

### **Postmodernism discourse**

The term 'postmodernism' was first used in the 1950s by critics concerned to describe what they perceived to be new kinds of literary experiment arising out of but moving beyond those of cultural modernism.

As a cultural movement, postmodernism is an aspect of postmodernity, which is broadly defined as the condition of Western society after modernity. The features of culture that have contributed to postmodernity include globalization, consumerism, the fragmentation of authority and the commoditization of knowledge. According to Lyotard, postmodernity is characterized as an 'incredulity toward metanarratives', meaning that in the era of postmodern culture, people have rejected the grand, supposedly universal stories and paradigms such as religion, conventional philosophy, capitalism and gender that have defined culture and behavior in the past, and have instead begun to organize their cultural life around a variety of more local and subcultural ideologies, myths and stories.

Postmodern literature argues for expansion, the return of reference, the celebration of fragmentation rather than the fear of it, and the role of reference itself in literature. While drawing on the experimental tendencies of authors such as Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner in English, and Borges in Spanish – writers who were taken as influences by American postmodern authors such as Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, John Barth, William Gaddis, David Foster Wallace and Paul Auster – the advocates of postmodern literature argue that the present is fundamentally different from the modern period, and therefore requires a new literary sensibility.

Postmodernism argues that what we call knowledge is a special kind of story, a text or discourse that puts together words and images in ways that seem pleasing or useful to a particular culture, or even just to some relatively powerful members of that culture.