

What is Postmodernism?

Postmodernism was a movement that was born as a response to modernism. So, we need to have a little refresher course on modernism to get a proper picture of where Postmodernism is today. Modernism was a movement that was born as a response to the way that industrialization had developed.

The world used to be ruled by monarchs, kings, queens, pharaohs, popes, what-have-you; but as technologies improved and communication became easier for lower-class people. It became easier for the general public to learn about more abstract concepts, the very concept of philosophy. Even became more widespread among normal everyday people. It led to the general public becoming more aware and frustrated with the monarchy and the aristocrat that had most of the power and money. This led to a period known as the Enlightenment era. It was kind of the red pill of the 18th century. Enlightenment spawned a hatred for monarchy and religious authority and a lot of simple modern concepts were born of it, like liberty, freedom, tolerance, progression, constitutional government and the separation of church and state, as well as things like deductive reasoning, logic, the scientific method, even objective truth.

The Enlightenment era drove the Industrial Revolution into high gear and created industrialized cities and a huge exodus from rural farming and a large growth of population in urban areas. This was the birth of the middle class. Eventually, this is how modernism rose up.

The modern movement was born of the age of reason and logic and took it to its next logical step. A rise in rational thinkers who reject unprovable things like spiritualism and religion and embrace provable concepts like the scientific method, believing only what you can prove. Naturally this is how God died, as Nietzsche put it. The world was not only just more secular now, atheism was becoming more widespread. People were no longer driven by their identity based on religion and they were now driven by identifying with other concepts like patriotism, capitalism, communism, fascism. Knowledge was expanding, the world was mapped, technologies were improving life, society was becoming more organized and institutionalized, art was challenging convention and it also brought concepts like the American dreams.

Modernism had turned into a unified concept of progress and development through logic and scientific endeavor. Modernism led to great achievements like the moon landing. The idea was institutions knew best. They would tell you what to eat. But then World War I and World War II happened, as well as the invention of the nuclear bomb, something that could kill everyone and everything on Earth. And the Cold War happened, which basically held the entire planet hostage. All of these things led to the realization that those same institutions we trusted would progress us into the future, are just as likely to destroy us. This is where Postmodernism comes in.

Postmodernism is a direct response to modernism. But it does not replace modernism. The two sorts of coexist as competing ideas. You don't really have to align yourself with just one concept. It's not a tenant of Postmodernism to reject everything, but it does question everything. Doesn't just question everything from modernism though, it goes all the way back to when the concepts of truth and logic were adopted by the Enlightenment era. That's how you end up with arguments like "science as a whole is a product of western modernity and the whole thing should be scratched off."

The certainty that society had that institutions would use science to progress us into the future was shattered. Now, there is no longer a unified value system, unified moral system, unified identities. There's no longer a trust and institutionalized science, or institutionalized government. Structure is replaced with endless choice. People are left to find their own meaning in life, their own form of logic, their own personal philosophies even. Identity is now a commodity, something people are thirsty for. The breaking point was the 1960s. Uncle Sam was peddling the institution, sending sons to die in some jungle and the public had had enough.

We're still seeing the same battle happened today. Postmodernism as a philosophical movement is basically impossible to define. There is absolutely no unification of ideals.

Part of the reason, the movement is impossible to define, has to do with the way that the philosophy creates uncertainty about everything it studies. It's about breaking down conventions and questioning their validity, dissecting everything we know until it dies and watching it die, and then putting the pieces back together; and in theory that helps us understand it better. This can reaffirm the importance of certain conventions and value systems that we hold. You may in fact be employing inventions of Postmodernism like nihilistic humor, or even the shitpost. Art, culture, entertainment— all are influenced by Postmodernism.

I'll answer the biggest question most of you have, what is wrong with Postmodernism? like I said Postmodernist question, traditions and conventions, including concepts – that came from the entire Enlightenment era, scientific method, logic, reason, deduction, well some than the movement flat out reject those concepts. At the university level, this means the Humanities, Social Sciences, they seem to be following a trend of rejecting the old-world logic and substituting it with their understanding of their subjects through a Postmodernist lens. Without empiricism, they develop their own version of truth through their own version of reason, rejecting ideas like universal truths and absolutes.

Basically, any conclusions that society had come to in the past, is now up for question, is up for debate again. What this has created is a giant gap in our ability for the two camps to communicate ideas with each other. It's almost as if people on university campuses, on Parliament Hill, in media and entertainment are speaking two different languages; and that makes things very difficult from a skeptical or from a debate perspective.

How do two people come to a logical conclusion, if they both employ different versions of logic? Concepts like privilege, patriarchy, cultural appropriation, toxic masculinity, rape culture— everything being a social construct. These are all Postmodernist ideas, that can only be properly explained or properly explored or proven through the lens of Postmodernism; and that's why it's so hard to get empirically minded, scientifically minded, logically minded, reasonably minded people to swallow these concepts. There was always an ongoing joke in academia that the social sciences are mostly nonsense. Today that divide is exacerbated by the new language post modernists use, or their shoptalk, if you will. Which is impossible to understand if you aren't initiated.

Noam Chomsky said on Postmodernists in Education: *“I think the effect is pretty clear. It allows people to take a very radical stance, you know, more radical than theory. But to be completely dissociated from anything that's happening, for many reasons. One reason is nobody can actually know where they stand. So, they're already dissociated. It's kind of like a private lingo...”*

Popped in these concepts make their way from an academic platform, and completely unfiltered end up somehow on some shit news site that uses them as clickbait, and it only serves to confuse the fuck out of the uninitiated. Outside of a group of people who have taken say gender studies, these things don't make much sense. It's two different languages if you have been ever in an argument with a social justice warrior, for example, you may feel like, no matter how well you make your point; they just don't seem to get it. Well, likely they're feeling the same way about you.

Postmodernists replace facts and proofs with narratives. Evidence either proves or disproves a narrative. To oppose modernists, they may see a debate as being their narrative versus your narrative. What this has created is a generation of students with a completely different mindset than previous generations.

Postmodernism isn't all bad. It's given us some amazing things. It's a merely a medium, a type of canvas, it's how one uses that medium that defines one character as an intellectual.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PotnyAxuO2Q>