

Week 9: Modernism and Postmodernism

Sociologists tend to categorise contemporary interest in astrology as 'postmodern'. But is it? This class will introduce the main ideas associated with the terms 'postmodernism', necessarily starting with a grasp of the fundamental dynamics of modernity.

This week's work is significant for the entire MA, mainly because post-modern approaches to knowledge have influenced the humanities and social sciences very widely. In some disciplines, such as history, there is considerable resistance to post-modern ideas but in others, especially anthropology, they have been highly influential: this will become clear in the Research Methods module. Postmodernism's liberal attitudes to what constitutes acceptable academic study has encouraged the study of, for example, paganism, within Study of Religions departments and was a factor in the development of this MA. Therefore while the question of whether astrology is modern or postmodern is of specific relevance for the nature of astrological theory and practice, interest, postmodernism as a whole is significant for our understanding of cosmology in the wider sense – as the way in which human beings relate to the cosmos.

Forum

Given the choice, would you define astrology as modernist or postmodernist?

A Note on This Week's Reading

The potential reading on modernism and postmodernism is extensive, but both areas, especially postmodernism, can be complex and contradictory. We have included suggestions to pursue these areas, and there is a great deal of opinion on the web, but the on-line readings for this week feature discussions of the matter by astrologers.

Reading

Nick's Modernism Notes

Nick's Postmodernism Notes

Curry, Patrick, 'Astrology from Pagan to Postmodern?', *Astrological Journal*, Jan/Feb 1994, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 69-74.

Eco, Umberto, chap 1, 'Travels in Hypereality', in *Faith in Fakes: Travels in Hypereality*, London: Minerva 1995, pp. 1-58 (Chap 1).

Ferlat, Anne, 'Pagan Movements in Russia: Postmodern Invention or Return to Tradition? A Comparison with Western Pagan Movements', PhD Thesis, University of the West of England, 2008, chap. 2

Goddard, Gerry, 'Beyond a Post-Modern Astrology',
<http://www.islandastrology.net/resp-can.html>

Hand, Robert. 'Towards a Post-Modern Astrology',
http://www.astro.com/astrology/in_postmodern_e.htm

Hillenbrand, Candy, 'An Archaic Astrology Cast Adrift in a Post-Modern World', *A Place in Space*, 2001.
<http://www.aplaceinspace.net/Pages/CandyPostmodern.html>

Klages, Mary, 'PostModernism',
<http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html>

Lechner, Norbert, 'A Disenchantment Called Postmodernism', *boundary 2*, Vol. 20, No. 3, The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America (Autumn, 1993), pp. 122-139.

JSTOR

Perry, Glenn, 'The New Paradigm and Postmodern Astrology', "International Forum on New Science. University of Fort Collins, Colorado. 27 Sept. 1991. 20 Jan. 2007

<http://www.aaperry.com/index.asp?pgid=21>

Postmodern Culture journal

<http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/>

Other suggested Reading

Bauman, Zygmunt, *Intimations of Postmodernity*, London: Routledge, 1992, Introduction ('The re-enchantment of the world, or, how can one narrate Postmodernity?').

Belsey, Catherine, *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Best, Steven and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*, London: MacMillan 1991, Chapter 1.

Budd, Martin, "Astrology and Linguistics", *Astrology*, 1981, vol. 55, no. 2, pp. 50-64.

Chandler, Daniel, Semiotics, *Introduction*, London: Routledge 2002.

Childs, Peter, *Modernism*, London: Routledge, Introduction (pp. 1-36).

Eagleton, Terry, *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, Oxford: Blackwell, Chap 1.

Ferguson, Harvey, *Modernity and Subjectivity: Body, Soul, Spirit*, London and Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press 2000, Introduction (pp. 1-19).

Gablik, Suzi, *Has Modernism Failed?*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2004, chap 8 (pp. 125-138)

Giddens, Anthony, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1990, chap 1 (pp. 1-54).

Harris, Marvin. "Anthropology and Postmodernism." *Science, Materialism, and the Study of Culture*. Gainesville, FL: University P of Florida, 1995. 62-77.

Jencks, Charles, 'The Post-Modern Agenda' in Charles Jencks (ed.), *The Post-Modern Reader*, London: Academy, 1992, pp. 10-39.

Latour, Bruno, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2006 [1991], Chap 1.

Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Postmodern Condition*, Minneapolis, The University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Pippin, Robert B., *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, chap 2.

Williams, Raymond, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, London: Verso, 1989, chap 3 (49-63).

Other Possible Reading

Rabinow, Paul, *The Foucault Reader*, London, Penguin, 1984.

Rabinow, Paul and Hubert L. Dreyfuss, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Brighton, The Harvester Press, 1982.

van Reijlin, Willem and Dick Veerman, “An Interview with Jean-François Lyotard”, in *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1988, vol. 5, no. 2-3, pp. 277-309.

Said, Edward, *Orientalism*, rev. edn, London, Penguin, 2003.

Smith, Barbara Herrnstein, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1988.

Smith, Barbara Herrnstein, *Belief and Resistance: Dynamics of Contemporary Intellectual Controversy*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1997.