

Stefan Morawski

Problems with Postmodernism, or Can We Grasp the Essence of Postmodernity?

Summary

Stefan Morawski takes as his starting point the problems with defining modernism and modernity as those two notions undoubtedly affect our understanding of postmodernism. While discussing four basic reasons why it is so difficult to grasp the essence of both modernity and postmodernity, the author emphasises their affinities and divergencies. Thus postmodernism can be seen either as a kind of self-rectification of modernism or as its decline/decay which must follow the modernist crisis of culture. Stefan Morawski argues that the phase of postmodernism we have entered now can be characterised by its dominant consumeristic permissivism which derives its impetus from cyber-culture. By bidding farewell to the culture we have cherished since ancient Greece, we seem to opt for taking over a destructive facet of modernism which developed under the pressure of modern civilisation.

Ewa Rewers

The Position of the Subject – The Subject as Position. Who Leads the Subject out of Metaphysics?

Summary

The essay attempts to answer three basic questions. Who leads the subject out of metaphysics? Who occupies 'my' position? What passes through the position called the subject? The first of these questions concerns the current tasks of the philosophy of subjectivity; the second one addresses the subject's functions in different traditions with particular emphasis on the incommensurability of Greek and Judaic traditions; and the third question is concerned with the effects of poststructuralist de-re-constructions of the subject.

Agata Bielik-Robson

Irony, Tragedy, Community: Richard Rorty in the Eyes of a Barbarian

Summary

The essay is a perverse attempt at interpreting Richard Rorty from the perspective of a barbarian, that is, a person whom the author of *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* excludes from the conversation of civilised people. For Rorty, the basic criterion of barbarity is adherence to a culture which has retained distinctly pre-modern characteristics, i.e., those which predate 'the process of civilisation'. The author, by identifying herself with the excluded "barbarian", seeks to indicate the merits of the pre-modern paradigm which has been unjustly disparaged by the leading philosopher of American postmodernism. Thus the author wants to redress the postmodernist turn from a pre-modern position; by evoking those categories that modernity has made to sink into oblivion – e.g. ritual un-differentiation and the catharsis experience – she argues that they are a natural supplement to Rorty's 'call for universal solidarity'. Without this supplement, Rorty's call is just a vacuous declaration.

Tadeusz Sławek

Butter and Rotten Wood / a Teardrop: Blake and the Philosophy of Friendship

Summary

The essay sets out to explore the framework of the philosophy of friendship as a basic human relationship whose richness has not been exhaustively scrutinised yet. Taking as its starting point the memorable statement from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that “opposition is true friendship”, the author seeks to demonstrate the fundamental and profound character of the relationship called friendship; the character which prevents it – despite its common understanding – from being defined as agreement, support or alliance. Friendship, by transcending those relationships, becomes a force which may disrupt and undermine their structures and thereby it comes to speak on behalf of desires and passions. This is why it may be called a ‘counter-relationship’: the notion itself alludes to a fundamental term of Blake’s philosophy, i.e., ‘a contrary’ as opposed to negation. A friend is thus a restless being; a being without a permanent address; a being who is nomadic and denies to be unequivocally defined. It is Blake, as well as Nietzsche and Emerson (who are also referred to in the essay), who makes us appreciate this extraordinary philosophical and ethical phenomenon.

Tadeusz Rachwał

Who Does Not Work Does Not Return: On the Culture of Labour

Summary

The essay offers a view of modern European culture from the perspective of broadly understood ‘returning’ which constitutes an economic, ethical and aesthetic principle of the mythologisation of exteriority as the main, though not exclusive, area of the creative activity of the human subject. The *sub-ject* is discursively constructed as an *e-ject* born out of the bowels of its/his/her own contraries. In the latter part of the essay the author discusses Zygmunt Bauman’s distinction between anthropophagic and anthropoemic cultures. Representatives of the anthropophagic culture devour their own species in opposition to the anthropoemic culture which is a culture of emission or ‘vomiting’, as Bauman has it.