

Postmodernism

Servants Meeting

11/15/15

Outline

- Overview: what is it and why is it important?
- Three Philosophical Movements
 - Nihilism
 - Architecture
 - Art
 - Fashion
 - Common Sayings
 - Truth and Religion

What is it?

- A late 20th century philosophical movement that seeks to define elements of culture including architecture, art, music, literature, etc.
- This movement ultimately became a mindset or worldview that certainly affects *popular culture*
- It began as a movement in architecture that rejected *modernism* and the passion for the new

Why is it Important?

- Popular culture drives the mindset of young people
- Exposure to culture far exceeds exposure to church culture
- Being proactive not reactive
- Realizing how culture might be affecting us personally

Three Eras

- Premodernism: before 1750
- Modernism: 1750-1950
- Postmodernism: 1950 to present

Premodernism: before 1750

- Minimal social change
- Pre-scientific
- Religious and superstitious
- Relied upon revealed knowledge from authoritative sources
- Ultimate Truth could be known through direct revelation
- Direct revelation came from God or a god
- Source of authority: The Church
- “I believe because it is the only thing I know”

Modernism: 1750-1950

- Protestant Reformation and Enlightenment
- Questioning of Divine Revelation
- Scientific empiricism (observation and experience)
- Science and reason are most important
- Religion viewed as irrational

Modernism: 1750-1950

- Early modernists → retain objective moral values
- Latter modernists → moral relativists (view that ethical standards, morality, and positions of right or wrong are culturally based and therefore subject to a person's individual choice. We can all decide what is right for ourselves)
- Sources of authority: Politics (governments and kings) and universities (scholars and professors)

Postmodernism: 1950 to present

- Rejection of individuality; emphasis on collective, anonymous experience
- Collage and diversity
- Dissolution of distinctions
 - Gender
 - Breakdown between “high” and “low” cultural forms
- Broadening of traditional definitions
 - Marriage model: heterosexual, homosexual, polysexual
- Rejection of “grand narratives” or “metanarratives”
 - Big story: a truth that transcends all peoples and cultures
 - An explanation for everything that happens in society



POSTMODERNISM

Now we've finally found out that we can discover truth by a group hug.



OUCH!.. YOU'RE
STANDING ON
MY NECK!

WELL, THAT'S ONE POINT
OF VIEW... BUT ONE
COULD ALSO SAY THAT
YOU'RE TRYING TO
TRIP ME WITH
YOUR NECK...

YOU SEE, IN THE POSTMODERN
CONDITION WE CREATE OUR OWN
REALITY BASED UPON OUR
INTERNALIZED PRECONCEPTIONS.
SINCE THERE IS NO LONGER
ONE OBJECTIVE TRUTH, WE ARE
FREE TO CREATE OUR OWN
TRUTH... SO YOU SEE, THERE
IS NO RIGHT AND WRONG
JUST AN INFINITE
NUMBER OF EQUALLY
VALID "STORIES"

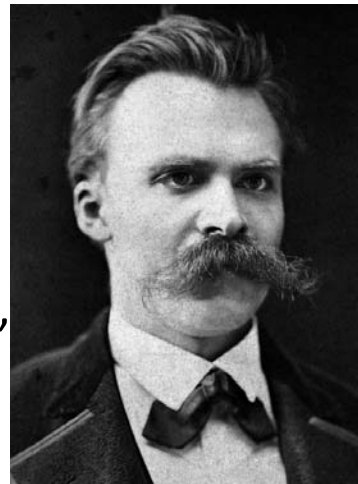
BUT YOU'RE
STILL STANDING
ON MY NECK!

YOU NEVER
WENT TO COLLEGE
DID YOU?

CLAY 897

Nihilism

- Extreme form of skepticism
- Life is without objective meaning, purpose, or intrinsic value
- All knowledge and truth are denied
- Deny the existence of morality
 - If it does exist, it is a human construct
- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)
 - Proclaimed “God is dead” in 1883
 - “Every belief, every considering something-true is necessarily false because there is simply no true world”



"I'm a nihilist."

Test:

1. What important event took place on December 16, 1773?



WHEN IN DOUBT,
DENY ALL TERMS
AND DEFINITIONS.

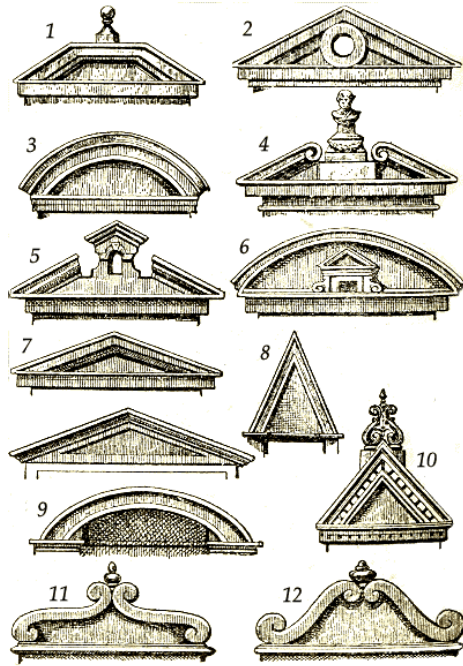


I DO NOT BELIEVE IN LINEAR
TIME. THERE IS NO PAST AND
FUTURE: ALL IS ONE, AND
EXISTENCE IN THE TEMPORAL SENSE
IS ILLUSORY. THIS QUESTION,
THEREFORE, IS MEANINGLESS AND
IMPOSSIBLE TO ANSWER.



AT&T Bldg/ Sony Tower

Manhattan,
New York
City



M2 Building

Tokoyo,
Japan



MIT Stata Center

Cambridge,
Massachusetts







Critical Reception

“the Stata is always going to look unfinished. It also looks as if it’s about to collapse. Columns tilt at scary angles. Walls teeter, swerve, and collide in random curves and angles. Materials change wherever you look: brick, mirror-surface steel, brushed aluminum, brightly colored paint, corrugated metal. Everything looks improvised, as if thrown up at the last moment. That’s the point. The Stata’s appearance is a metaphor for the freedom, daring, and creativity of the research that’s supposed to occur inside it.”

—Robert Campbell, Boston Globe

Lawsuit

...for “providing deficient design services and drawings” which caused leaks to spring, masonry to crack, mold to grow, drainage to back up, and falling ice and debris to block emergency exits.

“These things are complicated, and they involved a lot of people, and you never quite know where they went wrong. A building goes together with seven billion pieces of connective tissue. The chances of it getting done ever without something colliding or some misstep are small. I think the issues are fairly minor” --Frank Gehry, architect

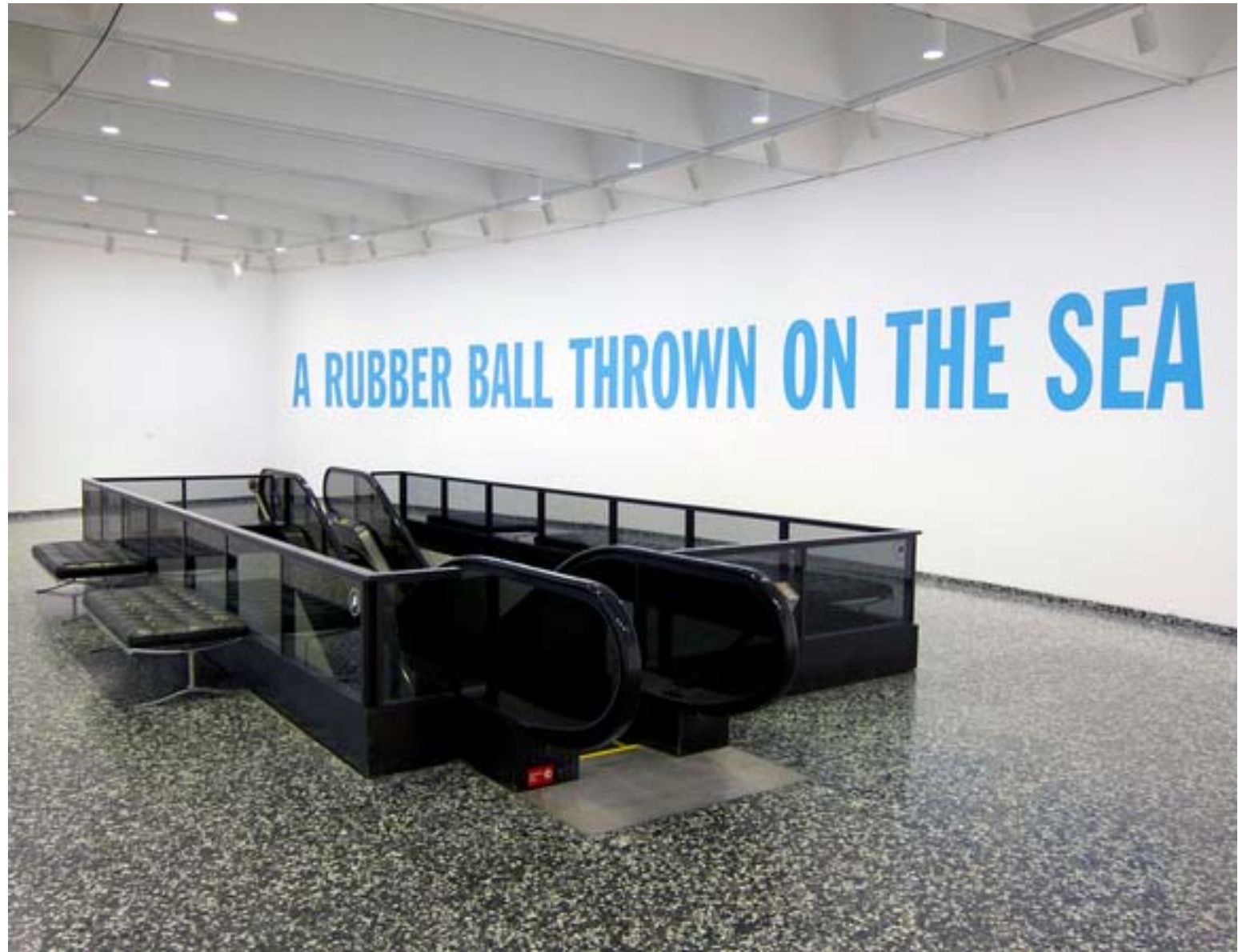
Fred & Ginger/ Dancing House

Prague,
Czech Republic



Lawrence
Weiner

1969



MS/MR

PAR JEAN-BAPTISTE MONDINO







Common Sayings

- “That may be true for you, but not for me”
- “I am spiritual, but not religious”
- “I love who I love; it’s the person that matters”
- “I know” replaced by “I feel”
- “Is it right?” replaced by “What will it do for me?”

“Where modernism was a manifesto of human self-confidence and self-congratulation, postmodernism is a confession of modesty, if not despair. There is no truth, only truths. There are no principles, only preferences. There is no grand reason, only reasons. There is no privileged civilization, only a multiple of cultures, beliefs, periods, and styles. There is no grand narrative of human progress, only countless stories of where people and their cultures are now. There is no simple reality or any grand objectivity of universal, detached knowledge, only a ceaseless representation of everything in terms of everything else.” —Os Guinness (author and social critic)

Truth and Religion



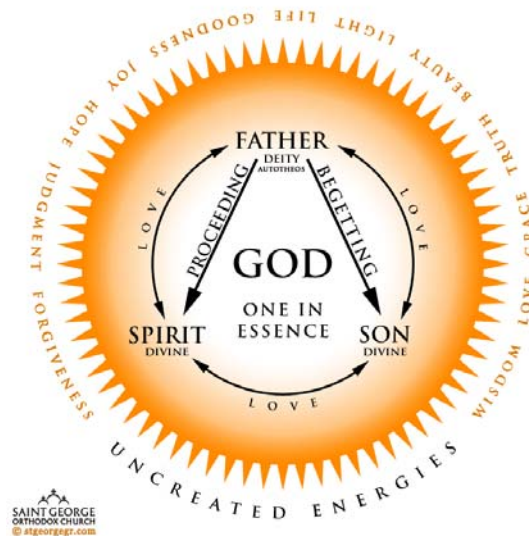
Talk to me about the truth of religion and I'll listen gladly. Talk to me about the duty of religion and I'll listen submissively. But don't come talking to me about the consolations of religion or I shall suspect that you don't understand.

(C. S. Lewis)

izquotes.com

Premodern

- Some things we do not question, even if there is no scientific “proof”
 - God’s existence
 - The nature of the Trinity
 - The existence of heaven
 - Sacraments



Modern

- There are absolute truths, even if we can't always discover them

- There is evidence for God:

- **Psalm 18:** The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims the work of His hands. Day to day utters speech, and night to night proclaims knowledge.



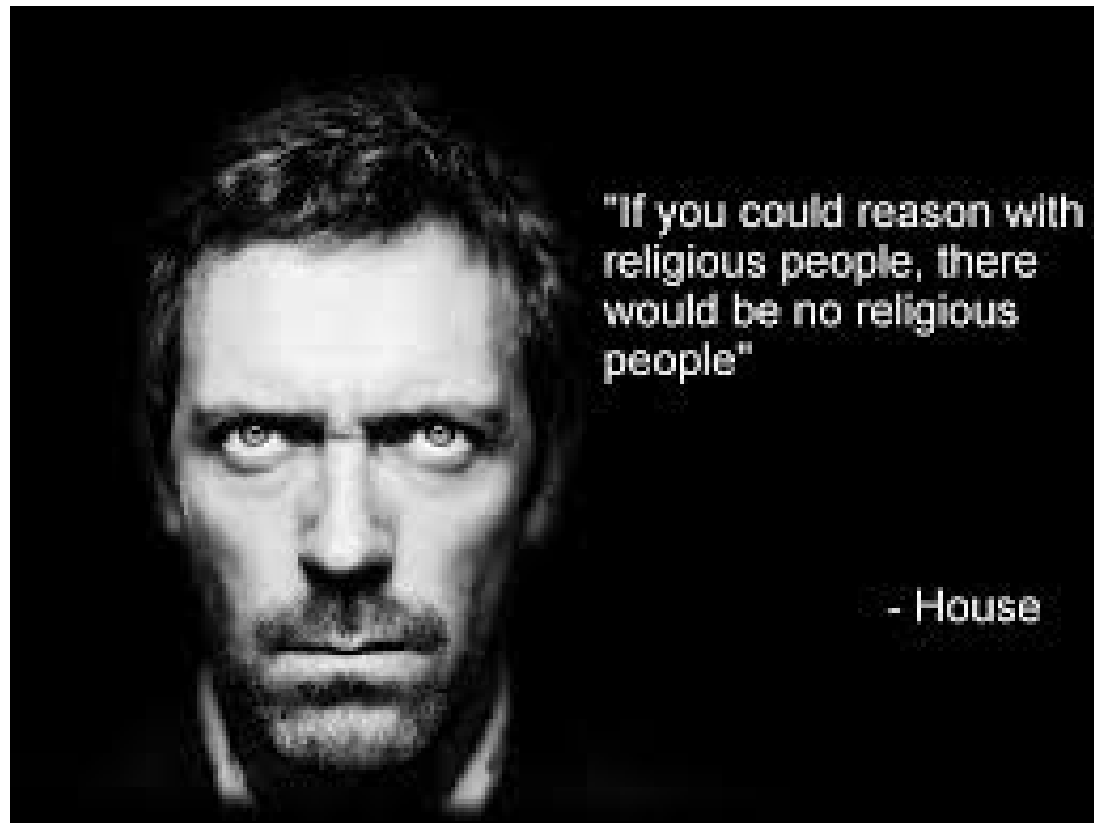
Modern

- The Lord Christ is the Logos (rational)
- We can rationalize many things:
 - The Fall and the need for Resurrection
 - Atoning Death of the Lord
 - The empty tomb
 - The Creation had to have a source



Postmodern

- We reject scientism and rationalism



Postmodern Tolerance



What tolerance is NOT

- Not remaining silent towards behavior you disagree with
 - “I believe abortion is wrong, but I will not rebuke or condemn anyone who does it”
- Not changing your mind that a certain action is wrong
 - “I used to believe that abortion is wrong, but now I see that is acceptable”

What tolerance IS

- Not claiming any belief you hold corresponds with reality
 - “Abortion is a personal choice, and there is no right answer”
- Not claiming that a belief is better than any other belief
 - “The belief that abortion is wrong is not better than the belief that it’s right and vice-versa”
- Not condemning any belief you don’t share
 - “Abortion is not wrong. I might not think it’s right for me, but it might be ok for you”
- Not holding any exclusive beliefs
 - “Murders will not inherit the Kingdom of God”

Postmodern Christianity

- Experience over reason
- Subjectivity over objectivity
- Spirituality over religion
- Images over words
- Outward over inward
- Holy Bible is not the absolute source of truth

