



WLL 246: "Survey of Post-Soviet Literature and Culture"

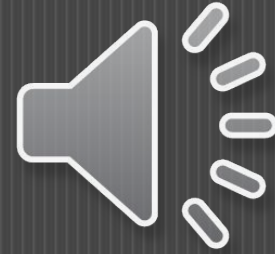
# POST-MODERNISM

# Post-Modernism



- A general (and sometimes controversial) term used to refer to changes, developments and tendencies which have taken place (and are taking place) in literature, art, music, architecture, philosophy, etc. since the 1940s and 1950.
- Post-modernism is a reaction to modernism
- It is amorphous and difficult to define
- (1. is modernism really over? 2. is post-modernism something new? 3. it is still happening: we are within it)

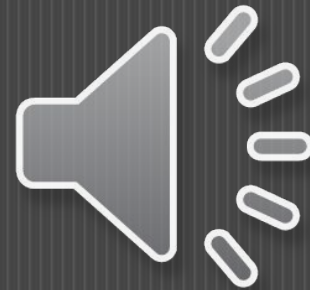
# Post-Modernism in the West



- In the West, postmodernism is “late capitalism” plus “mass culture”
- ... “the result of an information revolution leading to a computerized, media-saturated civilization” (Baudrillard, 1983)
- ... “a sign of the end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992)

# Post-Modernism in Russia

- The West: Modernism → Postmodernism
- Russia: Modernism → Socialist Realism → Postmodernism?
- Post-Modernism in late-Soviet literature:
- Andrei Bitov
- Sasha Sokolov
- Viktor Erofeev



# The crisis of legitimacy authority, and tradition



- The fiasco of political utopianism (Soviet Union was, essentially, a modernist project) which would inevitably lead to the Gulag or the Holocaust...
- Theodor Adorno: can there be poetry after Auschwitz?
- Varlam Shalamov: the aestheticism is impossible after the horrors of the Gulag
- “the collapse of the modernist system in every sphere became clear in 1968” (Dubravka Oraić)

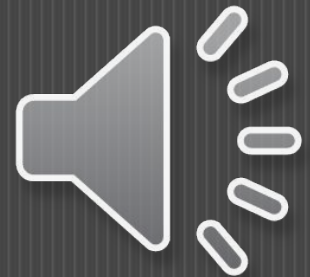
# Features of the Post-Modern Condition

- The GOD IS DEAD (=Secularization)
- The end of ideology and uniformity in thought
- The emergence of multiple and diverse patterns of thought
- A critical approach to institutions and institutionalized values
- A movement from a single culture to multiple cultures
- The desecration of the canon , the abolishment of the distinction between high and low, elitist and mass culture
- The rejection of metanarratives
- (Condee and Padunov 1994)

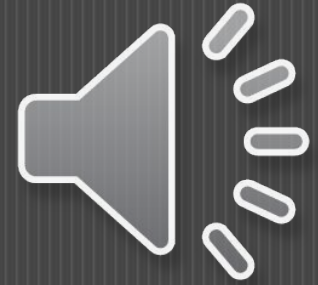


# Important Critical Schools and Theories

- Marxist criticism
- The Frankfurt School (Theodor Adorno)
- Feminist criticism (Julia Kristeva)
- Post-Structuralism (Roland Barthes)
- Psychoanalytic Criticism (Freud, Lacan)
- Deconstruction (Jacques Derrida)



# Post-Modernism in Literature



- Experimental techniques: e.g. anti-novel, concrete poetry, the Theater of the Absurd, the total theater, “happenings”
- Eclecticism
- Aleatory writing (“chance”): machine-generated writing
- Parody (and Stioib)
- Pastiche (a literary technique employing a generally light-hearted tongue-in-cheek imitation of another's style; although jocular, it is usually respectful.)
- Magic realism, neo-Gothic

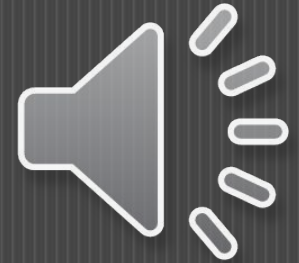


# Post-Modernism in Literature: Intertextuality



- Intertextuality is used as an artistic device
- Intertextuality comes from Modernism; but its role and function are different
- Postmodernism “plays” with intertextuality: it uses intertextual play
- This play is anti-hierarchical, antiteleological, anti-structural, not serious.
- Modernism: myth-making play; post-modernism: demythologizing play
- Everything is subject to parody , everything is turned inside out
- A typical feature of the play: the appearance of the author-creator in the text itself (the author is not “sacred,” he is turned into an object of play too

# Important Post-Modern Concepts



- "The Death of the Author" (French: "La mort de l'auteur"), a 1967 essay by the French literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes (1915-1980).
- Readers must thus separate a literary work from its creator in order to liberate the text from interpretive tyranny
- the author is merely a "scriptor"
- Every work is "eternally written here and now", with each re-reading, because the "origin" of meaning lies exclusively in "language itself" and its impressions on the reader.

