



A reply to Peter Boghsonnian and James Lindsay's, 'What comes after postmodernism?'

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In their answer to the question posed by this journal, 'What comes after postmodernism?' Peter Boghossian and James Lindsay provide several curious arguments which, when not completely incoherent, fail to follow. They claim, for instance, that postmodernism 'valorized notions of subjectivity and lived experience while deprecating the idea of an objectively knowable world'. It should be noted, however, that philosophers have been engaged in debates concerning the nature of reality throughout history. Specifically, the fields of metaphysics and epistemology are concerned with such questions.

The authors further claim that as 'postmodernism' developed, 'the experiences of the marginalized received particular status and deference'. Note, the fact of marginalization is not the problem, but that marginalized people sought to no longer be marginalized. Thus, they claim, *before* 'Postmodernism shifted us', 'the marginalized' had a general status and were treated *without* deference, which, it is inferred, is preferable. But they fail to observe any contradictions in their argument. To wit, they claim that they uphold 'Enlightenment values', such as 'free inquiry, open expression, progress', yet they also claim that things were better for 'us' before the so-called postmodern 'shift', that is, when 'the marginalized' were not seeking a 'particular status'. But arguing for the continual marginalization of some people, while also claiming to value things like 'free inquiry, open expression', and 'progress' is contradictory. The former precludes the latter. If people are marginalized in a society, then the conditions that might allow for (universal) 'free inquiry, open expression', and 'progress' are non-existent.

Furthermore, the authors mourn the 'old social hierarchies of dominance and subordination' that have, they say, become inverted after 'postmodernism'. They do not say, however, what constituted the old 'hierarchies of dominance', but only that they are preferable. Things were better, they say, before 'victim-based identity politics and intersectionality' emerged. Intersectionality, in short, is a social theory initiated by Professor of Law, Kimberlé Crenshaw, which recognizes that Black women are subject to an intersection of oppression that white women are not. Black women, thus, face a 'double' oppression: racism and sexism. Subsequently, scholars have identified myriad other intersections of identities that may compound oppression and marginalization. The authors do not deny that such intersections exist; however, they claim that marginalization confers a dominant social power. This claim, of course, contradicts itself outright. The claim that the more intersections of oppression one experiences, the 'greater' their 'social status' will be, is contradictory. In other words, 'the more one is marginalized, the less they are marginalized'. Absurd!

The authors also claim that 'seeking objective, non-situated Truth is viewed as an act of oppression', but this too is unfounded. There are many scholars who spend their careers speculating and writing on theories of Truth. Furthermore, there's been a resurgence in scholarly interest in the Philosophy of truth over the last 20 years.

Finally, their claim that 'postmodernism' has 'matured into an industry of pseudo-scholarly "knowledge" production' is striking in light of the authors' own consistent failures to put forth coherent statements, which themselves, constitute a hallmark of pseudo-science.

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