Philosophical Reconsruction and Metamodernism

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Abstract: The article examines the philosophical foundations of the discursive reconstruction method used by metamodernists in the analysis of modern humanities and art. Reconstruction is a multilevel critical strategy that includes many auxiliary concepts such as "structure of feelings", "metaxis", "authenticity" etc.
Keywords: deconstruction, metaxis, metamodernism, postmodernism, reconstruction.

The postmodern paradigm that was formed during the 20th century has previously defined the textual cultural pattern with its own semiotic, cognitive and anthropological criteria. However, in the 21st century, new discursive and communicative practices have emerged. Metamodernism is an example of such new cultural approaches.Their research program is aimed at reconstructing the traditional metaphysical values of the search for truth, authenticity, subjectivity, and transcendence. In contrast to the textual deconstructivism of J. Derrida, they called their method reconstruction. The unusualness of this strategy, which confronts the historical past and the present, lies in the search for "here and now" of authenticity in oneself and the world with a deliberately absent ending and truth: "Metamodernism moves for the sake of movement, attempts, despite its inevitable failure; he is always looking for the truth that he never expects to find "[1]. When considering the issues of the ontological or epistemological justification of reconstruction, it loses its independence and goes into the rhizome-eclectic regime: - the removal of any of the references to the works of Plato, Malabu (Hegel), Voegelin, Williams, Fukuyama, Deleuze, etc. do not inflict structural discourse metamodernism of meaningful damage.

Reconstruction as a method was not invented by metamodernists. In architecture, monument reconstruction means repairing existing structure and recreating its former state and functions. In the mid-19th century, A. Schleicher, a linguist, gave reconstruction a scientific meaning by attempting to reconstruct Proto-Indo-European language. Linguistic reconstruction is the practice of recreation of extinct linguistic forms and systems, taking into account the possible paths of linguistic development. In 1950s, F. Alexander, R. Grinker, and F. Robbins created a reconstruction method within the framework of psychosomatic approach to psychoanalysis. It came down to exposure of a patient's previous episodic mental states that cause neurotic disorders in present. To a great extent it became the development of Freudian "restoration" (Wiederherstellung) of mental states indicated in mnemonic trace of the patient's clinical history. In his *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, J. Dewey, American philosopher with instrumentalist views, describes reconstruction as identification of philosophy's correspondence to initial circumstances of its occurrence or rearrangement of conditions of existence to create new philosophical systems.

In all considered meanings reconstruction represents an action of establishing authenticity through retrospective projection, restructuring of semiotic system, redintegration or instrumental reconstruction. Authenticity being in itself [2] (J. Baudrillard) takes root in time and upon reconstruction of an artefact, sign, phenomenon, circumstance of the past shall be expressed in the updated copy to the fullest extent. Metamodernism advocates have set even a more complicated task: to reconstruct the authenticity in the works of contemporary art. It is suggested not to establish its author as much as to use an opportunity to represent it externally. Considering imitative paradoxicality of contemporary art as fiction narrative, the critical reconstruction of metamodernism pursues not its actual proof but oscillation — metaxis — between the actual and fictional. Considering that fiction always accompanies the literature of resonating fulfillment of what's hoped for, replacement of something that's lacking in reality, metaxis is then the state of a reader at the border of ambiguity, tragic conflict, temporal uncertainty. Incidentally, the result of reconstruction is the reader's self-identification in terms of free discovery of truth of its existence here and now upon immediate contact with text, "...we suggest and broadly define the term "reconstruction" for a kind of engagement subject to oscillations in works of art, engagement calling for genuine responsibility of a reader upon its contact with text"[3].Through dynamic dualism the symbolic character of the whole postmodernist culture provides the reconstruction not only with artistic meaning.

The main reconstruction is to find a middle point of conflict or contradiction, which metamodernists call "metaxis" (borrowed from Plato's dialogue on the two-facedness of Eros). One of the metamodernism ideologists T. Vermeulen comments on the perceptions of M. Heidegger and F. Jameson on the source and end of the work of art. When talking about the worn-out peasant's shoes depicted by Vincent van Gogh, M.

Heidegger sees an ontological attribute, "These shoes belong to the land... The shoes sprang up from this preserved belonging to the land to rest in itself" [4] Jameson matches van Gogh's shoes against the black and white image of shoes by Andy Warhol "out of this world." [5] Art without genesis loses its meaning and turns into a tagline. In turn, T. Vermeulennotes that in the contemporary artistic vision, "... appearance can trigger a feeling of being outside its range." [6] This affective experience gives the work an "implication" and reconstructs it. In any case, there is no deconstructive game of presence vs. absence which turns the art into a multifaceted colage or decolage of endless copies.

Reconstruction as a path of discovery of "being in itself" (J. Baudrillard) functions as a cut-off valve between the symbolic and real worlds. Interaction between the symbolic and real existence as part of conceptualized repetition. In terms of aesthetics, repetition is a narrated image of the past as expressed in any system of symbolic signification. Reconstruction is an act of "deciphering" of a symbolic construction, establishing its connection to the reality. Fulfillment of such a critical synthesis is due to alignment of external references (time, place, reason, goal) of present and affective experience of the reader. Reconstruction is the poetics of narrative transferred into the historical reality (historioplasticity). Such reader's transgression of symbolism in fiction creates a material scene of future.

The discovery that metamodernists made is introduction of timing of spontaneous interaction (oscillation) between the real past and symbolic past, as well as between the reverse movement from symbolic to the real present. Symbolism is considered not as a self-institutionalized sign system but as a universal media, a means of representation of real based on the materialistic concept of the "structure of feeling." In *Notes on Metamodernism* the "structure of feeling" is presented as a superindividual modulation of mutually conditioned mental states manifesting themselves in the process of cognition, "Each time the metamodern enthusiasm swings toward fanaticism, gravity pulls it back toward irony; the moment its irony sways toward apathy, gravity pulls it back toward enthusiasm" [7].

Binary psychologism is reflected epistemologically as expressed by Plato's metaxis, an ambivalent state between opposites "here" and "there" (atopos) [8], present and past, surface and depth, form and matter, spirit and matter, mundane and sacred, male and female, personal and common, liberal and unitary, etc. In representation metaxis as a result of becoming cannot be reduced to dialectic removal of opposites, formal identity, Nietzsche's cycles of eternal recurrence, sequence of post-structuralistsimulacrums.Metaxis is historical in time and creates a possibility for spontaneous reproduction of "being in itself"of a past event in reality which is a significant difference from nomadic "inbetweenness" of post-structuralist rhizome, which "...isn't made of units, but measurements or, rather agile processes. It doesn't have a beginning or end, but it always has a middle which helps it grow and overflow. It institutionalizes the linear sets with measurements, without a subject or object..." [9] In metamodernism, the state of "inbetweenness" indicates the interdependence, co-existence of contradictions but at the same time it doesn't express them, which has led to a historical stop, lack of progress and development of opposites.

The distortion of traditional subject-object relations and alogism of dialectic differences without identical relation (diakrisis) on the one hand demonstrate a complete symbolic replacement of reality popularized by postmodernism, but on the other hand, a reverse parabolic discourse projecting to reality. Metamodernists don't see this as a variation of empirical continuation from abstract to concrete, but rather as a historical representation of here and now of a past event, which is unpreventable, tragic and hurtful. Contemporary literature is a visual evidence of such "hunger for reality" and urge for authenticity. In terms of search of meaning, literature creates an effect of an inclined vessel between two extremes: fiction and reality; the vessel's inclination towards one side prompts to catch it from another side. These contradictions sharpen the words used for description of spontaneous life events and cause the recipient reader to experience complicated affective emotions of empathy, horror, love, grief, etc.

R. Eshelman, the founder of critical performatism, believes that the easiest and most affordable way to register the real life events is to take pictures. A picture is a technically generated documented proof of the fact which helps avoid the distortion of phenomenal and textual experience. The formal method of "double framing" by R. Eshelman allows the audience to find itself in a fascinating gap between the source and author's version of the picture which doesn't lose its denotative dependence. At the same time, the systematic attitude of metamodernists towards the evaluation of the reality of what's being photographed based on the "structure of feeling" R. Eshelman calls unclear and temporizing. [10]

G. Harman exercises an even more drastic, metaphysical method of reality unveiling through object-oriented ontology (OOO). He presents two cognitive strategies for presentation of real life objects as either "undermined" (manifestation of Arche) or "overmined" (representation within its quality and functional characteristics). The metamodernist "structure of feeling" should be attributed to the latter. Hartman's philosophical system is based on *The Quadruple Object* system, which is a quaternary object structure consisting of a "sensitive object," "sensitive qualities," "real qualities," "real object." [11] The first three types

of object were borrowed from a majorly reformed system by E. Husserl on the *epoch* and eidetic properties of a phenomenon, the fourth type is the "real object" which always escapes from cognition—a derivative of Heidegger's "available" being of a thing. Like metamodernists Harman supports the trend for seeking authenticity of real autonomous objects in past and present, meanwhile he doesn't make any concessions for discourse representativeness or psychologism.

The swinging of the historical pendulum toward realism that has started to take shape in the beginning of the 21st century is a response to postmodernist simulacrums dominating in the European culture. While postmodernism was defined by the market demand for fashion, movie, commercial, show, politics, Internet trends, metamodernists with their urge for "authenticity" focus on their real consequences for consumers in a form of environmental, economic, political crises.

On the background of these recessions, the modern historical narrative is changing, indicating the end of the past period in history. F. Fukuyama was fast enough to respond to the emerging uncertainty with an "end of history" concept. While the Hegel's and Marx's scenarios of the kind didn't come to life at the end of the 19th century being imbued with unrestricted optimism of metaphysical freedom and industrialization, today the declining ideology and economics are imbued with real anticipatory anxiety[12]. The contemporary philosophy discursively strives to give hope for the future. For example, K. Malabou illegally introduces his theory of "plasticity" into the Hegel's philosophy of history and contrary to Heidegger's predictions argues that future has "an ability to take shape and to create shape." [13] Metamodernists, on the contrary, try not to look into future by reconstructing the disconnected past with present.

R. van den Akker, a graduate of Rotterdam University and a student of J. de Mul (who defined two extremes of the 20th century: modern enthusiasm and postmodern sarcasm), gives the postmillennium transformations a sophisticated historical connotation. R. van den Akker takes as a basis the capitalistic determinism of F. Jameson when defining the epistemological dominating ideas in history (national capitalism (17th - mid 19th century) — realism domination, monopolistic capitalism (end of the 19th century — 1960s), modernism, multinational capitalism (1960s to present) — postmodernism) and determines the fourth reconfiguration of the 21st century capitalism as "multi-tensed" characterized by truce between the optimistic modernism and global postmodernism. [14]

The symbolic orientation of this arguable discourse has effect on the special interdependence of temporal modes of present and past. If, at the end of the 20th century, G. Deleuze and F. Guattari considered such continuity rather conditional and accidental, similar to pathological displacement of conscious stating that, "... the world history is not only retrospective but also accidental, unique, ironic and critical" [15], at the beginning of the 21st century the historical determinism becomes a trend again. This is exemplified by Columbia University professor F. Hartog's book *Regimes of Historicity*, in which structural invariants of anthropology are debunked (*Other Times, Other Customs: The Anthropology of History* by Marshall Sahlins) with arguments of a real connection of historical times with genetic basis, development and end. [16] F. Hartog considers the Odysseus' heroic journey as the first completed historical experience opposed to closed temporal cycles of a myth. The journey is interpreted not only as a return to the past, to the source and home, but also as a challenging throw from present to future with suspense. Such oscillation of time, once removed, then returning back is becoming a sign of logical diakrisis (*διάκρισις*) for metamodernists, at which the major term *becomes* contradictory to itself with time (for example, in ancient times "techne" meant a craft, today it is the basis of an industrial civilization). This is not Πάντα ῥεῖ but a reversible movement from source winding up like waves of the ocean. Metamodernists call this cognitive oscillation the passing of present through representation of the past, because it's always possible to model a future opposite to the past (happened present). Metaxis as an "in between" state indicates the conceptual ambivalency until the it tilts to either end. No unstressing double negation of Hegel's dialectics is observed here, since the idea of progressive development is absent. The historical moment of re-presence is a result of interdependency of extreme opposites of the past, when it makes sense to step back from one and favor another (from chaos to order, from servitude to freedom). Thus, diakrisis manifests itself in pendulum change of opposites unlike it poststructuralist "coupling," as carried out by G. Deleuze when evaluating the temporal corporal experience in Proust's rethoric, "How did spontaneous memory function in Proust? It coupled two feelings, which, while being at two different levels in the body, grappled — feelings of present and past — and revealed something irrelevant to either past or present, and that was the Shape" [17]. Thus, the reconstruction of a historical event in the metamodern discourse is interpreted as diacrisis - a fundamentally incomplete dialectical difference in conditions of spatio-temporal ambivalence and nonlinearity of the historical process.

In conclusion metamodernism registers the main changes that have been taking place in world culture and public life at the beginning of the 21st century. Diligent consideration of particular phenomena of literature, arts, politics etc. shall be followed by the establishment of concepts and percepts for their clarification. Reconstructing history, the metamodernists focused on the possible synthesis of the already existing

achievements of culture through the oscillation between the utopian metanarratives of the mass modern man and the pluralism of postmodern simulacra. For metamodernist epistemology the truth in rapid alteration of opposites is unachievable, it's only possible to pursue the truth through the "structure of feeling" as you would pursue future. At that, the future is boiled down to the concept of the "end of history" as defined by Fukuyama. This prevents the appearance of a potential or a new meaning of a statement both in deconstructivism and performatism. We are only left with "responsibility" for the present being as something "in between" the opposites. The issue is not so about the choice, as it is about the recognition of the fact of the mutually conditioned presence of opposites in the reality captured by them. As such the meaning is unveiled in a conflict or paradoxical situation of a public or political life. The same principle is observed in representative practices of interpretation of contemporary works of art and literature mentioned in this research.

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