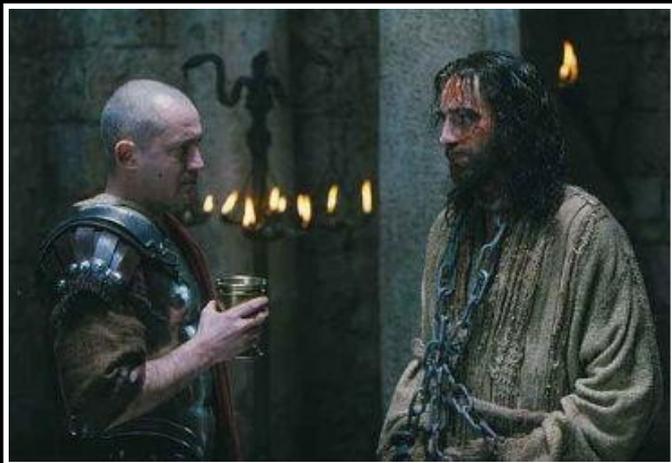


Naturalism...Postmodernism...Theism

# POSTMODERNISM



John 18:37-38a

Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?"

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world--to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Worldview Questions

- What is prime reality?
- How do we know what is real?
- What is a human being?
- What are the chief problems facing humanity?
- What is salvation and how is it achieved?
- What is right and wrong?

# What is prime reality?

- For the postmodernist, this question cannot be meaningfully answered in a universal sense, because we are so biased in our perceptions of reality, that there is no way for us to discover or know what is universally real or true.



*Untitled (Joe)*

by Robert Longo, 1981

**POSTMODERNISM**

# What is prime reality?

- For the postmodernist, each person has his own prime reality set by the culture, gender, and race of which he/she shares.



by Gurunistma Dasa  
2010

POSTMODERNISM

# What is prime reality?

- Whether God (or anything in the supernatural realm) exists is not something that can be objectively known. People can make God a part of their reality through belief but not through objective knowledge.

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# How do we know what is real?

- We cannot know what is real or true. Our perspective is so shaped by our culture, gender, race, and personality as well as by the culture-shaped words we use that any truth that may exist can never be definitively known to be true.

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# How do we know what is real?

- While we are not able to access any universal truth, each culture does develop its own "truths." In other words, truth is simply what we as individuals and communities make it to be and nothing more. Thus for the postmodernist, there is not one reality, but many realities.

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*"It may be true for you  
but not for me"*

*I've given up on reality.  
Now I am looking for  
a good fantasy!*

"It doesn't matter  
what you believe as  
long as you are  
sincere."

**"I'm glad your religion works for you!"**

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# How do we know what is real?

- Neither religion or science is more accurate in telling us what is real or true. Both are social constructions and only create what is real or true for the culture that is affected.

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“The postmodern individual...views religious truth as a special kind of truth and not an eternal and perfect representation of cosmic reality. And—going beyond modern secular humanism—he or she sees the work of science as yet another form of social construction and not a secret technique for taking objective photographs of the universe.”

Walter Truett Anderson  
*Reality Isn't What It Used To Be*

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Why is it called postmodernism?

- For modernism, knowledge starts with objective human reasoning...
- For postmodernism, “knowledge” begins with enculturated human reasoning

**POSTMODERNISM**

“There is nothing deep down inside us except what we have put there ourselves, no criterion that we have not created in the course of creating a practice, no standard of rationality that is not an appeal to such a criterion, no rigorous argumentation that is not obedience to our own conventions.”

Richard Rorty  
*Consequences of Pragmatism*

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Why is it called postmodernism?

- For modernism, certainty and universal truth can be attained...
- For postmodernism, certainty and truth cannot be attained.

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Why is it called postmodernism?

- ✓ For modernism, knowledge is achieved through reason and rigorous scientific methods...
- ✓ For postmodernism, knowledge is achieved through whatever methods the culture decides.

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**“The End of Modernity”  
Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project  
St. Louis, MO  
1954-1976**

**POSTMODERNISM**

# What is a human being?

- A human being is a product of his/her culture, gender, race, and psychology. There is nothing “essential” or “fundamental” about an individual or a social group. Human identity is contingent on social construction and not on any objective reality in the cosmos.

# What is a human being?

- A human being is finite and limited in his/her perspective and understanding.
- A human being may be of nature only or may be natural and supernatural. A person's culture determines which is "true."



“We accept the reality of the world with which we are presented.”

Cristof  
*The Truman Show*

**POSTMODERNISM**

“There’s no more truth out there than there is in the world I created for you. The same lies. The same deceit.”



Cristof  
*The Truman Show*

**POSTMODERNISM**

# What are the chief problems facing humanity?

- Claims of neutrality. Postmodernists believe we are unable to get outside of our biases. Those who claim that they can be neutral are mistaken and end up using their “neutral” perspectives to advance power.

**POSTMODERNISM**

# What are the chief problems facing humanity?

- The idea of metanarratives (universal statements of truth). Postmodernists believe that metanarratives (whether they be communism, Christianity, or scientism) are nothing more than power moves developed for the purpose of advancing one group's cause and suppressing the ideas and behaviors of others.

**POSTMODERNISM**

# What are the chief problems facing humanity?

- Language. We are all trapped by our language. Each culture has a limited vocabulary and uses words in a way that supports its own worldview and power.

**POSTMODERNISM**

"It depends on what the meaning of the  
word 'is,' is."

**William Jefferson Clinton**

Presidential  
Impeachment  
Proceedings, 1998



"The great story here for anybody  
willing to find it and write about it and  
explain it is this vast right-wing  
conspiracy that has been conspiring  
against my husband since the day he  
announced for president."

**Hillary Clinton**

**POSTMODERNISM**

# What are the chief problems facing humanity?

- Intolerance towards the “truths” of others.

**POSTMODERNISM**

# What is salvation and how is it achieved?

- Salvation is when no one tries to impose a metanarrative on someone else.
- Salvation is when there is no intolerance towards the “truths” of others

# What is salvation and how is it achieved?

- Salvation is achieved when each culture (and each person within a culture) is free to define what salvation is and to pursue it.

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# What is right and wrong?

- There is no universal right and wrong, or if there is we can never be certain that we have found it.
- Moral “truth” is not static or universal. It is the tool of those in power. Cultures are free to change what is considered right and wrong as they please.

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“As a lawyer, Laurie Gray knows from experience that witnesses aren't always capable of knowing, let alone telling, the whole truth. As a mom, she allows herself the same human quality.

“Last year, she had her 10-year-old daughter lie about her age to register for a free email account, knowing the company's minimum was 13.

**POSTMODERNISM**

“She had told me you have to be 13,’ said Gray, in Fort Wayne, Ind. ‘I responded you don't actually have to be 13. You just have to enter a year for your birth date that was at least 13 years ago.’”

**“Is honesty the best policy?”**

Leanne Italie

The Associated Press

**POSTMODERNISM**

# What is right and wrong?

- Although postmodernists say there is no right or wrong, they are generally quite strong in declaring that it is wrong to be intolerant of other people's "truth" and it is right to celebrate the diversity of "truth."



"I learned something on my quest. Just saying your belief is not how you get into heaven. Jesus is only a symbol. It doesn't matter whose name you use, as long as their name implies being good."

"Pete O'Malley"  
*Stolen Summer*

**POSTMODERNISM**

Naturalism...Postmodernism...Theism

# POSTMODERNISM

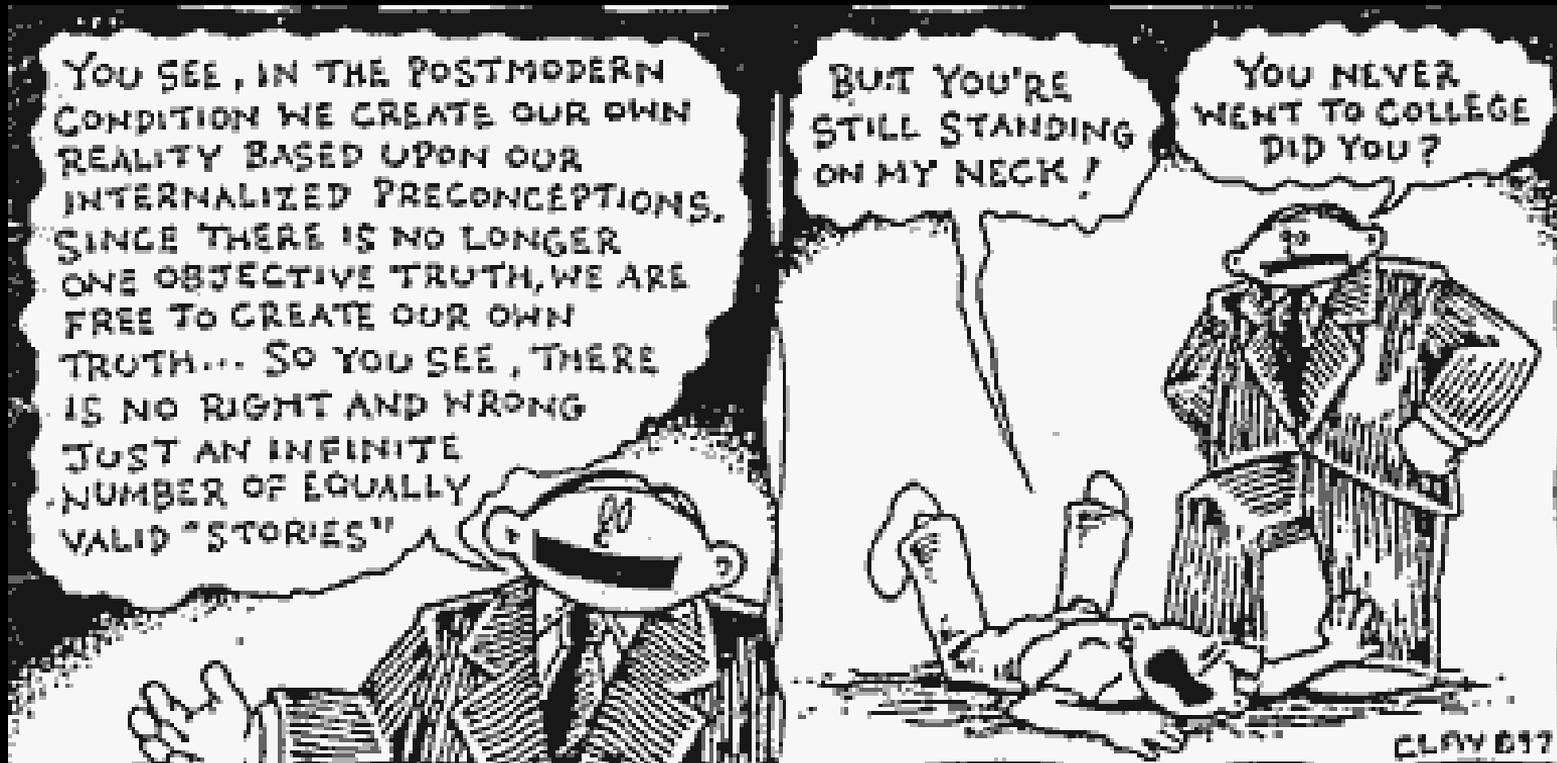
# Worldview Questions

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**POSTMODERNISM**



POSTMODERNISM

# Positive Contributions of Postmodernism

1. Postmodernism recognizes that we are biased by our cultural upbringing and should be careful in declaring universal truth.

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Positive Contributions of Postmodernism

2. Postmodernism recognizes the finiteness of the individual and thus the finiteness of any knowledge that one might have.

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Positive Contributions of Postmodernism

3. Postmodernism helps us recognize that people sometimes use “truths” to gain and maintain power.

**POSTMODERNISM**



Pro-Nazi cartoon (1936).  
Caption and pictures tell  
of a Jewish man acting  
friendly to a German  
man on public bench, but  
later pushing him off.  
This was purported to be  
the normal behavior of  
Jews and a reason for  
justified discrimination  
against them.



# Positive Contributions of Postmodernism

4. Postmodernism is open to more ways of human knowing than the scientific method including the role of intuition which plays a very significant role in developing new scientific theories.

# Positive Contributions of Postmodernism

5. Postmodernism recognizes the value of individual cultures. It does not easily raise one culture above another or promote nationalism. It celebrates cultural diversity.

# Positive Contributions of Postmodernism

6. Postmodernism generally promotes peaceful co-existence.

# The Main Concern for the Christian

Postmodernism is blatantly antithetical to Scripture's claim that we can know the truth. It is one thing to be wrong about what is truth; it is a whole other matter to be wrong about whether truth can be known.

**POSTMODERNISM**

Then Jesus said to those Judeans who had believed him, "If you continue to follow my teaching, you are really my disciples and *you will know the truth*, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:31

**POSTMODERNISM**

...I urge that requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanks be offered on behalf of all people...Such prayer for all is good and welcomed before God our Savior, since he wants all people to be saved and to come to a *knowledge of the truth.*

1 Timothy 2:1-4

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“Only if we recognize that the truth of truth...is in doubt today, and that this uncertainty stifles the word as a carrier of God’s truth and moral judgment, do we fathom the depth of the present crisis.”

Carl F.H. Henry  
*God, Revelation, and Authority*

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

1. Postmodernism is self-defeating. If all are biased in their perception of reality, then why should a postmodern view of truth ever be accepted? Furthermore, if postmodernism abhors metanarratives, how can it offer its own?

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

2. Postmodernism makes all truth relative, but this is not how postmodernists behave. They behave as if at least some things are really true. Find out what a postmodernist is really concerned about and you quickly find that they consider it wrong to act otherwise.



**POSTMODERNISM**

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

3. If a person is stuck in the world created by their own culture, then it would not be possible for people to change their own culture. Indeed postmodernism would suggest that every culture is valid in condemning reformists.



**POSTMODERNISM**

“If truth is a mere social construction, with no outside reference to an independent reality, it has no ability to anchor protests, to inspire dissent, to orient the soul to what is objectively good and to liberate those ensnared in error.”

Douglas Groothuis  
*Truth Decay*

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

4. There is no room within postmodernism to hold another culture accountable for any action. Justice can be pursued within a culture and never across cultures.



Nuremberg Trials



Robert Jackson

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

5. Postmodernism wants to fix power imbalances that occurred under modernism, but since there is no ultimate truth to appeal to postmodernism must rely on one group using power to right the imbalances of another. This is ironic since postmodernism disdains cultural power moves.

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

6. Postmodernists encourage that we listen to the voices of others since no one group has truth. But if each culture has its own set of truth that blinds it from others, it is probably easier to develop apathy towards what other's believe rather than an acceptance.

“[Postmodernism] leaves our own culture conveniently insulated from anyone else’s culture. All those anti-Western bleatings from the so-called third world may be safely ignored, since they are interpreting our conduct in terms quite irrelevant to us.”

Terry Eagleton

*The Illusions of Postmodernism*

**POSTMODERNISM**

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

7. When the quest for objectivity and universal truth is lost, all presentations of history, journalism, art, and science necessarily become meaningless. They become nothing more than “Once upon a time” stories.

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

8. It is hard to say that postmodernism is promoting tolerance when it belittles the claim of billions who say their beliefs are universal truth and not just a mere social construction.

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

9. Postmodernists say that language is relative; thus the world we describe using words is relative. If this is true, then we would have no reason to believe the words of a postmodernist. We would also not expect that people of different languages could understand each other even with translators.

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

10. If we cannot know what reality is, then we can never really know what is truly worthy or deserving of praise or love. In the end, what we say we love or adore is just be a myth and our affection is unfounded.

# Shortcomings of Postmodernism

11. Peaceful co-existence is not always possible.  
There are people who would rather we be dead  
or be their slaves.



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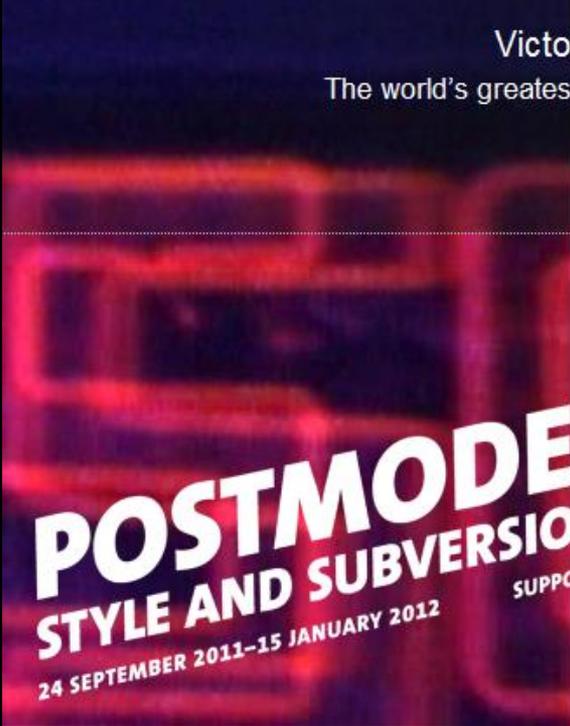
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