

知识、真理与文化危机

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[英文提要]

Postmodernism, despite its severe critique of modernity, is nothing but the radicalization of subjectivism that is intrinsic to the vision of knowledge and truth in the Enlightenment. From Nietzsche onward, those who revolt against the Enlightenment make the Will and not Reason as the foundation of knowledge and truth. Truth or knowledge thus becomes creative construction at the will of man as the subject. However, in our present age, it is the Will of the human person that is the most questionable. What we are confronted with in the present age is precisely the reality of hollow men devoid of identity and will, of men without inwardness.

Why has western culture come to such a predicament? Some point to the loss of critical awareness which defines the nature of the Enlightenment, with the result of modern man being blinded by the scientific world view he constructed. Others point to the totalitarian character of any system of explanation which claims totality.

We propose that the real problem lies in the concept or vision of truth intrinsic to the Enlightenment. Truth or knowledge

is regarded as something that is to be grasped in abstraction from one's existence, as something external to one's being, not knowing that the one to grasp is in fact part and parcel of the reality to be grasped. Regarding reality as nothing but the blueprint of the grand design of the universe, the founders of the Enlightenment took an objectivistic approach to reality and therefore to truth. Taking such objectivistic approach, the subject becomes an obstacle to pure reality. Doubt about knowledge of the external world becomes inevitable. Approach to knowledge thus becomes intellectual gymnastics to find epistemological certainty. Out of epistemological despair, subjectivism, skepticism and relativism have become the norm of the day.

An alternative perception of truth is proposed. Incarnation—the Word became flesh—is the model. Truth is not *Theoria*. Truth is that which touches the very core of our being. It arises out of the life-world where we move and have our being. To seek for truth, one cannot take a detached “theoretical” attitude. One has to open one's being to it. At the same time, the seeker of truth can no longer regard himself as “subject”, as that which has the capability to subject the object of his knowledge. Rather he has to let the personal realm of being, which reflects the reality of his own being, show him the way to know. In the personal realm of being, one cannot suppose oneself to be a subject over-against other persons as objects. The others have their subjectivity which determines the way they are to be known. Revelation is common in the intercourse among human persons. Revelation involves relation, involvement and commitment. That

is the Christian approach to real knowledge of truth. God as the Absolute Subject invites us to open ourselves to His revealing Himself. It is an invitation of mutual participation and interpenetration. In this journey of grasping truth, our life is shaped and determined by the truth in which we have a part.

从各种时代的迹象看来，尼采的预言似乎真的应验了。尼采曾倡议意志确立真理，并预言时候将到，一切所谓真理、科学、知识都不过是意志的产物。我们所谓的后现代，其最重要的观照（Vision）乃是，一切科学、知识、真理都是人按其自由意志所建构的产物或社会的精神反射。对后现代主义者来说，真理或客观实相只是时代意识的产物。而所谓科学方法，也不过是一种“建构世界的方式”（“a way of world-making”）。^① 骤眼看来，我们所处的时代似乎是主体精神决定一切、确立一切的时代。人可以凭其意志所选取的观点、角度及创作的取向，无论是个体的抑或是集体的，建构他视为真实的世界。意志（不是理性或客观实相）似乎是知识、真理的基础。然而，看得清楚一点，当今最成疑问的，正是人的意志的确实性。现代人或后现代人深悟自己意志的空洞与割裂。

不错，现代人确从传统信仰、从着重群体生活的社会形态解放出来。他似乎真的成了自主、自法的主体，一个可以支配、主宰世界的主体，他可随意构思世界的本相（reality），把真实的世界化成“世界图象”（world-picture）。然而，自尼采宣告他的意志福音（the Gospel of the Will）以来，现代人的实况是怎样的呢？

^① Nelson Goodman 的著作 *The Way of World-Making* 便是这观点最典型的代表。