# Modernity and POSTMODERNITY

| Modernity | POSTMODERNITY |
|---|---|
| Using rational, scientific, logical means to know the world. Optimism that we can understand and control an objective world | A reaction against rationalism, scientism, or objectivity of modernism |
| There is an absolute, universal truth that we can understand through rationalism and logic | There is no universal truth. Rationality by itself does not help us truly understand the world |
| Humans are material machines. We live in a purely physical world. Nothing exists beyond what our senses perceive | Suspicious of such dogmatic claims to knowledge |
| Humankind is progressing by using science and reason | "Progress" is a way to justify the domination by European culture of other cultures |
| History as a "narrative of what happened" with a point of view and cultural/ideological interests | Postmodern historians and philosophers question the representation of history and cultural identities: history as "what 'really' happened" is only from one group's POV |
| Renaissance, Enlightenment 1750s - 1945 | Post WWII, especially after 1968 |
| Functional | Creative |
| Egocentric | Altruistic |
| Classification of the world; order; hierarchy | The way we understand the world is relative; it depends on our culture, position, class, gender, age, beliefs, etc. |
| High culture vs. low culture -- strictly divided; Only high culture deserves to be studied, analyzed | Everything is "popular" culture -- it all deserves to be studied; commodification of culture--everything can be bought/sold |
| Reality can be discovered through science and can be expressed abstractly (equations) | "The transformation of reality into images" (Nike is not about shoes but about an image, etc.) |
| Sense of unified, centered self; "individualism," unified identity | Sense of fragmentation and decentered self; multiple, conflicting identities |
| Organized | Chaotic, fragmented |
| European, Western | Multicultural |
| Linear | Non-linear |
| Permanence | Transience |
| Moral values based on the Bible | Moral values based on personal feelings, preference |
| Doctrine | Personal story, exploration |

| Approximate years | Period | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| 100 - 300 AD | Primitive (early) Christianity | Apostolic teaching & witness |
| 100 - 600 AD | The Common Era | Classical Christianity formalized in creeds, councils, and the biblical canon |
| 600 - 1500 AD | Medieval Era | Formation of Roman Christianity |
| 1500 - 1750 AD | Reformation | Birth and growth of Protestanism |
| 1750 - 1960s AD | Modern Era (The Enlightenment) | Growth of denominations and mainline liberal Protestantism; Vatican II; American Evangelicalism; Fundamentalism |
| 1960s - ? AD | Postmodern Era | Rise of the "nones" (those who claim no religious affiliation); megachurches; Multi-site/campus churches; online spirituality |