Limits of Demythologization, Critique of Ideology, Postmodern Critique of Reason and Critique of the Other: Unsuccessful Moments in the History of Modern Rationality

Fasil Merawi[1]

Abstract: The historical trajectory of modern rationality is characterized by an attempt to develop an account of the emancipatory reason that can diagnose the existing problems of society and also posit emancipatory visions. Still, such an effort did not lead to the development of an account of rationality that is reflexive enough to reflect on its epistemic foundations and can account for the different horizons of emancipation that are historically and culturally situated. Taking this into consideration, the aim of this paper is two-folded. The first one is to identify the limits of demythologization, critique of ideology, postmodern critique of reason, and the critique of the Other as the four unsuccessful moments that have emerged in the history of modern rationality. The second one is to show how there is a need to embark on a new reflexive moment that is informed by a fallible and temporal account of emancipatory reason.

Keywords: emancipation, rationality, critique, demythologization, subjectivity.

[1] Department of Philosophy, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, fasilmerawi@gmail.com

1   Introduction

The development of modern rationality emerged in the background of a premodern world of tradition and authority. In the premodern world, the life of the individual and the physical objects that are found in the world was defined as a metaphysical system that is absolutist and fixed in its nature. What characterized such a period is the quest for firm ontological origins and a tradition that can be described as the "metaphysics of presence."[2] This was revolutionized by the emergence of modernity where the individual became the focal point of analysis. There were attempts to liberate the individual and realize symmetrical relations. This was also regarded as a foundation of societal growth and progress as the triumph of individual rationality was said to lead to emancipation in both the natural and the social worlds. With the emergence of the philosophy of the subject, one witnessed a focus on the exploration of the cognitive modalities of the thinking individual.[3]

Throughout the history of modern rationality, there was a preoccupation with a conception of rationality that has the goal of exposing the problems of contemporary reality and also proposing solutions that lead to the creation of a better world. This cannot be separated from the concept of rationality that was developed by Rene Descartes as he set the foundation for a theory of rationality that is grounded on the freedom and the autonomy of the individual. In such a mode of subjectivity, there is an inseparable relationship between "thinking and acting."[4] Although the optimism in individual rationality was seen as the foundation of individual growth, there was soon the realization that conceptions of rationality are only serving the interests of a given group and this led to the emergence of the critique of ideology. Subsequently, there is a focus on "the generation or production of ideology."[5] Such a Marxist-inspired form of philosophical criticism sought to realize the emancipation of the working class although it only developed an instrumental conception of reason. It was replaced by a postmodern conception of reason that identified all forms of rationality with the tools of repression.[6] This in return gave broth to the critique of the Other that concentrated on the unequal power relations that are found between "the Self and the Other."[7] The critique of the Other managed to introduce the questions of structural marginalization and otherness into the mainstream discourse although it did not succeed in going beyond the bounds of a Eurocentric discourse.

In the contemporary world, where the very idea of truth is being undermined by the emergence of an intellectual climate that is characterized by the mottos of post-truth and alternative facts, there is a need to embark on a new reflexive moment in the trajectory of modern rationality that is characterized by a fallible and temporal conception of reason that is attentive enough towards multiple horizons of emancipation.[8] There is a need to develop an account of emancipatory

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[2] Richard Jacob Bernstein, "Metaphysics, Critique, and Utopia," *The Review of Metaphysics* no. 2(1988): 42.

[3] Thomas Hall, "Descartes' Physiological Method: Position, Principles, Examples," *Journal of the History of Biology*, 3, no. 1(1970):74.

[4] Andrea Christofidou, "Descartes' Flash of Insight: freedom, the objective world, and the reality of the self," *The European Legacy* 27, no. 3-4 (2022): 261.

[5] Herman Schmidt, "On the origin of ideology," *Acta Sociologica* 24, no. 1-2 (1981): 62.

[6] Rodolphe Gasché, "Postmodernism and Rationality," *The Journal of Philosophy* 85, no. 10(1988): 533.

[7] Tabish Khair, "Ghosts from the Colonies," The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere (2009): 38.

[8] Colin Wight, "Post-truth, postmodernism and alternative facts," *New Perspectives* 26, no. 3 (2018): 17.

critique that is not trapped under a Eurocentric concept of modernity that tries to impose the path toward progress that modern Western societies have embarked on, on other societies of the world. There is a need to incorporate an element of cultural differences and historical differences in the attempt to develop conceptions of reason.

Having the aim of identifying the limits of the reflexive moments in modern rationality, the paper is made up of two major parts. In part one, a critique of the reflective moments in modern rationality that are expressed by demythologization, critique of ideology, postmodern critique of reason, and the critique of the Other will be made. In the second part, an argument will be made for the need to embark on a new reflexive moment in modern rationality that can develop a theory of critical emancipation that identifies the crisis of rationality as leading to a new account of the reason that is sensitive enough towards cultural differences.

2   Demythologization and Rationalization

The emergence of modern rationality cannot be separated from the downfall of the metaphysical system of the medieval world. The metaphysical system of the medieval age was grounded on the idea that the life of the individual cannot be separated from the world within which one is found in. In such a context, "the subject of metaphysics is the transcendental."[9] This led to the development of a system where the human subject was subsumed under a reality that tries to give a totalizing picture of human existence. Jürgen Habermas characterized the movement from the premodern into the modern world in terms of a process of demythologization and rationalization.[10]

In the eyes of the sociologist Max Weber, it is through a process of demythologization that the medieval world of tradition and authority was being replaced by the emergence of a new world where there is an emphasis on rationality and the autonomy of the individual. Weber thinks that this "disenchantment of the world" is not just limited to the Western world but could even be used to explain the social development and gradual evolution of societies that are found in different parts of the world.[11] In philosophical circles, Immanuel Kant was the first philosopher that showed the nature of rationality in the modern world in his attempt to show the limits of human knowledge as it is bounded to the world of phenomena. Kant managed to introduce a "representation of the representations given by our senses."[12] Kant argued that human beings can never know the world of noumena and the "world of things in themselves."[13] What is even more important is Kant's declaration that to be enlightened is to free oneself from the yoke of custom and tradition. All this culminated in the abandoning of the medieval world of authority and the birth of a new concept of reason that is crystallized around the thinking potentials of the individual.

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[9] Jorge JE Gracia, "Critical study: Medieval philosophy and the transcendentals: Aertsen's characterization of medieval thought and thomistic metaphysics," Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales 64, no. 2 (1997): 459.

[10] Jürgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures (Canmbridge: MIT Press, 1987), 45.

[11] Andreas Michael, "Differentiation vs. disenchantment: The persistence of modernity from Max Weber to Jean-Francois Lyotard," *German Studies Review* (1997): 344.

[12] Clinton Tolley, "Kant on the place of cognition in the progression of our representations," *Synthese* 197, no. 8 (2020): 3215-3244.

[13] Ralph CS Walker, "Kant on the Number of Worlds," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 18, no. 5 (2010): 821.

In his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Habermas identified the process of demythologization or the rationalization of the lifeworld as the process through which the medieval conception of reality was replaced by the modern concept of reason.[14] Two major things are involved in such a process. The first one is the abandoning of the medieval world as it turned out to be a form of rationality that is antithetical to temporal reality and lived experience. The second one is showing that the emergence of modern rationality led to the focus on the freedom and the autonomy of the individual. Habermas thinks that the project of modernity is grounded on the process of demythologization that made it possible for the emergence of a form of rationality through which individuals can voice their opinions within the bounds of "subjective and objective reason."[15] This is part of an attempt to identify a semi-transcendental concept of reason that is situated on particular grounds of knowledge.

As the first reflexive moment in the development of modern rationality, demythologization or the rationalization of the lifeworld is an attempt to lay the foundations for a form of rationality that is subjected to the demands of an individually autonomous existence. This goes hand in hand with "the value and meaning of rational scientific knowledge."[16] It is also part of the effort to find the foundations of a theory of social progress that explains the path towards progress that is being embarked on by different societies and cultures of the world. The critics in one way or another other have maintained that this reflexive moment of rationalization is not good enough to evolve a non-Eurocentric foundation of truth that can accommodate the conceptions of rationality that have emerged in the different parts of the world. This is part of the "desire to challenge dominant explanations."[17] The basic limitation of such a reflexive moment is that it tries to subsume the developmental path of other societies of the world under the Western discourse on modernity which is crystallized around the values of individual freedom and an instrumental form of rationality. It does not recognize the uniqueness of other cultural backgrounds and paths to emancipation and because of this; it is permeated with a Eurocentric core.[18] The reflexive moment of demythologization was soon replaced by another moment in the development of modern rationality that expressed itself in the form of the critique of ideology. Whereas the process of demythologization was focused on the need to separate oneself from the pre-modern world of authority, the critique of ideology sought to expose the inner contradictions that are found in the world of capitalism.

3   Critique of Ideology

The different reflexive moments in the development of modern rationality emerged as a response to particular forms of a quest. The first reflexive moment of demythologization focused on the nature of the collapse of the substantive metaphysical tradition and in return the emergence of a new form of rationality that concentrated on the rights of the individual. The second reflexive moment that is signified by the critique of ideology in return emerged in the

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[14] Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, 35.

[15] Fred Dallmayr, "The Discourse of Modernity: Hegel and Habermas," *The Journal of Philosophy* 84, no. 11(1987): 690.

[16] Gunter Abramowski, Larry Moore, and Swatos William, "Meaningful Life In A Disenchanted World: Rational Science and Ethical Responsibility: (An Interpretation of Max Weber)," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 10, no. 10(1982): 123.

[17] Sanjay Seth, "Is Thinking with 'Modernity'Eurocentric?," *Cultural Sociology* 10, no. 3 (2016): 385.

[18] Dilip Menon, "Religion and colonial modernity: Rethinking belief and identity," *Economic and Political Weekly* (2002): 1665.

background of the emergence of material economies and capitalist societies that led to relations of antagonism between the rich and the poor. In declaring the emergence of such a new reality, Marx established the fact that "history is made by real existing individuals who also produce ideas."[19] There was the realization that the growth of the economies of the Western nations was founded on a process that led to relations of antagonism. In such a context, the reflexive moment emerged being inspired by the ideas of Karl Marx and the concentration on the nature of ideology and false consciousness. This was regarded as the foundation of the "notion of emancipation."[20] There was the realization that the task of rationality is not just declaring the freedom of the individual but liberating the human subject from the relations of exploitation that are found in the world of capitalism.

The critique of ideology is founded on the idea that the foundation and the very functioning of capitalist societies could be explained in terms of the division that is found between two levels of rationality. The first one is signified by the base and shows the material foundation of a given society while the second one which is shown by superstructure signifies culture.[21] Trying to rid itself of the idealism of Hegelian philosophy, the critique of ideology under Marx showed us that there is a need to study the material relations of conflict that is found within a given context. All human relations are situated under "the economic base."[22] It is further assumed that there are always relations of conflict and antagonism under a particular historical period and that it is the antagonism that is found between the rich and the poor that defines the world of capitalism.

The critique of ideology as a reflexive moment in the history of modern rationality is quite important since it shows that there is a transition from a focus on the role that is played by the conception of rationality in the liberation of the human subject into a focus on the need to expose what interests are being consolidated in the name of truth and rationality.[23] It is shown that in the age of capitalism, the reason is undergoing a process of transformation as it is being used as a way of marginalizing the masses. In the name of rationality and conceptions of truth, the masses and the workers are being told that exploitation is natural and that they should accept the relations of subjugation that are found in the world as if they are natural and unchanging. There is such a need to question the existing "relations of production." [24] In such a process, the critique of ideology has the aim of raising the consciousness of the working class on the path toward freedom and emancipation.

The aim of the critique of ideology is not to liberate the human subject from the bounds of custom, religion, and authority. On the contrary, the focus is on unraveling the foundations of the material form of exploitation that are found in the world. In such a world, "the capitalist now owns products whose value is greater than that of the factors he used to produce them."[25]

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[19] Benno Herzog, "Marx's critique of ideology for discourse analysis: from analysis of ideologies to social critique," *Critical Discourse Studies* 15, no. 4 (2018): 402-413.

[20] Thomas Teo, "Prolegomenon to a contemporary psychology of liberation," *Theory & Psychology* 8, no. 4 (1998): 536.

[21] Terry Eagleton, "Base and superstructure revisited," *New Literary History* 31, no. 2 (2000): 235.

[22] Jarek Paul Ervin, "Rethinking base and superstructure, yet again." *Critique* 48, no. 4 (2020): 376.

[23] Trevor Purvis, and Hunt Alan, "Discourse, Ideology, Discourse, Ideology, Discourse, Ideology..." *British Journal of Sociology* (1993): 481.

[24] Ernesto Laclau, "Ideology and post-Marxism," Journal of Political Ideologies 11, no.2, (2006): 111.

[25] Gary Young, "Justice and Capitalist Production: Marx And Bourgeois Ideology," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 3 (1978): 425.

One basic element of such a critique of ideology is the fact that it is a reflexive moment that is both diagnostic and also emancipatory. Being motivated by the ideas of Marx that philosophy should not just study the nature of the world and that it must also contribute to the realization of the goals of emancipation, there is an active effort to realize a better world under such a conception of reason. The emancipatory intent has the goal of restoring the "sensuous way of being."[26] Still, it must be seen that the critique of ideology as a reflexive moment in the development of modern rationality is essentially characterized by two basic limitations.

First of all, the critique of ideology is criticized for subsuming the individual under macro social structures and is thus regarded as a conception of reason that gives much more importance to economic structures when compared to the autonomous existence of the individual.[27] The defenders of Marxism respond by arguing that the life of the individual should not be analyzed "independent of and before any social relations."[28] This leads to the development of an embedded conception of subjectivity.

Secondly, it is argued that the concept of rationality that is developed by the critique of ideology is narrowly focused in its nature since it only concentrates on the nature of instrumental rationality that is being used to dominate the physical world.[29] Jürgen Habermas is one of those thinkers that advance such a line of criticism and he argues that the critique of ideology is not able to make sense of the division that is found between communicative and instrumental conceptions of rationality. Taken on this way, the basic limitation of the critique of ideology is that it envisions the goals of emancipation in only instrumental or material terms. Habermas thus favored the analysis of "legitimation crises" over the study of ideological manipulation.[30] As a result of this, it is completely indifferent to the communicative and emancipatory potentials that are found within the world of daily communicative action. With the realization that reason is not just a tool for the emancipation of the subject and that it can also serve the role of ideological manipulation, there was already the realization that rationality is not separated from tools of repression. After such a realization, came a third moment in the development of rationality that is signified by the postmodern critique of reason.

4 Postmodern Critique of Reason

With the emergence of the postmodern critique of reason as the third reflexive moment in the development of modern rationality, the focus was no longer on the ideological function that is being fulfilled by rationality in the world of capitalism. There was no focus on identifying the limits of reason as such. There is a focus on, "openness, heterodoxy, pluralism, eclecticism, randomness, revolt, deformation."[31] It was not the role of reason but the very limit of the concept of reason that was identified by the postmodern critique of reason. This is said to lead to a "global crisis of identity."[32] It was shown that reason is not a tool that facilitates

[26] Bentley Le Baron, Bentley, "Marx on human emancipation," *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 4, no. 4 (1971): 565.

[27] Thomas Sowell, "Karl Marx and the Freedom of the Individual," *Ethics* 73, no. 2 (1963): 122.

[28] Sean Sayers, "Individual and Society in Marx And Hegel: Beyond The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," Science & Society 71, no. 1 (2007): 88.

[29] Robbie Pfeufer Kahn, "The Problem of Power in Habermas," *Human Studies* (1988): 365.

[30] Joseph Heath, "Habermas and Analytical Marxism," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 35, no. 8 (2009): 896.

[31] Ihab Hassan, "The Culture of Postmodernism," *Theory, Culture & Society* 2, no. 3 (1985): 125.

[32] Ihab Hassan, "Beyond Postmodernism," Angelaki: *Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 8, no. 1 (2003): 5.

emancipation and that there is no longer a belief in the development of universal conceptions of truth that have the capacity of providing the foundations of a good society. [33] Reason does not lead to a life of happiness and knowledge does not have the aim of liberating the individual from the exploitation and subjugation that is found in the world.

One thing that is unique about the postmodern critique of reason as a reflexive moment in the development of modern rationality is the fact that there are no single features that can be used to characterize the nature of such a reflexive moment. Such a movement eventually became, "institutionalized and routinized."[34] Although it is comprised of disparate moments of reason and criticism towards the goals of modernity, still it can be argued that the postmodern critics are equally wary of the idea of emancipation. In place of the idea of emancipation, there is a focus on the relations of subjugation and the lack of meaning that is found in the modern world. This resulted from the celebration of the "free play of meaning."[35] Among other things, the basic qualities of the postmodern critique of reason can be approached from the perspective of the deferral of meaning, the emergence of hyperreality, the identification of an intimate relationship between power and knowledge, and finally the downfall of grand narratives. In all these different formulations of the postmodern critique of reason, one can witness that what is being criticized is not the particular aspects of reason but the nature of reason in general. Hand in hand with this is the process of questioning "notions of subjectivity." [36] It is shown that one is witnessing the emergence of a new world where the themes of reason and emancipation are no longer credible.

One major component of the postmodern critique of reason is the focus on the deferral of meaning that was introduced by Jacques Derrida. It is shown that there is no universal path toward truth that is characterized by the presence of a meaning that can serve as the ultimate origin. What Derrida emphasized was "the vertical slipperiness of language."[37] Two major things are being criticized here. First of all, there is an explicit criticism of the philosophy of origins that is being developed. Secondly, the very idea of truth is criticized in favor of a theory of rationality that assumes that the nature of meaning is always in a state of transition. This idea is developed under Derrida's understanding of the deferral of meaning and is founded on the assumption that the classical metaphysical tradition erred in its quest to identify a truth that is constant and permanent. In the process what is being abandoned is the "view of intention as a conscious experience."[38] Derrida criticized this view of reason by assuming that the very nature of meaning is made possible through relations of exclusion and that as a result of this, meaning is something that always escapes the nature of human cognition.

Jean Baudrillard identified another component of such a postmodern critique of reason in arguing that the relationship that is found between the thinking subject and the outside world as it has been introduced by the Cartesian paradigm is no longer tenable in the postmodern world. Baudrillard sought to show that we are living in an age of simulacra and simulation where there is no direct access to the reality of the objects that are found in the physical world.

[33] Linda Hutcheon, "Beginning to Theorize Postmodernism," *Textual Practice* 1, no. 1 (1987): 20.

[34] Andrew Hoberek, "Introduction: after Postmodernism." *Twentieth Century Literature* 53, no. 3 (2007): 235.

[35] Patti Lather, "Postmodernism and the human sciences," *The Humanistic Psychologist* 18, no. 1 (1990): 75.

[36] Steve Matthewman and Hoey Douglas, "What happened to Postmodernism?," *Sociology* 40, no. 3 (2006): 536.

[37] Charles W Bingham, "Derrida on teaching: The economy of erasure," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 27 (2008): 18.

[38] Mark Rowlands, "Wittgenstein and Derrida on Meaning," *Behavior and Philosophy* 20 (1993): 39.

One finds the representation of "the symbolic as the lived."[39] This should not be taken as a denial of the existence of an outside world. On the contrary, it is being shown that human beings do not have an ultimate reference to the outside world since they have an experience of reality through the usage of copies and images. We are living in hyperreality and as a result of this, the idea of an ultimate reference that can serve as an objective foundation of truth is no longer acceptable in the contemporary world.[40] This has served as a foundation of recent discussions of post-truth where human beings are no longer interested in the question of truth and are not being engaged in fact-checking the nature of propositions. What the postmodern criticism of Baudrillard is showing is that in the contemporary world, there is a new fictional reality that is being created and that rather than establishing a connection with the outside world, human beings are positing themselves and defining their place in the world by being grounded on the new artificial reality.

Whereas the deferral of meaning concentrated on the absence of clear and universal meaning and the celebration of a hyperreality focused on the lack of a way of relating to the outside world in a certain manner, the analysis of knowledge and power that is developed by Michel Foucault, assumed that reason itself can be seen as a tool of repression that is used to subjugate others. It should be noted that the idea of repression and subjugation that was developed by Foucault did not concentrate on the nature of the struggle that is found in the world of capitalism. Foucault emerges as "a deep pessimist about modernity." [41] Foucault completely abandoned the modern concept of the subject in his argument that the subject is not leading an autonomous existence and that it is being created through power relations. The kind of power that is being developed here is diffused in its nature and takes place within concrete historical relations. The subject is docile and does not even have control over its existence and the only mode of human agency that is available to the subject is resisting the discursive order.[42] Foucault's postmodern critique is important since it helps to identify the limitations of the idea of emancipation as it is developed in the modern world. It is shown that modern society is a disciplinary power and that it functions in terms of the discourse on normality and abnormality.

Another important aspect of the reflexive moment of the postmodern critique of reason is developed in the form of the critique of grand narratives. It is developed by Jean-Francois Lyotard and is an attempt to herald the emergence of a new world in which there are no longer any overarching stories that give meaning to every aspect of human existence. Postmodernism is situated as "the breakthrough of the crisis of the narratives of legitimation."[43] Lyotard thinks that the emancipatory motifs of modern reason were founded on the idea that there is a general truth that expresses itself in the particular aspects of human existence.[44] In the contemporary

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[39] William Merrin, "To play with phantoms: Jean Baudrillard and the evil demon of the simulacrum," *Economy and Society* 30, no. 1 (2001): 90.

[40] Jean Baudrillard and Evans Arthur B, "Simulacra and Science Fiction (Simulacres et science-fiction)," *Science Fiction Studies* (1991): 310.

[41] Colin Koopman, "Revising Foucault: The History and Critique Of Modernity," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 36, no. 5 (2010): 549.

[42] Steven Best and Kellner Douglas, "Foucault and the Critique of Modernity," *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations* (1991): 50.

[43] Jean-François Lyotard and Brügger Niels, "What about the Postmodern? The Concept of the Postmodern in the Work of Lyotard," *Yale French Studies* 99 (2001): 85.

[44] Seyla Benhabib, "Epistemologies of Postmodernism: A Rejoinder to Jean-François Lyotard," *New German Critique*, 33(1984): 120.

world, here one sees the crisis of knowledge and the authority of science. In return mini narratives are beginning to emerge in different parts of the world and this expresses itself in the crisis in knowledge and truth in general. As it is seen in the different aspects of the postmodern critique of reason, whether it is celebrated in the name of the absence of a coherent meaning or the analysis of power and discourse, it is shown that under the postmodern critique of reason, it is not the particular qualifiers of reason but reason as such that is being undermined.

The basic limitation of the postmodern critique as a reflexive moment in the development of diverging conceptions of rationality is that it is not able to retain the paradigm of emancipation. The classical motifs of reason, truth, objectivity, and emancipation are replaced by the ideas of emotion, relativism and repression, and truth under the postmodern critique and as a result of this, there is no focus on the idea of creating a better society or envisioning a reality where meaningful relations are being pursued among individuals. The postmodern critique of reason showed the limits of the conceptions of societal progress and emancipation that have been developed in the modern period although it has abandoned any view of an emancipated future in the process. Besides this, it was also raised by the proponents of the discourse on otherness that postmodernism is completely indifferent to the questions of otherness and the structural marginalization of non-Western societies.

5   Critique of the Other

Modern rationality entered another major stage of reflection when it tried to accommodate the questions of otherness and the asymmetrical power relations that are found between Western and non-western societies. The major difference in the emergence of such a fourth reflexive moment in the form of critique of otherness is the fact that for the first time in the development of modern rationality, there was an attempt to go out of the bounds of Western thinking. This situates "otherness within modernity."[45] The issue is not the nature of reason or the role that it serves within a given context. The major point of analysis is what kind of role is being fulfilled by rationality in the creation of non-western subjugated identities. It establishes the inseparable relations between "Enlightenment and Coloniality."[46] This took the form of the analysis of otherness as it was argued that the very development of modern rationality is characterized by a relationship of binary between the other and the dominant self.

The critique of otherness is an attempt to identify the limits of modern rationality by initiating a discourse from the perspective of the subjugated and the excluded self. This is a subject whose humanity is denied and is being relegated to a lower ontological status. This creation of otherness is not the accidental feature of modern reason but an integral element of the modern idea of progress which was being realized at the expense of the other. The other is situated as an "object of domination and knowledge."[47] The critique of the other assumes that classical conceptions of rationality and progress are characterized by a Eurocentric core that holds Western culture as the apex of humanity. The other is a subject whose existence is denied as it is not being identified as being properly human.[48] It is treated as a subhuman which has not yet embarked on the path toward progress that the Western subject has embarked on. Such a

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[45] Terry Smith, "Modernism, modernity and otherness," *Australian Journal of Art* 13, no. 1 (1996): 152.

[46] Barnor Hesse, "Racialized modernity: An analytics of white mythologies," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 4 (2007): 649.

[47] Etienne Balibar, "Difference, Otherness, Exclusion," *Parallax* 11, no. 1 (2005): 25.

[48] Dan Bloom, "From the night before being: contacting the other," *Gestalt Review* 25, no. 1 (2021): 135.

discourse takes place within the "colonial space."[49] This is further developed in terms of a binary structure between modern societies on one hand and traditional ones on the other hand.

From the perspective of the critique of the other, there is a relationship that is established by modern rationality between the selfhood of the same and that of the Other. The Same is regarded as the dominant self who is seen as a rational and autonomous subject that is trying to declare its dominance over the social and natural worlds. There is a need to reconstruct the "dominant discourses of the West."[50] The selfhood of the same is sharply contrasted to that of the Other which is a subject that is inferior and of a lower origin. The only form of subjectivity that is made available to the other is to imitate the subjectivity of the Same. The Other cannot embark on its unique path toward subjectivity since it is a subject that does not have control over its existence.[51] The critique of the other thus shows that it is through the establishment of a relationship between the Same and the Other that relations of superiority and inferiority are being established in the modern world.

The critique of the Other as the fourth reflexive moment is important in broadening the horizon of the debate on modern reason and trying to make sure that the Other also becomes part of such a dialogue. Still, the basic limitation of such a reflexive moment is that it commits a performative contradiction in terms of trying to develop a form of rational criticism by borrowing tools of the critique from the very philosophical edifice that it is trying to criticize. The discourse needs to open itself up to a "process of negotiation and struggle."[52] The critique of the other is not radical enough and as a result, this leads to the development of a Eurocentric anti-Eurocentric position that is still operating within the bounds of modern Western conceptions of reason. The critique of the Other in the urge to find a tool of emancipation that is also able to expose the marginalization of the Other, still utilizes concepts and inputs from different philosophical traditions like post-structuralism, critical theory, existentialism, and Marxism. As a result of this, it is not able to evolve its unique tools of philosophical criticism that can liberate the Other.[53] The critique of the Other still maintains the binary relationship between the Same and the Other since it does not introduce a new space for philosophical criticism that is situated within the world of the Other.

It cannot certainly be denied that the critique of the Other is an important reflexive moment in the development of Western rationality as the need to include other voices in the discourse is being emphasized. Still, for such a realization, it must be seen that there is a need to embark on a new reflexive moment that can accommodate different voices of reason without necessarily succumbing to the idea that there is one single path toward societal progress that must be followed by all societies of the world. This could be realized by the development of a concept of reason that is fallible and temporal and recognizes the simultaneous but non-hierarchical existence of different conceptions of rationality and modern projects of emancipation.

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[49] Gary A Olson, "Encountering the other: Postcolonial theory and composition scholarship," *JAC* (1998): 49.

[50] Jane Hiddleston, "Spivak's 'Echo': Theorizing Otherness And The Space Of Response," *Textual Practice* 21, no. 4 (2007): 632.

[51] Veeran Naicker, "Ressentiment In The Postcolony: a nietzschean analysis of self and otherness," *Angelaki* 24, no. 2 (2019): 65.

[52] Paresh Chandra, "Marxism, Homi Bhabha and the omissions of postcolonial theory," *Critique* 40, no. 2 (2012): 210.

[53] Margaret Kohn, "Postcolonialism and Global Justice," *Journal of Global Ethics* 9, no. 2 (2013): 1981.

6 Emancipation and Rationality beyond the Four Reflexive Moments

As it is shown in the discussion so far, the reflexive moments in the development of modern rationality originated from being animated by particular necessities. The moment of demythologization emerged as a response to the limitations of the medieval and the premodern world and the fact that the freedom of the individual was being taken away. The moment of the critique of ideology in return originated as a way of identifying the role of conceptions of truth in serving ideological interests while the postmodern critique of the reason was an attempt to show the limits of rationality in general. Lastly, the critique of the Other was an attempt to incorporate the insights of the excluded Other into the discourse on human civilization. Currently, living in a state of knowledge where there is an obsession with post-metaphysical, postmodern, and post-truth thinking, there is a need to embark on a new reflexive moment. Such a quest allows us "to think beyond the binaries of truth."[54] This reflexive moment emerges from the realization that the moments of reason that have emerged so far are not adequate to answer the questions of modern societies. It also arises from the affirmation that there is a need to develop a conception of reason that is attentive enough toward cultural differences and also can develop a conception of critique and emancipation that can facilitate a possible dialogue among different cultures.

The new reflexive moment needs to go beyond the limitations of the classical conceptions of rationality. It should not be trapped in an endless debate between rationalism and empiricism, and also between objectivism and relativism. On the contrary, it should emerge from the affirmation that all conceptions of truth and rationality originate within a given context although they can contemplate the very nature of universal truth. In a Habermasian manner, this view criticizes the "belief that knowledge is limited to empirically testable propositions."[55] It must be seen that cultures and ways of life should not be seen as closed ways of life and that a possible dialogue and mutual understanding could be carried out among different cultural horizons. There is a need to embark on a conception of reason that can restore the motifs of truth, critique, and emancipation in a manner that is fallible, dynamic, and opens itself to the possibility of rational criticism. Such a conception always opens itself up to "epistemic possibility."[56] By going beyond the reflexive moments of demythologization, the critique of ideology, the postmodern critique of reason, and the critique of the Other, there is a need to embark on a new reflexive moment in modern rationality that can address the problems of contemporary societies. This urge must also be complemented with a form of philosophical criticism that can diagnose current problems and also propose an emancipatory dimension.

The new reflexive moment needs to be founded on three major conceptual inputs and necessities. First of all, there is a need to develop a conception of reason that is fallible. This comes with the affirmation that no conception of truth could ever arrive at the position of absolute truth and certainty and that there is a need to reserve room for error in theories of rationality. As it is shown by the postmodern critique of reason and also the critical modernists, one of the basic limits of the major conceptions of the reason is that they are founded on an absolutistic system of metaphysical thinking that is not able to make sense of the temporal and

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[54] Kohn, "Postcolonialism and Global Justice," 191.

[55] Jonathan Matusitz and Kramer Eric Kramer, "A critique of Bernstein's beyond objectivism and relativism: science, hermeneutics, and praxis," *Poiesis & Praxis* 7 (2011): 295.

[56] Baron Reed, "How to think about Fallibilism," *Philosophical Studies* 107 (2002): 149.

finite aspects of human experience.[57] The solution is to learn from the phenomenological tradition and to develop a conception of truth that is attentive enough to the lifeworld and the world of everyday possibilities. There is a need to develop a conception of truth that shows that human beings can never arrive at the point of absolute certainty because there is something that always goes beyond the bounds of human knowledge and cognition. To such an extent, the conception of rationality needs to be fallible.

Another major aspect of the new reflexive moment is the development of a conception of rationality that is founded on temporal horizons. This is a view that is dictated by the teachings of Martin Heidegger and the need to take temporal reality as the starting point of philosophical analysis. It is shown that the metaphysical tradition has failed in terms of addressing the question of Being and so far it has been indifferent to the study of the lifeworld and everyday temporal horizons. Heidegger tried to introduce "a non-nihilistic futural understanding of Being."[58] There is a need to see that any conception of truth that is developed in the contemporary world needs to take into consideration the temporal reality that everyday human interactions are taking place within. The locus of truth and philosophical activity is not the world of hidden form, the cognition or division that is found between a world of noumena and phenomena. On the opposite, by being grounded on and taking seriously the Heideggerian investigation into facticity and being in the world, there is a need to study our daily interactions and unique mode of existence that is characterized by a quest for authenticity. This is not "merely concerned with appearance."[59] There is a need to realize that the study of truth should not be separated from the study of a reality that is temporal, finite, and dynamic. Based on this, the task of the new reflexive moment in rationality is to study the temporal reality that we are all situated within.

Lastly, another major component of the new reflexive moment in rationality is the affirmation that there is a need to incorporate the insights of different cultural horizons into the quest for truth. The conventional conceptions of rationality are founded on the assumption that there is one single developmental path that needs to be followed by all societies of the world.[60] There is the argument that modern Western societies represent the apex of human civilization and that to be modernized, other societies need to imitate such a developmental path as well. Such a conception of reason and societal progress has turned out to be Eurocentric in its nature since it cannot accommodate the conceptions of rationality and progress that have emerged in non-western societies. There is a need to develop a conception of reason that can affirm the existence of conceptions of truth that are grounded on the insights of different cultures. This can "go beyond the original premises of modernity have been taking place also in Western societies."[61] This can be conceptually grounded on the idea of multiple modernities which shows that modernity is not the unique achievement of a unique culture and that culture and politics play

[57] Calvin O Schrag, "Postmodernism as a Problem for Metaphysics," *Russian Journal of Communication* 7, no. 1 (2015): 73.

[58] Iain Thomson, "Ontotheology? Understanding Heidegger's destruktion of metaphysics," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 8, no. 3 (2000): 309.

[59] Dan Zahavi, "Phenomenology as metaphysics," In *The Routledge Handbook of Metametaphysics*, ed. Rick Bliss and Miller J.T.M (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2020), 16.

[60] Arturo Escobar, "Worlds and knowledges otherwise: The Latin American modernity/coloniality research program," *Cultural studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2007): 202.

[61] Eisenstadt, Samuel N Eisenstadt, "Multiple modernities in the framework of a comparative evolutionary perspective," *Understanding Change: Models, Methodologies and Metaphors* (2006): 200.

a huge role in the development of conceptions of modernity that have emerged in different parts of the world.

7   Conclusion

The development of diverging conceptions of modern rationality has been accompanied by the need to develop a conception of reason that can address the challenges of the times. There is a focus on the development of a theory of rationality that can liberate the individual from custom and tradition and this led to the emergence of the reflexive moment of demythologization. This led to the celebration of the right of the human subject and the view that there will be progress that is attained in the natural and the social worlds. Unfortunately, the conceptual foundations of such a reflexive moment are not broad enough and because of this, it led to the imposition of western cultural values on other cultures of the world in the name of realizing the goals of modernization. With the emergence of the capitalistic mode of production, there was the realization that there is an ideological manipulation and that there is a need to emancipate the alienated masses through collective struggle. This was founded on an instrumental conception of reason and was not able to incorporate the emancipatory and communicative potentials of reason. The third moment expressed itself in the form of the postmodern critique of reason and concentrated not on the actual functions of rationality but on the limits of modern rationality in general. This led to the abandoning of the paradigm of emancipation.

What makes the critique of the Other stand out when compared to the other moments in rationality and historical trajectory is that it was an attempt to incorporate the questions of the subject that are marginalized and subjugated under modern conceptions of rationality. There is still the performative contradiction that is founded within such a mode of criticism and because of that, it did not succeed in terms of introducing a form of rationality that makes sense of the lived experiences of the Other and the alienated subject. All these limits that are exhibited within modern conceptions of rationality show that there is a need to develop a new reflexive moment that can provide a fallible and temporal foundation of rationality that is also able to accommodate diverging conceptions of emancipation. This is attentive enough to cultural and historical differences and also can generate a dialogue between different conceptions of emancipation.

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