


Postsecularism as the Subversion of the Dichotomy between Science and Religion: A Theoretical Study

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Abstract

Postsecularism's advocacy for addressing and correcting the issues such as injustice, inequality and rendered liberty prevailed in the society amid the pervasiveness of capitalism, which puts it on a safe level; however, it is sometimes portrayed as a regressive concept as it advocates for the return of religion in the public sphere. The shortcomings of secularization project, a firm pillar of the Western Modernity, in the Western society, which was exacerbated by the unprecedented migration to the West as a consequence of globalization and religious organizations' claim for their role in the public sphere amid the conflicts in the name of religion throughout the world marked the gradual rising of postsecularism to transform both the orthodox religion and extreme secularism in a point of reconciliation. This study endeavours to critically analyze the ideas of postsecularism, tracing its origin and mapping its evolution in the West and the East. While exploring it, the incomplete promises of secularism and modernity and the stimuli of postsecularism are accounted. Moreover, this article argues that postsecularism is a significant theoretical approach for literature and society to explore the impact of science and religion in their rigid form of dichotomy and find a way to reconcile them, emphasizing the just and equal human and social relations. The findings reveal that postsecularism unearths and tries to correct the injustice and inequality prevalent in various disciplines of study, including literary or fictional works. This study sheds light on postsecularism's strengths of blending various theories such as postcolonialism and deconstruction, along with concepts from different thinkers, establishing its significance for exploring the injustice, domination and faultlines in society and particularly in literature and correcting them, which presents postsecularism as a significant theoretical lens.

Keywords: postsecularism, secularization, modernity, principled distance, communal harmony, spirituality, discursive translation, communicative action

1. Introduction: Postsecularism as an Emerging Concept

Postsecularism has been a highly discussed topic in academia since the last quarter of the twentieth century and the turn of the twenty-first century, implying the resurgence of religion in the public sphere. Secularism's relegation of religion from a public sphere, a space where public opinion can be formed through the democratic participation of citizens, eradicating any coercion (Adut, 2012, p. 238), came under scrutiny as it created the dichotomy of reason and spirit. The subverting idea of postsecularism provides the proper space for "both physical and metaphysical, territorial and transcendental, practical and philosophical, human and non-human, tangible and intangible natures, causes and practices of diverse religions" (Dalai, 2020, p. 71) and gives rise to a new religion drifting apart from orthodox religion that focuses on spirituality rather than the institutionalized form with the valorization of public experience and individual subjectivity (Tacey, 2020, p. 3). Postsecularism brings the secular and religious together, subverting the dichotomy created by secularism.

Characterizing postsecularism as an idea, Possamai (2017) maintains that postsecularism acknowledges the return of religion to the public sphere so that the voices of religious actors are heard (p. 1). Secularism's relegation of religion to the private sphere generated a strong resurgence of religious voices in the public sphere. Therefore, Dalai (2020) takes post-secularism as a "response to the religious absurdities propagated by secularism" (p. 71). The ideology of secularism itself is the determinant of providing a claim of religious space in the public sphere.

Postsecular thinkers vary in their opinions about the idea of postsecularism. For Caputo (2001), postsecularism is the continuation of the Enlightenment, instead in a new form (p. 104). Similarly, Tacey (2020) thinks that postsecularism's presence in the public sphere does not threaten secularism but motivates modification for living together. They accept that postsecular is also grounded in the thesis of the use of reason, but not in the traditional form. Beaumont (2010) tries to establish the interrelation among multiple religions and humanist and secular personalities while treating the idea of postsecularism. In a similar vein, Blond's (1998) argument about the concept furthers the call to the mystical myth back, i.e., religion in a transformed form, that once the secular outlook was erased as profane in a fascist way (p. 27). According to him, the goal of postsecularism is to correct secularism's deliberate efforts to marginalize religion in the name of progress. Characterizing the secular thesis as the hegemonic power, Neuhaus (1982) proposes postsecularism as the "end of the hegemony of secular Enlightenment over public discourse" (p. 309). The end of reason has been considered as the sign of the

beginning of postsecularism. Parmaksiz (2016) agrees that postsecularism plays a significant role in overcoming the malaises of secularism through the means of communitarian views and reconciliation between the religious and secular world (p. 100).

Nevertheless, Tahrus (2022) is concerned with a pessimistic view of postsecularism as he highlights the grim side of it, arguing that postsecularism provokes “missionary expansion. Fundamentalist radicalization, and the instrumentation of violence in multiple world religions” (p. 4). He must be tracing the revival of a traditional form of religion in the postsecular era. However, such orthodoxy is almost impossible to reclaim at present. Nonetheless, some incidents throughout the world can strengthen religious extremism through the advocacy of postsecularism. Therefore, the idea of postsecular revolves around the concept of the continuation of reason in an accommodative form for religion and the resurgence of religion in the traditional form, giving rise to fanaticism and the renewal of religion in the transformed form.

Beaumont, Eder, and Mendieta (2018) correctly capture the diversity of opinions on postsecularism, as they argue that postsecularism “produces many different people with dissimilar beliefs spread out over space and time and united in a higher perspective or reality” (p. 301). Kaufmann’s (2009) idea of postsecularism as a rejection of both grand narratives of secularism and a return to the traditional form of religion, treating them to be ideological, cultural, and historical constructs for the dismantling of religious/secular binary (pp. 68–69) and Geoghegan’s (2000) agreement with Kaufmann that postsecularism is the solution to the dichotomous relation between secular and religious that he calls “the antimony of secularism/religion” (p. 206), provide the inherent ideas of postsecularism that it rejects the secular/religious binary for reconciliation and cooperation among the heterogeneous worldviews of both and creates the space for coexistence of secular and religious. Therefore, postsecularism is an idea that suggests that religion has come back into the public sphere that secularism once attempted to privatize and relegate to the private sphere; however, the revival is not in the orthodox form but rather in the changed form, which can accommodate the secular or scientific outlook and multiple religious views in reconciliation, promoting coexistence and harmony.

Although there is a lack of uniform understanding about the emergence of postsecularism, which creates bewilderment in finding the beginning of the concept of postsecularism, most of the thinkers believe that the concept came to prominence in the 1960s in social theology to indicate the commencement of revitalization of

postsecularism to address the shortcomings of secularism in the West. Tacey (2020) and Parmaksiz (2016) agree that social theologians, Catholic and Jewish, used the term ‘postsecular’ to denote the failures of secularism and the need for the revival of traditional religion. After the conclusion of the Great War and the beginning of the Cold War, theologians came up with arguments to revive the traditional form of religion. However, in the 1990s, the postsecular witnessed a significant rise in stimulating internal, individual, and subjective religiousness (Olson, Hopkins, Pain, and Vincell, 2013; Molendijk, 2015; Jasinski, 2020). The revival of religion then was considered as a need merely in a transformed form, rejecting orthodoxy. Tacey (2020) briefly describes the evolution of the concept of postsecularism when he writes that “by the 1990s and beyond, the meaning of the term changed. It was no longer a reactionary term calling for the renewal of the religious enterprise from the resources of contemporary theology, science, and philosophy” (p. 2).

Tacey’s view about the development of the concept of postsecularism refers to the inclusive and accommodative nature of religion for the coexistence with science and philosophy. However, since 2000, the concept has gained importance in the academic world (Molendijk, 2015, p. 103). Although some thinkers have pointed to the 1960s as the beginning of the concept of postsecularism, Dalai (2020) argues that “though it has always had its ontological presence in the European world through the renaissance, enlightenment, capitalism and industrial stages, it is towards the end of the 19th century and early 20th century it finds conspicuous/visible presence in the domain of religion, politics, and culture” (p. 72), on the other hand, Tacey (2020) believes that the revival of religion was the subject matter of the Jungian psychology as he states that religion remains in unconscious which gets manifested in the form of fundamentalism. According to him, religion is always in the psyche of human beings of all ages. Therefore, postsecularism was an idea that was within the secular worldview, which gained prominence after the 1960s in the West.

Nonetheless, the case is different for the East because the East is the forerunner in the context of postsecularism. Bhargava (2015) opines that, as the postsecular treats the presence of religion, recognition of multiple religions, and their coexistence as elements, “India [East] has always been postsecular (pp. 110-111).” Similarly, Tacey (2020) gives credit to the East for contributing significantly to the traditions of yoga and physical health as elements of spiritual well-being, which shows the spiritual tradition of the East from time immemorial. He accepts that the West owes the East for deriving the spiritual and personal experience tradition.

The purpose of this research is to scrutinize the concept of postsecularism in relation to the concept of secularism and the secularization process, drawing on the East and the West, and what they believe in. Meanwhile, the assessment of concepts such as discursive translation, communicative action, spirituality in a postsecular sense, principled distance and communal harmony, provides the theoretical bases for postsecularism in approaching literary texts which this study aims to illustrate. Reviewing the arguments for and against the postsecularism, this article tries to establish postsecularism as an important lens of analysis, which is the main objective of this research.

This study aims to: 1) assess the concept of secularism and secularization and the reasons for their failure in the West; 2) trace the evolution of postsecularism in the East and West; 3) identify the stimuli for its rise; 4) analyze key concepts that contribute to it; and 5) establish postsecularism as a significant theoretical lens for literary and social analysis.

2. Literature Review

For the purpose of this research, the available literature related to postsecularism is discussed from the perspectives of failed promises of secularism and the momentum that led to the turn to postsecularism. Simultaneously, what the age and society look like in the time and space of postsecularism is elaborated to determine the importance of postsecularism as a significant lens for analysis.

2.1 Secularism and a Turn to Postsecularism

Without having knowledge of secularism, the concept of postsecularism cannot be vivisected. Secularism is treated as having spatial and temporal dimensions. Pecora (2006) accepts time and space as the dimensions of secularism or secular thesis (p. 13). For Pecora, secularism is an ideology that advocates for the separation of the state from religion in order to lead the state to be modern, progressive, and rational (p. 59), and secularization is the process in which the institutionalized religion is deliberately detached from state affairs, confining the religion to the private domain (p. 13). When he talks about secularism and secularization, the separation of church or religion from the state is emphasized. McNamara (2015) confirms that secularism is the political doctrine that either separates religion from the state or celebrates or preserves the rights of religions and ethnic communities to validate the ideology of secularism (pp. 3-4). On the other hand, Jasinski (2020) concedes that secularism is the ideology advocating against the presence of religion in public affairs marking the arrival of religiousness and transcendental truth calling it harmful to human beings because he thinks that secularism has caused the faith in

God to shift into the private domain, the faith as one option among many forms which one can choose one (pp. 7-8). In this context, Jasinski is referring to the privatization of religion from the public sphere to valorize secularism.

Casanova (2006) similarly relates the concept of secularism with the statecraft principle of separation of religious and political authority to guide the state in adopting neutral behaviour towards all religious and non-religious communities for the sake of democratic participation (p. 1051) while treating the secularization as the process of differentiation of secular spheres such as economy, politics, science and law from religious institutions causing the decline of religious beliefs and privatizing the religion (Casanova, 2009, p. 12; 2006, p. 1050; 1994, pp. 19-20). In a similar vein, Krolikowska (2017) rectifies that secularism is a doctrine whose main goal is to spread a non-religious worldview (p. 39). Therefore, secularism as an ideology and secularization as a vehicle or process of secularism leads to the understanding that they try to drive the religion away from the public sphere, i.e., state and privatize the religion, relegating it to the private sphere, creating the binary of religious and secular and treating the secular way or scientific way of life authentic, progressive and modern. It does not accept the coexistence of religion and religious communities and creates the binary of secular and religious.

Although Phuyal (2013) writes that modernity in the West began with industrialization and the search for liberty as manifested in the French Revolution, passing through the rise of capitalism (p. 57), secularism as a ground, among others, such as rationalization and differentiation, of modernity is believed to have begun much earlier. The process of secularization has gone through different phases. The turn from the Medieval Dark Age to the Renaissance is sometimes considered the beginning of secularization. The role of Queen Elizabeth in separating the state power from the church implies the celebration of humanism, leading to scientific invention and discovery. Nevertheless, Jasinski (2020) asserts that the secularization process began in the 17th century against the backdrop of the German religious war and the French Revolution to emancipate property and specific sectors from the church's grip. Jasinski states:

The term “secularisation” itself is not new. It appeared in the 17th century, in the context of the German religious wars and the French Revolution. ...the process of liquidation of some church property and liberation of a certain sector from the power of the Church. It was then applied to culture as contrary to religion... very intense in the 1950s and 1960s. (Jasinski, 2020, pp. 6-7)

The German religious wars and the French Revolution are milestones for the intensification of secularization and the reduction of the power of the church as an institutionalized religion. However, after the Second World War, with the influence of capitalism and globalization, secularization witnessed an unexpected influence in state affairs, driving out religion from public spheres.

There were some conducive things that gave rise to secularism in the West. In the opinion of Habermas (2008), the progress in science and technology, functional differentiation of social subsystems such as economy and social, through the bureaucratic system, and social security as the primary responsibility of the state as a welfare state are the reasons behind secularization (pp. 17-8; Tahrus, 2022, pp. 3-4). Such stimuli exacerbated the growth of science and technology, leading to industrialization and urbanization, the human-centred understanding of the world, and the separation of religion from other public sectors through the well-arranged bureaucratic systems. Moreover, the welfare state took responsibility for the contingency that befell the citizens, causing a decline in religious belief. As rationalization, secularization, and differentiation are the foundations of modernity, the project of modernity gave rise to modernization, urbanization, and industrialization, establishing them as the catalysts of secularization (Jasinski, 2020, p. 7).

Modernity had come with the promise of progress, emancipation from all sorts of exploitation, liberty, equality, and fraternity, as manifested in the French Revolution. However, the consequence of modernity brought industrialization, urbanization, and excessive development in science and technology, resulting in the exploitation of resources and a divide between people and places, mocking the promise it had made. Moreover, scientific reason could not deter the great wars, which caused the destruction of human civilization. The split of the world into socialist and capitalist, and the use of reason, turned into instruments to oppress and generate an unfathomable ditch of inequality. Therefore, modernity, particularly secularization, came under scrutiny in the quest for religious values of liberty, equality, fraternity, and nonviolence. On the other hand, secularism's overemphasis on the relegation of religion provoked religious fundamentalism. Secularism, an ideology motivated by political purpose, deliberately hems religion from the public sphere. As the "secularization had not been successful in countering the evils of modern society as there was 'little or nothing in the secular approach to things...which [was] productive and empowering of human value' – a lack that leads civilization into a crisis as 'all its major instrumentalities [were] value-free or even antihuman'" (Borowitz, 1970, p. 470). Borowitz portrays the failure of

modernity to empower human beings with human values, leading to anti-human results.

Therefore, the failure of modernity to address contemporary problems and the realization of the need for religion to fill the gap created by secularism led to the revival of religion in the public sphere, resulting in the turn to postsecularism. The postsecular turn gained importance with the rising importance of religion in both the private and public lives of individuals. Although the shortcomings within secularism were the foundation for the postsecular turn, there were some stimuli that stimulated the emergence of postsecular consciousness. The stimuli are: (1) the growth of religious fanaticism and the spreading of the news of it with the development of mass media, (2) the increasing role of religious organizations, such as the church, in the formation of public opinion and private morality such as animal protection and climate change, (3) the increase in migration process with globalization from the places having traditional values to create the pluralistic society leading to coexistence (Verma, 2014, p. 55; Habermas, 2008, pp. 20, 27; Molendijk, 2015, p. 105). In other words, religious uprisings throughout the world increased the role of religious organizations in the public sphere, and the multiculturalism caused by globalization and migration are the core elements to escalate the postsecular turn. However, the thesis that the weakness of modernity in fulfilling the promise is the significant cause of postsecular consciousness is strong in its arguments. This thesis claims that external factors are less responsible in comparison to internal factors, which is the failure of modernity. According to Dalai (2020), the stimuli of postsecular consciousness are “the futility of rationality, the failure of the modern nation-state, governments and, of course, the capitalistic culture to address and mitigate mushrooming problems in human society (p. 72).” The rationality envisioned by rationalists did not work in the way they had expected, but instead turned into instrumental rationality.

The nation-state became a business institution through the privatization and liberalization of government enterprises and the privatization of social security, ignoring the ultimate responsibility in the name of Thatcherism, Reaganism, and New Public Management. The capitalistic culture introduced fetishism, leaving the majority of people in poverty, confining most of the resources in the hands of a few capitalists, giving rise to economic inequality and injustice. Therefore, the weakness of secularism or modernity at large and the recent development of fundamentalism, migration, and religious organization are the reasons behind the rise of postsecular consciousness.

2.2 Age and Society of Postsecularism

It is interesting to discuss what the age looks like in postsecularism. Postsecularism asserts the re-emergence of religion from the position of marginalization. According to Bhargava (2015), the experience of age in postsecularism indicates the resurgence of religion, the realization of the coexistence of secular and religion with religion revitalized, and the acceptance of the values in religion, such as wisdom and insights, due to the cognitive and moral values of religion should not be neglected (pp. 109-110). Bhargava's opinion is confined to the characteristics and significance of religion as it propagates the rise of religion, the coexistence of religion and secularism, and the acceptance of the value of religion, which provides a base for ethics and morality. In a similar vein, Agcan (2020) recognizes the age in postsecularism in which religious communities exert influence on the public sphere (p. 386). Therefore, the age envisioned by postsecularism claims the dominant role emerging from the dormant state in human society.

In a general sense, postsecular society refers to the space where postsecular conditions apply. However, postsecular society is believed to be a secularized society, such as the affluent societies of Europe or countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where religion has diminished with modernity and has re-emerged as an influential force (Verma, 2014; Habermas, 2008). In this sense, a postsecular society is not a distinct society but rather the continuation of the secularized society where religion claims its influential role. On the other hand, for Bhargava (2015), postsecular society is a place where religious and secular live together through either side's self-reflexivity (p. 110). The coexistence of science and religion should go together for the postsecular society, but through self-reflexivity.

3. Methodology

Since this study is concerned with the discussion of the theory and framework of postsecularism to develop postsecularism as the analytical framework, this study employs the theoretical/conceptual analysis, bringing in the concepts from the various thinkers from the East and the West. To explore the injustice, domination and faultlines layered in and across the religion, society and their representation in literature, and the failed promises of modernity in the West, Habermas in the West and Bhargava and Gandhi in the East are selected as relevant thinkers intentionally. Habermas' Discursive Translation and Communicative Action provide bases for tracing the failure of modernity and secularism in the West, and the need for a turn to postsecularism and Gandhi's Communal Harmony and Bhargava's Principled Distance Model provide the foundation for coexistence of multi-religions and

identifying and correcting the injustice prevalent in the name of religion and the role of state to protect the minority religion. Thus, these thinkers and concepts are intentionally selected for the discussion in this study. Such concepts are treated as themes, and the thematic analysis method is employed with the process of comparing and contrasting the diverse arguments on the themes to reach the argument that postsecularism is a significant theoretical lens. For that, the inductive reasoning method is used.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Concepts to Contribute to Postsecularism

Postsecularism not only advocates for the revival of religion but also goes on to validate the importance of religion in the public sphere through numerous concepts. Among the concepts, Habermas' notion of Discursive Translation and Communicative Action, Bhargava's Principled Distance, and Gandhi's Communal Harmony and Spirituality play a leading role in better comprehending postsecularism and its politics.

4.2 Discursive Translation and Postsecularism

Discursive translation is the concept that owes to Jurgen Habermas, which refers to the process of translating religious discourse into secular standard and vice versa. There are various perspectives regarding discursive translation as thinkers are divided into the idea of translating religious discourse into secular standards, translating secular discourse into religious outlook, and translating both to suit each other's standards in an accommodative way.

Most of the theorists' opinions are concentrated on the religious discourse, as it needs to undergo the process of profound screening. They identify that it is the duty of religious communities to undergo the translation process through self-reflexivity and deep screening to avoid the religious presupposition so that the religious discourse becomes accessible to secular people and space (Dillon, 2010; Byrd, 2017; Krolikowska, 2017). They consider that, in the process of discursive translation, religious discourse needs to be translated against the secular standard to make religious values and ethics accessible to all and remove the orthodox religious presuppositions. Similarly, Habermas, while defining the postsecular, argues that the discursive translation applies to a part of religious communities. Religious discourse needs to be compatible with secular principles, leaving behind the impact of the lived experience that the religion promotes. In answer to how the religious discourse can go through the discursive translation, Habermas points out the ways

through which the religious discourse can undergo the translation process: (1) religious consciousness should acknowledge the encounter of other denominations and religions to give rise to multi-religious society, (2) religious discourse should adopt to the scientific principle as the secular knowledge, and (3) religious discourse/communities should accept the constitutional state based on the democratic principles (Habermas, 2003; Verma, 2014; Krolikowska, 2017; Tahrus, 2022). The ways or processes that the religious communities have to adopt while performing discursive translation are an acknowledgement of multiple religious existences and interactions, adaptation to scientific knowledge that can contribute to communicative action, and the democratic values of the constitutional state. Habermasian idea of discursive translation aligns with secular standards, expressing the need for religion to be translated in line with secular principles.

Nevertheless, linking the concept of discursive translation to merely the religious communities for their adaptive nature to nurture is a biased and unidirectional view that creates injustice to religious values and ethics. Habermas, later on, comes to realization to correct the unidirectional translation process, accepting that religious communities need to reshape and put into scrutiny the claims of ultimate truth and transcendental knowledge to situate against the scientific framework which can be justified with the accessible sound explanation for the general public and secular sphere; meanwhile, the secular subjects also need to be self-reflexive fostering the phenomenological experience and moral and ethical values of religion into the secular discourse without negating the sensibility and insights of religious discourse (Habermas, 2006, p. 11; Habermas, 2011, pp. 26-7). Habermasian discursive translation process gets the bidirectional self-reflexive momentum to give rise to the postsecular consciousness. The requirement for both the believers and non-believers to re-envision the long-inherited legacy of their respective domains and be liberal and adaptive for developing religious discourse within the scientific framework and secular discourse within the framework of a transformed form of religion is precisely admitted by Verma (2014) as he states “secular citizens have to recognize their historical roots in religious discourse and not presuppose that it is an archaic and obsolete ideology. They must also go through a self-reflexive transcending of a secularist self-understanding of modernity” (pp. 56-57). According to him, the tendency of secularists, calling the religious discourse an outdated ideology, needs to be reviewed, and the values of religion need to be revived once again to help them coexist for better human relations and progress.

Therefore, discursive translation enables the translation of religious discourse into secular discourse and vice versa, contributing to postsecularism by exploring the

humanitarian outlook by translating the extremist ideology of both religion and secularism.

4.3 Communicative Action and Postsecularism

Habermas' notion of communicative action significantly supports postsecularism. His idea of communicative action, or rationality, offers adequate scope for postsecularism. He believes that the lifeworld is conducive to communicative action, wherein civil society plays an active role. Possamai (2017), using Habermas' ideas, elucidates the concept of communicative action, which encompasses linguistic interaction such as debates in newspapers and on television, as well as conferences that occur within the lifeworld where individuals acknowledge one another fostering cooperation among the human beings without the pursuit of profit, ultimately enhancing the quality of human life, humanizing individuals, and embracing plurality grounded in ethical principles (Possamai, 2017, p. 2-3). Habermas posits that communicative action is fundamentally anchored in ethics, which is predominantly derived from religion. Consequently, religion can furnish the ethical principles necessary to confront the contemporary pathologies engendered by secularisation. He promotes communicative action, emphasizing dialogue among people from both secular and religious domains, which can foster the religious and secular actors to engage in the broader humanitarian framework. The postsecular idea facilitates communicative action by allowing religious actors to claim a role in the public domain, which secularisation had confined to the private sphere. Communicative action brings a progressive humanitarian perspective, whereas instrumental reason inclines to regressive, as it functions within a lifeworld system that restrains communicative expression, encourages colonization, substitutes social coordination with the accumulation of financial and political power for profit, exacerbates corruption at the expense of democracy, and reduces students to consumers and teachers to producers, ultimately leading to the degradation of the lifeworld (Possamai, 2017, p. 3).

The notion of instrumental reason posits that the rationality embraced by modernity as the basis for scientific advancement and human welfare has transformed into a tool of oppression. Habermas introduced the concept of communicative rationality or communicative action, wherein all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status, religious beliefs, or cultural background, can engage in the lifeworld equitably, devoid of instrumental rationality. Dosdad (2016) contends that while Habermas posits the lifeworld as conducive to communicative reason, it remains inextricably linked to power dynamics and systemic inequity. He posits that communicative action relies on the participation of linguistically proficient

individuals for collaboration and recognition; however, given that society comprises rational individuals and is shaped by power dynamics and various forms of structural inequities, it is an illusion to believe it can exist devoid of domination and injustices (Dosdad, 2016, p. 892). He further contends that this myopia obscures the plight of individuals who have faced discrimination, exclusion, and deprivation of their civic rights, rendering them unable to articulate and substantiate their social, political, and moral aspirations through rational discourse. Consequently, the communicative reason may function as an invention that creates a ghetto, which, in its pursuit of enhanced democracy, is unlikely to encompass people who have been historically marginalized and oppressed (Dosdad, 2016, p. 892). Tahrus (2022) posits that while Habermas perceives the secular modernization process as incomplete, the concept of secularisation has diminished in significance due to its overemphasis on reason, which has reduced the reason into the instrumental reason, which necessitates the reintegration of moral order of religion to enable individuals to participate in communicative action, creating a space for religious discourse (p. 9-10). As the communicative action favours the democratic space promoting equality for all irrespective of their outlook, it helps to explore humanity, coexistence, and fraternity, which is free from all sorts of oppressions.

4.4 Spirituality and Postsecularism

Although postsecularism is related to the idea of the revival of religion, it does not suggest that religion is returning to its former form. The postsecular shift has motivated a transition from institutionalized to deinstitutionalized forms of religion. Moreover, the postsecular shift highlights a more open approach to religious rituals, fostering spirituality and deconstructing conventional institutionalized religion. Jasinski (2020) generates ambiguity in his discussion of spirituality, positing that it may be either associated with or separate from religion while asserting that spirituality constitutes an “inner deepening of the content of faith, a more conscious religious experience, contact with a certain transcendent being, and reflection on the nature of the ‘spirit’ as its basis” (p. 6). He states that spirituality is an inner faith rooted in the belief in transcendence and the spirit, as opposed to institutionalized actions like ceremonies and rituals. He argues that religion in the postsecular era has returned to the form of spirituality, characterized by subjective faith and self-fulfilment, hence engendering a crisis in institutionalized religion (Jasinski, 2020, p. 9). The declining belief in institutionalized religion indicates the beginning of individual spirituality, detaching individuals from religious communities in the postsecular era (Jasinski, 2020, pp. 9-10). As a result, a deinstitutionalized approach to religion facilitates individualized spirituality,

allowing individuals to select from a diverse array of religious practices, models, values, and norms, which empowers them to create their own religious identity, ultimately leading to a transcendence of their inherent nature in relation to the divine (Jasinski, 2020, p. 11).

4.5 Principled Distance and Postsecularism

Postsecularism underscores the significance of the principled distance model, as it promotes improved human and societal relations among religious and secular domains. Rajeev Bhargava (2015), the proponent of the principled distance model, believes that this model seeks to enhance social relations while safeguarding individuals from both inter- and intra-religious domination, as well as from religious influence over secular matters and vice versa (p. 130). Principled Distance is a notion that primarily addresses the topic of whether a state should involve itself in religious affairs or not. Bhargava (2015) defines principled distance as a policy that “entails a flexible approach regarding the inclusion or exclusion of religion and the engagement or disengagement of the state” (p. 131). This concept of Principled Distance indicates that its business is primarily related to the relationship between the state and religion, in which there are arguments whether the state should engage with the matter of religion or expel it. Subsequently, Bhargava (2015) addresses the necessity of differential treatment within multi-religious cultures, emphasizing coexistence with a secular perspective (p. 132). Bhargava’s concept of positive discrimination promotes the reenvisioning of the merits and demerits of both religious and secular ideologies, as well as the various denominations within religions. In this framework, he recognizes the necessity of state action in the safeguarding and rationalization of religious principles (Bhargava, 2015, p. 133). The principled distance model serves as a foundation for examining inter- and intra-religious dominations; hence, postsecularism can enhance research on oppression and injustice perpetrated in the name of religion.

4.6 Communal Harmony and Postsecularism

Postsecularism tries to derive the idea of Gandhi’s communal harmony model, as it provides the ground for harmony and fraternity among the religious communities and religious and secular domains. Modernity exacerbated the scientific reasoning as the only way to progress, overlooking the importance of morality, ethics, and other humanitarian values that religion carries. To address the pathologies of secularization or modernity, Gandhi advocates communal harmony, which is expected to foster a state of coexistence and harmony. Verma (2014) notes that Gandhi’s concept of “*Sarva Dharma Sambhava*” basically signifies religious coexistence, inter-religious tolerance, and equitable treatment for all faiths within

society, advocating for equal treatment of all religions among the multiple religions and the secular, prioritizing it over hierarchical structures within Indian religions (p. 60). He opines that Gandhi's concept of *Sarva Dharma Sambhava* relates to communal harmony through religious coexistence, inter-religious tolerance, and equitable treatment of all faiths. Therefore, the communal harmony model champions religious tolerance and coexistence, recognizing the significance of religions in the public domain while fostering global fraternity and humanity, which is the principal objective of postsecularism.

4.7 Postsecularism: An Important Lens of Analysis

The effort of Postsecularism to subvert the dichotomy between religious and secular makes it an important approach because the theory encourages both to adopt a secular perspective to religious discourse and a spiritual perspective to secular discourse. Olson, Hopkins, Pain, and Olson et al. (2013) clarify the relevance of postsecular theory in research, arguing that it incorporates secular critical realism with religious, spiritual, or transcendental experiences. They assert that it offers normative and ethical alternatives which are absent in secularisation theory, encourages the adaptation of religious perspectives to secular contexts, and emphasizes the enduring presence of religion in the public sphere, thereby acquiring space for religious institutions and leaders in secular issues (Olson et al., 2013, p. 1423). As Postsecularism serves the goal of exploring the coexistence of secular and religious, bringing them under scrutiny while fathoming their boundaries for bringing humane and natural outlooks to the fore, it functions as an essential analytical approach to literary texts through the deconstruction of religious and secular dichotomies. Ratti (2018) illustrates the methodological importance of the postsecular, claiming that it can serve as a deconstruction of the dichotomy between 'religion' and 'secularism'. The methodological tool, Postsecularism, can be aligned with the principles of deconstruction and poststructural theory to uncover and investigate the instabilities, faultlines, blind spots, exclusions, silences, contradictions, and fissures within a discourse, discipline, institution, and text (Ratti, 2018, p. 118). Since postsecularism boasts of the blending of the theories of deconstruction and poststructuralism, which tries to reveal and correct the injustice in the overall, it can provide an appropriate lens to explore society and literature.

4.8 Criticism of Postsecularism

Although postsecularity promotes a pluralistic democratic society that envisions peace, harmony, and tolerance among diverse religious beliefs and secular ideologies, it is not without criticism. Dossad (2016) contends that postsecularity serves as a mechanism to realize Western colonial ideology, facilitating the process

of othering (p. 889). Dosdad (2016) contends that the challenge is in integrating the Muslim ‘other’ into liberal democracies, hence perpetuating remnants of colonialism (p. 889). The contemporary phenomenon of globalization resulting in massive migration from the Muslim world to Western nations is the principal catalyst of postsecular society. Nevertheless, in the pursuit of integrating immigrants with their varied religions and cultures, the West has established a division between ‘us’ and ‘them’, reflecting the colonial mentality described by Dosdad (2016).

5. Conclusion

Postsecularism, an emerging theoretical tool, provides a more nuanced approach to exploring the dynamics of injustice in literature, the humanities and social science. Providing appropriate space to religion in the form of spirituality and advocating for the moral and ethical values of religion, it attempts to subvert the dichotomy of science and spirit created by secularism. It not only accepts the resurgence of religion in the public sphere but also acknowledges the scientific reason to coexist with religion for the betterment of humanity and human relations. By enhancing the democratic values and environment, postsecularism fosters the participation of religious communities in the secular public sphere and, meanwhile, exacerbates the process of translating religious discourse into secular standards and secular discourse into the humanitarian framework, paving the way for harmony. Since postsecularism endeavours to address the malaises generated by secularism and re-visions the grand narratives of both secularism and religion for their truth claims through the reinterpretation and translation process, it stands to be the best tool to approach at present.

This study reveals that postsecularism is equipped with the progressive concepts such as discursive translation, communicative action, spirituality, principled distance and communal harmony that unearth and correct the prevalent injustice and domination in the name of religion and utter rationality, and provides a proper lens or approach for analysis. However, as postsecularism is a recent concept, the other thinkers and concepts remain the subject of a quest, while the present study is concentrated on a few thinkers and concepts. Therefore, an extensive study of thinkers and the concepts relevant to the concept of postsecularism can broaden the horizon of postsecularism and establish it as a significant methodological tool.

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