

Postmodernism

Distinguishing features

- culturally pluralistic and profoundly interconnected global society lacking any single dominant center of political power, communication, or intellectual production
- the economic and technological conditions of our age have given birth to a media-dominated society in which there are only inter-referential representations with no real original referent
 - simulacra - copies without originals / reality created by media (Deleuze, Baudrillard)
- discontinuity and plurality of history
- erases the borderlines between literary theory/ philosophy / sociology / anthropology
- cultural relativism - Conflation of low/high culture
 - End of the dialectical opposition between mass culture (developed from realism and naturalism) and high modernism
- experience is personal (cannot be generalized) and meaning is only for the individual to experience, not for the author to dictate
 - This draws on deconstruction (Jacques Derrida) – texts have multiple meanings and no essence.
- moral relativism
- Postcolonialism – the Western civilisation is no longer authorised to define 'the other' (i.e. their colonial subjects) and to speak on their behalf.

Artistic offshoots (by-products):

Pop-Art

Magical Realism

Neo-Romanticism

American authors that are generally considered postmodernist:

Raymond Carver

Kurt Vonnegut

Donald Barthelme

John Barth

Vladimir Nabokov

Some other major writers 1960s - until now

Joseph Heller: *Catch 22*

William Styron: *Sophie's Choice*

Norman Mailer: *The Naked and the Dead*

John Updike: *The Centaur*

Truman Capote: *In Cold Blood*