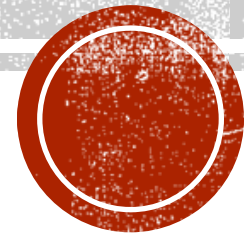


POSTMODERNI SM

Week 9





ORIGINS

- Around since 1870's; comes to fruition in 1960's
- Collapse of distinction between high and low culture
- Confrontations with the canonic
 - shocking, scandalous, ugly, dissonant, immoral, anti-social, is acceptable
 - a culture of *kitsch* -- artwork marked by sentimental or pretentious
 - Western culture = a state of decline

Pomo = a celebration of that decline, mass art = commercial culture

Andy Warhol - no distinction between real/mass art
Only context defines it (art gallery, museum)



JEAN-FRANCIS LYOTARD

PREMODERN



"Because God put it there and that's the way it's always been."

MODERN



"Onwards and upwards with inevitable progress!"

POSTMODERN



"Blppppggghljsdlkfjowejfalsk djflksdjflksjldjl;aldflkj;;;df"

- Pomo = crisis in the status of knowledge in Western societies.
- Collapse of metanarratives which explain and order our existence and mark the voices, narratives, and structure of everyday life (Christianity, science) creating the privileged truth
 - What will religion give to me?
 - What can I get from knowing science?
- Cultural diversity over homogenization

The intellectual's privilege to explain and distribute knowledge is threatened, his authority, dispersed.

Creates new intellectuals, voices from the margins
- blacks, women, homosexual, minority or working class -



JEAN BAUDRILLARD



- A culture of the simulacrum
- No original = no distinction between copy/original
- The hyperreal: real without origins or reality
- Real and simulation continually collapse; no such thing as authentic/truth
- Disneyland
- Watergate
- Gulf War
- Collapse of metanarratives of authority, as centers of authenticity and truth
- *The collapse of meaning and representation*



FREDERIC JAMESON

- Culture of pastiche - an open imitation of the works of other artists
- Pomo culture is a culture of quotations, a culture of intertextuality, flatness/depthlessness = the waning of affect
- A separation between affect and meaning; a loss of temporality; a schizophrenic experience
- Pomo = hopelessly commercial culture;
 - collapse of culture into commerce = representation as a form of power
 - metanarratives replaced by micronarratives
- Co-optation and incorporation make no sense -- we are already from the start



CHARACTERISTICS OF POSTMODERNISM

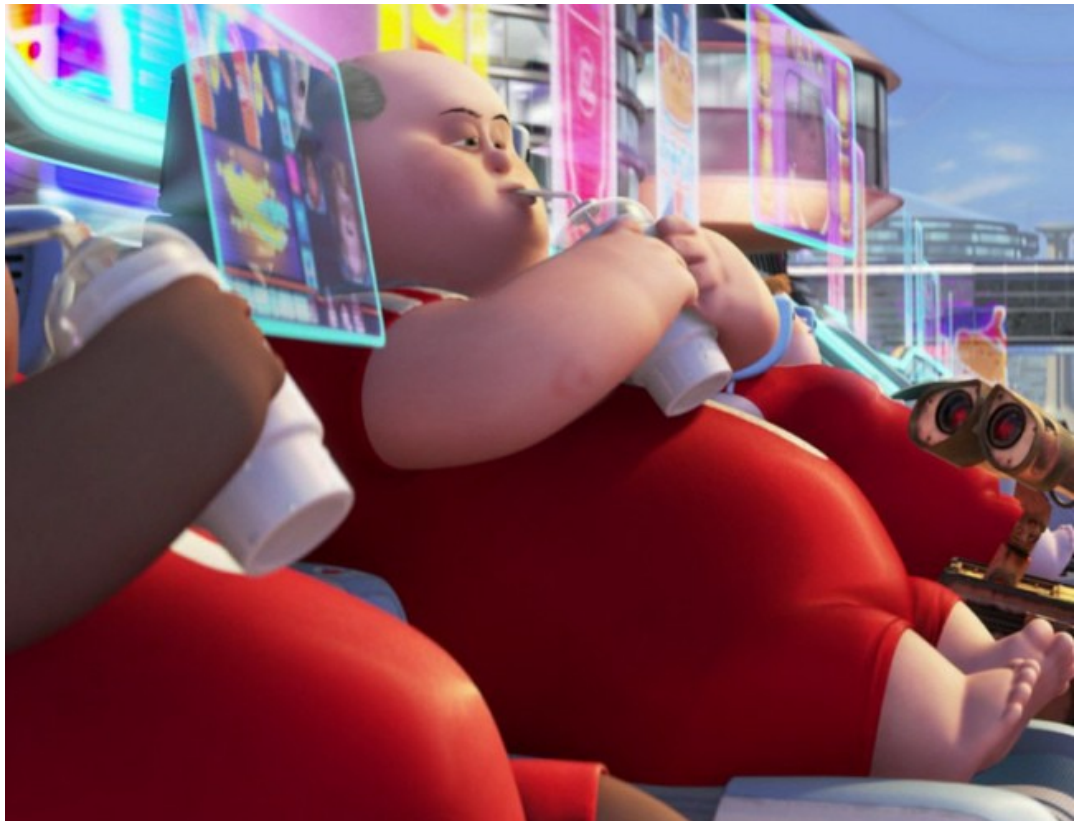
- The elevation/commodification of the ordinary
- Infinite signification and insatiable desire
- Irony

- Plurality of Value
- Globalization
- Convergence Culture

- Logics of Late Capitalism
- Q = who determines significance, and who has the right to interpret?
- Pessimists = multinational capital, the decisions of the market and marketing
- Optimists = consumers themselves, stylists who take the goods on offer and make their own marks with them



DEBORD



- Spectacle – Commodities have supplanted human relationships
 - Obfuscates history/past – the ever-present
 - Yesterday's religion is today's advertising
- Quality of life, knowledge, critical thinking is degraded; "what was lived is now represented"
- Mass media stimulating consumer culture and commodity fetishism serve to stupefy public
- What binds the spectators together is the very center which maintains their isolation. The spectacle reunites the separate, but reunites it as separate" (29) With people trying to understand themselves through a representation, they in fact lose all hope of coherently and unitarily living their own life. "This is why the spectator feels at home nowhere, because the spectacle is everywhere" with representation ruling over "the society of the spectacle", the unified direct human relations are replaced with the fragmented adherence to the spectacle which isolates us
- A society which no longer needs a developing economy for its survival, but rather one which has to provide for the survival of the ever-developing economy



DEBORD: SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE

(1967)

- Deeply distressed by the hegemony of governments and media over everyday life through mass production and consumption.
- Criticized both the capitalism of the West and the dictatorial communism of the Eastern bloc for the lack of autonomy allowed to individuals by both types of governmental structure.
- Postulated that Alienation had gained a new relevance through the invasive forces of the 'spectacle = a social relation between people that is mediated by images" consisting of mass media, **advertisement**, and popular culture
 - a self-fulfilling control mechanism for society
 - probed the historical, economic, and psychological roots of the media and popular culture
 - alienation is a consequence of the mercantile form of social organization that has reached its climax in capitalism



ADVERTISING AND COMMERCIAL CULTURE

- History and Discourse: Transition to Consumer Society: Pros and Cons
- Shift in Techniques: Shift in Experience: “Values” promoted
- Shift to Visual Culture: Target Marketing; Cultural Differentiation
- Ad Agencies (prime movers): Size, Structure (demographics, lifestyle brands, producer incentives)
- Techniques: snob-appeal, bandwagon, hidden-fear, irritation, association principle
 - Stereotypes, myths and stories, product placement
 - Limitations (?): Children, Schools, Health, Politics



TRANSFORMATIONS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKIVyUJw3TM>

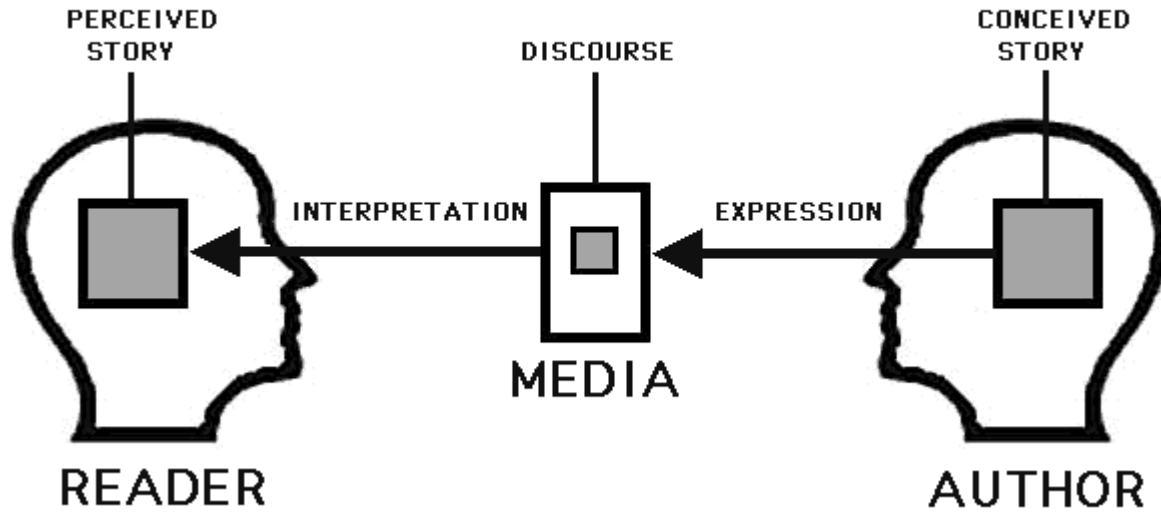
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjO4hf7Byhw>



TRANSFORMATIONS ?



MEDIA NARRATIVES: STORYTELLING



THE BRANDED SELF



- Self as Something Produced Discursively
- Different form of exploitative labour: *“If we see the self as both a product and a reflexively-constituted brand subject to a transaction and exchange, we see a notion of self deeply marked by the discourse and practices of post-fordist modes of capitalist production”*
- Brand = ultimate image-commodity; value-generating (internalized logics of capitalist accumulation); empty signifiers (flexible meanings)
- Sits as the nexus of discourses related to neoliberalism, flexible accumulation, radical individualism, and spectacular promotion
- Entrepreneur of the self; whole way of life
- Reality TV: Media Life



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- Consider the tenets of Postmodernism: The collapse of 1) Metanarratives, 2) Authenticity/Truth, 3) Affect (waning); what are the positives and negatives of these developments for society?
- The ascendancy of the Spectacle (and its logics) has, according to Debord, brought powerful changes to how culture operates.
 - What are those changes?
 - What role does the media and advertising (and their logics) play in this development?
 - Is it better or worse for culture? The ways we communicate?
- What is your role in this (consider this question in relation to your thoughts on The Branded Self)



post-truth

adj. Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief:

'in this era of post-truth politics, it's easy to cherry-pick data and come to whatever conclusion you desire'

'some commentators have observed that we are living in a post-truth age'

PA

