

THEORETICAL POSTMODERNISM: ARCHITECTURAL POSTMODERNISM AS AN INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY POSTMODERNISM

Architectural critics beat their literary counterparts by ten years in producing a practical, hands-on guide to postmodernism as a movement. In 1977, Charles Jencks published the first comprehensive guide to postmodernism as an architectural movement, *The Language of Postmodern Architecture*. The literary equivalent, Brian McHale's *Postmodernist Fiction*, was published ten years later. Both Jencks and McHale succinctly delineate postmodern aesthetics from their modernist predecessors', but Jencks goes one step further. He pinpoints the instant of modernism's death, writing "Happily, we can date the death of Modern Architecture to a precise moment in time... Modern Architecture died in St. Louis, Missouri, on July 15, 1972 at 3:32 p.m. (or thereabouts) when the infamous Pruitt-Igoe scheme, or rather several of its slab blocks, were given the final *coup de grace* by dynamite" (23). Literary scholars on the other hand talk about the first, most original, or best-known representatives of modernism, but they absolutely avoid pinpointing a definitive end to the movement. The modernism/postmodernism distinction blurs in literature because many authors—such as Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, Robert Coover, and Thomas Pynchon—gradually transition from modernism to postmodernism over the course of their careers or even in a single book. Thanks to architecture's visual nature and Jencks' early, authoritative, and internationally read scholarship, the differences between modern and postmodern aesthetics are often clearer in architecture than in literature. For this reason, architecture provides a helpful visual counterpoint for modern and postmodern aesthetics in literature. In this chapter, I will use the relatively clear distinctions between modernism and postmodernism in architecture to help define postmodernism as it applies to literature.

While there is widespread consensus in Jencks's overall definition of architectural postmodernism, there are two prominent definitions of postmodernism in literature. To summarize Jencks, architectural postmodernism favors pluralism, complexity, double coding, and historical contextualism. In literature, however, there are two predominant schools of thought. According to Linda Hutcheon, postmodernism is historiographic metafiction, texts that self-consciously and ironically problematize the way fiction and history are represented. Whereas, for Brian McHale, postmodernism is characterized by its focus on ontological issues, issues that pertain to being or reality. McHale contrasts this with modernism's focus on epistemological issues, issues that pertain to the nature and limits of knowledge. He offers examples of some of the typical questions that dominate the two types of texts:

Table 3. McHale's Ontological Versus Epistemological Questions

Epistemological Questions (modernism)	Ontological Questions (postmodernism)
How do I interpret the world I am part of? What is there to be known? Who knows it? How do they know it and how can they be certain? How is knowledge transmitted and can it be transmitted reliably? How does knowledge change as it is transmitted? What are the limits of the knowable? (cf. McHale 9)	What world is this? What is to be done and which of my selves will do it? What happens when different kinds of worlds are juxtaposed, or when boundaries between worlds are crossed? What kinds of worlds are there? What is different in the existence of a text and the world(s) it projects? (cf. McHale 10)

While there are many other writers who have striven to define postmodernism in literature, McHale and Hutcheon have distinguished themselves by actually applying their theories to the messy, heterogeneous body of postmodern literature. What, after all, is a theory of postmodernism in literature worth if it cannot handle such a diverse group of authors as Thomas Pynchon and Toni Morrison in the United States, John Fowles and Salman Rushdie in England, Italo Calvino and Umberto Eco in Italy, Markku Eskelinen and Kari Kontio in Finland, Cecilie Løveid and Kjartan Fløgstad in Norway, Svend Åge Madsen and Peter Høeg in Denmark, and Lars Gustafsson and Stig Larsson in Sweden?

Although extremely useful in analyzing a great many postmodern texts, Hutcheon's equivocation of metafiction and postmodernism has contributed to confusion about the definition of literary postmodernism. I recently received an e-mail from Jan Kjørstad in which he wrote that "postmodernismen er like gammel som Cervantes" [postmodernism is as old as Cervantes], mistakenly equating metafiction with postmodernism, which is clearly a somewhat more recent movement (personal e-mail). Hutcheon herself has come to agree, "it would be foolish to deny that metafiction is today recognized as a manifestation of postmodernism" (1980, xiii). Thus, I include metafiction as one of, though not the only, distinguishing characteristics of literary postmodernism.

I will also look at some of the standard complaints modernists and postmodernists harbor about each other. First of all, though, as literature is not written in a vacuum, I will survey some of the societal changes over the course of the twentieth century that affected artistic production. Then, I will look at some of the major formal trends that characterize modernism and postmodernism, examining particularly at parallels between architecture and literature. In this discussion I will refer to architecture as a means of better illustrating the expression of similar ideas in literature. Finally, I will focus specifically on modernism and postmodernism as literary movements, specifically how many of the aforementioned formal trends carry over into literature.

SOCIAL CHANGES INFLUENCING MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM

Modernism

Before comparing literature and architecture, it is important to think about some of the social changes informing art and design. In contrast to the humorous precision with which Jencks pinpointed the death of modernism in architecture, it will never be possible to set such a definitive date for the end of modernism in literature. However, scholars happily name the movement's early contributors. Sven Rossel calls Finland's Edith Södergran, who debuted with *Dikter* in 1916, "the first and possibly greatest of the Fenno-This span of time also saw a widespread shift from a more rural, agrarian society to one that was more urban and industrial. In part, this was reflected in modernist authors' preoccupation with the themes of cities and urban life. Many modernists assembled in small groups in cities like Berlin, London, Moscow, New York, Paris, Rome, and Vienna. There was, for example, the group that included Edvard Munch, Stanislaw Przybyszewski, and August Strindberg who met at Zum Munch, Stanislaw Przybyszewski, and August Strindberg who met at Zum schwarzen Ferkel in Berlin. In Paris there was Gertrude Stein's salon, where ▼

Postmodernism

As mentioned above, literary scholars are loath to name a date for modernism's death. There is much greater consensus on a date for postmodernism's birth. While literary postmodernism began in the 1960s in the United States, it was not until the mid-1980s that it truly caught on in the Nordic countries. Swedish scholar Bo Jansson names the evening of February 28, 1986, when Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme was murdered, as a critical moment in the birth of postmodernism (10). Finnish scholar Jukka Petäjä pinpoints the start of postmodernism in Finland to the fall of 1987, when Markku Eskelinen and Jyrki Lehtola proclaimed its arrival in their collection of essays, *Jälkisanat—Sianhoito-opas* [Afterword—A Guide to Pig-Keeping]. Norwegian critic Eivind Røssaak discusses some of the false starts in the early phases of Norwegian postmodernism, ultimately pinpointing Jan Kjørstad as the likely first postmodern author in Norway, specifically with his 1984 release of *Homo falsus*. In other words, postmodernism became a widespread phenomenon in Nordic literature during the ▼

Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso, William James, and Henri Matisse were frequent guests. And in New York City, Jean Toomer hosted a similar group. Modernist texts often feature single cities in relatively anonymous, monolithic, rather ominous roles. The specific city is often less important than the metaphysical issues the city evokes, such as anonymity and mass production.

So, many of these modern artists viewed themselves as exiles, representatives of an alienated cultural elite. They settled or worked in foreign cities, in self-imposed exile from their countries. The American Gertrude Stein, for example, lived in Paris. Sweden's August Strindberg spent time in Paris and Berlin, among other places. Norwegian author Dagny Juell spent a great deal of time in Berlin and died in Tbilisi, Georgia. Many modernist works focus on the sense of alienation experienced by city dwellers and people who feel cut off from traditional ways of life. Ironically, despite the authors' feelings of exclusion and exteriority, as Connor phrases it, "it is also strangely the case that the ugly duckling of the avant-garde in literature was always quickly transformed into a sleek canonical swan" (112). In other words, during their lifetimes many modernists felt alienated and exiled, as if their work were on the very periphery of cultural fields of vision, but by the 1950s these authors' works had become canonized.

The modernist era saw dramatic changes in industrialization, technology, and the role of machines. Modernists such as Pound, Eliot, and Woolf were opposed to and horrified by the automated mass culture of the twentieth ▼

1980s.

The period from the 1980s to the present in the Nordic countries has been marked by a transition from an urban, industrial dominant to a more wired, media-based, post-industrial society. Growing numbers of Finns and Norwegians work in post-industrial jobs, for example in computer and telecommunications fields. This trend has also been reflected in literature, with the emphasis moving away from cities, urban life, and machines to a fascination with information. Hayles pinpoints this as one of the major transformations of the last half century, the privileging of information over material presence such that information has become more important than the biological or mechanical substrate carrying the information (2). Post-industrial jobs are far less dependent on physical location. By investing in high tech and education, in fact, Finland was extremely successful in emerging from the recession that started in the 1970s to become a world leader in the cell phone industry among other sectors, despite its physical location on the periphery of northern Europe. Thanks to technological advances such as video conferencing many workers in Finland and Norway now do business well beyond the geographical location of their physical offices.

Instead of experiencing alienation, postmodernists have embraced the new technologies and incorporated them into their lives and their fiction. The widespread adoption of electronic media into the everyday lives of Finns and Norwegians has resulted in a postmodern generation of authors ▼

century. They considered the commercial, mechanized production of mass goods, including works of art, a threat to utopian ideals and aestheticism. They believed the position of the craftsperson was being diminished. For example, I have a woven blanket that one of my American ancestors laboriously created in the pre-modern mid-nineteenth century. She was so skilled and meticulous that to modern observers this blanket looks as if a machine made it. By the modernist era, machines were weaving blankets much faster and more cost-effectively than skilled craftspeople; machine-woven blankets really were being mass-produced for popular consumption. Modernists were grappling with precisely this conceptual issue. In other words, the more skilled the modern artisan, the more her work looks as if it was made by a machine. If an artist were to weave a blanket now, they would include intentional mistakes or irregularities so that people could tell it had been made by hand. The modernists were on the cusp of this transition in the way people viewed one-of-a-kind works of art.

In his 1936 essay “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit” [“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”], Walter Benjamin argued that, as an effect of mechanical reproduction, autonomous works of art lose their unique value as “authentic” works of art. He points out that, “from a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the ‘authentic’ print makes no sense” (46). Life in the modernist era was so focused on machines that Le Corbusier referred to a house as a *machine à habiter* (ix) ▼

doing things that no other generation did, such as participating in online e-mail chat sessions answering questions from their readers. Kjørstad was featured on the Norwegian television program *Maraton*, a series created by Lars von Trier’s production company Zentropa, where an interviewer and television camera crew followed him around in his home for 24 hours straight. Outtakes that were not included in the 3 hours that were actually shown on NRK can be downloaded and viewed over the Internet. As another example, Tapio published his most recent text, *VR (Virtual Reality)—Pohjoinen Linja* [VR (Virtual Reality)—The Northern Line], online. In a key observation, McHale correctly notes that “postmodernist writers are more interested in the social and institutional consequences of technological innovation, the social arrangements these advances give rise to, rather than the innovations themselves” (66). The decades from the 1960s through the end of the twentieth century in both the United States and the Nordic countries have been marked by the increasing adoption of television, the Internet, and other fast-paced and increasingly international media. The five authors I have selected, born between 1949 and 1957, mark the first generation in Norway and Finland to have grown up with television. Kjørstad in particular has even acknowledged television as an influential factor in his fiction. In Finland and Norway, television dramatically expanded access to national and global cultural productions; even in remote hamlets, people had access to everything from the BBC and CNN to MTV, ▼

and in his preface to *The Wedge*, William Carlos Williams said that a poem is “a machine made up of words.” Naturally all of this was reflected in the literature of the day, in modernism’s fascination with mechanization, alienation, and quest to understand how the machine of the human mind functions.

Literature reflects society in other ways as well. Obviously, modernist characters do not have office jobs that involve computers. Instead, if they have to work at all, they hold jobs typical of the time—men are journalists, merchants, tradesmen, sailors, and so forth. Women are not employed outside the home, unless as teachers or nurses or the like. More often than not, however, modernist protagonists tend to be independently wealthy, devoting their time to an artistic passion rather than a job needed for financial reasons. Modernist characters do not watch television, do not fly to Paris for the weekend, and rarely make phone calls. Changes in the sex distribution of the workforce and in technology are necessarily reflected in literature and modernism most definitely reflects the gender roles and technological norms of the early and mid-twentieth century. While the reflection of these societal details in literature may seem obviously, it bears repeating as yet another distinguishing feature between literary modernism and postmodernism.

In hindsight, it is also easy to see that modernism bears the stamp of other historical societal changes besides technology. There has been social progress as well. Modernists, such as Conrad, generally believed that they could speak for others—the colonized, Africans, women, and so forth. Thanks to the growing academic disciplines of gender ▼

“Dynasty” and “Seinfeld.” Just as the changing roles of women in the workforce have impacted literary production, the availability of international programming in Norwegian and Finnish living rooms cannot be ignored as a factor that influences art. There are numerous other societal changes that affect literature as well.

While Walter Benjamin drew attention to the relationship between a photographic negative and a print, his postmodern counterpart would point out that digital photos have not only done away with negatives, but in most cases with prints as well. In fact, software makes it easy to manipulate photos and alter their appearance. If Benjamin were alive today, he might muse over the new paradoxes of photographic authenticity. After all, using a program such as PhotoShop to remove reddy from a photograph, tampers with the reality of the image the camera captured. However, since the photographic subject most certainly did not have reddy in real life, you have also made the photographic image more authentic by altering it. Of course this is only one small example of the way technology has changed from the modern era to the postmodern.

More pertinent to literature are the changes in the way people deal with texts. From typewriters, carbon paper, and copy machines, the 1970s and 1980s marked the beginning of a trend toward word processors and computers. These have dramatically altered the way people think about and handle text. Words no longer have static appearances; computers make it easy to copy text, change fonts, modify formatting, and generally manipulate texts. Fax machines, ▼

studies, gay studies, and postcolonial studies, this view has changed considerably. Instead of trying to consider all other subjects, Gayatri Spivak urges us to “entertain the notion that [we] cannot consider all other subjects” (29). These changing viewpoints and other societal changes have had dramatic effects on the way authors live and write, and on who becomes an author. It also affects the narrators they choose to tell their stories, and on the way their literature unfolds. ■

file transfer protocols, and e-mail made it easy to move texts back and forth between remote locations. These innovations have not only altered the process of textual production, but also the way readers and writers think about texts. And anything that changes the way readers and writers think about language and texts inherently impacts literature.

In addition to the technological advancements that distinguish the latter half of the twentieth century from the first half, there have also been vast social changes. In Europe and North America, colonial and patriarchal power structures have lost much of their former potency. While modernists believe they can speak for others, postmodernists believe that others must speak for themselves. Postmodernist authors are more likely to problematize centralized master narratives, e.g., through parody, irony, and innovative narrative devices. Toni Morrison, for example, uses a ghost child in *Beloved* to represent the silenced voice of a slave. In *Pimeästä maasta* [*From a Dark Country*], Maarit Verronen frustrates gender assumptions by not allowing readers to determine the gender of the main character. Gerd Brantenberg uses a different tactic to frustrate readers' gender assumptions in her satire, *Egalias døtre* [*Egalia's Daughters*], which depicts a world in which gender roles are reversed.

In a similarly postmodern problematization of master narratives, the postcolonial Greenlandic protagonist of Peter Høeg's *Frøken Smillas fornemelse for sne* [*Smilla's Sense of Snow*] ▼

travels between a detective story in contemporary Copenhagen, Denmark, and a science fiction story in Gela Alta, Greenland. By structuring the book this way, Denmark is portrayed as the real world, one in which Smilla is a racial and cultural outsider, and Greenland is portrayed as a highly fictionalized world. The result is that contemporary, postcolonial Greenland is absent from the text. In other words, Smilla's only real home is the one in which she is an outsider. This type of narrative problematization is common in postmodernist literature, where heterogeneous perspectives abound and societal truths are revealed to be constructed notions. ■

SUMMARY OF SOCIAL CHANGES

The course of the twentieth century saw dramatic societal changes throughout Europe and North America especially in the role of cities, technology, race, and gender. Modernist literature reflects many of the social mores and facts of the period it is written in—mostly between 1916 and 1960 in Finland and Norway. Modernist authors struggle with issues relating to urbanization, industrialization, and the role of machines in people's lives. They express a general sense of alienation and horror at mass-produced culture. Postmodernist literature, prevalent in the United States since the 1960s and in Norway and Finland since the 1980s, also reflects the social mores and truths of the era it is written in, a time of wired, media-based, postindustrial societies. Postmodern societies and authors are more preoccupied with computers than industrial machines and more interested in the information being transmitted than the technology used to transmit it. Unlike their literary predecessors, postmodernists embrace new technologies; they use e-mail, participate in online chat sessions, and publish fiction directly to the Web. Modernists viewed mechanized production as a threat to original, authentic artistry. Postmodernists problematize the very idea of authenticity, showing that truth and originality are constructed notions to begin with.

FORMAL TRENDS: FROM ARCHITECTURE TO LITERATURE

Modernism: Univalent

Modernist architecture is univalent in form, in other words it is designed around one of a few simplified values using a limited number of materials and right angles. In fact modernism's univalency is one the movement's most salient features. As Jencks explains, "the glass-and-steel box has become the single most used form in Modern Architecture, and it signifies throughout the world 'office building'" (27). Ideal modernist buildings present a unified, singular form of uninterrupted, clean lines. Take the clean, uninterrupted lines of Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building in New York City (1958) as an example.



Figure 1. Seagram Building (Danekwa) ▼

Postmodernism: Double Coded

While modernist architecture tends to be univalent in form, postmodernist architecture is characterized by double coding, the inclusion of messages to be interpreted by other professional architects and a separate set of messages to be interpreted by the buildings' users and inhabitants (Jencks 12). In addition, postmodern double coding is often ironic. This can be seen, for example, in Philip Johnson and John Burgee's AT&T Building in New York City.



Figure 2. AT&T Building (Howe)

The building looks both like a traditional glass and steel skyscraper and at the same time like an enormous grandfather clock culminating in an upward reaching Chippendale split pediment. The AT&T Building is double coded because ▼

The building is made of concrete, steel, and glass. The façade includes an endless repetition of evenly spaced, equally sized windows. Typical of modernist architecture, no single window stands out on the Seagram Building; rather the sum of all the windows together is what makes an impression on the viewer. All of the building's angles are right angles and all of its details are spaced at regular, predictable intervals. Modernist architecture values coherence, purity, and unified representation. In fact, if you left-right reverse an image of the Seagram Building, it looks the same. This may be the most convincing proof of the building's coherent univalency.

Univalency is also a useful way of thinking about modernist literature. Modernist authors overwhelmingly present narratives from the point of view of a single consciousness. They strive to find a language that captures the personalized intensity of a subjective life, recording one person's unique view of the world from within what Virginia Woolf famously calls the "semi-transparent envelope" of consciousness. Modernists ask readers to extrapolate a universal truth from the example of a single life-experience. Kjærstad has likened the modernist approach to the individual as a magnifying glass. As through a magnifying glass, modernist texts are filtered through a single consciousness, a specific voice in an explicit location that contemplates some aspect of his or her relationship with the external world and finally reaches an epiphany or resolution. This is particularly clear in texts where the featured narrating consciousness is unusual, such as the mad Darl Bundren in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* or the retarded Mattis in Vesaas's *Fuglane* ▼

it is part skyscraper and part grandfather clock. It blends in with the other modernist buildings in its vicinity by mirroring and parodying many of their features. For example, its façade is left right reversible, it includes a great many 90° angles, its ground level incorporates pillars, and there is a simple capital in the top horizontal row of windows. Comparing this with the Seagram Building for example demonstrates the AT&T's modernist coding. However, the AT&T Building's pink granite sheathing provides a welcome ironic break from the drabber colors of its repetitive neighbors (Jencks, 133). The building also includes a second capital on top of the modernist one, the broken Chippendale pediment, which not only breaks the modernist flat-roof code but also ironically evokes a grandfather clock, surely the biggest one in the city. While many large buildings prominently feature clocks, for example Big Ben in London, it is undeniably ironic that a building should take the form of a clock. Its double coding is ironic. The rooftop garden of the Landeszentralbank in Frankfurt by PAS Albrecht, Jourdan, Müller and Berghof, Landes, Rang is another example of double coding. It is a traditional French garden with orderly topiary shrubs and flat white pebble pathways. At the same time, it is located on the roof of a bank, an unusual location for a traditional French garden, and when viewed from above, which its location facilitates, it resembles a computer chip.

Postmodernist literature also tends to be double coded. Whereas modernism presents either/or choices, postmodernism presents both/and contradictory versions of the story that ▼

[*The Birds*] (1957). In Vesaas's novel, the entire story is told through the filter of Mattis's consciousness. The book ends with Mattis slipping under the water's surface, drowning. The world Mattis lives in is available to readers only through the lens of his consciousness and naturally when he dies he can no longer interpret the world for the reader. The world Mattis lives in is stable and realistic; readers are able to reconstruct events that happen based on Mattis's experience of them. The representation of an ontologically unproblematic world through the filter of a single consciousness is the literary equivalent of univalence in architecture. ■

Modernism: Consistent

Along with their univalent forms, modernist buildings also present extremely consistent surfaces. The majority of ▼

choices. In a postmodernist text, there are often are not resolved; there is no single, unproblematic ontological reality in postmodernism. Kjærstad borrows the term complementarity from physics to describe this literary phenomenon. Complementarity is the concept that two different models may be necessary to describe a system, for example, the fact that electrons seem to behave both as particles and as waves depending on the circumstances. Kjærstad explains "det er altså lov, eller mulig, i en prosabok å bruke hovedfortellinger som utelukker hverandre, men som alle er nødvendige for å gripe det fenomenet man forsøker å beskrive" [Thus in a prose book it is permitted, or possible, to use main narratives that exclude each other, but that are all necessary to capture the phenomenon one is trying to describe] (1997, 227). Kjærstad's *Homo falsus* is an example of this type of mutually exclusive double coding in literature. The text has two narrators, the man who likes to make salads and the woman who serially acts out different Greta Garbo roles, and the reader cannot resolve which of the two actually narrates the text. The question of who narrates *Homo falsus* is irresolvable. They are both the true narrator of the text. By creating two narrators, Kjærstad inscribes a mandatory double reading; his text is doubly coded. ■

Postmodernism: Inconsistent

Postmodernist buildings present the viewer with an inconsistent surface that includes multiple colors and textures as well as ▼

modernist structures look the same when left-right reversed because their façades are uncluttered and lack eye-catching ornamentation. In keeping with this principle of consistency, modernist architects work with a limited color palette, often only black, white, and gray. According to a modernist aesthetic, if a building were to include color or art, this would be separate from the building. Take C. F. Murphey's Daley Center in Chicago (1964) as an example.

Figure 3. Picasso in Front of Daley Center (Soto)

The Picasso sculpture in front of the building provides a break from the building's straight lines and the flags add a splash of color. However, they are not integrated into the building itself. They remain separate.

In a similar fashion, modernist literature also presents a consistent, realistic world. The narrator's subjective point of view does not affect the uninterrupted consistency of the underlying world. For example, in Tarjei Vesaas's *Fuglane* [*The Birds*], the story is told through the filter of ▼

Figure 5. Portland Public Services Building (Foster)

a young retarded man's mind. Although the world is presented from Mattis's subjective point of view, it is clear that the world he lives in is realistic. This fictional world provides a consistent, ontologically unproblematic backdrop against

Figure 6. Walt Disney Headquarters (Sullivan)

disruptions to the building's symmetry. While modernist architects adhere to monochromatic color schemes, postmodernists often incorporate polychromy. Venturi, Rauch, and Scott-Brown's Gordon Wu Dining Hall at Princeton University exemplifies this. Its façade includes white marble, gray stone, light wood, dark metal, and red and black brick. Not only does the building's façade include a number of different colors, materials, and textures, but they also all combine to evoke a cartoon-like face.

Figure 4. Gordon Wu Dining Hall (Bernard)

The building is both colorful and ironically double coded, both a university dining hall and an anthropomorphic smiling face. While sculptures tend to be separate from modernist buildings, postmodernist buildings often incorporate sculpture into the building itself. For example, Michael Graves's Portland Public Services Building prominently features an enormous, playful sculpture of the goddess Portlandia over its main entrance (see figure 5). Similarly, Graves's Walt Disney Headquarters in Burbank (see figure 6) features seven 19-foot ▼ tall stone dwarves as caryatids, doubly coded as a subtle reference to classical Greek architecture and an overt reference to the type of business the building houses. While modernists keep flourishes of color and sculpture separate from their buildings, postmodernists integrate color, textural inconsistencies, and sculpture into their buildings.

This is paralleled in literature. In modernist literature, unrealistic events are

which the movements of Mattis's mind can be displayed. William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) presents a similarly subjective view of a ▼

fundamentally realistic world. Faulkner's text is told through three primary narrators. And although the story is filtered through these different narrative points of view, the reader can easily connect the dots and figure out what happened. Despite the multiple perspectives in the text, the events that took place are consistent. To be sure, modernists sometimes incorporate unrealistic or surrealistic events into their texts, but these are typically framed as dreams, wishes, memories, or something to that effect that takes place *within* a character's mind. Just as elements of color or

framed as vagaries within a character's mind, perhaps as a dream or hallucination.

Postmodernists include unrealistic, ontologically problematic events, but leave these as unresolved paradoxes *outside* the character's mind (McHale 101). In other words, when strange things occur in a modernist text there is ultimately an explanation. Take *The Wizard of Oz* as an example. A man behind a curtain operating the levers of a machine explains the magic of the Oz. Of course, Dorothy also turns out to have been unconscious or dreaming as the result of a head injury suffered in the tornado. In a postmodernist world by contrast, strange events take place and people accept that there is no logical explanation—unrealistic things are simply real in the postmodern world. An example of this is the missile suspended a hair's breadth above the movie theater in which the reader sits at the end of Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. That missile is not in the character's mind; the missile is real. Kjørstad's *Homo falsus* is another example. Greta does not dream that Paul, Alf, and Jacob vanish when she has sex with them. In the world of the text, they do vanish ▼ when they reach the point of orgasm. Unlike their modern counterparts, postmodern protagonists do not suffer from a pervasive sense of alienation and estrangement; rather they tend to be remarkably comfortable with their paradoxical, fragmented worlds. Postmodernism depicts a world that is beyond repair and postmodern characters tend to be appropriately aware of incoherence and uncertainty, but face it with tolerance or even enjoyment. ■

ornamentation are framed separately from the structure as a whole in modernist architecture, unrealistic elements in the lives of modernist characters are framed discretely from the real world the characters live in. The unnerving depictions of Oslo in Hamsun's *Sult*, for example, are explained by the narrator's hunger. Another example is Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* [*Death in Venice*] where unrealistic events are explained by the narrator's illness. In both of these cases, there is nothing unusual about Oslo or Venice themselves, merely in the protagonists' subjective experiences of them. ■

Modernism: Idealistic

Modernists universalize their own utopian goals. By setting a good example, the purist style of modern architecture is meant to instill good, clean, healthy behavior in a building's inhabitants (Jencks 24). But, although this message is clear to architects, it is lost on inhabitants of modernist buildings such as the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis. Pruitt-Igoe residents experienced so much crime and vandalism that the buildings ▼

Postmodernism: Relativistic

While modernist architects have an idealistic, utopian view of what their housing projects can accomplish, postmodernist architects send a more relative, contingent message. Postmodernists emphasize multivalent messages, which inherently do not present a single, unified meaning. The message a modernist housing project such as Pruitt-Igoe or Alison and Peter Smithson's Robin Hood Gardens in London ▼

had to be destroyed; they were imploded in 1972. The concrete slab buildings had been constructed in the early 1950s according to the most progressive ideals of the Congress of International Modern Architects.

Figure 7. Architect's Vision of Communal Corridor (von Hoffman)

Figure 8. Actual 3rd Floor Communal Corridor of Pruitt-Igoe (von Hoffman)

The buildings resembled modernist housing projects in the Nordic countries such as Fantoft in Bergen, but whereas Fantoft is divided into controlled semi-private spaces, clusters of rooms sharing a hallway and communal kitchen, Pruitt-Igoe consisted of long, undivided corridors marked by a lack of semi-private space and sense of anonymity. Ultimately this resulted in an astonishingly high crime rate. In other words, while it impressed architects, regular citizens and building tenants often find modernist

sends to residents is that all residents are all the same.

Figure 9. Robin Hood Gardens (Stuart)

In postmodernist housing projects, such as Jeremy Dixon's St. Marks Road in London, the message is relative. Although the floor plans are unusual as the result of the tight space and angled layout and what looks like one house from the front is actually two, residents nonetheless live in a building that fit in with the other Edwardian buildings on the street.

Figure 10. St. Mark's Road (New London Architecture)

Their homes look like their neighbors' and yet each residence is distinct. The St. Marks Road housing includes twenty-four houses and twenty flats carefully fit into a tight space, but because it mimics the styles of the surrounding neighborhood it sends the message to residents that they deserve the same style and class as those who can afford to buy larger residences. The architecture sends a relativistic message: you can have old-world charm in a newly

architecture to be unappealing, uninviting, and sterile. The spectacular failure of a number of prominent, award-winning modernist buildings has helped fuel postmodern architecture's popularity.

Like modernist architects, modernist authors universalize their own ideals, goals, and experiences. Modernist authors such as Pound, Lewis, and Yeats prescribe a modern art that will "administer to and correct 'the modern world,' not collaborate with it" (Brooker 6). Modernists have faith that learning the laws of nature and psychology will give people the ability to avoid unpredictability. They believe that insight into one individual's mind will truly capture a universally applicable human truth. This results in modern literature's virtuoso variants on interior monologue and stream of consciousness narration. For example, modernists believe in the globally applicable worth of the details of a socialite preparing for a party, as in the case of Clarissa in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, or 900 pages replete with the interior monologues of a group of men attending a six-hour provincial conference, as in the case of Kilpi's *Alastalon salissa* [*In the Living Room at Alastalo*], or Marcel's extensive, meandering memories of his own life, as in Proust's *A la Recherche du temps perdu* [*In Remembrance of Things Past*]. Capturing the workings of the human mind in literary form is a lofty goal, and the aforementioned examples are only a few of modernism's remarkable achievements. Nonetheless, postmodern literature's popularity has, in part, been fueled by a sense that it is egotistical to think that the inner working's of one person's mind will satisfactorily apply ▼

constructed, more space-effective, affordable way.

As with postmodernist architecture, postmodernist literature has received criticism for its relativism. In part this is the result of the shift in legitimacy from grand narratives to smaller, less universalizing narratives that Lyotard recognized as one of the fundamental characteristics of postmodernity in his *La Condition Postmoderne* [*The Postmodern Condition*] from 1979. Postmodernist fiction is a testament to societal disillusionment with the idea of absolute knowledge. Postmodernists are far more likely to leave situations unresolved and questions unanswered than modernists, for whom everything adds up in the end. In fact, postmodernists often self-consciously draw attention to the unresolved situations and unanswered questions. McHale contends, "postmodernist fiction *does* hold the mirror up to reality; but that reality, now more than ever before, is plural" (39). This can be seen, for example, in the ending of John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, or rather, endings. The book's two endings have the same ontological status and "they are mutually exclusive: in one, Charles and Sarah are reconciled through their daughter; in the other, Charles loses Sarah for good" (McHale 110). A similar situation exists in Kjørstad's *Homo falsus*. In one of its two endings, the male narrator is institutionalized in an asylum, but his book sells well; in the other, Greta prints out the book, which is hers, not his. Just as previously marginalized figures—for example, the ▼

to the ways other people's minds work. ■

Modernism: Autonomy of Art

Modernists promote autonomy as a virtue for works of art. To the dismay of preservationists, many modern architects feel that new structures are necessarily better than older structures. To modernists, something that is built new, which is independent of previous historical styles, is inherently better. Modernist skyscrapers such as One Chase Manhattan Plaza are freestanding monuments, tributes to the power of their namesakes.



Figure 11. One Chase Manhattan Plaza (Murphy) ▼

nonwhite, nonEuropean, nonmale, nonheterosexual—emerge in the postmodern era, postmodern literature also shakes up traditional narrative hierarchies. Through features like multiple endings and metafiction, postmodernist fiction simultaneously de-centers the assumed subject and power hierarchy. ■

Postmodernism: Intertextuality of Art

Whereas modernists build autonomous skyscrapers, oblivious of the surrounding buildings, postmodernists consider the contexts of their buildings. For example, Hans Hollein's Haas House in Vienna is adjacent to gothic, baroque, turn of the century, and 1950s modern buildings, and Haas House functions like a "chameleon building" mediating between the complex and contradictory styles surrounding it (Jencks 11).



Figure 12. Haas House (Sullivan)

The stone portion of Haas House's façade with the repeated square windows blends into the style of the adjacent building. This stone gradually gives way to a glass curtain wall ▼

Since the late nineteenth century, people have competed, attempting to surpass their rivals and make their tower the tallest. As Jencks points out, “one doesn’t have to be Freud to know what is going on here” (181).

These phallic structures vie with the other buildings around them for attention; they do not make any attempt to blend in with the styles of adjacent buildings. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill’s One Chase Manhattan Plaza was completed in 1960 and pays absolutely no regard to the context of the other buildings that surround it that were built in different styles and eras, for example the 40 Wall Street Building from 1930 (also known as the Trump Building).



Figure 13. 40 Wall Street Building (Wired New York)

Similarly, modernist authors believe literature should uphold a principle of artistic autonomy, with each work standing on its own. This belief in the new is echoed in Pound’s rallying cry to “make it new.” Literary modernism is typified by a rootless independence of the individual text. Authors such as Virginia ▼

sheathing a cylindrical “tower” that not only evokes an ancient church or fortification, but literally reflects the mediaeval cathedral across the square. Haas House blends into pale green building next door with stone that fits together with colors in the neighboring building and repeated window motifs that evoke the adjacent building’s windows. At the same time, it accomplishes the seemingly impossible goal of blending in with the cathedral across the square—quite an accomplishment. Unlike modernists, postmodernists take a building’s surroundings into consideration. Postmodern architecture revisits the past, citing different periods and styles within a single building, but doing so ironically. In the case of Haas House, the citation is ironic because it strives to blend in with the mediaeval cathedral across the square and yet Haas House contains shops, offices, and restaurants. Given the building’s purpose, there is really no reason for it to look like a mediaeval cathedral. But that is precisely the point: postmodernists’ intertextual citations and references are often ironic.

These ironic intertextual references are also abundant in postmodernist literature. Whereas modernists strive to create new, autonomous works of art, postmodernists blend multiple genres and styles, often borrowing components from other texts. Postmodernists juxtapose these borrowed elements to new effect, sometimes creating a pastiche. They incorporate intertextual references to other literary texts and sometimes borrowing entire characters. The main character of Tapio’s 1996 ▼

Woolf, William Faulkner, James Joyce, Tarjei Vesaas, and Eeva-Liisa Manner strove to create unique, one-of-a-kind texts, innovative, original works of narrative art. Ideally, the work of art is even autonomous from its own author. Whereas texts by authors such as Thackeray, Balzac, and Trollope often include intrusive authorial comments, modernists remove the traces of authorial presence from the surface of their writing, creating ostensibly ‘narratorless’ texts. For example, in Vesaas’s *Fuglane* [*The Birds*], no narrator steps in to explain that Mattis is retarded. Rather, the reader learns this through unobtrusive clues such as “Mattis hadde merkt noko, men sette det i hop med det evige samvetsnaget han hadde fordi han ikkje arbeidde som andre folk...” [Mattis had noticed something, but put it together with his eternal conscious fretting because he did not work as other people did...] (6). One of the most important functions of this lack of authorial intrusion into the fictional world of the novel is to create a truly independent, uninterrupted, autonomous textual world. ■

Modernism: Classical References

When modernists do interrupt the autonomy of their art with references to other works or styles, they emphasize classical references. Underscoring the ideal of building new, autonomous buildings, modernist architects tend not to cite previous architectural styles. Modernists do not include obvious references to other styles such as gothic, baroque, or art deco. If they allude at all to earlier architectural movements, it is to the ratios, ▼

Frankensteinin muistikirja, for example, is the same monster we are all familiar with from Mary Shelly’s 1818 *Frankenstein*. Postmodernists frequently create diverse admixtures of wildly divergent elements, for example Lars Gustafsson’s mix of comic book references and the historical king of Poland and Sweden in *Sigismund* or Sissel Lie’s combination of Renaissance French poetry with a contemporary Norwegian jazzercise class in *Løvens hjerte*. Instead of “making it new,” postmodernists revisit and reinterpret the past, but ironically. For example, *Frankensteinin muistikirja* is a bildungsroman, telling the story of how Frank Stein goes from being a misfit as a young freak of nature to gradually educate himself and become a fine, cultured, erudite European gentleman. Tapio has both revisited the traditional bildungsroman form and taken it to a new level by tracing the development of someone who truly was *formed*—a play on the word *Bildung*—assembled from pieces of other people’s bodies. ■

Postmodernism: Popular References

Not only do postmodernists make intertextual references to other works of art, they reference mundane and popular cultural artifacts as well. While the few interstructural references modernist architects make tend to be to classical buildings, postmodernist architects include references to more recent architectural styles and popular culture. The Boston bar whose façade was featured in the television program *Cheers* ▼

symmetry, and deep structure of classical architecture. Mies van der Rohe, for example, thought of his Seagram Building in New York City as the modern equivalent of a Doric column (see figure 1). Indeed, the vertical lines of the steel I-beams run up the circumference of the building, evoking the fluted grooves in a Doric column. Furthermore, the top level of the Seagram Building, where the otherwise consistent pattern of windows is altered, is reminiscent of the simple capital of a Doric column. Another example of references to classical architecture was found in the two World Trade Center towers. Architect Minoru Yamasaki alluded to the pointed arches of classical Islamic architecture in the sheathing near the base of the former towers.



Figure 14. World Trade Center (Byrne)

Just as their architectural counterparts did, literary modernists such as T.S. Eliot or James Joyce also harken back to classical sources. Other modernists like Swedish poet Gunnar Ekelöf took inspiration from classical Indian and Persian verse in addition to classical texts and fellow modernists such as T.S. Eliot. Ekelöf and countless other modernists also frequently included quotations from Greek and Latin texts in their work. These references and citations were rarely translated; ▼

is an example of this. To the continual disappointment of the flocks of tourists who came to see the “real” bar, the inside of the real bar did not look like the set used in the television show. The owners finally gave in and remodeled the interior to match the “authentic” simulacrum that television viewers expected. Carrying the simulacrum further still, developers built a chain of bars in airport terminals around the United States designed to look like the bar on *Cheers*. They capitalize on the program’s theme song, which comforts travelers with the idea that even in a strange airport they are in a place, “where everyone knows your name.” The whole reference is hollowly ironic, however, because a bar in an airport terminal is rarely anyone’s neighborhood bar, nor would anyone there know your name since the turnover in clientele is so rapid in an airport—not to mention that *Cheers* was a fictional television program to begin with, populated with paid actors not real bar regulars. The Experience Music Project in Seattle also incorporates popular culture references. As a museum dedicated to popular music, it is inherently a combination of the low culture medium of popular music and the high culture approach of a traditional curatorial approach to its museum presentation. To carry this even further, Gehry designed the building so that from above it resembles a smashed guitar, alluding to rock musicians’ iconic gesture.

While modernist authors reference elite, high culture texts such as Homer’s *Odyssey*, postmodernist authors require more eclectic background knowledge from their readers— ▼

modernists expected readers to have the necessary education required to read and recognize citations from classical sources. For example, Ekelöf begins his 1959 poetry collection, *Opus Incertum* [*Uncertain Work*], by quoting an inscription found on one of the walls in Pompei, “Admiror, paries, te non cecidisse ruinis/ qui tot scriptorum taedia sustineas” [I am astonished, Wall, that you who endure the tediums of so many writers have not fallen to ruins]. Ekelöf did not translate the title of his collection or the inscription. Nor did he acknowledge that the inscription was found in Pompei. Readers of modernist texts are simply expected to have the prerequisite academic training to supply that information on their own, or to procure it. One result of this is that modernist texts have gradually come to exclude the middle class. Only a narrow, specialized audience of scholars, critics, and other highly educated readers can understand them. To make these texts more accessible to average readers, publishers insert footnotes and annotations, print texts together with interpretive essays, and produce ancillary study guides. ■

Beatles lyrics or the names of athletes or tourist destinations, for example.

Postmodernists address the common man while simultaneously engaging literary theorists. This is another aspect of postmodernism’s double coding—a single work can appeal simultaneously to different people in different ways. One strategy postmodernist texts use to appeal to readers is citing “subliterary” genres such as science fiction, mystery, or romance. They also appeal by drawing in culturally relevant allusions from the reader’s everyday life, such as brand names, television personalities, references to fax machines, aerobics classes, and familiar scenes from movies or song lyrics. More or less any page from a Mark Leyner novel could serve as an example of this, such as the following excerpt from *Tooth Imprints on a Corn Dog*:

I’ve been commissioned by *Der Gummiknüppel* (“the German equivalent of *Martha Stewart Living* but with more nudity and grisly crime”) to compose a poem for their ten-year anniversary issue... The editors of *Der Gummiknüppel* have custom-ordered their poem with unusual specificity. The contract received by my agents at ICM stipulates “1,000 lines of free verse in the *poète maudit* tradition of Arthur Rimbaud, but infused with the ebullience and joie de vivre that made ABBA so popular in the 1970s.” (242)

There are enough authentic and false cultural references in this brief excerpt to make a generation X reader’s head spin. My grandmother could never read this. To be ▼

sure, authors like Leyner and Kjørstad take cultural citation to an extreme. But even in *Løvens hjerte*, where intertextual cultural references are extremely subdued in comparison with Leyner's writing, Lie works in references to things like a jazz aerobics class. There are also innumerable references to Renaissance French poetry. But, although Renaissance poetry is now considered high culture, Lie essentially makes it popular culture by emphasizing its somewhat baser aspects—such as lewdness and excrement. So, even when drawing on high culture references, postmodernists often give them an ironic or popular culture twist. ■

Modernism: Grand Narratives

Modernists believe in grand narratives, universal truths that apply to all people. As I mentioned above in my discussion of the now imploded Pruitt-Igoe housing project, the buildings' modernist architects felt that clean, organized buildings would result in clean, organized residents. They felt that intelligently planned space would promote healthy behavior (Jencks 24). This belies the underlying modernist belief that there is a single, unified definition of good, organized, healthy behavior and that an architect has the power to instill his sense of social values on his building's residents, whoever they may be. Many people now find this attitude pretentious and naïve and feel that it is more suitable for sociologists and tenants to be included in defining what will encourage good, healthy providing them with long, anonymous concrete ▼

Postmodernism: Multiple, Smaller Narratives

Modernists impose a single hierarchy of values, selecting an elite canon of appropriate sources for literary or architectural allusions. By contrast, postmodernists self-consciously deconstruct modernists' hierarchical system, in favor of pluralism and complexity. Modernist skyscrapers all look quite similar to each other; they are all variations on a basic box structure with similarly repetitive, regular window patterns and a limited number of construction materials. Postmodernist skyscrapers stand out amongst their modernist neighbors precisely because they do not fit the modernist mold. They are united by how different they are from each other. In fact, they frequently include a variety of styles within a single building so that a single postmodernist building does not even fit into its own mold. The library incorporates a number ▼

corridors. As more and more large modernist public housing projects were built, more and more tenants struggled to find ways to personalize the structures. When I lived in Fantoft student housing in Bergen in 1989, the student population was actively lobbying to paint the hallways different colors or take some other action to distinguish one hallway from the next. When I returned in 1998, the student population was still lobbying and all the hallways were still plain concrete gray.

Modernist authors struggle with the collapse of universal truths the way residents of large, anonymous modernist public housing projects do. Modernist texts reflect a growing skepticism surrounding the universal values of the Age of Reason, including science, progress, and reason. The modernist era saw the downside to what Lyotard would later call grand narratives. Things that had been viewed as universal ideals, such as science, were being used to justify wars and death camps and back various behavior. In the case of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project, the buildings were so disastrous they had to be demolished. The architect, it turned out, could not make the tenants conform to his standards of clean, healthy behavior by totalitarian systems. Modernists witnessed the universal appeal of these grand narratives crumbling. William Butler Yeats exemplifies this in his 1919 poem "The Second Coming" where he writes, "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world" (1880-1). In these two lines, Yeats succinctly summarizes the modernist sense that grand narratives such as Christianity were losing their grip as universally held truths. At the ▼

of different styles, from gothic to modernist, blending in to the buildings around it. As mentioned earlier, Hans Hollein's Haas House in Vienna is another example of postmodern pluralism. It incorporates elements that link it to the other buildings surrounding it, referencing modernism, baroque, turn of the century, and even the mediaeval cathedral across the square. The inclusion of so many different styles in a single building make the Suzallo-Allen Library and Haas House paradigms of postmodern architectural design.

Like its architectural counterparts, postmodernist literature includes multiple styles and narratives in a single work. Lyotard wisely recognized this as one of postmodernism's primary traits: the death of grand narratives and a newfound tolerance for multiple, even contradictory, worldviews. Postmodernists ask readers to interpolate specific, local truths given a problematized system of worlds. So, Suzallo-Allen Library at the University of Washington is an example of this diversity of styles within a single structure, what Jencks calls heteromorphic contextualism. The while the puzzle pieces in a modernist novel all add up to give one ultimate picture of what happens in the text, the puzzle pieces in a postmodernist novel do not. Postmodern literature juxtaposes multiple, unresolved worldviews without singling out one correct version of the truth. Kjærstad's three-volume postmodern bildungsroman, *Forføreren* [*The Seducer*], *Erobreren* [*The Conqueror*], and *Oppdageren* [*The Discoverer*], demonstrates this dissolution of grand narratives in favor of a ▼

same time, these two lines also express the modernist longing for some new grand narrative to fill the void. Modernists, both authors and architects, believe that their goal as artists is to create a new grand narrative in their work. Hence, modernist art has a lofty goal, no less than seeking “to assert the identity of humankind through all times and cultures” as Rossel wisely says of Swedish modernist Gunnar Ekelöf (175). ■

Modernism: Elitist

Not surprising for a movement trying to create new universal truths, the posture of modernist art is serious, didactic, and/or elitist. Mies van der Rohe and other modernist architects want to achieve formal purity in their buildings, something that is clear to other architects, but not to average citizens or building users. This results in people’s not being able to read messages coded in modernist architecture. For example, Mies van der Rohe’s boiler house at the Illinois Institute of Technology resembles more of a cathedral from the outside with its spire-like smokestack, whereas the chapel looks more like a boiler house (Jencks 28–29). In fact, modernists such as Mies van der Rohe dismiss the common man’s ability to understand their messages as irrelevant. This results in a number of strange architectural bedfellows. I. M. Pei’s Christian Science Church Center in Boston, for example, is laid out like a giant phallus, culminating in a fountain (Jencks 30). Gordon Bunshaft’s Hirschhorn Museum of modern art (see figure 16) on the Mall in ▼

plurality of smaller narratives. The trilogy tells the story of one character’s life, but the narrative of his life is broken up into literally hundreds of shorter narratives covering different moments of his life from various perspectives. Each of the books is narrated by a different source.

Kjærstad’s character embodies post-modernism’s predilection for pluralization. The truth about Jonas Wergeland’s life is that no single narrative version captures the real story; the story of a life inherently requires more than one point of view. ■

Postmodernism: Populist

While modernist architecture is serious, didactic, and elitist, postmodern architecture tends to be playful, fun, and populist. Modernists completely disregarded the ability of regular people, including a building’s users or inhabitants, to understand the messages of their architecture. In fact, Jencks writes, “the better the Modern architect, the less he can control obvious meanings” (31). This results in the unfortunate fact that nonarchitects misinterpret a building’s symbolism; for example, Herman Hertzberger’s Old Age Home in Amsterdam, where the “incessant symbolism of white crosses containing black coffins is... unpremeditated and unfortunate” (Jencks 32). By contrast, postmodernists pay far more attention to the messages a building sends to its average observers. Realizing that people see buildings in the context of the other surrounding architecture, postmodernists acknowledge the styles of surrounding buildings. Postmodernist ▼

Figure 15. Illinois Institute of Technology's Chapel of Saint Savior (Sullivan)

Washington D.C. is a large, white masonry cylinder meant to communicate power, awe, harmony and the sublime but inadvertently says 'stay away from this art; keep out' (Jencks 31).

Figure 16. Hirschhorn Museum (Smith)

One lesson architects learned from unintended popular interpretations of their work, such as the way the inhabitants responded to the Pruitt-Igoe housing project, was that the admiration of all the architects in the world is worth relatively little if a buildings' inhabitants cannot stand living there. The appeal of the serious, didactic and elitist is evident in modernist literature as well, from authors' expectations that readers understand Latin and Greek to assumptions that all readers will share a thorough familiarity with the Bible. Modernists expect readers to come from the same backgrounds they come from and share the same values. ▼

architecture is not built in a vacuum; it acknowledges its own context. Consider Venturi and Rauch's Franklin Court in Philadelphia, where an open stainless steel frame approximately outlines the space Benjamin Franklin's mansion once occupied (see figure 17). Visitors have no trouble understanding the structure's message, which is fun and playful while at the same time contributing to visitors' historical education.

Figure 17. Franklin Court (National Park Service)

Postmodernist architecture appeals to non-architects by incorporating fun elements, such as windows designed to look like eyes and a door designed to evoke a mouth, complex ornamental patterns, or polychromy. Postmodern architecture keeps observers on their toes, looking for hidden details that provide another level of meaning. This is an effect of the works' multivalence—like a cartoon for children that incorporates puns and allusions that only adults will understand.

In terms of literature, unlike modernists, postmodernists believe that the fact that a ▼

Understanding the symbolism and citations used by modernist authors is so important that texts often included glosses, attempting to make them accessible to a wider, more diverse reading public. See, for example, T.S. Eliot's use of footnotes in *The Wasteland*. In cases where the author does not provide glosses, an academic cottage industry has sprung to make them available. In fact, Joyce scholar Paul Saint-Amour bemoans the plethora of guides available for *Ulysses*, likening the situation to national parks with their trails, signage, and organized tours. He longs for the day when one could simply walk through the wilderness in solitude or read Joyce uninterrupted by secondary sources. And while it is natural for a Joyce scholar to feel that way, the average reader of *Ulysses* is quite grateful for the help. ■

book sells well does not automatically negate its value as literature. A rift can be observed, for example, in the way Peter Høeg's *Frøken Smillas fornemelse for sne* [*Smilla's Sense of Snow*] was received by academics. In part because Høeg includes elements from the science fiction and mystery genres, which appeal to popular audiences, critics who prefer more canonical fiction consider the text subliterary. By contrast, postmodernists readily accept the premise that the text is doubly coded and are willing to consider both the literary and subliterary aspects of the novel. Postmodernist authors incorporate fun elements in their books: breaks in the narrative frame, blends of fact and fiction, references to popular culture and technoculture, and innovative explorations of historical events or retellings of traditional narratives. They parody modernist literature's cumbersome didacticism and elitist cultural citations by including parodic, and sometimes completely falsified, footnotes to "help" readers understand things. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, for example, John Fowles includes a footnote to expound on a character's condemnation of Disraeli and Gladstone in the body of the text:

Perhaps, in fairness to the lady, it might be said that in the spring of 1867 her blanket disfavor was being shared by many others. Mr. Gladraeli and Mr. Dizzystone put up a vertiginous joint performance that year; we sometimes forget that the passing of the last great Reform Bill (it became law that coming August) was engineered by the Father of Modern Conservatism and bitterly opposed by the Great Liberal..." (87)

One anticipates that a footnote will provide ▼

factual, accurate information. For the most part in this case it does, but Fowles parodies Disraeli and Gladstone's names which forces the reader to question the accuracy of the rest of the information. Another common postmodernist technique is to frustrate the type of erudite, well-educated readers who understand modernist high culture allusions by referring to less bookish things that such readers are unlikely to be familiar with but which average, middle-class consumers of literature will recognize immediately, such as popular music groups. For example, Leyner veils a reference to the country music group, the Dixie Chicks, writing "all to the din of the latest *Chix with Dix* CD..." (244). No level of traditional academic training will prepare the reader to recognize this type of popular culture reference. ■

Modernism: Depth

Modernist architecture's outward minimalism and simplicity of style aims to highlight the harmony of a building's proportions. Modernist architects are drawn to pure geometric shapes—the cylinder of the Hirschhorn Museum in Washington D.C. (see figure 14), the triangle of the Cambodian Pavilion at the World's Fair in Osaka, or the rectangle of most modernist skyscrapers. As described above, viewers frequently cannot assess the purpose of a modernist building from the outside, because the form of the building is one step removed from the building's function. As mentioned above, you end up with boiler houses that look like cathedrals and vice versa. At ▼

Postmodernism: Surface

In contrast with their understated, unadorned modernist counterparts, postmodernist buildings display more ornamentation and detail. Architects draw viewers' attention to the buildings' surfaces through the juxtaposition of different colors, textures, and building materials. For example, Arata Isozaki's Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles includes glass blocks, smooth panes of glass, red sandstone, polished white stone, and green sheet steel. Postmodernist architecture also draws attention to its surfaces through the use of asymmetry and symbolism. By shifting or rotating familiar axes or combining dissonant, ▼

first glance, an entire building will resemble a simple geometric form because there is no smaller level of detail that immediately grabs the viewer's attention. Modernist buildings lack distracting ornamentation and make extensive use of repeated elements with the result that the building's overall form is what attracts notice. It is only when the viewer moves closer and focuses on the details that the component elements begin to be clear. For example, at first glance Trump World Tower is an enormous rectangle. It is only once you look closer that you see where the divisions between the windows are and sense the structure beneath the glass curtain wall.

Ihab Hassan calls this trend a preference for "Root/Depth" over "Rhizome/Surface" (591). In other words, modernists favor depth over surface. This is clear in literature as well as architecture. While modernists package their texts in innovative narrative styles, there is always an underlying structure, a unified harmonic system of symbols, and a deeper meaning. Modernist authors also draw on religions and myths to elicit a deeper sense of meaning. No matter how many narrative points of view, languages, styles, registers, and citations a modernist text includes, there is always a unifying monological perspective (cf. McHale, 166). Modernists strive to integrate all of a text's elements into a unified ontological world. They then work to uncover a deeper core reality, some type of epiphany or resolution for the narrating consciousness. By delving deeper and deeper into a single, subjective soul, modernists seek a universal truth. Kjærstad has compared this to a magnifying glass approach (1997, 268). Modernists believe

eclectic, or referential elements, postmodernist architecture forces observers to take a second look. Unlike modernist buildings that look the same when left right reversed, postmodernist buildings generally demonstrate chirality. By playing with a viewer's expectations, postmodernists hope to provide people with a structure that fulfills more than one purpose, supports more than one interpretation, embodies a sense of pluralism, and offers a level of complexity. While modernist structures appeal to architects with their purity and proportionality and appear sterile and dull to average observers, postmodernist structures appeal not only to architects with their pluralism and complexity, but to average observers who notice the asymmetry, colors, juxtaposition of styles, and other details in the buildings' surfaces. Like postmodernist architecture, postmodernist literature includes a great deal of surface detail. Here, even more so than in architecture, detractors seize on these surface elements as the bases for criticism. For the most part, this is due to generational differences and changes in the speed at which people feel comfortable receiving information. Television is a wonderfully analogous medium in this regard. Scholars consider television a postmodern medium because it presents a surging river of images, all flickering by quickly and referring more to other simulacral images rather than any underlying reality. Reading postmodern literature sometimes feels like watching television. This can be seen, for example, in Kjærstad's use of the literary equivalent of sound bites and video clips, ▼

that if you travel deep enough into the interior of a character's identity, into his/her subconscious, you will get to the core, which will have universal application. ■

referring to breathless strings of different items. In *Homo falsus*, for example, as Greta looks into her closet trying to decide what to wear when she seduces Paul Ruud, we read:

Silke, sating, taft, tweed, tyll, bomull, chenille, fløyel, organza, crêpe, chiffong. Broderte bærestykker, blonder, brocade, puffermer, vatterte skuldre, påsydde applikasjoner, fløyelsbånd, paljetter, sølvtråder, volanger. Klær hun hadde sydd selv, inspirert av bilder fra Vogue, Asana, Elégance, Marie Claire. En rolle på hver kleshenger, kostymer til dusinvis av forvandlinger. Sportspiken, vampen, vestkantfruen, uteliggersken, grevinnen, studenten, flyvertinnen, sekretæren, diskodronningen, sporveisarbeideren, kunstmaleren, pønkeren. Et antrekk for enhver anledning. Masker bak masker. (91)

[Silk, satin, taffeta, tweed, tulle, cotton, chenille, velvet, organza, crêpe, chiffon. Embroidered yokes, laces, brocade, puff sleeves, padded shoulders, sewn-on applications, velvet ribbons, sequins, silver threads, volanger. Clothes she had sewn herself, inspired by pictures from Vogue, Asana, Elégance, Marie Claire. A role on each clothes hanger, costumes for dozens of transformations. Sports girl, vamp, lady from Oslo's West Side, outsider, countess, student, stewardess, secretary, disco queen, public transit worker, painter, punk. An outfit for every occasion. Masks behind masks.]

Like a music video on MTV, Kjørstad provides readers with a rapid succession of images. The message and mood come not from any one thing he includes, but rather from the speed and diversity of the flow. While some readers find this strategy shallow and not worthy of consideration as "high" art, I find Kjørstad's use of the technique extremely appropriate. ▼

Greta's character in the book is defined by her continual role-playing and disguises and Kjørstad's encyclopedic style is profoundly suited to the character. ■

Modernism: Two Dimensional

As I mentioned above, before you see the “deep structure” in a modernist structure—the harmony, proportionality, and details—you first see the façade. Modernists use purely flat, two-dimensional façades, employing exclusively straight lines to emphasize the planar effect. Trump World Tower, for example, presents a clean, two-dimensional rectangular face to the city. The building's glass curtain wall even hides the concrete framing between floors windows. The form of the building as a whole is a rectangle. Aside from the building's height as compared to the others in its proximity, the only thing that jumps out at the casual observer is its flat, regular rectangularity. Compare this to a building like Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, with its sweeping curves and bulges. Modernism's predilection for straight lines and flat surfaces is readily apparent in the context of postmodern architecture's more three-dimensional shapes. Much the same as a modernist building generally looks the same when left right reversed, another trick for recognizing a modernist building is to look at the pitch of its roof. Modernists overwhelmingly choose flat roofs—flat roofs and flat façades.

It is somewhat more difficult to conceive of what two-dimensionality might equate to in literature, of course. I like to think of ▼

Postmodernism: Three Dimensional

Postmodernist architecture favors curved lines and three-dimensional forms that disrupt the straight lines and rectangles of modernist buildings. Compare the image presented by the façade of more or less any modernist skyscraper with the façade of a structure like the Experience Music Project in Seattle or the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao.



Figure 18. Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao (Heald)

Cesar Pelli's World Financial Center Tower in New York City (see figure 19) is a more understated example; the three-dimensional changes in the building's façade cause Jencks to wonder, “is this a geode, or a thin building ▼

modernist literature as a puzzle. Kjærstad writes that, “Modernismens formmodell er puslespillet. Det knuste bildet av virkeligheten kan alltid settes sammen igjen. Man er prest, dictator, detektiv. Man opererer med kunnskap, epistemology.” [Modernism’s formal model is the puzzle. The shattered picture of reality can always be put together again. One is a priest, a dictator, a detective. One operates with knowledge, epistemology.] (1989, 214). In other words, modernist literature has a two-dimensional pattern and for each text there is one ultimate solution. The puzzle pieces necessarily add up to one image; the pieces do not fit together any other way. Modernist authors are disturbed by their disillusion with older, traditional keystone beliefs, but at the same time trust that if they look hard enough, a new pattern will become visible and new core beliefs will be realized. They believe that the puzzle pieces can and will add up to form a larger image. This is apparent in modernist authors’ use of point of view perspectives. For example, in Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!*, behind the different point of view narrations, there is an objective, true series of events that the reader can discern. There is ultimately one real story that the reader assembles by putting all the puzzle pieces together. ■

Figure 19. Two World Financial Center (Janberg)

trying to get out of a fat one?” (180).

Frank Gehry’s Nationale-Nederlanden Building in Prague is another example of postmodern three-dimensionality; the building resembles the fluid form of two people dancing, hence the nickname “Fred and Ginger,” after Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

Similarly, postmodern literature often creates a three-dimensional effect, juxtaposing multiple, contradictory layers of reality.

Postmodernist authors often use the same narrative strategies as modernist authors, but ▼

Figure 20. Nationale-Nederlanden Building (Heinisch)

exaggerate them and self-consciously draw attention to them. By inscribing and then repudiating boundaries between layers of fictionality or different fictional worlds, postmodernists draw attention to the multi-layered, three-dimensional aspects of their fiction. Many postmodernists use metafiction to foreground a literary text's explorations of its own nature and status as fiction. Whereas modernist texts ask readers for a willing suspension of disbelief, postmodernist texts force readers to cycle through a process of constantly suspending and then reawakening their disbelief. While Kjærstad compares modernist texts to two-dimensional puzzles with only one way to fit all the pieces together, he writes that:

postmodernismens formmodell er
modulklosserne. Det gis ingen løsning
som er riktigere enn andre. Man kan



Modernism: Summary

In summary, modernist architecture is univalent, emphasizing coherence, purity, uniformity, and streamlining. It tends toward minimalism, shying away from flowery ornamentation. Modernist architects universalize their ideals and present them with a minimum of references to other buildings or styles. What references a structure does make tend to be classical. Modernist architects tended to have a serious, didactic, elitist view of the architecture they design, ignoring the messages their buildings send to viewers and users who are not trained in architectural theory. Each project, despite its physical location and the adjacent buildings, should be an autonomous work of art. In many cases, you cannot interpret a modernist building's purpose from the outside; you need to come closer and enter the building to figure out what it houses.



lage en pluralitet av verdener. Man er magiker, anarkist, gal. Man beveger seg mellom forskjellige virkligheter, i ontologien (214)

[Postmodernism's formal model is building blocks. There is no one solution that is more correct than the others. One can create a plurality of worlds. One is a magician, an anarchist, crazy. One moves between different realities, in the ontology.]

In postmodernist texts, in other words, there are a number of possible solutions. After all, there is no single correct way to put a set of blocks together. Postmodernist texts include contradictory voices, leaving the determination of meaning(s) up to readers. ■

Postmodernism: Summary

So, how do you tell a modernist building from a postmodernist one? Based on what I have discussed here, there are a number of general clues. If a building has a flat roof, is rectangular, symmetrical, and makes minimal use of different colors and materials it is probably modernist. Conversely, if the building is asymmetrical, playful, ornamented, acknowledges the other buildings around it, incorporates multiple styles and cultural allusions, and includes three-dimensional elements like sculptures, it is probably postmodernist. Postmodernist architecture prominently features pluralism, complexity, double coding, and historical contextualism.

Thanks to the similarities between architecture and literature, we have now seen that postmodernist literature also prominently ▼

The external features of modernist buildings are two-dimensional, drawing a viewer's attention to the overall structure rather than to specific details.

Modernist literature similarly tends to be univalent, presenting the world through the filter of a single, unifying consciousness. Modernist texts do contain departures from a realistic representation of the world as the narrator experiences it, but these departures tend to be framed within the mind of the narrator as dreams or delusions, things that occur within the narrator's mind. Modernists believe in Utopian ideals, striving to move the world towards these through literature. They are proponents of autonomous works of art that do not draw overly on intertextual reference to other literary or cultural sources. Modernists' allusions tend to refer to classical Western texts such as the Bible or Greek and Roman sources or newly accessible Eastern mythological or religious sources, sources accessible only to readers with the academic training more affluent backgrounds tend to provide. As a result, their texts are taken by many to be serious, didactic, and elitist, not intelligible to the average reader. Modernists believe in universalism, particularly the idea that a deeper understanding of the mind of one individual will have universal application. In short, modernist literature tends to explore epistemological questions, exploring the nature and limits of knowledge, framing its exploration in the consciousness of a single individual's experiences and views. ■

features pluralism, complexity, double coding, and historical contextualism. If a book appears on numerous college reading lists, presents an unproblematic ontological world, draws on classical sources for its symbols and references, and/or the story's components can ultimately be put together like a jigsaw puzzle for which there is a single correct completion, it is probably modernist. If a book is double coded, appeals both to scholars and consumers, uses meta-fiction, includes multiple endings and story lines that cannot be resolved conclusively, draws on elements from other literary works as well as popular culture, is playful, and/or presents an irresolvably problematic ontological world, it is probably postmodernist. Postmodernists display incredulity toward what Lyotard calls grand narratives, juxtaposing instead multiple smaller, relative, contingent, local views. For example, while modernists are more likely to believe that there is a single, universal ideal that applies to all people, postmodernists are more likely to believe that what is ideal for a single mother in Nuuk might not be ideal for a single mother on Nuku Hiva, let alone for a young, white Republican male in Tucson. And finally, one of the most striking differences between literary modernism and postmodernism is the way in which authors approach reality. While strange events in modernist literature tend to be framed within characters' minds, for example as dreams or delusions, weird events in postmodernist literature take place outside of characters' minds in the "real" world—unrealistic things just happen in the postmodern world; readers and characters accept this and move on. ■

LITERATURE: AUTHORS, NARRATORS, SUBJECTS

Modernism

“Exit author,” proclaimed Joseph Warren Beach in 1932 to describe modernists’ careful removal of any kind of metafictional interruption that would disturb the realism of the worlds they were presenting. Modernists want readers to willingly suspend their disbelief and journey into the consciousness of the character presented on a quest for a deeper understanding of the character’s mind. McHale explains,

The modernists sought to remove the traces of their presence from the surface of their writing, and to this end exploited or developed various forms of ostensibly “narratorless” texts—texts based in large part on direct dialogue exchanges (Hemingway, Ivy Compton-Burnett) or on free indirect discourse (early Joyce, Woolf, Dos Passos). Or they effaced their own subjectivities behind the surrogate subjectivity of a first-person narrator or interior monologist (Conrad, Faulkner, Joyce in *Ulysses*, Woolf in *The Waves*) (*Postmodernist* 199).

In other words, modernists present the mental lives of their characters’ through a wide variety of narrative modes. Nonetheless, all of these different narrative styles are united by the absence of an overt authorial presence. In addition to the narrative forms they choose, modernists remove traces of authorial presence from the contents of their texts as well. Modernist literature is rarely about reading or writing and certainly not about the metafictional process of that specific book’s creation. Even in texts that do focus on a character’s attempts to produce art, such as Knut Hamsun’s *Sult* [*Hunger*] and James Joyce’s ▼

Postmodernism

If the modernist motto is “exit author,” the postmodernist motto is “exit author, enter author, exit author, enter author” ad nauseam. Postmodern authors make wide use of metafiction, fiction that discusses its own fictionality, to draw attention to the delineation between fiction and reality, often keeping the boundary between the two clear, but crossing it frequently. Unlike modernist authors who minimize narrative disruptions, postmodernist authors maximize disruptions. While the unifying consciousness of a modernist text has a specific identity, postmodernist texts are unified by the reader’s consistently enforced awareness that what they are reading is fiction. In Jäntti’s *Amorfiaana*, for example, the frame story about a little girl on a tricycle about to be hit by a truck repeatedly interrupts the world of the novel. Jäntti frequently and abruptly interrupts the rest of the story to remind readers that they still do not know what happened to the little girl on the tricycle. Furthermore, the ways that Jäntti reminds readers are so outrageous that the effect is not only to remind the reader, but to emphasize the process of reminding the reader. For example, in the midst of other events in the text, we read, “Kysyt ja vaadit, kärsimätön sinä, että missä on tyttö kolmipyörineen, että tyttö ja rekka esiin! ‘TYT-tö ja REK-ka ja TYT-tö ja REK-ka’ ... Niin, niin, aina siitä tytöstä” (57) [You ask and demand, impatient you, where is the girl on the tricycle, bring out the girl and ▼

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, the character's experience is meant to make a universalized statement about artistic production. Modernists do not interrupt their texts with metafictional frame breaks that would cause the reader to realize a character is fictional. They take their literature very seriously; they do not acknowledge to their readers that what they are reading is fiction. Modernist fiction purports to be serious and real, not written by an author but captured from the mind of a character experiencing the events of the plot. Authors highlight this level of seriousness with the very real issues their characters deal with, things like mental health, disease, death, and the struggle to create art. For example, the following all prominently feature death: Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, Camus's *L'Étranger* [*The Stranger*], Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* [*Death in Venice*], and Vesaas's *Fuglane* [*The Birds*]. Although modernists write ostensibly narratorless texts, readers can "reconstruct a position for the missing author to occupy, in effect an *image* of the author" (McHale, 199). For example, the six characters in Woolf's *The Waves* are all "cast in a uniform idiom, which varies neither laterally (from one character to another), nor temporally (from childhood to maturity)" (Cohn 264). Unlike the characters in Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible*, where each narrating character has her own age and idiomatic speech characteristics, the various narrators in *The Waves* do not speak in different idioms, or at different levels of maturity. Cohn concludes "The Waves cannot be understood as realistic reproductions of figural thought or speech, but must be understood as poetry fashioned by a single creative ▼

the truck! 'G-irl and TRU-ck and G-irl and TRU-ck' ... Yeah, yeah, always that business about the girl]. The first-person narrator's interruptions remind readers that they still do not know what happened to the girl. Jäntti unsettles *Amorfiaana*'s reader, alluding to a tragedy, but refusing to tell the story. As soon as the reader suspends his or her disbelief, postmodernists interrupt the flow of the fiction to refresh the reader's disbelief.

While modernist authors hide the seams between reality and fiction, postmodernist fiction "seeks to foreground this seam by making the transition from one realm to the other as jarring as possible" (McHale 90). In most modernist texts it is possible to trace the narrative back to a single focal consciousness. For example, in Woolf's *The Waves* a number of critics have theorized that the six different characters who speak in the text, including Bernard, are all actually speaking in interior monologues in Bernhard's mind (Cohn 265). Postmodernists frustrate attempts to find a single focal consciousness in the text. In postmodernist fiction, this type of distillation is not possible. For example, in Kjærstad's *Homo falsus*, the central narrating consciousness is either the salad-eating man or the woman who thinks she is Greta Garbo. Kjærstad frustrates any attempt by the reader to resolve the question of who really narrates the text. The question must remain unanswered. Essentially, they both narrate the text. Other postmodernist authors, such as Jäntti in *Amorfiaana*, mix gritty, disturbingly realistic textual worlds with blatantly unrealistic, or magically realistic details, constantly ▼

mind” (265). The presence of an underlying, single, unifying authorial consciousness, particularly when this author is somewhere outside the text and not acknowledged in the text, typifies literary modernism.

Hence, although modernists strive to remove any explicit expression of their presence from both the form and content of their texts, their “self-effacement, it turns out, is a form of self-advertisement” (McHale, 199). The more modernist authors strive to make themselves invisible in the surfaces of their narratives, the more conspicuous they become, as behind-the-scenes strategists. Modernists create a fictional world through their carefully positioned narrators, and the boundary between the fictional and real worlds exists at the book’s cover. Modernist authors use the form and content of their narratives to explore this fictional world, but do not acknowledge that the world they are exploring is fictional. They hide the seams between fiction and reality just as they hide their own presence in the text.

Within the world of a specific book, modernists look at a subject’s identity as if through a magnifying glass (cf. Kjærstad 1997, 268). They delve deeper and deeper into the mind of a subject, seeking universal truths about the nature of reality by reaching the core of an individual’s identity. Modernists approach a subject like an archeological dig—the reader sifts through layer after layer in search of clues that will help assemble a bigger picture. Kjærstad also compares this approach to the stethoscope. Modernist literature attempts to get to the heart of its characters’ minds. ▼

forcing readers to notice the text’s transgression of ontological boundaries. For example, after the little girl on the tricycle is hit by the truck, she stands up and takes a bow in its headlights, as if she were a circus performer who had just completed a stunt.

Unlike modernists, who take a magnifying glass approach to identity, postmodernists take a prism approach (Kjærstad 1997, 268). Postmodernists strive to illuminate the multiple facets of a subject’s mind, aiming to reveal the myriad of truths about the nature of the worlds that subject inhabits and the different reflections a subject casts when you shine the light on them in various ways. For example, in Kjærstad’s *Homo falsus* the character of Greta appears in at least three different incarnations (see table 4).

The three versions of Greta are understood to be the same person. Each goes through the same ritual of seducing a man and then murdering him. But while they are clearly versions of the same woman, Kjærstad does not provide any way to resolve the differences between the different versions of Greta. Ultimately there is no one version of Greta that is the most authentic, the true Greta. Kjærstad takes this same prismatic approach to the individual in his trilogy, *Forføreren* [*The Seducer*], *Erobreren* [*The Conqueror*], and *Oppdageren* [*The Discoverer*]. The three books all tell the story of Jonas Wergeland’s life, but their stories do not quite add up. Each text has a different narrator and the stories contain numerous contradictions and discrepancies. All of these texts are ▼

One of the biggest differences between a modernist and postmodernist outlook on authors, narrators, and subjects, then, is that modernists treat the author, narrators, and subjects as entities while postmodernists treat them as functions. The entity of the author remains invisible in modernist texts. Woolf, for example, does not step into *The Waves* and comment on the strategic decisions she made while writing the text. Scholars must look outside the text, to Woolf's journals and correspondence for that kind of commentary. The entity of the narrator translates the epistemological quandaries of a book's characters for its readers. In other words, modernist narration simulates for the reader the same problems of accessibility, reliability, and limitation of knowledge the story's characters experience (cf. the discussion of Faulkner's *Absalom! Absalom!* (McHale 9–10)). And finally, modernists present the entity of a subject or character to readers as a connect-the-dot puzzle—the reader simply has to follow the numbers and connect the dots to be able to see a clear picture of the subject. ■

wonderful examples of postmodernists' prismatic approach to the individual. Postmodernists approach a subject more like a trial—the reader examines the evidence, listens to testimony from various witnesses and possibly the defendant himself. In the end, however, there are often multiple irreconcilable versions of a single event. The reader does not necessarily get to see the crime take place, and, subsequently, may ultimately be unable to resolve the multiple versions to determine what actually happened. Tapio's *Frankensteinin muistikirja* [*Frankenstein's Notebook*] is another example of this *e pluribus unum* aspect of postmodernism. There the protagonist is physically composed of pieces of multiple bodies, all sewn together to create the ultimate postmodern subject. In contrast to modernism, where authors, narrators and subjects are treated as entities, postmodernism treats these as functions, roles that can be performed. The author flickers in and out of existence on different ontological levels in postmodernist texts, neither completely absent nor fully present (cf. McHale, *Postmodernist* 202). In Hoem's *Kjærleikens ferjereiser*, for example, the author appears in Oslo metafictionally describing why he decides to write this book. He also appears in a hotel in the middle of the fictional community he has created. He even meets one of his fictional characters and gives him a cigarette. In between these various appearances, however, he disappears from the reader's awareness. Sometimes he self-consciously draws ▼

attention to his presence, sometimes he vanishes from the surface of the text mimicking modernism's narratorless style. Unlike their modernist counterparts, postmodernist narrators are notoriously plural and postmodern texts infamously lack any single center of consciousness around which the book is organized. Kjærstad's *Homo falsus*, for example, is "centered" on the narration of not one but two distinct and irresolvable narrators. Instead of *epistemological* issues, postmodernist narrators transfer the *ontological* quandaries of a book's characters to the book's readers, simulating for the readers the same problems of double coding, disruptive meltdowns of the boundaries between fact and fiction, and formerly marginalized voices getting to speak that the characters experience. Postmodernists foreground the process through which their subjects become subjects. *Homo falsus*, for example, traces Greta's progression from a character trapped in someone else's fiction, to a subject in her own right, a woman writing her own story. Similarly, Tapio's protagonist starts out as a gothic, monstrous compilation of body parts taken from corpses and grows progressively more and more human over the course of *Frankensteinin muistikirja* [*Frankenstein's Notebook*]. By the end of the novel, he has embraced the relativism of the contemporary world, written his memoirs and moved to London to open a new mortuary business. The character of Frank Stein is multiple on his own, but note that Tapio's story is not told merely through Frank's own written remarks ▼

in his notebook. Gertrud (sic) Stein’s written observations in her diary make up approximately half of Tapio’s text. Postmodernists’ narrators are often plural in this way, lacking a single unproblematic central organizing consciousness. ■

Table 4. Per Thomas Andersen’s Three Incarnations of Greta (320)

	Greta1	Greta2	Greta3
Hero	G. Garbo	G. Garbo	G. Garbo
Career	Scholar	Rock music	Feminism
Idol	Mao	Elvis	Bakunin
Marriage	“Picasso”	“Schönberg”	“Joyce”

CRITICISMS AND CONCLUSION

Those who favor postmodernism criticize modernism for being elitist, pessimistic, nihilistic, didactic, and self-important. Those who favor modernism criticize postmodernism for being substandard, sporadic, cluttered, nihilist, American, and relativist. While these criticisms clearly reflect both generational differences and differences in taste, they can also provide additional insight into the two movements.

Modernism has been criticized for its elitism, sexism, racism, and general suppression of anything that is not white, heterosexual, bourgeois, and so forth. Of course changing societal views over the course of the last century have also changed the way people view these issues. At the same time, it is easy to see how countless pages devoted to capturing the stream of consciousness of a woman preparing for a party, as in the case of Clarissa in Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, 900 pages replete with the interior monologues of a group of men attending a six-hour provincial conference, as in the case of Kilpi’s *Alastalon salissa*, or Marcel’s extensive, meandering memories of his own life, as in Proust’s *A la Recherche du temps perdu* [*Remembrance of Things Past*], can appear self-important.

Since modernism is criticized for its elitism, it makes sense that postmodernism is criticized for its populist leanings, its embrace of sub-literary genres, and its inclusion of popular cultural references. In particular, many traditionalists are threatened by postmodernists’ penchant for leveling the playing field between high culture and popular culture. They equate this with a lowering of standards. In a recent newspaper debate in Norway, for example, Dag Solstad argued that allowing literature students to analyze *jentelitteratur* [popular fiction for young women] means that people believe these texts are just as good as texts by canonical greats such as Ibsen. A postmodernist is unlikely to feel threatened by the notion of comparing a work of adolescent fiction to Ibsen. Postmodernists do not assume the automatic hierarchical superiority of canonical authors such as Sigrid Undset, who received the Nobel Prize for literature, but instead feel that there is always the potential to gain insight by comparing works—for example, Undset’s *Jenny* with Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary*. Although Fielding will almost certainly never receive a Nobel Prize, postmodernists are likely to agree that the difference in academic acclaim the authors have received is not a reason to reject the idea of comparing the books outright. Whether the

comparison proves apt or not, postmodernists agree that a respected work of literature cannot lose stature through a comparison. In other words, as Kjærstad writes in his response to Solstad, allowing students to write about *jentelitteratur* does not diminish Ibsen in any way. Kjærstad decries as utterly unreasonable Solstad's assertions that "akademikerne har mistet interessen for disputaser (når var Solstad på disputas sist?) eller at norsklærerne ikke verdsetter Ibsen høyere enn krimromaner (når snakket Solstad med en lærer)" [academics have lost interest in dissertation defences (when did Solstad last attend a defense?) or that Norwegian teachers don't appreciate Ibsen more than murder mysteries (when did Solstad last talk to a teacher?)] (*Aftenposten* 1 July 1997). Postmodernism's populism is partially a legacy of poststructuralism, which regards all knowledge as textual. If the definition of text is opened up in this way, it becomes possible to compare such seemingly divergent masterpieces as George Lucas's *Star Wars* movies and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen*. In fact, in his delightfully postmodern *Trash Culture*, Simon shows that such a comparison can be extremely fruitful (29–37).

The modernist assumption that educated readers will understand French, German, Latin, or classical Greek and recognize allusions to literature in those languages is another reason some consider modernism elitist. Many modernists make the assumption that all educated people have read the same books and share the same educational backgrounds and values. Postmodernism's pluralist message, promoting inclusion of marginalized voices, was viewed as a threat and resulted in a wave of articles and books, such as E.D. Hirsch Jr.'s *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. There were similar outcries in Finnish and Norwegian newspapers from conservative academics and literary critics who bemoaned everything from falling standards, to children watching too much television, to no one attending dissertation defenses (cf. Solstad, *Aftenposten* 27 June 1997). Jon Hellesnes's satirical cautionary tale against the dangers of postmodernist thinking, *Den postmoderne anstalten*, is another example of a negative reaction. Methinks they do protest too much.

They have misunderstood postmodernism. As a movement, it does not seek to topple all that came before it. It merely asks readers to consider new pairings, to analyze literary greats in new contexts, to expand the definition of what makes great literature. Postmodernists criticize modernists for arbitrarily requiring all people to fit into an academic template that may not represent their backgrounds. Around the world, scholars and critics have also responded positively to postmodernism as a movement. Their responses have been less newsworthy, particularly in Scandinavia, than their aghast colleagues' dismay. After all, there is little in a calm, reasoned response to a literary movement that awakens popular notice. Numerous scholars in Norway and Finland have tackled the challenge of postmodernist literature—see for example Liisa Saariluoma's *Postindividualistinen Romaani* [*The Postindividualist Novel*], Bo Jansson's *Postmodernism*, Päivi Kosonen's *Naissubjekti ja postmoderni* [*The Female Subject and Postmodernism*], and Eivind Røssaak's *Det Postmoderne og De Intellectuelle* [*The Postmodern and The Intellectual*]. This ever-widening group of scholars reacted calmly and rationally to postmodernism as a movement and have not shied away from applying postmodernist theory to actual literature, something postmodernism's detractors seem unable to do. These scholars, who have taken postmodernism in stride, respond calmly to the changes postmodernism implies. For example, Lasse Koskela comments matter-of-factly on a Finnish Board of Education website that academic literary studies have changed:

Aikaisemminhan kirjallisuushistoriat kirjoitettiin ikään kuin kirjailijakohtaisesti, siis edettiin sillä tavalla, että ensin otettiin käsittelyyn F. E. Sillanpää ja sitten seuraavassa luvussa Pentti Haanpää ja niin edelleen.

Tämä kirjailijakeskeisyys meiltä nyt lähes kokonaan kadonnut. Meillä on tässä suurena selittäjänä juuri nykyaikaistuminen eli seuraamme sitä, millä tavoin kirjallisuus on ollut mukana nykyaikaistumisprosessissa, ja myös sitä, millä tavoin kirjallisuus on nykyaikaistumiseen reagoanut. Onko se kommentoinut sitä kriitisesti, iloisesti, miltä nyt kulloinkin, millaisia näkymiä nykyaikaistuvasta maailmasta kirjallisuus on esittänyt.

[Previously literary histories were written as if in author sections, so that you would advance in such a way that first one covered F. E. Sillanpää and then in the following chapter Pentti Haanpää and so on. This author-centered way of thinking has now almost completely vanished. Here we have contemporary times as a great explanation of our society, how literature has been part of the modernization process and also how literature has reacted to contemporary times. Whether this is commented on critically, joyfully, however at any given point in time, what kind of views literature has presented about the contemporary world.]

Koskela sums postmodernism's importance up quite wisely here. Postmodernism will change the way literature is studied. Already literary studies have increasingly mixed with interdisciplinary studies in numerous other fields including feminism, cultural studies, and queer theory. This is reflected both in the way literature is studied and in the literature itself. Postmodern literature takes pastiche to new levels.

One result of postmodern literature's predilection for pastiche is that it appears cluttered by modernist standards. Postmodern literature often includes flourishes and embellishments from various eras. Critics of postmodernism have accused authors like Kjørstad, for example, of showing off because of his ubiquitous references to bits of knowledge from various fields. These references, however, are from miscellaneous factual embellishments. For example, *Homo falsus* is peppered with references to Sergei Nechayev and Greta Garbo's *Queen Christina*. Far from random, the Russian revolutionary and the Hollywood version of a Swedish queen were carefully chosen; a reader with the right background knowledge recognizes them as examples of people who cross-dress to escape, in Nechayev's case from Russian authorities, who wanted him in connection with a murder, and in Queen Christina's, as a temporary respite from her royal duties and obligations. This ultimately mimics the narrative situation of the text as a whole, which appears to have been written both by the male, salad-eating narrator, and the female Garbo impersonator, Greta. Through these allusions, Kjørstad suggests the possibility that the two narrators are not two different people, a man and a woman, but one person who sometimes dresses in drag.

By postmodernist standards, modernism seems dull. Modernism's relatively homogeneous style, without the excitement of metafiction or frequent interruptions of humorous references to everyday elements from the reader's life, comes off as boring to some readers. Modernist literature's subtle humor or, more often, serious tone can seem stuffy to a postmodernist. Finally, modernism's stable, realistic world may appear uneventful to those more used to postmodernism's fragments of different, incompatible realities and changing ontological levels.

Postmodernism is sometimes criticized as "too American." While the movement may have started in the United States and then spread, the situation is far too complicated to draw sweeping conclusions. Wherever the theory is coming from, and a great deal of it certainly originates outside of the United States, postmodern literature is being written around the world, recognized as such by academics most everywhere, and commented on as such by critics globally. A Finnish family on a small dairy farm outside of Kuopio once forced me watch an episode of the *Simpsons* with them. And I never met anyone as devoted to *Seinfeld* as my Norwegian friends. If postmodern literature, by drawing in references to popular cultural icons such as the *Simpsons*, *Dynasty*, or *Seinfeld*, is too American, then that is because the Europeans themselves who pay to import and broadcast American popular culture

are too American. And if anyone is seriously arguing that families on rural Savo dairy farms or small towns along the Sognefjord are too American, they need to reconsider what they mean by “American.”

Both modernism and postmodernism have been criticized as nihilistic. In both cases, this is quite an overstatement. Specific texts or authors may be nihilistic, but modernism and postmodernism as entire movements are not. Modernists’ eternal quest for a new grand narrative to fill the vacant center left by the collapse of previous grand narratives is evidence of modernism’s lack of nihilism, not to mention the idea that modernist texts almost always have a unifying consciousness and that their puzzle pieces can be assembled to form a larger picture. Postmodernists are nihilistic in that they believe there is no universal objective basis for truth, but not at all in the sense that they believe life pointless and human values worthless. For they do not. Each of the five postmodern novels I will examine in this project demonstrates a subject in the process of creating itself, making him/herself human and moving to the next ontological level. In Kjærstad’s *Homo falsus*, Jäntti’s *Amorfaana*, and Tapio’s *Frankensteinin muistikirja*, the subjects literally progress from a character in someone else’s story to become a person in their own right. In Hoem’s *Kjærleikens ferjereiser*, an entire coastal community forgotten by the big-city bureaucratic government becomes real. And in Lie’s *Løvens hjerte*, a timid, victimized woman becomes bold, and with the help of her contact with the fictionalized Louise Labé, goes on to live a more meaningful life as the author of her own destiny. This theme of creating and empowering subjects appears in many other postmodern books and is not compatible with the label of nihilism.

Finally, modernism has been criticized for dwelling overly much on alienation and postmodernism for being too lighthearted. While modernist literature does have a tendency to be somewhat darker and postmodernist literature more playful, this is hardly a reason to criticize an entire movement. These criticisms clearly reflect taste preferences rather than any great contribution to scholarship. Charles Jencks considers the moment in 1972 when the Pruitt-Igoe housing project, widely recognized as unliveable, was imploded as the death of modernism in architecture. At least modernist literature never had to be blown up.