

Modernism

Defined

1. Latest things: the latest styles, tastes, attitudes, or practices
2. Arts modern styles in art: the revolutionary ideas and styles in art, architecture, and literature that developed in the early 20th century as a reaction to traditional forms
3. Christianity movement within Roman Catholicism: a movement in European Roman Catholicism in which scholars and theologians attempt to accommodate the contemporary world view within Roman Catholic theology and doctrine

4 Pillars:

1. Reason is superior to faith.
2. Science will lead to morality.
3. Progress is inevitable
4. Knowledge is inherently good.

Why Christians were ineffective to modernism

1. The overconfidence of the Church prevented its leaders from recognizing the threat.
2. The irrelevance of the Church's response made attempts to influence intellectuals ineffective.
3. The gradual slippage of the Church was almost imperceptible at least at the beginning.
4. The Church underestimated the long-range impact of the philosophical changes taking place.

Miscellaneous comments:

Modern Art was and is not the "Real World" (A)

Modern Era had optimistic promises, it's overconfidence in rationalism (engineering) and science, and it's naive trust in knowledge and progress were the roots of the Modern Era.

Contrasts between Modernism and Postmodernism:

Modernism	Postmodernism
Purpose	Play
Design	Chance
Hierarchy	Anarchy
Distance	Participation
Centering	Dispersal
Root/depth	Shallow/surface
Paranoia/mistrust	Schizophrenia/delusions

Postmodernism

Defined

1. After modernism: relating to art, architecture, literature, or thinking developed after and usually in reaction to modernism.
2. Returning to more classical or traditional elements and techniques
3. Multiplicity of styles or trends.
4. Does not believe that human reason holds all the answers to life's questions.
5. The United States is a post-Christian nation.
6. There is NO "Real World" (A)

Comes after:

1. Postmodern comes after, all stop thinking like engineers (rationalism)
2. Postmodern comes after, the cult of science (scientism)
3. Postmodern comes after, we have given up the belief that there is a goal, a flow, or a meaning to history (historicism)
4. Postmodern comes after, we give up the notion of truth----that it actually exists outside of individual human minds, that it is universal and eternal (absolutism)
5. Postmodern comes after, the universe no longer "really" exists (realism)
6. Postmodern comes after, people stop believing their culture is the one true culture or the best of all cultures (ethnocentrism)

7. Postmodern comes after, we give up the pretense of cool detachment from the objects we study (objectivism)
8. Postmodern comes after, we give up the notion of truth (tolerance, pluralism)

Situations:

1. **Multiculturalism:** Each culture has its own worldview. Its own way of looking at the world.
2. **Disconnectedness:** No formal relationship between the past the present or the future. (See Derrida, Jacques below)
3. **Leveling of Hierarchies:** Destabilize power structures.
4. **Survival:** There are other answers to life's questions besides reason.(story, metaphor, feeling, intuition)

Reconstructing Postmodernism by Faith:

First, we draw from the sacred text, the Bible. Postmodernism celebrates the fact that every culture or tribe has its own sacred text, so we do not need an excuse for our use of the Bible. But for the Bible to provide fresh symbols that are meaningful to the postmodern mind, we must try to look at it differently. A lot of Bible study in modernity was bent on finding doctrines that could be set in a systematic framework.

With that in mind, let's use the word *doctrine* less and start substituting the word *teachings*. The latter is easier for postmodernists to accept in reference to inspired writings. The Greek word translated as *doctrine (didache)* is the same word the New Testament translates as *teaching*.

Doctrine refers to a body of beliefs forged by other humans in a previous era. Teaching is an activity that goes on whenever we read and reflect on the Bible. Doctrine is self-contained and static. Teaching, like the Bible itself, is alive. The Bible must be allowed to speak for itself.

The second source of needed symbols for postmodernists is a spiritual community, namely, the church. The church as the "body of Christ" the people

(Romans 12), a building (Ephesians 2) and a bride (Ephesians 5) are rich in symbols and stories. The church is also the repository of the ultimate story, the gospel.

One caution, however, the Christian church must distinguish itself from the many cults that will continue to flourish in the coming years. There must never be any coercion to join a church or to stay in a church. And we must be wary of religious movements that form around the charisma of one particular leader.

A third source for symbols to inspire Christian faith lies in our sacraments. We need to revitalize Christian sacraments (Communion, penance, marriage, Baptism etc.) and find fresh applications of their timeless truths.

The fourth and really the first source of symbol and story is our own experience of God in Jesus Christ. We will be like the demoniac who begged Jesus to let him join the disciples. Jesus, however, refused his request and instead sent him on a mission.

Jesus told him, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (Mark 5:19). I can picture the man's face brightening with realization, as if to say, "I'm on it, Lord. I know exactly what to do!" Then he went, not only to his own home, but through all of the ten Roman cities east of the Jordan River in the area of Decapolis.

Culture has several distinguishing characteristics. (1) It is based on symbols—abstract ways of referring to and understanding ideas, objects, feelings, or behaviors—and the ability to communicate with symbols using language. (2) Culture is shared. People in the same society share common behaviors and ways of thinking through culture. (3) Culture is learned. While people biologically inherit many physical traits and behavioral instincts, culture is socially inherited. A person must learn culture from other people in a society. (4) Culture is adaptive.

People use culture to flexibly and quickly adjust to changes in the world around them.

The Bible must be taught to all cultures, without destroying that society and traditions. The exception would be where the culture and the Bible do not agree. Gentleness must be used in showing that the Bible is inerrant, the true Word of Jesus.

Theater: The movement known as **postmodernism** found expression in the **American theater** chiefly through staging and direction, rather than through the plays themselves. **Postmodern** staging and design tended toward the minimal and sometimes incorporated images from earlier plays and productions.

Postmodern directors sought to uncover multiple layers of meaning in a play. Feminist playwrights sometimes effectively appropriated these approaches. *Fefu and Her Friends* (1977) and *The Conduct of Life* (1985), both by Maria Irene Fornés, used spatial experiments, such as moving the audience from room to room instead of changing stage scenery.

Wendy Wasserstein more safely explored the complex social issues raised by the women's movement in *Uncommon Women and others* (1977) and *The Heidi Chronicles* (1988), which won the 1989 Pulitzer Prize for drama. The Bible believing community must be on guard for all postmodern activities that are directed against Christianity. (i.e. Theatre, radio, internet, groups like the ACLU)

International Relations: In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of new approaches to **international relations** emerged. Feminist theories of international relations emphasize the importance of gender roles among the politically powerful in understanding how foreign policy is developed and why nations behave the way they do.

Postmodern approaches call into question the basic categories and methods by which international relations has traditionally been studied, arguing that international relations scholarship is an arbitrary discipline invented by powerful special interests to advance their own agendas. Peace studies are an interdisciplinary approach to questions of war and peace, openly promoting peace over war. Peace studies teach that scholars can learn more about certain aspects of international relations, such as diplomacy, by becoming involved in them.

The United Nations is a pawn, used by radical groups to accomplish their goals on a worldwide scale like the group "The Right of the Child" and "Abortion Rights". These proposals have negative effects on children, mothers and families.

Literary: The frontal attack, initiated by Nietzsche, on any use of language as an instrument of mystification and domination has its most unwavering advocates today in scholars who practice the interpretive technique known as deconstruction.

Following French philosopher Jacques Derrida and Belgian-born American critic Paul de Man, deconstructive critics assume that attributing even the most complex single meaning to a text violates the boundless signifying potential of language in a world where there are no facts but only indeterminate meanings and unresolvable conflicts of interpretation.

Proponents of deconstruction elaborate on textual ambiguities and paradoxes that most early interpreters (including the New Critics) attempted to resolve. For deconstructors and other so-called postmodern critics, special difficulties in the interpretation of complex literary works forcefully suggest the general resistance of all texts to definitive meanings.

Today's widespread tendency to interpret texts as hiding rather than revealing what is most significant about themselves has three major sources: the writings of German philosophers Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and of Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).

Influential studies along Marxist lines of the social and economic underpinnings of culture were undertaken by German critic Walter Benjamin before World War II and by Welsh critic Raymond Williams between the late 1950s and the early 1980s.

Marxist and Freudian methods of literary criticism were productively combined from the 1920s on by several American writer-critics, including Edmund Wilson and Kenneth Burke. Viewing humans as symbol-using and symbol-misusing animals, Burke approached literary works as often deceptive or self-deceptive symbolic actions that should be critically reenacted, rather than passively contemplated, by their readers.

In a comparably skeptical spirit, current feminist critics in many countries draw attention to literary evidence of ingrained prejudice against women or stereotypic views of women. Their methods often emulate Marxist critiques of oppressive ideologies or Freudian excavations of repressed desires.

The gender-conscious essays of English novelist Virginia Woolf and also influences contemporary feminist writings, by *The Second Sex* (1949), a book-length plea by French thinker and novelist Simone de Beauvoir against the second-class treatment of women. Feminist criticism explores issues relevant to women as authors, as readers, and as fictional characters, and also raises the controversial question of the possible existence of distinctly female writing—recognizably different in the character of its language from discourse shaped by male patterns of thought.

Like feminist, Marxist, and some Freudian critics, nonwhite Western critics and critics emerging in countries newly freed from colonial rule also have challenged many aspects of European and North American culture as socially and psychologically oppressive. Although these so-called multiculturalism critics are united in their opposition to Western domination, they take many different positions on particular issues of race, class, gender, language, and national or ethnic identity.

The influx of Christian books, Bibles and literature is much needed in this postmodern era. The writings and teaching by evolutionists, atheists and other world religion leaders cuts hard and deep into the thinking of new Believers in Christ. They also have an immense affect the Sunday morning only Christian.

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Derrida, Jacques (1930-) Deconstruction: French philosopher, whose work originated the school of **deconstruction**, a strategy of analysis that has been applied to literature, linguistics, philosophy, law and architecture.

Deconstruction shows the multiple layers of meaning at work in language. By deconstructing the works of previous scholars, Derrida attempts to show that language is constantly shifting. Although Derrida's thought is sometimes portrayed by critics as destructive of philosophy, **deconstruction** can be better understood as showing the unavoidable tensions between the ideals of clarity and coherence that govern philosophy and the inevitable shortcomings that accompany its production.