Schools must be the places for creating political and social changes and teachers and learners should play their role at making some changes and save the world from monarchies. One of the most important educational goals is that a sense of social responsibility towards others including those who are marginalized and are known as "outsiders" be strengthened. In other words, the goal is to develop the numerous identities of students so that they can fight against inequality and develop fundamental human rights (Beheshti, 2010; Ozmen, 2007).

5.2 Decentralizing Authority

Postmodernism is hostile towards values and systems that consider themselves as central, pervasive and indestructible and believe that no authority and authoritarianism is acceptable. Given the constructed nature of human and value system, any dogmatism and authoritarianism should be ignored and all cultures and value systems should be seen equal, and humans that are equal and adaptable with their corresponding social values

and culture should be developed. Education should be used to institutionalize the culture of tolerance that is “wishing for yourself what you wish for others” within the society. Social discussions that are important for postmodernist educational methods are the development of a sense of social responsibility towards the marginalized and outsiders. By “marginalized”, we do not necessarily mean geographically marginalized people; rather, we mean socially, culturally and economically marginalized people (Beheshti, 2010; Poorshafei, 2008).

Henry Giroux, an American theorist in education, proposes a type of boundary education system within which many traditional goals of education are ignored. Boundary education provides the necessary opportunities for students to engage with multiple resources and references that constitute various cultural codes, experiences, and languages. This means that students should know these codes and treat them critically and discover their limitations (Giroux, 2009, p. 716).

5.3 Establishment of Justice and Rejection of Supremacy

Postmodernists with their critical approach towards monarchy, globalization, and various common religious, national, racial, and gender biases, consider the freedom of societies from these biases and injustices as their main motto and goal. For this reason, in educational discussions, they recognize efforts to release learners from common injustices governing educational systems as the most important educational goal. They emphasize that educational schools and systems should change the cultural understanding plan governing the world. Learners should reach a level where they realize that injustice and cruelty are not unchangeable realities that are inseparable from human communities. They should also understand how much their individual experiences are influenced by social conditions (Beheshti, 2010; Ozmen, 2006).

5.4 Training for Self-Determination

Acquisition of knowledge and skills and specialization in scientific fields cannot be a goal. The most important goal of education should be to prepare learners to actively participate in political-social areas and create fundamental corrections and transformations that change the miserable conditions of marginalized social groups who are under monarchy (Beheshti, 2010). In Henry Giroux’s view, education morally precedes knowledge acquisition at individual and social strengthening, though knowledge acquisition is done by strengthening. According to McLaren, the primary goal of social and individual strengthening is the development of students’ commitment to create a social transformation that promotes marginalized groups, particularly the poor oppressed ones (Farmahini, 2010; Ozmen, 2006).

Richard Rorty proposed the idea of “ideal human” that is more “self-creating” and believed that education should adopt this self-creation. Schools should allow all students to have a self-creation chance to actualize their abilities. An educational system should offer learners the opportunity to develop their critical capacity to fight and change the existing social and political statements instead of just adapting to them. Education should try to educate good citizens or critical citizens; citizens that can identify and understand contradictions, social inequalities, and dominance (Farmahini, 2010).

5.5 Abandoning the Idea of Urbanism

Postmodernists do not accept any certain prediction for future and highly reject any historical fatalism. No general historical lawfulness and inevitable stage has ever existed or will ever exist in history. The claims of Auguste Comte and the historical materialism regarding lawfulness and certain historical stages are unreasonable and illogical. The claim of divine religions about the end of the world and the end times’ savior is unreasonable and unacceptable. The future of the world will not necessarily be better than the present or the future; because no definite and ensuring prediction of future is possible. Therefore we should not define the goals of education based on optimism without reason. The fact that fatalism is held as a goal in existing educational systems is a deviation and an unreasonable matter (Poorshafei, 2009). Postmodernist reject end-believing theories such as the end of philosophy, the end of history, etc. When Heidegger speaks of a metaphysical end or Foko Yama believes that the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union has brought us to the end of the world both are wrong (Farmahini, 2010).

5.6 Democratic Consolidation

In postmodernists’ view, education is naturally a process with the aim of creating a democratic and equal society. They believe that democracy has not been realized in the modernity era as a desirable element and is rather focused on the domination of a specific culture. For this reason, the main obstacle for a real democracy is the marginalization of social groups by racism, genderism, nationalism etc. and the most prominent example of it is the American globalization (Homan, pp. 128-130).

6. Weaknesses of Postmodern Perspective Based on Moral and Religious Values Education

Postmodern perspectives on values education, despite having some advantages, have their own weaknesses too. The most important of them are:

6.1 *Relativism*

One of the fundamental problems of postmodern thought is the denial of objective and absolute facts, obvious and conscience knowledge, and natural values. The existence of some objective facts and the infallibility of some knowledge and the reasonable and innate being of some values are not deniable for any wise and fair person.

6.2 *Self-Destruction*

Postmodernists emphasize the acceptance of relative attitudes towards the universe, knowledge and the existence of no absolutely true value and knowledge; this means that they deny their own theory as paradoxical, but the truth is that they made an ideology out of postmodernism and are practically trapped in dogmatism and totalitarianism. Basically, the language of postmodernist in defending their theories is the language of totality and absoluteness, and they try to convince others that their theory is both right and rational. If there is no universal principle or meta-narrative, then how does this very principle stand? Is this very claim absolute and universal or conditional and relative? If postmodernists claim that there is no certainty and essentiality, then the first foundation to collapse would be the postmodern thought. Of course, postmodernists do not follow the necessity of their logical thought.

6.3 *Separation of "Is" And "Must"*

Postmodernism rejects objective and constant realities and also rejects the relation between norms and values with realities. This degrades norms and values to the point of absolute and taste-dependent matters, social contracts, and desires, and makes them lose any solid objective, knowledge, and logical support. It is clear that these "do" and "do not" are defected from different aspects especially in terms of motivation and influence of human evolution. How can such an educational system of "do" and "do not" play a constructive and educational role in the life of a real creature called human?

6.4 *Mere Negativity and the Lack of Solution Provision*

Postmodernist indulge in negativity and destruction to the point that they fully miss the positive aspects of the opposite theories and are satisfied with critique and do not usually offer any solution. The dominance of sensual and affectionate aspects on postmodernists has made them destroy buildings one after another and build no sanctuary. This will bring them an intellectual and cultural anarchism and consequently an absolute perplexity.

6.5 *Indiscriminate Attention to Politics and Power*

Although the attention of educational systems, schools, teachers and learners to political-social issues is necessary, the politicization of schools and educational systems is very dangerous; because first, it may lead to the politicization of schools, teachers and students and deviate them from educational space. Second, the politicization of this institute has led to the inappropriate intervention of political-social matters in educational and scientific matters and turns into a big obstacle for educational and scientific advances. Third, in contrast to the postmodernist's theory, it may lead to the indoctrination and compelling of the values accepted by the group governing educational systems and learners.

6.6 *Indiscriminate Attention to Differences and Negligence of Commonalities*

Although attention to subcultures, individuals, genders and other differences is essential, an extreme emphasis on differences concerning individuals, cultures and values, prevents an educational institute from paying attention to the numerous commonalities of human societies. In other words, postmodernism encourages the forgetting of the past and separation of generations. This separation is very dangerous for human societies.

6.7 *Failure and Incoherence*

Postmodernists have extremely different and sometimes contradictory thoughts and theories and in practice, it is hard to title them all as "postmodernists". In some cases, the differences are so extreme that they reject each other. Although they may consider this as an advantage due to their support of pluralism, indiscrimination in pluralism causes confusion and astonishment and it will not be pleasing for them.

6.8 *Moral and Educational Anarchism*

The collapse of value systems and the loosening of the status of religious centers and the creation of educational and moral chaos are among the unpleasing consequences of this thought. By removing sanctity and rejection of worthy religious and educational patterns, postmodernism encourages learners towards following their desires.

In other words, they destroy education by deconstructing and undermining objective and conceptual structures that have a key role in education. If there is no limitation, then humans can do anything. In this case, education will not have an acceptable meaning (Kunar, 2010).

7. Conclusions

The main motto of postmodernism, or a new and freshly processed version of modernism, is breaking norms and breaking of any “meta-narrative”. Therefore, to speak of value education in postmodernism is some sort of contradiction. But since it defends a sequence of postmodernist values in a dogmatic way, it can be said that this movement aims at preaching and even compelling its values to society. Also, due to the postmodernism’s conflicts with philosophy, it is contradictory to speak of its philosophical fundamentals. But since philosophy can only be rejected and criticized by philosophy, then the claims of this movement are based on a sequence of philosophical fundamentals.

Pluralism, relativism, and opposition again fundamentalism and objectivism are of postmodernism’s philosophical fundamentals in various philosophical areas. Postmodernists highly reject the knowledge position of reason and other human knowledge tools and hold no value for natural and intrinsic values; because basically, they consider all realities and values including human nature and his innate values as being fluid and constructed by social and external factors. Therefore, they not only hold no sanctity for religious and educational patterns and religious and moral instructions, but they also oppose any authority and pattern-based ability. Therefore, they identify the institutionalization of pluralism and democracy, rejection of any authority and dominance, and strengthening of autonomy and self-determination in learners as the most important educational goals in values education. They consider avoidance of any dogmatism, attention to fluidity and advancement, and opposition to artificial boundaries among different sciences as their educational principles and emphasize individual freedom as the most important principle in education. They have adopted methods such as discussion, norm breaking, use of media and opposition against any system-centeredness to achieve their goals. In designing curricula, they emphasize a pluralistic approach and pay attention to individual differences, socio-political matters, and avoid elitism.

Postmodernist view of values education has weaknesses despite its strong points and anti-imperialist position. The most important weakness of this view is not having defensible, reasonable and certain fundamentals, opposing developmental realities, certain knowledge and eternal values. This causes postmodernist thought to fail and be trapped in obvious contradictions. By adopting a negative approach, they only criticize and destroy but offer no alternative solutions and theories. Therefore, by indiscriminate emphasis on differences and subcultures, they neglect cultural and moral commonalities of nations and schools. This school of thought or movement has ultimately resulted in moral and educational anarchism and the consequence of this movement is the perplexity of learners and drowning of society in the swamp of corruption and destruction.

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