The Postmodern Explained to Grown-ups: A Lesson of A Thai Study of the Postmodern

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‘มีอะไรใหม่ๆ ไหม?’—‘Is there anything new?’
It is more often than not that this kind of question is put to a Thai who has just been graduated afresh from the West. In this case, I was not exempted. The Thai academic circle is always fascinated with the latest comers. In the second semester of 1992 academic year, I was asked by some enthusiastic post-graduate students of the Department of Government of Chulalongkorn University to conduct a course on Western political theory. Like a salesman, I humbly asked them what kind of my goods might satisfy their needs. They answered my question with a question. What then inevitably came to the fore is: Is there anything new? Really
I was thrilled. First, it implies that they have already been through that which is not new, which was good to hear. On the other hand, it made me uncomfortable. Since what I had in my James-Bond briefcase could not be deemed new. My subject is mainly of two thousand and five hundred-year-old ancient Greek political philosophy, namely Plato and before, therefore I felt quite insecure that my stuff could not be of service. However, a good salesman must not be discouraged at his first encounter with an unmatched target group. He should play a trick by camouflaging his undesirable stuff with something seemingly desirable.1

Of course, one cannot deny that besides 'globalization and democratisation' the current topic on a top of the prof.2 chart is the Postmodern. To be sure, the term traverses across the realm of the tragic-serious to the realm of the comic-playful. From a cable television channel, I once heard one of the characters in a cartoon version of Beetlejuice

1. A salesman differs from 'a wise man called Socrates who has theories about the heavens and has investigated everything below the earth, and can make the weaker argument defeat the stronger' (Apology, 18b). Socrates' Apology, translated by Hugh Tredennick in Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, (eds.), Plato: The Collected Dialogues including the Letters with Introduction and Prefatory Notes, Bollingen Series LXXI (Princeton University press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1982, 11th printing.) The old man Socrates is someone who makes desirable things undesirable. He successfully makes the Athenian people turn away from what should be desirable, namely episteme, to what should be undesirable, namely doxa. With regard to the former, philosophy is a real thing like Coke which is tangible and drinkable whilst to the latter, sophistry is a hocus-pocus like its namesake Walt Disney's movie, Hocus Pocus, which is intangible and undrinkable.

2. ‘Prof.’ or professor refers to scholars and academics.
cry out loud to remind his/her friends that they are now living in the postmodern age. In the mean time, so far, it seems that one hardly found either globalization or democratisation employed in a realm of comic-playful as such. Some might argue that both terms are specifically academic so that their usages are confined within their own life-world. I do not deny this. Also no one could ever deny the scholasticality of postmodern either. Therefore, it seems that, on the contrary, such an argument *argumentum ad hominem* is supporting rather than being against the traversal of *postmodern*'s popularity across various realms, that is, from an ivory tower down to a comic/looney-toon world. Truly, the *postmodern* has become a widespread and fashionable. Moreover, *postmodern* is a typical western product. With this regard, it is qualified to be commodified. I could possibly sell it. But, someone might ask, how I can relate *postmodern* to my knowledge, of antiquity?

The forerunner of the *postmodern* is Nietzsche, a philologist\(^3\) whose expertise in the classics was incontestable. He is said to have both praised and attacked classical thought. Praising and criticizing classical thinking is not an unusual habit. Plato has been always eulogised as one of the founders of the Great Tradition, whilst the sophists play a subversive role and have been recognised as villains. The story had been so until Nietzsche started the fire by reversing the tradition. As the saying runs the

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3. To be sure, Nietzsche states that a philologist 'must have an understanding of three things: antiquity, the present, and himself. His guilt lies in failing to understand antiquity or the present or himself'. (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, translated, with an Introduction by Marianne Cowan, Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1962, p. 10.)
like always likes its like.\textsuperscript{4} The subversive is attracted to the subversive. For Nietzsche, Socrates and Platonism are not heroes. It is the Pre-Socratics and the sophists to whom Nietzsche paid tribute.\textsuperscript{5} His unconventional view, compared with his contemporaries, of the ancient Greek thought should be one way or another related to the origin of \textit{postmodern} thought. With this peculiar connection to antiquity and his adumbration of the \textit{postmodern}, Nietzsche is taken as a medium between antiquity and \textit{postmodern}. In one way or another, to understand \textit{postmodern} one has to go back to the Nietzschean path to the Greeks. Of course, to spend a considerable length of time lecturing \textit{postmodern} by having recourse to the Greeks would allow me to sell what I have in the name of something I do not. At least, I expected, half of the time of the whole course should have gone to the Greeks.

I

Before proceeding, it is necessary to return to the question in question above, namely "Is there anything new?" The style of questioning should be considered carefully. It can be said that searching for knowledge is a perennial activity of humankind. Only what kind of knowledge to be sought after marks the difference. Evidently, "Is there anything new?" differs from "Is there anything old?" From this, it tells us that what is new is more desirable than what is old. New or novel knowledge is more desirable or rather better than the old stuff. This love

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{4} "...(T)hat like must of necessity be ever friendly with like.' (Plato, Lysis, (214a\textsuperscript{e}), translated by J. Wright in Plato: The \textit{Collected Dialogues}, op cit.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Friedrich Nietzsche, \textit{Philosophy in the Tragic Age of The Greeks}, op cit., pp. 34-36.
\end{itemize}
of novelty reminds me of 'Querelle des anciens et des modernes'. It is the great debate in the Middle Ages between the moderns and the ancients who argued for superiority of their knowledge to the other. This therefore possibly leads one to conceive that they—those Thai students who always have a hankering mood for what is forever new—are the moderns. Since the West has been travelling in time so long before it faced another new interpretation of its self-image, the question whether they are the modern is importantly significant to understanding postmodern. To be sure, the Western distinction between antiqui and moderni started approximately one thousand and five hundred years ago when Cassiodorus called his contemporaries the Moderns although the meaning of his concept of modernity basically differs from the more modern one. For Cassidorus, the Moderns referred to his contemporaries as the heirs and renewers of the old culture, so to speak the new ancients whilst, more modern concept of the moderns announced a break in the cultural tradition of antiquity. With regard to the latter, then, to be modern one has to keep


8. Ibid.
up with a revolutionary spirit in breaking with its own tradition or, say, itself.\(^9\) Paradoxically, to be modern one inevitably has to be postmodern, or if one would like to be modern/s/he has to be postmodern otherwise s/he could not.\(^10\)

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9. An excellent account of the problem of this point in concern can be found in Marshall Berman’s *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*. Berman leads us to perceive the problem of modernity that its “dialectical motion... turns ironically against its prime movers, the bourgeoisie, (b)ut it may not stop turning there: after all, all modern movements are caught up in this ambience including Marx’s own, (s)uppose, as Marx supposes, that bourgeois forms decompose, and that a communist movement surges into power: what is to keep this new social form from sharing its predecessor’s fate and melting down in the modern air?...(b)ut one of the distinctive virtues of modernism is that it leaves its questions echoing postmodern is like a woman. It is hard to apprehend.” I am not capable of explaining the postmodern to the children who always wanted something new and exciting! For what I have is not new. However, whatever reason it is of the utilities of postmodern, if they cannot find it, I would have thought, at least, *it makes them modern* in the air long after the questioners themselves, and their answers, have left the scene.” (Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: the Experience of Modernity*, (London: Verso 1983), p. 21. See also Stanley Rosen *Hermeneutics as Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987): Rosen states that “...postmoernist(s), although they understand themselves as an attack on the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, are in fact a continuation of that Enlightenment”, p. 3.

10. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982–1985*, op. cit., p. 22: A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Thus understood, postmodernism is not modernism at its end, but in a nascent state, and this state is recurrent.’
II

[My lecture in postmodernism had been framed by Lyotard’s popular statement on the subject, that is, postmodern ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’.\textsuperscript{11}] I started my lecture by explaining to the students that Nietzsche, a forerunner of postmodernism, castigated Platonism since, after Plato, Platonism has effected and overshadowed Western metaphysical thinking. In other words, it is a founding father of archetypal metanarrative. It generated relentlessly serious search(es) and faith(s) for Truth. Power and influence of Platonism changed the condition of thinking. It makes lightness and its associates unbearable.\textsuperscript{12} According to Platonism, being cannot be light. It must be masculine, heavily-weighty, substantive, and true.\textsuperscript{13} Of course, in this regard, metanarratives and Truth are interchangeable. However, in this century, what is held as Truth can only be a metanarrative for a postmodernist like Lyotard. In 500–400 BC in ancient Greece, what was held as Truth for Plato and others could only be just a verbal expression for Antiphon. In this respect, I asked my students to start

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\item “In the world of eternal return the weight of unbearable responsibility lies heavy on every move we make. That is why Nietzsche called the idea of eternal return the heaviest of burdens (das schwerste Gewicht) ....What then shall we choose? Weight or lightness?” (See Milan Kundera, \textit{The Unbearable Lightness of Being}, (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 5.
\item For Nietzsche, from this attitude, beginning with Plato, ‘philosophers became exiles, conspiring against their fatherland’. (Nietzsche, \textit{Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks}, op cit., p. 35.)
\end{enumerate}
with Antiphon in order to experience the atmosphere congenial to Lyotard’s *postmodern*. For I myself believed that Antiphon and some sophists can be regarded as distant founding fathers of postmodern thought. Since Lyotard regarded his new cognitive option as agonistics. The term is ancient Greek in its origin which referred to festival games and competitions. If agonistics of language game is a mood which *postmodern* has called for, then, one can see that what is derived from Antiphon’s statement reponds to the mood. From class discussion on Antiphon, we came to a conclusion-cum-statement that language is neither representation nor correspondence of reality; law and order are conventional, *nomos*, and, from this regard, ‘justice may also be injustice’;
things which bring pain do not benefit man more than the things which bring pleasure; nothing but self-interest is true and ethical.¹⁷

Antiphon had been with us for nearly three-four sessions. So far, 'Is this (Antiphon) *postmodern*?' cried the students. Their comment was 'they ain't see nothing (new) yet!' 'ไม่เห็นมีอะไรใหม่เลย Mai hen mi arai mai leoy!'. Also, having translated—read a few pages of Antiphon, they began to get bored of confronting the English translation of ancient Greek fragments in order to keep up with modern spirit by being

¹⁷. 'Justice then consists in not transgressing the customs of the city in which one enjoys citizenship. So a man would employ justice best for his own interests if he were to regard the laws as important when witnesses were present, but, when no witnesses are present, he were to regard the demands of nature as important. For the demands of the laws are artificial, but the demands of nature are necessary. And the demands of the laws are the result not of natural disposition but of agreement, but the demands of nature are exactly the opposite. So if a man transgresses the demands of law and his transgression is unnoticed by the parties to the agreement, he escapes without either shame or penalty. But if the transgressio is noticed he does not. If, on the other hand, a man does what is really an impossibility and violates one of the inherent demands of nature, if allmankind fails to notice it the harm is no less and if everyone is aware of it the harm is no greater. For the injury he suffers is not in appearance but in truth. Laws lay down what the eyes may see and not see, what the ears may hear and not hear, and what the tongues may say and not say, and what the hands may do and not do, and where the feet may go and where they may not go, and what the heart may desire and what it may not. But as far as nature is concerned, none of these things is more in accord or conformity with nature than any other, either the things from which the laws turn men aside or the things to which they direct them.' (Antiphon, op cit., pp. 218-219.)
postmodern. If they had to toil and tears work, they wanted to get a true benefit. It means that if they have to tackle with English, they prefer a postmodern text to the ancient or nonpostmodern one. Indeed, they are quite pragmatic in the best sense of the term. What can I say? Then my itinerary had to be changed. Originally I intended to trace along the history of ideas from the Greeks through modern philosophy to Nietzsche and postmodernism. Never mind. Whatever they wanted, they got it! Then I offered them a shortcut to postmodernism by handing out an article on postmodern epistemologies. Generally, a journalistic article is understood to be much easier than the text itself. So a twenty-three page article by Seyla Benhabib served the purpose.¹⁸

III

The problems arose when they came back after reading the article. Too much jargon needed to be elaborated: for instance, on the first page, Hegelianism, Zeitgeist, Contemplating itself in its objectifications, Spirit has not 'recognized' and thus 'returned to itself,' but has recoiled in horror from its own products, ..to prove the Faustian dream to be a nightmare; on the second page, Reason, Representation and History, classical imperatives, the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth, etc. From this, the mission of explanation began.

¹⁸ Seyla Benhabib, Epistemologies of Postmodernism: A Rejoinder to Jean-Francois Lyotard’ in New German Critique, Modernity and Postmodernity, No. 33 Fall 1984, (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), pp, 103–126.
One difficulty which I realised from explaining *modernity and its problems* to them is that there existed no material evidence for references. Moreover *a mood for progress and perfection of technology* is hardly found. The location of scientism, Marxism, or even faith in some kind of modern spirit in their minds is *unknown*. If we never have a Faustian dream, how can we have nightmare? To put it another way, if we have never been modern\(^{19}\) how can we be or comprehend postmodern? So we come to the problem of self-periodisation again. I say again because once at the high time of Marxism, Thai scholars were engaged in the polemic over the mode of production of Thai society: Was it feudal or capitalist? Now Marxism is no longer fashionable. A fashionable question turns out to be 1) Is Thai society modern? or 2) Is Thai society postmodern?

As regards the problem of the historical periodisation of Thai society, I found two kinds of answers from my postgraduate students' papers from Kasetsart University. Both are in the same direction. One believed that we are living in a modern society. The other said that we are in the process of becoming modern. The first group pointed to material evidences such as transferred technologies and their problems and lifestyle. The second stated that modernity has been so far centralised in Bangkok and major provinces. However, it is spreading out.

Another pragmatic question which I was hardly able to answer is What is the use of postmodernism in Thai context? In the West,

\(^{19}\) Bruno Latour has written a book called *We Have Never Been Modern*, though not relevant to the namesake statement made in this paper, it interestingly offers a new explanation of science and also asks us to rethink the definition and constitution of modernity. (Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, translated by Catherine Porter, London: Harverster Wheatsheaf, 1993.)
postmodernism is described as incredulity towards metanarratives of long overdued hegemony of scientism and modernism. One can equip oneself with postmodern thought in order to fight for one's self-interest against all kinds of dominating metanarratives. At the same time, he knows that it is just gaming. In this regard, the postmodern condition makes life much healthier. But, if we have no targets like scientism and modernism in our society, then, what use can we make of postmodernism? Although we have no such things like in the West, however, we should ask whether we have any metanarratives in our own society. But if our prevailing metanarratives are not modern, then, must it be postmodernism since the idea itself is said to rise specifically against modernity as its prefix indicates? Furthermore, are non-modern, perhaps pre-modern, metanarratives necessarily to be discredited?

The postmodern incredulity towards metanarratives is, among other things, informed by its criticism of designative theory of meaning and denotative theory of language. From the postmodern point of view, it is these theories of name that make metanarratives possible. It generates a distinction between the wise and the ignoramus, and the good and the bad. From this premise, there is always someone who

is stupid because of her/his ignorance of the existence of God

is stupid because of her/his genetic defection


21. I employ the term 'theory of name' in order to point to the fact that with language all things have their names and become audible. This point is derived from Plato's Cratylus which influenced Wittgenstein.
is stupid because of her/his lack of education
is stupid because of her/his lack of philosophy or love of knowledge
is stupid because of her/his false consciousness
is stupid because of her sex
is stupid because of her/his race (Laotian, Cambodian etc.)
is stupid because of her/his religious fanaticism
is stupid because of her/his ignorance of Buddhist Dharma
is stupid because of her/his ignorance of postmodernism
is stupid because of her/his ignorance of English
is stupid because of her/his self-ignorance, etc.

But from a postmodern point of view, the demarcation line between the wise and the ignoramus becomes blurred (temporarily). What then in the midst of chaos does postmodernism offer? Nothing, so it seems! Pierre Bourdieu regards postmodern analyses as a nihilistic attack. To be sure, it does not just nullify anything. According to Bourdieu, its target is focused on science: positivism and scientism.\textsuperscript{22} Postmodernism is just a ‘French radical chic’ to the age-old irrationalist rejection of science, and more especially of social sciences, under the aegis of a denunciation of ‘positivism’ and ‘scientism’\textsuperscript{23}. As stated above, the


\textsuperscript{23} Bourdieu, ibid., pp. xiii.
metanarratives in Thai society might or might not be science or, perhaps, beyond science.

IV

As regards the postmodern nihilistic aspect, some of my students opined that it is quite similar to Buddhism's anatta, selflessness. Moreover, Buddhism itself can accommodate any belief. Prominent Buddhist monks argue that Buddhism is essentially scientific. Also, at the high tide of Marxism and socialism, Buddhism was also socialistic. Seemingly everything is possible in Thai Buddhism. Everything is possible insofar as it is located under the umbrella of Buddhism. In other words, everything is possible in the shadow of the metanarrative of Buddhism. At the same time, Buddhism itself is elusive with regard to its paradoxical non-metaphysical metaphysic. Postmodernism shares this characteristic. Anything is possible insofar as it is not metanarrative. It argues for anti-metanarrative, not for any narrative. From this, one of my students said his term paper would be the study of Buddhism and postmodernism which I cannot wait to see.

So the postmodern is against metanarratives, but not any narratives. Another student is an activist, and is so eagerly enthusiastic to apply postmodern strategy to the problems of development in Thai society with regard to the fight against a metanarrative for the existence of some

24. Pra Thepvethee (Prayuth Prayuthto), Buddhasartsana nai tana pen rak tarn kong vidhayasart, (Bangkok: Mullanithi Buddhadharma, 1992)
narratives.° NGOs in Thailand are now campaigning for local knowledge, the so-called ภูมิปัญญาชาวบ้าน Poom panya chaoban. One way of translating Poom panya chaobarn is ‘man on the street knowledge’: poompanya means wisdom, knowledge, and chaoban, or villagers, means people who are more ordinary than people, that is, mainly people in rural areas. Its official translation is local wisdom. It has been regarded as indigenous development strategy which focuses on endogenous management of local people against Westernised modern oriented technology development strategy. The activist student believed that postmodernism can help consolidate her thought in pursuit of her mission. She identified the centralised rural development plan of the government with a kind of knowledge based on a metanarrative of scientism. From this regard, it inevitably led to periodising Thai society as modern society. She also believed that local wisdom has been repressed by the government’s centralised plan. However, it is hard to believe that a society which is overwhelmed by animism, superstition, astrology, black magic, reincarnation and a certain version of fatalistic karma, is repressed by the modern and scientific metanarrative. So it seems that the modern condition of Thai society is ambiguous. If Thai society is a modern society, it is a modern society without a modern man. Otherwise it will be the case that there is a modern man without a modern society. So her application of postmodern analyses seems to find itself in a dilemma. To hold fast to postmodernism, she has to change the target. She has to reexamine what exactly is playing metanarrative role in Thai society. So she has to seriously take into consideration the problem of periodisation. On the other

hand, it might be the case that she has to abandon postmodernism in order to save the foundational structure of her ‘local wisdom’ regular type save herself.

Another application of postmodern analysis is taken in the realm of Thai politics and its problem of democracy. The student who works on this is a political activist, and once was a prisoner of conscience. In his study, versions of Thai democracy and politics have been launched from seemingly two opposing standpoints, namely a traditional interpretation based on Thai Buddhist values and the other based on Western political science. The traditional version argued for the necessity of the presence of the ruling class in Thai democratic politics. This attitude can be traced back to a politico-religious text called Tripoom Phra Roung (ไตรปุธมพระwang) - the story of Trinity of Heaven, Earth, and Hades of around 1200 A.D. the ancient kingdom of Ramkamhang. The ruling class which traditionally consists of the King and his lords has been transformed into a centralized leadership of the civil and military bureaucratic staff. Also, the power structure of this political discourse legitimated itself by having recourse to anakern samosom sommuti (อนันกนิกร สมณะสมมติ), a kind of social contract-like idea, in the Thai interpretation of Buddhism. It argued that the King’s rule is always legitimate because it is based on consent of the ruled. Moreover, its idea of human nature has a Hobbesian outlook. From this, there emerged a Thai style democracy which necessitates a legitimate rule of the few over the many. The protagonists of this idea have also argued that Thai-style democracy has been prevailing locally in Thai society. On the other hand, there also exist discourses of

Western-style democracy. Undoubtedly, Western political ideas have been copied and set forth to explain Thai polities and its problems. First, the 1932 revolutionaries launched what they regarded as universal democratic ideas of freedom and equality. Three decades later, when it turned out that democracy could not realise itself in Thai politics like in the West, another discourse, which is based on Western post-war political science of behaviouralism, came to the fore to explain and justify the inevitable existence of chimerical democracy of Thai politics.

V

According to his analysis, these opposing interpretations can be put into the same categoric type of knowledge, namely metanarrative. Like Lyotard, he felt that a postmodern condition would mellow down the stiffness of these Truth-claimed versions of politics and democracy. He asked his reader to look at them in a different way. This, he expected, would create a more democratic atmosphere, that is, an open-ended self-understanding of democracy. That is to say, the postmodern condition renders a democratisation of self-knowledge of democracy. However, in his conclusion, he pondered upon two problems in the postmodern condition. Firstly, concerning theoretical status, it might be true that a postmodern condition tried to free a society from metanarrative. However, postmodernism itself might ascend to a hegemonic metanarrative. Secondly, in practice, postmodernism has not offered solutions to some serious social and political problems such as Aids, decentralisation of administrative power, prostitution, poverty and homeless people etc. It seems that if we let things go in pursuit of postmodern condition, everything would possibly stagnate. At this point, I realised that there is a glimpse of a yearning for a kind of Enlightenment project in his thought. Also, from
this, it can be interpreted that prior to the postmodern, one has to go through the Age of Enlightenment. So it seems that my student after undertaking postmodern application to Thai society inevitably finds himself in such a dilemma not so unlike that of my NGO-supporter student.

I am afraid I am not quite certain that Lyotard would share his view. How can both versions of democracy and politics be regarded as metanarratives at the same time? There is only one meta narrative. If there are two, either one is not, or neither is. Also someone might ask why the long-lived traditional view has not been regarded as a metanarrative. Or why has it not been taken as a repressed local knowledge against the metanarrative of modern political science?

My last but not least case is postmodernism and sexuality. This student of mine, from his colleagues’ point of view, is keen on the topic. His paper tried to tell us that the incest taboo is a kind of grand narrative, and postmodernism can help free people from its repression. From his survey of medical reports, he argued that there is no definite proof of genetic inferiority from sexual intercourse of near relations. Also he tried to be a voice of the heretic marginals who have to hide their sins of taboo transgression. He said his paper had been inspired by Thanes Wongyannawa’s Foucauldian essay on Feminism and sexuality.27 Following

27. Thanes Wongyannawa, "Epilogue: The Logic of Repression: Foucault and the Feminists' in Rattasart Sarn, Thought and Philosophy Issue," 12th anniversary, (Thammasart University, 1987), pp. 166-178. In his article, reducing to essentialism, Thanes points to the incommensurability between Foucauldian and the feminist stances as regards sexuality. What is finally left unresolvable is the war between these two sexes. Furthermore, liberalism cannot be an answer since each individual has developed his own subjectivity. So far the article seems to head towards anarchism.
Thanes, he concluded his study that *anything goes if you like it*. To be sure, he was not telling that you should "fuck your father/mother/sister/brother/daughter/son. However, it depends on tastes of both parties of the partner. So it is to be remembered that this thing is up to (both) of you, otherwise you will be *up-yoursed*.

To conclude my "The Postmodern Explained to Adults", the above are just some examples of the postmodern application effected by my explanation of postmodernism. To be sure, behind their studies, they always complained to themselves and friends that they do not know yet what postmodernism is. Moreover, they still find nothing new. However, they had to render something to get a mark. To survive. Possibly, the idea of postmodernism has really been adumbrated by Thai Buddhism in the same way that scientific ideas, Marxism, Socialism and all leading influential non-Thai ideas have been. Or, perhaps, I have to be responsible for attempting to *make what is ugly beautiful in the eye of the beholder* by pretending to know what I do not really know. If the former is the case more than the latter, it tells me that what I have done is *just having explained the postmodern to the grown-ups.* My audience is not the 'moderns'. They are the ancients who have lived their life for thousand years and will be perhaps living as long as there is a Thailand in the world atlas. Their ancient or local wisdom is always superior to what just takes place. So 'Is there anything new?' is just a satirical question. 'Is there anything new?' has been posed in order to prove that what is new is never new and

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28. 'What would happen if thought no longer had a childhood?' (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children*, op cit., the translator's Foreword to the English Edition.)
never surpasses what they already have had. Then the constructive question turns up just to deconstruct the deconstruction. Shall we say 'Goodbye modern, and Hello ancient?' No, the fault is mine. For me, Postmodern is like a woman. It is hard to apprehend.\textsuperscript{29} I am not capable of explaining the postmodern to the children who always wanted something new and exciting. For what I have is not new. However, whatever reason it is of the utilities of postmodern, if they cannot find it. I would have thought, at least, it makes them modern.