The Postmodern Turn

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Chapter Four: Postmodernism in the Arts: Pastiche, Implosion, and the Popular©

Abstract expressionism in painting, existentialism in philosophy, the final forms of representation in the novel, the films of the great auteurs, or the modernist school of poetry (as institutionalized and canonized in the works of Wallace Stevens): all these are now seen as the final, extraordinary flowering of a high modernist impulse which is spent and exhausted with them. . . . the younger generation of the 1960s will confront the formerly oppositional modern movement as a set of dead classics, which "weigh like a nightmare on the brains of the living," as Marx once said in a different context.

-Fredric Jameson

As Debord and Baudrillard developed their critical analyses of consumer culture in the 1960s, as capitalism was becoming a full-blown society of the spectacle, and as oppositional political movements were contesting existing societies, new tendencies emerged in the arts in the form of new postmodern methods, styles, and consciousness. At this time, a "new sensibility" appeared in criticism and the arts that expressed dissatisfaction with prevailing modernist forms and ideologies. Seen as stale, boring, pretentious, and elitist, European and American high modernism were rejected. The new attitude pronounced the death of modernism and the arrival of "postmodernism," of a new ideology and new aesthetic forms exemplified in the novels of William Burroughs, the music of John Cage and the dance of Merce Cunningham, the paintings of Andy Warhol and pop art, and the architecture of Robert Venturi and Philip Johnson. Postmodernism not only brought dramatic changes in existing fields, such as architecture, literature, painting, film, music, and dance, it also involved a creation of new art forms, such as happenings, performance art, multimedia installations, and computer art, suggesting that we were indeed living in a new culture of the simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1983a, 1993, 1994; see Chapter 3).

In the following section, we will describe the lines of the historical shift from modernism to postmodernism in the arts and the emergence of a new postmodern culture. We will illuminate this transformation with discussion of the postmodern turn in a variety of aesthetic fields, ranging from architecture, painting, and literature to multimedia art and media culture. We argue that though there are a number of diverse postmodern expressions in the arts, they share core stylistic features and, with postmodern interventions in social theory and science, are part of a shift to a new postmodern paradigm.

From Modernism to Postmodernism

The category of the new has been central to art since the middle of the last century. . . . there has not been a single accomplished work of art in the last hundred years or so that was able to dodge the concept of modernism. . . . The more art tried to get away from the problematic of modernism, the sooner it perished.

-T. W. Adorno

To elucidate the postmodern turn in the arts, we must begin with some reflections on the forms of modernism that postmodernists parody or repudiate. Beginning in the 19th century, "modernism" took shape as a tendency in the arts that articulated new artistic styles and techniques and new ideologies about the function of art and the role of the artist in society.1 In the 1850s, Parisian poet Charles Baudelaire called for a form of modern poetry that would be able to capture the uniqueness of modern experience, especially the shocks of urban life. His successor Arthur Rimbaud demanded, "il faut être absolument moderne," that art be "absolutely modern," and poet Ezra Pound insisted that artists "make it new." Modernist art sought innovation, novelty, and contemporary thematic relevance, rejecting tradition by negating old aesthetic forms and creating new ones. In this sense, modernism in the arts followed the basic processes of modernity, which involved negation of the old and creation of the new, producing continual originality and "creative destruction" in all spheres of life (see Berman, 1982).

In response to the romantic failure to preserve a progressive role for art in bourgeois society and to the increasing encroachments of the market and mass society on the artistic world, modernist artists sought autonomy in the arts, aspiring to free art from religion, morality, and politics, thus allowing the artist to pursue purely aesthetic goals. Indeed, a primary characteristic of modernism is its belief in the autonomy of art, involving an active attempt by the artist to abstract art from social ideology in order to focus exclusively on the aesthetic medium itself. Belief in art for art's sake and the autonomy of art ultimately decentered the aesthetic project from representation and the imitation of reality to a concern with the formal aspects of art. Beginning with the French impressionists in painting, modernist art breaks with realist modes of representation and the concept of art as mimesis, an imitation of reality, in order to explore alternative visions and to experiment with the aesthetic possibilities of a given artistic medium. This modernist project echoed through the arts, generating experiments with new forms, styles, and modes of aesthetic creativity.

Consequently, modernist artists undertook a series of formalist experiments in an intensive search for new languages that would liberate them from traditional notions of arts and reality, often anticipating later concerns of science, as Cézanne's multiperspectival vision prefigured that of Einstein (see Chapter 5). In some cases, this preoccupation with form, technique, and mode of vision rendered modern art highly self-referential, more about itself, its own artistic form, than about the social world or even the artist's experience of the world. Schoenberg and his followers experimented, for instance, in the production of a radically new system of atonal music that

> gave each note in the chromatic (twelve-note) scale equal weight by the device of requiring all twelve notes to be used once before any were repeated. The seemingly arbitrary ordering of notes was called a "tone row" and functioned much like a melody in traditional music. When the same idea was applied to other elements of musical language (rhythm, dynamics, timbre), the all-inclusive name for the results was "serial" music. (Glass, 1987: 13)

This practice produced a very abstract and modern sounding music governed by an inventive technique and rigorous formalism. In each particular art, modernist artists sought to discover what was specific to painting, writing, music, and other arts, to eliminate extraneous elements derived from other spheres: modernist painters, for example, sought to exclude the literary or didactic from painting. Artists like Cézanne and Picasso experimented with abstract and geometric forms that broke with naturalistic representation; composers like Schoenberg and Webern created new atonal and formal systems of music; writers like Pound and Joyce used

language in innovative ways and produced new modes of writing; modern architects devised novel modes of housing and forms of urban design, eliminating aesthetic decoration in favor of function and utility; and groups of modern artists in every aesthetic field created dramatically innovative works and techniques.

The movement toward innovation and purity in modernist art replicates the logic of cultural modernity not only in its drive for constant originality and novelty, thus producing a "tradition of the new," but also in its pursuit of the modern logic of cultural differentiation. On Habermas's (1983) account, modernity involves the differentiation of spheres of value and judgment into the domains of science, morality, and art, with each sphere following its own logic. Thus, the modernist celebration of the autonomy of art, the specialized development and refinement of specific artistic spheres, and the quest for formal invention follows the broader trends of modernity.

In a sense, the modernist imperative toward ceaseless change and development involves an embrace of the ethos of capitalism, in which variation of product means new markets, shifting tastes, and more profits. During the modernist century (approximately the 1850s to the 1950s), the artist was forced to sell his or her wares on the market, independent of the patronage systems that formerly supported art. This led to an internal contradiction within modernism between the need to produce novel and attractive products for the market and the urge to purify art of anything external or extraneous to the art object. Thus, conflicts erupted between the logic of aesthetic autonomy and its religion of "art for art's sake"-driving modernist artists to avoid contaminating their art with mass society and mass culture-and the imperative to sell their products for the highest price.

Modernist art became ever more complex and demanding as innovations proliferated, and by the 20th century modernism defined itself as "high art" distinct from the "low art" of the masses (Huyssen, 1986). Elitism became the corresponding attitude of high modernism and the modernist artist, whose genius and purity of vision was incomprehensible to the layperson. Leading modernists sought to develop their own private language, their own unique vision and style that expressed their singular self. Hence, the works of Eliot, Pound, Klee, and Kandinsky articulated an ideolect that proved incomprehensible to the uninitiated but was readily perceivable to the initiate. The search for a private code inscrutable to the masses, or to most critics for that matter, reached its height in Joyce's Finnegans Wake, a novel accessible only to patient polyglots. Walking on the clouds of genius, the modernist often feels intense alienation from the masses, such as evident in many of Baudelaire's poems.

The modernist artist was thus driven to create the great work, the masterpiece, and his or her own unique individual style. Genius, monumentalism, and distinctive style and vision were thus intrinsic features of modernist aesthetics. One could easily recognize the paintings of Monet or van Gogh; the prose style of Kafka or Hemingway; the music of Schoenberg or Stravinsky; the theater of Pirandello or Brecht; or the buildings of the International Style. Modernist works also expressed the personal vision of the artist, his or her own unique view of the world, and the modernist masterwork attempted to generate new modes of art and new ways of seeing and thinking.

During the early decades of the 20th century, however, modernism split into different, often warring, camps. While a formalist modernism sought primarily to pursue pure aesthetic concerns, avant-garde modernist movements emerged that aspired to revolutionize society, culture, and everyday life by assaulting the institution of art, allegedly corrupted by the bourgeois market society, and redefining the relation between art and life.3 Whereas modernism tried to transform (romantic) alienation into individual autonomy and creativity, the political avant-garde exploded the boundaries isolating the artist from society in order to use the unique gifts of the artist as a means of advancing radical social change. Paradoxically, the extreme individualists of avant-garde art worked in artistic movements that sought to align themselves with whatever social forces-scientific, technological, or political-that they believed augured emancipatory change.

For the most part, modernism was a male affair, although women were participating in the avant-garde movements by the 20th century. Women painters like Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot were active in the impressionist movement, Paula Modersohn-Becker and Käthe Kollwitz were major figures in the expressionist movement, and women became active participants in groups like the Bloomsbury circle, dada and surrealist movements, and the Paris arts community.4 Thus modernist subcultures gave women an opportunity to participate in cultural creation in a wide variety of arts from which women had previously been excluded, although they continued to suffer prejudice and exclusion in many cases. Likewise, people of color and non-Western artists would eventually appropriate the techniques and practices of modernism, though this development would only gradually mature.

Although avant-garde movements like expressionism, futurism, dada, and surrealism built on the formal experimentalism of modernism, continuing the attack on realism and mimesis, they assaulted its ideology of aesthetic autonomy and assailed the bourgeois "institution of art" whereby art was produced, distributed, and received as a commodity and tool of political legitimation (see Burger, 1984). Against modernism, the avant-garde movements saw art as a means of social transformation and sought to integrate art into everyday life. Where high modernism was becoming largely conservative in its function, a bastion of elite taste and an "affirmative culture" (Marcuse) that ultimately legitimated bourgeois social and political domination, the avant-garde strove to subvert dominant aesthetic ideologies and to effect revolutionary social change.5 Nevertheless, the avant-garde remained bound, with modernism, to the romantic notion of the artist as privileged social figure or visionary (as in Shelley's claim that artists are the "unacknowledged legislators of the world"). Moreover, much modern art continued to assume the idealist notion that language was an autonomous bearer of meanings and force of change, two key assumptions to be opposed by postmodern art and criticism.

Needless to say, the avant-garde failed to deliver on its promises to abolish oppressive ideologies and institutions or to merge art and life in a progressive social transformation. The militant rhetoric and manifestos of the avant-garde rang loudly for little more than a decade before being silenced by fascism, bureaucratic socialism, capitalism, and war. In Germany, the avant-garde tradition was stopped in its tracks in 1933 when Hitler came to power and banished all forms of modern art as decadent. In Soviet Russia, the last vestiges of a flourishing avant-garde tradition were exterminated by 1934 with the declaration of socialist realism as the official style under the cultural czardom of Zhdanov. In the United States, the avant-garde was defanged

during the 1940s and 1950s, less harshly but no less decisively, with the canonization of modernism in the universities and museums and the commodification of art in a dramatically expanding art market. Modernist art lost its sharp critical and oppositional edge, becoming an adornment to the consumer society, while its techniques were absorbed into advertising, packaging, and design, as well as the aestheticization of everyday life.

From the Shock of the New to Postmodern Historicism

The postmodern turn in the arts maintains some links to earlier aesthetic traditions while also breaking sharply from bourgeois elitism, high modernism, and the avant-garde alike. With modernism and the avant-garde, postmodernists reject realism, mimesis, and linear forms of narrative. But while high modernists defended the autonomy of art and excoriated mass culture, postmodernists spurned elitism and combined "high" and "low" cultural forms in an aesthetic pluralism and populism. Against the drive toward militant innovation and originality, postmodernists embraced tradition and techniques of quotation and pastiche. While the modernist artist aspired to create monumental works and a unique style and the avant-garde movements wanted to revolutionize art and society, postmodernists were more ironic and playful, eschewing concepts like "genius," "creativity," and even "author." While modernist art works were signification machines that produced a wealth of meanings and interpretations, postmodern art was more surface-oriented, renouncing depth and grand philosophical or moral visions (Jameson, 1991).

Yet a more activist wing of postmodernism advanced the anarchist spirit of the avant-garde through a deconstruction and demystification of meaning, but while breaking with its notions of agency, its idealist definition of language, and its utopian vision of political revolution (Foster, 1983, 1985). Postmodernists abandon the idea that any language-scientific, political, or aesthetic-has a privileged vantage point on reality; instead, they insist on the intertextual nature and social construction of all meaning. For postmodernists, the belief of the avant-garde in the integrity of the individual as an activist agent, in language as revelatory of objective truth, and in faith in historical progress remain wedded to the mythic structure of modern rationalism. As we will see, while some versions of postmodernism leave ample room for social criticism and political change, the postmodern turn in criticism and the arts abandons modern notions of the subject, the work of art, and political change.

On the whole, the postmodern turn in the arts reacted against what was seen as both the decay of an institutionalized high modernism and a failed avant-garde. Some critics, however, mourned the passing of modernism while others celebrated its demise. In 1959, Irving Howe lamented the end of the modern in his "Mass Society and Postmodern Fiction" (1970). A sad eulogy was given by Harry Levin in his 1960 article "What Was Modernism?" (1967). For both Howe and Levin, postmodernism was a symptom of decline; it represented the appearance of a new nihilism, an "anti-intellectual undercurrent" (Levin) that threatened modern humanism and the values of the Enlightenment.

In 1964, by contrast, Leslie Fiedler wrote two key articles, "The New Mutants" and "The Death of Avant-Garde Literature" (collected in Fiedler, 1971), which celebrated the flowering of a popular culture that was more playful, exuberant, and democratic, challenging the opposition

between high and low art and the elitism of academic modernism. In the same vein, Susan Sontag published in 1967 an influential collection of essays entitled Against Interpretation, which attacked the elitism and pretentiousness of modernism and promoted camp, popular culture, new artistic forms, and a new sensibility over the allegedly stale, boring forms of entrenched modernism. Whereas modernism denigrated "kitsch" and "mass culture," those who took the postmodern turn valorized the objects of everyday life and of commercial culture. Moreover, against what Sontag considered an abstract hermeneutics practiced by modernist critics, she affirmed the immediate, visceral experience of art and form over content and interpretation. In 1968, Fiedler made an explicit appeal to "Cross the Border-Close the Gap" (Fiedler, 1971), and this exhortation to break down the boundaries between high art and popular culture became a rallying cry of the new postmodern attitude.

Generally speaking, the postmodern turn in literature was carried out against the canonized forms of high modernism that had emerged as dominant in the United States in the 1950s. Modernist writing sought the innovative, the distinctive, and the monumental. Modernist writers like Kafka, Hemingway, Joyce, Eliot, and Pound sought their own distinctive styles to articulate their unique visions. For postmodernists, the aesthetic of high modernism had run its course and depleted its possibilities; the notion of the artistic work as a hieroglyph understood only by experts was rejected for a more accessible, populist writing style; and the concept of the author as an expressive unitary consciousness was dismantled to place the writing subject within a dense, socially constructed, intertextual discursive field.

Apocalyptic references to the "literature of exhaustion" and the "death of literature" proliferated, along with corollary references to the "death of the novel" and the "death of the author." These moods elicited conflicting responses ranging from calls for a new "literature of replenishment" (Barth, 1988), which would revitalize traditional modes of writing, to calls for altogether new forms of writing and culture. A wide range of writers who were developing new experimental modes and styles of "surfiction" or "metafiction" were labeled "postmodern," including John Barth, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Donald Barthelme, John Hawkes, and Robert Coover. These styles employed self-reflexive and nonlinear writing that broke with realist theories of mimesis, depth psychology and character development, and views of the author as a sovereign subject in full command of the process of creation. Its "characters" are typically empty, depthless, and aimless, embodying "the waning of affect." Moreover, as in Alain Robbe-Grillet's work, moral, symbolic, or allegorical schemes are often abandoned in favor of surface meaning, or the depiction of the sheer "meaninglessness" of random events and fractured "narration." Where modernist novels still assumed some order and coherence in the world and, despite moral uncertainties, aspired to project schemes of redemptive vision, postmodern fiction took a more nihilistic stance in portraying the random indeterminacy of events and meaningless actions, projecting an epistemological skepticism later articulated in postmodern theory.

Crucially, postmodern writers implode oppositions between high and low art, fantasy and reality, fiction and fact. Spurning "originality," postmodern writers draw on past forms, which are ironically quoted and eclectically combined. Instead of deep content, grand themes, and moral lessons, ludic postmodernists like Barth, Barthelme, and Nabokov are primarily concerned with the form and play of language and adopt sportive, ironic, self-reflexive, "metafictional" techniques that flaunt artifice and emphasize the act of writing over the written word. Of course,

some of the stylistic techniques of postmodern literature were defining features of modernism itself, motivated by its revolt against bourgeois realism-leading many critics to see postmodern literature as continuous with modernism rather than as constituting a radical break or rupture.

But one could twist the argument that almost all conceivable stylistic inventions were made by modern and avant-garde artists to lend credibility to the postmodern sense that there is nothing new for a writer to accomplish. All the postmodernists could do, then, would be to push these modernist moves further, to be more radically anti-realist and anti-narrative. Postmodernists, consequently, deployed language to turn in on itself with a new energy. The intense self-reflexivity of postmodern literature thus leads to a constant interruption of narrative, an untiring reminder to the reader that he or she is reading a text, language, a fiction, and not viewing a world without mediation. This is, of course, a technique that Brecht developed in the form of the "alienation effect" of his modern drama in order to break emotional identification between the spectator and the play and to awaken critical reflection instead.

Having arisen in the late 1950s and the 1960s, the trends of postmodernism in the arts quickly spread through literature, painting, architecture, dance, theater, film, and music, spilling over into philosophy, social theory, and science by the 1970s and 1980s. In contrast to the differentiating impetus of modernism, postmodernism adopts a dedifferentiating approach that willfully subverts boundaries between high and low art, artist and spectator, and among different artistic forms and genres. To return to Habermas's (1983) scheme, the dedifferentiation process that characterizes postmodernism began the moment the autonomous distance between art, science, and morality started to collapse, once science and money, as vehicles of social power, increasingly encroached on the autonomy of other social spheres in a process that Habermas terms the "colonization of the lifeworld." Once commodification dynamics had advanced to the point that modernism itself was assimilated to the market, the "shock of the new" had been defused, and avant-garde art became a sound investment. In the 1913 Armory Show in New York, European avant-garde art made its shocking debut in the United States; five decades later, it was hanging on the walls of bank lobbies, it provided background for advertisements, and it adorned the clothes and bedsheets of bachelor pads and middle-class homes.

At the same time that high art proved itself safely cornered and sanitized, popular art forms based on radio, film, television, advertising, and comics thoroughly saturated U.S. culture. Rather than snobbishly dismissing these "low culture" forms, artists of the 1960s embraced them as a refreshing alternative to high culture and assimilated their forms into their work. Where modern artists were typically insular, obscure, and idiosyncratic in their work, postmodern artists began to speak in the most available, public and commodified languages, such as exemplified in Warhol's use of media images or Venturi's desire to "learn from Las Vegas."

By the 1960s, there was a widespread feeling that novelty and innovation in the arts had been exhausted and that all that could be done had been done. The painting White on White by the Russian suprematist painter Kasimir Malevich, which features two barely discernible white squares superimposed on one another, was a clear indicator that in this field, for example, certain formal limits had been reached, and there was talk of "the end of painting." The search for new beginnings that characterized modernism gave way to a "sense of ending" (Kermode, 1967). All that was left for the postmodern artist to do, it was thought, was to play with the pieces of the

past and to reassemble them in different forms.

Hence, rather than bold innovation and originality, postmodernists deployed eclecticism, pastiche, and parody. As the postmodern architect Venturi put it: "Creating the new means choosing from the old." The modern quest for the new was informed by a belief in the artist as a unique, expressive self. Modern art was one with modern philosophy in its belief in a transcendental self outside of space and time. Contrariwise, postmodern artists, articulating the same anti-humanist themes of poststructuralist and postmodern theory, abandoned the belief in a self, author, and creative genius. The artist is no longer the originary and unique self who produces the new in an authentic vision but, rather, a bricoleur who just rearranges the debris of the cultural past.

Rather than expanding on the themes of selfhood, authenticity, originality, and liberation, postmodern artists parody them. Rather than inventing new materials, postmodernists quote what's already around and combine fragments in a pastiche-as Robert Rauschenberg pastes texts from newspapers and images from classical paintings onto his canvases, or as rap artists "sample" riffs from past songs. The postmodern turn is well exemplified in the work of Andy Warhol, who boasted he could produce as many works of art in a day through mechanical reproduction as Picasso could in a lifetime. The attack on the modern ideology of creativity and authenticity is also present in the work of the New York "artist" Mark Kostabi, who signs his name to works conceived and created by a crew of struggling painters who are paid paltry wages for works that fetch thousands of dollars, or in the work of Jeff Koons, who pays groups of artisans to produce "his" environmental sculptures and other works of "art."

Hence, the modern concern for monumentality, for great and original works, gives way to the postmodern theme of irony, and modernist seriousness passes over to postmodern play. The postmodern sensibility thus carries out the death of the author and the end of the great work. As Benjamin (1969) analyzed it, the "aura" of the artwork as something singular, sui generis, is corrupted and destroyed through the technology of mass reproduction, particularly in electronic form. Once the "original" is endlessly reproduced, a Baudrillardian state of hyperreality takes effect such that the original becomes indistinguishable from the copies and no more real than its reproductions (see Chapter 3).

The lack of aura of the mass-reproduced object and the belief in the end of the expressive self leads to another important contrast between modern and postmodern art: their respective emphases on depth and surface. The modernist focus on psychological and affective depth is related to the modernization processes. Where the capitalist experiences modern subjectivity as freedom from economic constraints, the artist experiences it as a distance from social conventions and the objective world and as a focusing inward. Just as rationalists like Descartes and empiricists like Hume grounded their new epistemologies in the isolated, experiencing self, so modern artists draw their creative resources from an exploration of their interior emotional worlds. The goal of exploring and processing experience was given ever-fresh stimulation through the dramatic changes overtaking modern society in the 19th and 20th centuries, leading to intense individual experiences and passionate, frenzied expressions of subjectivity and anxiety, such as are paradigmatically represented by Edvard Munch's The Scream.

In contrast to the expressive power of modern art, some forms of postmodern art display a "waning of affect." The term, coined by J. G. Ballard and popularized by Jameson (1991), suggests that the neurasthenia of the modern condition has given way to a widespread feeling of emptiness and blankness, as though the modern mind, addicted to cocaine, had taken massive doses of lithium to come down and cool out. Coolness, blankness, and apathy become new moods for the decelerating, recessionary postmodern condition in an age of downsizing and diminishing expectations. According to Jameson, the alienation of the subject in the modern era, which required depth of feeling and a critical distance between the subject and the objective conditions of its life, has been absorbed, as expressive subjectivities mutate into fragmented selves devoid of psychological depth and autonomy.

Although advocates of the postmodern like to champion it as a break from the modern, there are very few "postmodern" elements that are completely new or innovative. While postmodern discourse renounces originality and the celebration of novelty and innovation characteristic of modernism, it also continues the experimentalism of modernism and the avant-garde. Like these movements, it is committed to formalism, self-reflexivity, ambiguity, and a critique of realism. Against modernism and the avant-garde, however, postmodernism declares both the death of the author and of the work, replacing the former with the decentered self or bricoleur and the latter with the "text." In the poststructuralist lexicon, "text" refers to any artistic or social creation that signifies and can be conceptually interpreted. Thus, not only are artworks like novels and paintings "texts" but so too are buildings, landscapes, and cities. The shift from "work" to "text" is meant both to broaden the category of objects for critical interpretation and decoding and to suggest that the meanings of the text are usually multiple and conflicting, requiring new methods of interpretation that are multiperspectival and that decenter the "authorial voice."

Despite the heterogeneity of the various postmodern turns in the arts, they share key concerns and family resemblances. We believe this is the case because there are broad and sweeping changes occurring throughout the culture in general, and these same "epistemic" elements are being articulated in similar ways by various artists and theorists in different fields-an argument that we develop in Chapter 6. In fact, it should be no surprise that postmodern developments appeared first in the arts and only later in criticism and social theory as an explicit movement, since cultural changes are typically explored first phenomenologically, as experiences and moods, and only later reflexively, as theories. Yet, as we will see, the postmodern turn in the arts involves unusual intimacy between theory and culture, with developments in the arts influencing theory and movements in the arts illustrating trends of postmodern theory.

One key general characteristic that unites the various postmodern movements in the arts is that they are implosive and dedifferentiating. This is to say that they renounce, implode, deconstruct, subvert, and parody conventionally defined boundaries such as those between high and low art, reality and unreality, artist and spectator, and among the various artistic media themselves. These implosive tendencies are reactions against forms of modernist purism that seek unified or pure aesthetic styles defined according to a strict set of genre rules, as well as responses to the sociological conditions of media culture forms that are saturating culture and society. The implosion of well-defined boundaries means that postmodern cultural forms are typically eclectic and combine a host of different forms, often in playful and ironic ways.

Such play with different styles suggests yet another crucial characteristic of postmodern cultural forms: the rejection of structure, order, continuity, and cause-effect relations in favor of disorder, chaos, chance, discontinuity, indeterminacy, and forces of random or aleatory play. These motifs can take the form of an attack on narrative structure in literature, music, dance, or the willful combination of conflicting styles in architecture. John Cage (1961), for instance, made the postmodern paradigm of indeterminacy the organizing principle of his music, using what he called "chance operations" to organize sound in an aural collage that often picked up and delighted in accidental sounds from the environment or from electronic devices. Cage also undid the boundary between music and all other forms of sound, imploding music into sound, making all sound-including silence-a form of music.

Cage's collaborator, Merce Cunningham, likewise broke with theme and variation in dance, similar to the way Cage renounced theme and melody in music. In their collaborations, Cage and Cunningham produced their music and dance sequences separately, working within an agreed-upon time and structure, and thus were among the first to exhibit a dissociation of music and dance and the effects of an indeterminate chance juxtaposition. Just as Cage absorbed a wealth of sounds in his music, Cunningham absorbed a large repertoire of movements into his dance collages, including clumsy gestures, stillness, and habitual actions of everyday life previously excluded from dance. Like Cage, Cunningham spurned expressive dance and signification, rejecting the notion that were was an underlying idea or meaning in his work. Cunningham claimed that each of his dances produces a unique atmosphere and invites the spectator to interpret the significance, as he or she likes, just as Marcel Duchamp and Cage insist that the spectator produces the meaning of the artwork (see the discussion in Tomkins, 1965).

Because so many different elements work together in the postmodern text, postmodernists are typically multiperspectival in their sensibility, believing that no single perspective, theory, or aesthetic frame can illuminate the richness and complexity of the world of experience, or the "text." Postmodernists are also acutely self-conscious about their implosive play with formal elements, and they typically foreground the formal, semiotic, or linguistic nature of their art in a way that calls attention to the process of aesthetic creation as fictive, constructive, and artificial in nature. Just as language came to the foreground of theory in ways that saw words as constituting rather than reflecting reality, so in the arts postmodernists abandon realist principles, which allegedly reflect the world as it is without mediation, and emphasize the medium of language or form itself, a technique also employed by modernists like Brecht. Such an approach characterizes the "metafictional" status of postmodern literature as well as the "double coding" of architecture, and both are symptoms of the "linguistic turn" that informs all postmodern forms and practices (see Chapter 6).

As we shall see, some forms of postmodernism play with language, forms, images, and structures, appropriating material and forms from the past, finding aesthetic pleasure in appropriation, quotation, and the play of language, reveling in linguistic and formal invention, puns, parody, and pastiche. Such types of postmodern art are described by Hal Foster as a "postmodernism of reaction" (1983: xii) that is highly historicist, playing with forms of the past and generally affirmative toward the status quo, renouncing the modernist project of critique and opposition. Because of the element of play in this strain of postmodernism, which has its analogue in theoretical discourse, Teresa Ebert (1996) suggests the term "ludic postmodernism,"

which she and Foster distinguish from a "postmodernism of resistance" (Foster, 1983: xii; Ebert, 1996: ix, passim) that questions and deconstructs rather than exploits cultural codes and "explore[s] rather than conceal[s] social and political affiliations" (Foster, 1983: xii).

Ludic postmodernism describes the aesthetic advocated by Sontag, who affirmed the surface, forms, and erotics of art rather than content, meaning, and interpretation. Such an aesthetic finds its precursor in Nietzsche, who anticipates key aspects of the ludic postmodern turn in art, with his emphasis on joy in appearance and on the aesthetic of form and with his renunciation of a depth hermeneutic, writing: "Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously, at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance. Those Greeks were superficial-out of profundity" (1974: 38 and 1954: 683).

Consequently, we accept Foster's (1983) and Ebert's (1996) distinction between a ludic postmodernism that indulges in aesthetic play for its own sake while distancing itself from a politically troubled world, or even lending tacit or explicit support of the status quo, contrasted to a "postmodernism of resistance" that acknowledges its self-referential status but also seeks to engage political issues and to change the existing society.7 The less-oppositional postmodernism often plays with contemporary culture, exulting in the profusion of existing culture and society while rejecting modernist tenets and returning to tradition and such things as ornamentation, decoration, and pastiche of past cultural forms. Such a ludic postmodernism thus abandons modernist pretensions to novelty, originality, purity, innovation, and the like and seeks pleasure in playing with the pieces of the past rather than in criticizing the present while envisioing at a new future.

Of course, as avant-gardists insisted, challenges to conventional modes of perception in themselves can assume a positive political character, but they can also have depoliticizing effects by limiting themselves to a merely formal level dominated by abstract or ludic functions. Oppositional postmodernists, by contrast, combine artistic and political levels of aesthetic production and employ the formalist inventions of postmodern culture toward political ends, keeping a critical distance and thereby breaking out of the self-referential funhouse of language characteristic of many forms of both high modernism and postmodernism-an argument that we will illustrate later in this chapter through discussion of some oppositional postmodern political artists.

On the other hand, such categorical distinctions between modes of postmodernism are only ideal types, and much postmodern culture partakes of both poles, often ambiguously. Thus it is frequently undecidable whether specific forms of postmodern culture are primarily oppositional or conservative, promoting desires for change or a pleasure in the existing order, and are thus "resistant" or "complicit." Indeed, such dichotomies are destabilized by audience reception in which differing audiences receive, use, and deploy various works in highly contradictory and unpredictable ways according to their own gender, class, race, ideological, and other "subject positions." Artworks coded as critical and oppositional may well have conservative effects, while reactionary works can be read against the grain and decoded to generate socially critical insights. Consequently, the categories one uses must be deployed in specific situations and appropriate qualifications made with attention paid to both encoding and aesthetic practice and form, as well as audience decoding and use of the artifact.

The Postmodern Moment in Architecture

Each generation writes its biography in the buildings it creates.
-Lewis Mumford

Architecture is the *public art.*
-Charles Jencks

Postmodernism began appearing in a variety of artistic fields in the 1960s and 1970s, although it was most dramatically visible in the field of architecture, where it was adopted to describe the new forms of contemporary buildings, which returned to ornamentation, quotation of tradition, and the resurrection of past styles that a more purist modernist architecture had rejected. The rapid dissemination of postmodern discourse and forms in architecture helped to promote it in other aesthetic fields, thus providing concrete substance to the postmodern turn. Indeed, people live in houses, neighborhoods, and social environments, and so architecture is nothing less than the mode of construction of everyday life. Thus, shifts in how architecture is conceived and constructed inevitably produce mutations in the very structure and texture of lived experience and the social environment.

The postmodern turn in architecture involves a renunciation of modernist conceptions of stylistic purity, aesthetic elitism, rationalism, and universally based humanist and utopian political programs to beget a new humankind through architectural design. Against these principles, postmodernists like Robert Venturi, Philip Johnson, Christopher Jencks, Kenneth Frampton, and Michael Graves renounced the abstract and ahistorical formalism of the International Style, embraced an eclectic mixture of historical styles, pursued an approach that respects both popular and professional tastes, and abandoned the utopian aspirations of modernism in favor of more "modest" goals. Let us, accordingly, engage the modern turn in architecture, examine the postmodern critique, and then explore the forms and theories of postmodern architecture. We shall argue that the turn from modern to postmodern architecture involves a transition from the regime of monopoly capital to a more aestheticized and transnational form of postmodern capital.

The Trajectories of Modern Architecture

In lieu of cathedrals the machine for living in.
-Oskar Schlemmer

The bourgeoisie . . . creates a world after its own image.
-Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

It is often argued that whereas the lines between the modern and the postmodern are hard to draw in literature, they are particularly clear in architecture. But in fact, the easy dichotomization between modern and postmodern architecture is arrived at only by equating modern architecture with the glass boxes of the International Style, which is just one version of architectural modernism, albeit one that dominated from the 1920s through the 1950s. It is typically ignored,

however, that there were a profusion of modern styles, that there was considerable conflict among them, and that many architects of the International Style themselves developed different styles, some similar to the postmodern forms commonly opposed to it.

The architectural styles of the modern era include Renaissance (15th century), mannerism (16th), baroque (17th), rococo and neo-classicism (18th), expressionism (19th and 20th), art nouveau (19th and 20th), American industrial style, as in the skyscrapers of Louis Sullivan, and the organic regionalism of Frank Lloyd Wright. Architectural "modernism," however, is said in many standard postmodern accounts to begin with the genesis of the International Style, which appeared in the 1920s, was systematized by the early 1930s, and became dominant throughout the world by the 1950s.8 Our argument in this chapter, however, is that the "modern architecture" constructed by the postmodern polemic is a reductive construct that collapses a great variety of modernist styles into a unitary category of the International Style, thus obscuring important differences. The postmodern turn in architecture is often celebrated and legitimated by a spurious conception of modern architecture that covers over its complexity, diversity, and richness, identifying it tout court with the high modernism of the International Style. We will argue for an architecture that draws upon both modern and postmodern styles to develop a mode that serves human needs and that produces a more livable and sustainable environment.

The International Style is largely the product of the Bauhaus School founded in Germany in 1919 when Walter Gropius was appointed director of two schools of Arts and Crafts in Saxe-Weimar which he amalgamated, changing the school's name to "Bauhaus," that is, "house of building." The school attracted top teachers and students, but its progressive ideals and plans scandalized the conservative citizens of Weimar, and so the school moved in 1925 to Dessau, Germany, where Gropius designed the edifice that became a prototype for the new style and developed the philosophy that would dominate architecture for the next several decades (Benevolo, 1977: 414ff.).

The International Style came to the United States when Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and others emmigrated in the 1930s in order to escape from fascism. They were immediately embraced in the United States as architectural icons. Gropius was appointed head of the Harvard department of architecture in 1937 and Mies was designated director of architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1938, designing nearly all of the buildings on the new campus. Their students and followers became active in the major architectural firms in the United States, and their style of highly rationalized and functionalist buildings became the norm throughout the world.

The International Style is equated with "architectural modernism" because, like other modernist movements in the arts, it sought to make a clean sweep of the past, to be modern, to use new styles, materials, and technologies, and to advance new ideas. In the words of Gropius: "A breach has been made with the past, which allows us to envisage a new aspect of architecture corresponding to the technical civilization of the age in which we live; the morphology of dead styles has been destroyed; and we are returning to honesty of thought and feeling" (1965: 19). The reference to "honesty" is a critical attack on art nouveau, the prevailing aesthetic style that assaulted 19th-century eclecticism, neoclassicism above all, seeking a new "honesty" through imitation of natural forms such as trees and clouds, which it claimed to be the most valid sources of inspiration. Against art nouveau, the International Style asserted a superior "honesty" in the

imitation of the geometric forms of the modern machine age and sought to replace nature with man-made environments, or at least to integrate nature into a massive new technoscape of dazzling proportions.

Although it presented itself as a break from the past, modernist architecture (hereafter, simply "modern architecture") was dependent upon the 19th-century technological innovations whose iron, steel, glass, and reinforced concrete allowed for innovations in building technique. Modern architecture, moreover, was heavily influenced by the values of dynamism and progress that dominated the 19th century, such as were celebrated in the Crystal Palace science and technology exhibit that opened in London in 1851. Attacking the philosophy of art for art's sake, modern architecture also embraced the utopian and humanist values of the Enlightenment by intending their architecture to contribute to the rationalization of the environment and the liberation of human beings from tradition. The Enlightenment emphasis on universal values was enthusiastically adopted by Bauhaus architects in their quest to construct a global, uniform architectural language that expressed rational values appropriate for the new "universal man."

The French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier also expressed the utopian ambitions of modern architecture in his cry of "architecture or revolution," believing that architecture-using new materials, new structural methods, and universal principles of design that were also sensitive to local conditions-could solve the major problems of contemporary urban life, such as housing, traffic, and the organization of cities, in ways that were both efficient and beautiful. Le Corbusier and the new breed of engineer-architects believed that architecture had to be reconceived to realize the new technological possibilities and to respond to the problems of the time.

Twentieth-century aesthetic movements also influenced modern architecture. Much of the architectural style of Bauhaus, as well as the work of Le Corbusier, is influenced by cubism, which featured abstract, geometric shapes. Like futurism, which concocted powerful images of the new machine age in excited motion, cubism expressed the dynamic aspects of the modern age through a multiperspectival method of representing various dimensions of objects simultaneously. Early in his career, Le Corbusier produced numerous paintings in the cubist style of Picasso and Georges Braque. He applauded the breakthrough of such painters in creating new forms that he believed had something to teach architecture: "Today painting has outsped the other arts. It is the first to have become attuned with our [industrial] epoch" (quoted in Blake, 1996: 23). Indeed, the cubist influence is vividly evident in the various homes that Le Corbusier designed in the 1920s and is consummately realized in his Villa Savoye (in Poissy, France, 1931), a rectangular boxlike house raised off the ground by concrete stilts, and his Weekend House (1935), comprised of diverse geometrical forms that Le Corbusier described as a form of painting in space.

In both his paintings and architecture, Le Corbusier followed the lead of cubism in the spatial arrangement of abstract geometric forms such as cylinders, cubes, and cones that signified nothing but their own formal qualities. Yet Le Corbusier felt that cubism had not completed the formal revolution it began. As Peter Blake put it: "Cubism had cleared the air by removing the most distracting elements of realism from painting, but it had . . . degenerated into a sort of playful, decorative movement" (1996: 28). In response, Le Corbusier and fellow painter Amédée Ozenfant produced a manifesto calling for a return to the geometric foundations of cubism and

created a movement within the cubist tradition that they baptized "purism."

In October 1920, Le Corbusier and others published L'Esprit nouveau, a magazine dedicated to organizing all the arts around "l'esthétique de la vie moderne." In 1923, Le Corbusier-hitherto known by his birth name of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret-decided to focus on the architectural realization of his vision and resurrected himself as Le Corbusier, "the architect," and proceeded to revolutionize the discipline. Both Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus were also influenced by the avant-garde movement, which wanted to use art to transform everyday life, to devise an entire new modern world. Le Corbusier designed his first plan for an ideal city, une ville contemporaine, in 1922, and in 1925 he presented a plan to remake Paris, the Plan Voisin. He produced a housing complex at Pessac in 1925, and some decades later he designed a cityscape in Chandigarh, India (1952-1956).

The avant-garde aesthetic influences overlap with a crucial philosophical influence on Bauhaus and the International Style, namely, the utilitarian and functionalist ethos of capitalism and the modern machine age that it absorbed. Capitalist values of standardization and mechanization were embraced as liberating, with the result that architectural production became a factory assembly-line process: "We are approaching a state of technical proficiency when it will become possible to rationalize buildings and mass-produce them in factories by resolving their structure into a number of component parts" (Gropius, 1965: 39). Gropius calls for the transformation of architecture, once a trade subject to the seasons, the site, and "the arbitrary reproduction of historical styles," into "an organized industry" that prefabricates identical materials and standardized parts. This "will have the same sort of coordinating and sobering effect on the aspect of our towns as uniformity of type in modern attire has on social life . . . every house and block of flats will bear the unmistakable impress of our age" (40).

Such mass manufacture, Gropius insists, will allow sufficient range for architectural variety and free expression. Gropius rigorously trained a legion of students in the fundamentals of modern technique and design, encouraging them to take their place within the machine age, but the homogeneity of the International Style suggested that the pupils of Bauhaus did little but imitate their masters. Indeed, industrializing processes were so pervasive, so profound, that modern artists could not possibly ignore them. Every architect in particular felt compelled to respond to the machine age; this influenced how they built, what they built, and the philosophies informing their visions of architecture. They were intoxicated with the possibilities of the new technologies and in awe of the problems besetting the design of new urban environments.

Despite these technological, philosophical, and aesthetic continuities with the past, modernist architects generally sought to break from the history of architectural form, specifically the ornamental style that prevailed in Europe. They perceived such forms as the Gothic to be aesthetically unpleasing and bound up with authoritarian domination and social hierarchy, and they saw art nouveau as a slavish imitation of nature in contrast to the new industrial designs. For the Bauhaus theorists, massive churches, imposing government buildings, and public monuments projected power and authority, constructing testimonials of might for reactionary forces. Gothic cathedrals in this vision expressed the power and majesty of the church, and not just its aspiration for the divine. These insights are supplemented by Foucault (1965, 1977) who shows how mental institutions, hospitals, schools, and prisons helped construct the social space of

modernity, a categorizing, separating, and incarcerating space that confines individuals who refuse to conform to existing norms and practices. This process produced a normalization of subjects through socially constructed definitions of "normal" and the "abnormal," in which individuals are classified and situated according to how they fit into the modern order. On this perspective, the construction of carceral and disciplinary space is a key aspect of the development and trajectories of modern societies.

For modernist architects, the reconstruction of space and the construction of a new type of architecture thus constituted an important part of a revolution against the past. For these modernists, architecture should free itself not only from tradition but also from the natural environment, in order to create its own utopian worlds of glass, steel, and concrete. Rather than integrating architecture with nature, a principle Frank Lloyd Wright adopted from art nouveau, many modernists argued that architecture should stand in bold contrast to the natural world. Modern architects sought a new, austere style that abandoned symbolism, ornamentation, and decoration in favor of unity, simplicity, and purity of form, paring down line and space to their bare essentials. In the words of Mies, "Less is more," and Adolph Loos even denounced decoration as "a crime."

Whereas historicist values and a plurality of historical styles and unique architectural personalities, such as Antonio Gaudi, flourished before the Bauhaus and would be recaptured afterwards in the movements leading toward postmodernism, the architects of the International Style intended to reduce this eclecticism and plurality to a single new style that they sought to make dominant throughout the world. The prototype for the new International Style was Gropius's design for the Bauhaus compound built in Dessau, Germany, in 1925-1926. The site is made up of a series of rectangular buildings joined together at perpendicular angles. In typical International Style, the design is uniform, geometrically precise, devoid of ornamental detail, and completely standardized, resembling a warehouse or prison yard. This minimalist style was duplicated, with equally uninspiring results, by Mies in his buildings at the Illinois Institute of Technology. In the building boom after World War II, the International Style high-rise skyscrapers came to dominate the urban environment throughout the world (although they are now being pushed out by new postmodern buildings). Buildings such as the tall glass and steel towers of Lake Point Tower, Lake Shore Apartments, the Federal Center, and the IBM Building in Chicago, and the Seagram Building in New York, all designed by Mies, exhibited the triumph of the International Style.

These phallic prisons, embodiments of Max Weber's iron cage, represent the ultramodernist philosophies that informed them. For the postmodernists, highmodernist architecture strives for purity of form and function, generally ignoring principles of communication (semiotics) and beauty. Aesthetic "beauty" is an obsolete principle that is jettisoned by many modern architects in favor of sheer functionality, whereby, in the words of Louis Sullivan, "form follows function." Beauty is superfluous when the emphasis is on utilitarian values, replicating the same bottom-line approach of capitalist society. Architectural modernists fetishized functional values and the technological culture that produced automobiles, highways, and factories. Except for futurism, no other modern art movement has been so conditioned by technological ideology and the modern mechanist worldview as International Style architecture.

But the standard postmodern narrative occludes the variety and diversity of architectural modernism. Certainly, not all architecture from the late 1920s to the 1950s had the look of the International Style. Not all modern architects were strict functionalists, and many sought aesthetic inspiration in machines and abstract shapes. The most striking exceptions to the International Style were the inventive modernist constructions of Le Corbusier and the poetic works of Frank Lloyd Wright, most notably the magnificent houses he designed throughout the United States, such as the Kaufmann House, Falling Water (Bear Run, Pennsylvania, 1936-1937), or Taliesin West (Phoenix, Arizona, 1938), each of which revel in the play of diverse forms and levels coherently linked. Wright, in fact, detested the International Style, Gropius's work in particular, for he witnessed how it came to dominate architecture in the United States and elsewhere, pushing out a diversity of more interesting styles, such as his own Japanese-inspired approach.

Other high modernist architects, most notably Le Corbusier, rejected the straitjacket of the glass box to produce highly interesting and innovative buildings. Le Corbusier's Church of Ronchamp (near Belfort, France, 1950-1953), his monumental series of governmental buildings at Chandigarh, India (1952-1956), and his Exhibition Hall (Zurich, 1967), show bold departures from the International Style. Le Corbusier's famous statement that the house is a "machine à habiter," that is, "a machine for living in" is thus misleading and masks his fundamental concern with beauty and the transcendental qualities of abstract forms. "I compose with light," Le Corbusier said, as he meticulously broke up solid planes, on both exterior and interior surfaces, so as to absorb and reflect light and create mood. Le Corbusier speaks of his architecture as "poetry and lyricism brought forth by technics," thereby abolishing any rigid opposition between art and technology. He insisted that architecture "goes beyond utilitarian needs" such that the architect's passion can invent "drama out of stone" (quoted in Blake, 1996: 31)-as is vividly clear in his best works. Moreover, Le Corbusier explored tensions, ambiguities, and paradoxes that subvert oppositions such as those between machine and biology, between mathematical measure and lyricism, between engineering and aesthetics. He willfully combined mechanistic and biological metaphors; thus, his "machine à habiter," whether a house or a city, was composed of various "organs," and so he transcended merely mechanistic or formalist-functionalist conceptions.

Yet with the appointments of Gropius and Mies to major architectural chairs, the International Style literally became institutionalized and dominated the global scene, entrenching itself in Europe and the United States as a rigid orthodoxy that few architects dared to challenge if they wanted to work. Most, however, such as the Yale architects, produced endless variations of a highly limited form, seemingly unable to comprehend the possibility of color, locality, or irregular forms. An important incentive to remain within the orthodoxy was that International Style buildings, or so it was thought, were the most cost effective to produce. Those architects who did venture outside of the ideological limits and stylistic parameters of the glass box were condemned, ridiculed, and ostracized, and their designs were often prevented from being realized.

In fact, the modernist emphasis on change, innovation, and artistic autonomy was betrayed with the rigidification and repetition of the International Style. But modern architecture was not just formalist; it had a political content and philosophical vision that sought the rational

transformation of human beings in conjunction with egalitarian values. The humanist and utopian values of modern architecture were most evident in its attempt to build a suitable form of mass housing for workers, the middle class, and low-income families. Yet these values were grossly belied when the housing projects became prisons befouled by drugs, crime, and graffiti. Apparently, the architects of these compounds presumed that the units were best designed as barren, small, and cramped. Many featured ceilings not to exceed eight feet in height, thin walls devoid of molding, casing, or baseboards, and narrow hallways. In contrast to other contemporary designs organized around patterned variety, such as those by Bruno Taut and Ernst May in Germany, Bauhaus-influenced designs in the United States were homogenized and oppressive.

Indeed, in Europe many more successful examples of workers' housing and planned urban environments were carried out by socialist governments. Ironically, Bauhaus architecture was originally conceived of as a socialist architecture, designed to meet the needs of working people. But the International Style became largely a corporate architecture, providing monuments for capitalism and housing units appropriate for its underclass. The utopian and egalitarian aspirations of earlier modern architecture were thus subverted in the capitalist appropriation of modern architecture to aggrandize capitalist corporations and to produce public housing designed more for social control and ghettoization than for creating new forms of democratic life.

Publisher Joseph Pulitzer erected the first major skyscraper in 1890 with his World Building in Lower Manhattan, which arose as the largest building in the world. It was soon surpassed by the Metropolitan Life Tower of 1909 (700 feet), the Woolworth Building of 1913 (792 feet), the Chrysler Building of 1930 (1,046 feet), and in the early 1930s the Empire State Building (1,250 feet) (Paul Goldberger, The New York Times, August 4, 1996: H30). Thus, whereas urban skyscrapers like the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building were appropriate monuments to an earlier era of competitive capitalism, the glass and steel monoliths of the International Style are fitting emblems of a later stage of monopoly and state capitalism. The earlier urban skyscrapers designed by Louis Sullivan in Chicago and the first great high-rise buildings in New York expressed the architectural visions of their creators, with each having a distinctive style and look. Moreover, the spectacle of the earlier skyscrapers, with each striving to surpass previous heights, represented the ethos of a highly competitive and individualist capitalism. The skyscrapers paid homage to the entrepreneurs who dominated the early stage of market capitalism, generating the great economic fortunes and empires. Temples of the heroic stage of capitalism, icons of the market that made possible the amassing of great fortunes, these impressive and individualized edifices produced hieroglyphics of a competitive capitalism in which "Manhattan's great buildings were always happy enough to affront each other in a competitive verticality, the result of which is an architectural panorama in the image of the capitalist system: a pyramidal jungle, all the buildings attacking each other" (Baudrillard, 1983a: 135).9

High modernism in architecture fit perfectly with corporate capitalism and provided a useful ideology for its legitimation. The demand to restructure the environment, to destroy all obstacles in the path of modernization, was a perfect ideology for a relentless capitalist development. Small wonder that the movers and shakers of corporate capitalism were taken with the International Style. In a way, the avant-garde project of destroying tradition unwittingly abetted

the agenda of a modernizing capital which itself was negating tradition and obliterating the past and thrived on the creation of perpetually new products and needs. The modernist project of abstraction in some ways furthered the capitalist project of abstracting from concrete human needs, tradition, and culture to promote its obliteration of traditional values and personality and creation of new subjectivities in the transition to consumer capitalism.

Moreover, as Tafuri argues (1976), the formalist project of the avant-garde and the International Style was parallel to Nietzsche's and Weber's demystification of the world, producing an ideology that could attack any obstacle in the way of capitalist expansion. Avant-garde formalism, which carried out an eradication of substance, individuality, and subjectivity, was parallel to the capitalist project of reducing the world to the pure stuff of domination (i.e., the worker as pure automaton, the citizen as object of manipulation). The avant-garde thus covertly aided the process of capitalist domination and massification in the production of a new regime of mass production, consumption, and culture no matter how much it attacked bourgeois culture and society. Indeed, the later postmodern turn to individual feeling, to aestheticization, to pleasure and indulgence, and difference and fragmentation, advances the contemporary capitalist agenda of generating a more aestheticized and eroticized world that will promote more individualized consumption, more segmented markets, with new choices, pleasures, and services, thus, once again, serving the agenda of capital that requires a new ideology convincingly served up by postmodernism.

The more restrained functionalism of the International Style, by contrast, is the proper representation of a state monopoly capitalism in which individuals submit to corporate control and their uniformity and homogeneity corresponds to the staid, ascetic, conformist, and conservative world of corporate capitalism that was dominant in the 1950s, with its organization men and women, its mass consumption, and its mass culture.10 The International Style was thus appropriate to a homogenizing regime of capital that wanted to produce mass desires, tastes, and behavior. But the glass and steel high-rises of corporate capital can also be seen as monuments to their global power, with the same corporate style appearing everywhere, signifying the triumph of the giant corporations and their ability to remake the world in their own image.

The spectacle of high modernity was thus the U.S. corporation, the demiurge and progenitor of a new stage of global capitalism. The high-rise monoliths of the International Style were the temples of the megacorporation, the embodiment of the corporate vision, of the triumph and hegemony of global monopoly capital. Its imperatives meshed with those of modern architecture and its project to beget a new world that is clean, functional, efficient, and universal. But the modern city combined efficient and well-organized centers with regions of disorder, ugliness, violence, and chaos. The ideological abandonment of the modern project thus represents realist insight into the failures of the modernist-capitalist ambitions for a well-organized and functional corporate world and signals the transformation from modern to postmodern architecture, from the hegemony of the International Style to the eclecticism and pluralism of postmodern populism.

The shift from modern to postmodern architecture is thus not merely a mutation from one architectural style to another; it is, rather, a sign of a shift to a new regime of capital, a new social order. The fashionable postmodern architecture meets the needs of a transnational and

global capital that valorizes difference, multiplicity, eclecticism, populism, and intensified consumerism. Thus, postmodern architecture, shopping malls, and spectacle became the promoters and palaces of a new stage of technocapitalism, the latest stage of capital, celebrating the postmodern image and consumer culture. Perhaps the emergent cyberspace of the Internet will be a new privileged domain of the infotainment society on the horizon. Following this logic, the spectacles of postmodern architecture are more appropriate to the contemporary forms of a highly aestheticized global consumer capitalism, as we shall see in the next sections.

New Directions

The machine can no more adequately symbolize our culture than can a Greek temple or a Renaissance palace. . . . To persist in the religious cult of the machine, at this late day and date, is to betray an inability to interpret the challenges and dangers of our age.
-Lewis Mumford

I like elements which are hybrid rather than "pure," compromising rather than "clean." I prefer "both-and" to "either-or."
-Robert Venturi

The monotonous cityscape of the International Style was indifferent to the needs of people, and though the initial modern housing projects sought to be responsive to these needs, they in fact were often oppressive. Thus, a growing chorus of dissent began to attack the International Style, and new architectural directions have been explored from the 1950s to the present. Charles Jencks, somewhat facetiously, claimed that modern architecture died in St. Louis, Missouri, on July 15, 1972, at exactly 3:32 p.m. (1977: 9)-for this is the place and time that the infamous Pruitt-Igoe housing project, a symbol of misguided modern visions, was dynamited, after millions of dollars had been wasted in futile efforts to renovate what the inhabitants vandalized and vilified. This failure, Jencks declares, revealed the bankruptcy of the utopian designs of modern architecture and the need to develop new postmodern concepts.

Critiques of architectural functionalism had already begun to surface in the 1950s. In a 1955 annual of the Yale Department of Architecture, Philip Johnson, a devotee of Mies and codesigner of the Seagram Building, stated: "Merely that a building works is not sufficient. You expect that it works. . . . Structure is a very dangerous thing to cling to. You can be led to believe that clear structure clearly expressed will end up being architecture by itself. You say I don't have to design anymore" (quoted in Klotz, 1988: 41). But during the 1950s and 1960s, several significant polemics against the International Style appeared, which paved the way for the postmodern turn in architecture in the writings of Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs's The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961), and Robert Venturi's Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (1966).

By the early 1950s, Lewis Mumford had become one of the leading social and architectural critics in the United States. Growing up in Manhattan, Mumford had extensive experience with both the stimulating and stifling aspects of modern urban life, and his work represents a growing dissatisfaction of many people with machine values and emphases on growth and centralization. In essays such as "The Case Against 'Modern Architecture,'" Mumford assailed the mechanistic

paradigm that informed the work of Le Corbusier, Mies, Gropius, and others. He condemned their work as "the apotheosis of the compulsive, bureaucratic spirit" (in Miller, 1986: 78), as monuments to the modern fetish of size and growth. He saw that modern architecture had largely subordinated human beings to the circulation of commodities and traffic, ignoring their complex social, cultural, and psychological needs. He proclaimed that the vital function of both architecture and urban design was to realize these needs, to promote human interaction, stimulate creativity, and advance freedom and spontaneity. Decrying the reduction of the human to the mechanical, Mumford called for a new architecture that united art and technics, that promoted interaction among human beings, and that integrated culture and nature in an organic whole. He advocated a new architectural style that combined modern emphases on function with premodern emphases on decoration, symbolism, and expressive functions. In his emphasis on redesigning cities on a human scale organized around regional environments, he recaptured premodern emphases on decentralization and anticipated postmodern themes of a "critical regionalism" (Frampton, 1983) sensitive to locality, history, and tradition.

Jane Jacobs attacked modern urban planning and architecture that did not take into account the needs of the people and their actual communities. She argued that in the sprawl and disorder of the modern city, citizens had created a form of spontaneous order through communal interaction. Affirming the vibrancy and diversity of the urban neighborhood, Jacobs celebrated existing communities as sources of variety, liveliness, and cultural diversity that were being destroyed in favor of modernist visions of uniform order, structure, and homogeneity. By contrast, Jacobs valorized the intense variety and vitality of the city over what she saw as the sterile order projected by advocates of modern architecture. She believed that the self-organization of people in neighborhoods generated a form of ordered complexity that preserved life and community, writing: "There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served" (1961: xx). Thus, she anticipated the postmodern celebration of diversity, otherness, and heterogeneity that would later be articulated in both postmodern theory and architecture.

Mumford acknowledged the value of Jacobs's work and applauded her emphasis on the importance of family, neighborhood, and social diversity, but he argued that she had a limited conception of the modern city and was too uncritical of the worst features of urban life. Mumford claimed that Jacobs's vision of the ideal city life was merely that of a crime-free neighborhood, a goal attained through multiplying social and economic activity and people with watchful eyes. Mumford believed, however, that Jacobs's "cure" may be worse than the disease, leading her to affirm the values of the "megalopolis." With Jacobs upholding safety and activity above all other goals, Mumford argued that she failed to criticize urban crowding, overpopulation, excessive noise, the frantic pace of life, giganitsm in design, and excessive pollution. "Her simple formula [for eliminating crime] does not suggest that her eyes have ever been hurt by ugliness, sordor, confusion, or her ears offended by the roar of trucks smashing through a once quiet residential neighborhood, or her nose assaulted by the chronic odors of ill-ventilated, unsunned housing at the slum standards of congestion that alone meet her standards for residential density" (in Miller, 1986: 194).

Mumford agreed with Jacobs's affirmation of complexity and diversity, but thought she

confused these with overcrowding. Overall, Jacobs ignored "the increasing pathology of the whole mode of life in the great metropolis, a pathology that is directly proportionate to its overgrowth, its purposeless materialism, its congestion, and its insensate disorder-the very conditions she upholds as marks of urban vitality" (in Miller, 1986: 192). Indeed, it could be argued that Jacobs was perceptive in her affirmative analyses of small, intimate urban areas like Greenwich Village, but that she lacked an adequate critical vision that sees the need for a radical reconstruction of urban life in its totality. Her work suffers from a contradiction between her love of the intimacy of neighborhood life and her embrace of the general structure of the megalopolis.

It is, however, Robert Venturi who is most centrally associated with the postmodern turn in architecture. Venturi (1966) established a series of principles in opposition to modernism, such as complexity and hybridity versus modernism's simplicity and purity. The very title of Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, signifies opposition to Bauhaus minimalism, but the book was particularly influential because he coded his heterodox departures in language that paid homage to the masters, in the form of a "gentle" manifesto. Venturi also championed "the difficult unity of inclusion" over modernism's "easy unity of exclusion" (1966: 16). Thus, whereas high modernism systematically excluded ornamentation, decoration, and historical allusion, Venturi called for the inclusion of these elements, promoting a pluralist and eclectic aesthetic of inclusion that would embrace different styles, codings, and decorative elements banished by high modernism.

But it was his book Learning from Las Vegas (1972, coauthored with Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour), which signaled an explicit postmodern turn in architecture. Venturi and his colleagues aggressively celebrated the most distinctive forms of American commercial architecture, ranging from the Las Vegas Strip to billboards, neon, A&P parking lots, and suburbs. They distinguished between the "well-decorated shed," their metaphor for buildings suitably decorated and rich in signification, and the "duck," a metaphor for a building that merely signified itself, such as a doughnut shop in the shape of a doughnut or a boot shop in the shape of a boot, and they saw both as appropriate modes of architectural signification. Thus, in effect, Venturi and his colleagues provided an affirmative legitimation of dominant forms of U.S. architecture, which they defended as "all right" (i.e., "billboards are all right," "Main Street is almost all right," and ducks, decorated sheds, and other kinds of commercial U.S. architecture are all right too; the only thing that is not all right seems to be high modernism, the International Style).

Venturi and his associates saw architecture as a mode of communication and called for a rich architecture of allusion, comment, and ornamentation. Following this model, postmodern architecture returned to tradition, mixing traditional models, embellishment, and design with modern forms. For Klotz (1988), the primary characteristic of postmodern architecture is that meaning becomes as important as function, that buildings should "fiction" as well as function. Jencks (1977) also contributed to an understanding of how semiotic principles work in architecture and showed that postmodern architecture is part of the same linguistic turn that has influenced philosophy and social theory. His linguistic focus was influenced by the evolution in the 1960s and 1970s of structuralism and poststructuralism, each of which is informed by semiotic principles. But while academics and theoretical architects were debating problems with the International Style and searching for new vocabularies, many architects by the 1950s had

already begun creating new styles that marked a clear departure from Bauhaus principles. As the International Style was enjoying a resurgence (under the command of large architectural firms such as Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill), dissident architects such as Eero Saarinen, Philip Johnson, Marcel Breuer, Louis Kahn, Venturi, and numerous others were returning to past styles for influence, recapturing prior emphases on ornament, and creating fascinating new shapes that exploded the limitations of the glass box.

That something new was afoot was clearly evident, for example, in Saarinen's airport terminals, beginning with the TWA Terminal at John F. Kennedy Airport (New York, 1956-1962). Saarinen created a curved structure that expressed the dynamism of air travel, with reinforced concrete that resembles a bird in flight. His Dulles International Airport Terminal (Chantilly, Virginia, 1962-1964) is a monumental curved roof, accented by a futuristic air tower composed of a series of rings anchored on a concrete base and topped by a round ball. Breuer's St. John's Abbey and University (Collegeville, Minnesota, 1961) features a huge, oblong auditorium with a honeycomb façade that is entered through diagonally set steps above which towers a concrete slab set into four arched supports that holds a belfry and a cross in a cubist-like depiction of an animal. Jorn Utzon's famous Opera House in Sydney (1956-1973) is an expressionistic assemblage of shell vaults set at odd angles.

By the time that John Portman's hotels had spread from Chicago to Los Angeles to Atlanta, beginning in the early 1970s, the postmodern style was well underway. Even when postmodern architects did build a modernist skyscraper, such as Kevin Roche's and John Dinkeloo's U.N. Plaza Hotel (New York, 1979), the phallic monotony was relieved with irregular shapes. That the new postmodern aesthetic was not welcomed by modernists who cut their teeth on the glass box, just as the modernism of Le Corbusier and others was often met with violent opposition and criticism, is evident by the reception of Michael Graves's Portland building (Portland, Oregon, 1982), which in the design competition was rejected as "a dog of a building," a "turkey," a "juke-box," and an "oversized, beribboned Christmas package" that should be set up in Las Vegas rather than Portland (quoted in Jencks, 1977: 7). Yet a look at any city's skyline today, such as Austin, Chicago, or Tokyo, shows an odd mixture of the new postmodern, neon-lit irregular shapes and the glass boxes of the International Style (both frequently surrounded by the ancient railroad tracks and run-down warehouse districts of 19th-century industrialism). Our contemporary cities, indeed, are aleatory, postmodern pastiches of different historical styles.

Postmodern Historicism, Eclecticism, and Pluralism

I try to pick up what I like throughout history.
-Philip Johnson

Postmodern architecture was a specific reaction to the aesthetic and philosophical assumptions of the International Style rather than to the wealth of architectural forms from the 15th century on or even to the various styles present in the 20th century-ranging from expressionism to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright-that were not associated with the Bauhaus School. In effect, postmodernism seeks a return to the historicism and eclecticism that prevailed in modern architecture before the stranglehold of the International Style. In direct opposition to the Bauhaus break with history to construct a fundamentally new aesthetic, postmodern architecture returns to

the past to combine and play with different styles. Whereas modern architecture rejects history, postmodern architecture mines it for its rich symbolic, allegorical, and stylistic sources. The modern itself had become but a piece in the postmodern pastiche, as is evident in Philip Johnson's AT&T building (New York, 1980-1983), which rounds off a rectangular skyscraper with a Chippendale design.

The eclecticism of postmodern architecture was greatly enabled by the development of communications technologies that facilitated the rapid dissemination of ideas across the globe, allowing postmodern concepts and designs to quickly spread to places like India and Japan. Moreover, computers made possible mass production of "a variety of styles and almost personalized products" (Jencks, 1977: 5). Indeed, one could argue that modern and postmodern styles in architecture are each linked to specific technologies, one pertaining to industrial culture governed by the machine and the other to an emergent postindustrial culture governed by electronic mass media and the computer. They also correspond to different stages of urban culture, with high modernist architecture being appropriate to the well-planned, functional, homogenized world of state and monopoly capitalism while the more diverse, aestheticized, and multicultural "soft cities" of the contemporary era are appropriate to the universe of a global technocapitalism.13

The postmodern architectural spectacle is thus that of a global, postindustrial culture of consumerism, media culture, and the aestheticization of everyday life. The implosion of art into advertising, packaging, and design is preeminently visible in the highly aestheticized postmodern buildings that incorporate often gaudy and excessive historical allusions and neon ornamentation and coloring. Postmodern architecture thus breaks with the quest for purity and reintroduces symbolism, metaphor, color, and past historical styles. A new emphasis arises on decoration and the scenographic dimensions of architecture as opposed to abstract, compositional concerns, as tactile and surface properties are highlighted over abstract structural relations. Mies's claim that "less is more" is met with Venturi's rebuttal that "less is a bore."

The eclecticism of postmodern architecture entails a break with modern emphases on continuity of style in favor of willful discontinuity. Postmodern architecture juxtaposes different styles in discontinuous, often jarring ways. The clash between architectural styles in many postmodern buildings helps to foreground another key concern of postmodern style, the ambiguity of space. Postmodern buildings typically have unclear spatial boundaries, avoiding clear endings, beginnings, and climaxes, thus embracing principles of complexity and contradiction rather than of unity, harmony, and purity of form. This can produce the effect of a postmodern hyperspace that Jameson (1991: 44ff.) finds vertiginous, as well as the sense of clutter and disorder that some critics find characteristic of postmodern architecture.

Where modern architecture typically signifies little beyond its own abstraction and functionality, postmodern architecture seeks rich meanings and allusions; it is a consciously signifying form. As Jencks (1977) notes, modern architecture tried to suppress meaning in favor of an asignifying, formal purism, only to produce inadvertent, often embarrassing semiotics that reek of technocratic values. Jencks and other postmodernists condemn the bad communication of modern architecture. He sees the Chicago Civic Center, for example, a bland skyscraper distinguished only by a rusting Picasso statue in the outer courtyard, as an "inarticulate building"

whose look fails to convey the important political functions that take place inside. Jencks deplores the fact that the buildings on Mies's Illinois Institute of Technology campus suffer from the same uniformity of style that makes the chapel and library indistinguishable from the boiler house. Similarly, Jencks condemns Gordon Bunshaft's Hirshhorn Museum (Washington, D.C., 1974), a pillbox-like structure that connotes "Public stay out!" and his Old Age Home (Amsterdam, 1975), which symbolizes white crosses on top of black coffins.

Such clumsy semiotics are sign crimes for the postmodernists. They much prefer buildings like Le Corbusier's Ronchamp Chapel, which is rich in metaphor and illusion, suggesting at once a floating duck, hands in prayer, a steamship, or a hat. For Jencks, the postmodern architect employs a double coding that seeks to overcome the opposition between elitism and populism. Double coding speaks both to the public and to "a concerned minority, usually architects" (Jencks, 1977: 6). Double-coded semiotics carries a different meaning for the architect and for the public, each signifier intended to be rich in allusions. For Jencks and others, postmodern architecture can appeal to the specialized interests of connoisseurs while breaking with elitism and appealing to a public who wants

beauty, a traditional ambience, and a particular way of life. . . . Modern architecture suffered from elitism. Postmodernism is trying to get over the elitism not by dropping it, but rather by extending [through double coding] the language of architecture in many different ways-into the vernacular, towards tradition and the commercial slang of the street.

Hence, the modern primacy of function gives way to the postmodern focus on semiotics, style, and communication. The emphasis on semiotics is so important for Jencks that the term "postmodern architecture" applies only to those buildings whose designers "are aware of architecture as a language" (1977: 6). For Klotz, "the very fact that we speak again of the meanings of architecture is the most decisive change in the architectural debate since 1945 . . . the new trends in architecture are predominantly marked by attempts to draw attention to other contents besides the functional qualities of a building" (1988: 3). Klotz refers to this postmodern liberation from the pure forms of modernism as the "fictionalization of architecture," and this endeavor to generate multivalent meanings has direct parallels with poststructuralist emphases on signification, ambiguity, open-ended meaning, dissemination, and so on.

The concern for plural meanings also illustrates the postmodern attack on universals. Postmodern architecture repudiates the homogenization of the International Style and its contempt for place and favors the differences of regional styles and local cultures and traditions.

Modern architecture has thus been judged by its natural product: the modern city, the suburbs without quality, the urban landscape devoid of collective values that has become an asphalt jungle and a dormitory; the loss of local character, of the connection with place; the terrible homologation that has made the outskirts of the cities of the whole world similar to one another, and whose inhabitants have a hard time recognizing an identity of their own. (Portoghesi, 1982: 7)

Such a concern for the local is evident in Frampton's manifesto (1983), "Toward a Critical Regionalism" (1983), as well as in Venturi et al.'s Learning from Las Vegas (1972). As in other postmodern fields, pluralism in architecture entails a relativism of values such that "no code is inherently better than any other" (Jencks, 1977: 87-88). Unlike modern architecture, which sought to embody fixed principles and a universal style, but similar to poststructuralism, postmodern architecture "acknowledges the all-important contingent nature of meanings (92),

rooted in particular tastes and conventions. Often, postmodern architecture celebrates schlock, simulations, and "ersatz towns" (94). This is evident in Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia, a public square in New Orleans (1976-1979), now decayed, that simulates an Italian piazza.15 Postmodern architecture also implodes differences between public and private, or inner and outer, as in the Austin, Texas, Omni Hotel, which features rows of rooms that open upon the lobby and combines hotel rooms with offices, and nature with culture, with plants and trees decorated with lights. A similar implosion is found on the campus of the University of California at Santa Cruz, where dorm windows open to public walkways, exemplifying Baudrillard's (1983c) "ecstasy of communication" and "obscenity," where everything is transparent to those inside and outside. Alberta University, in Edmonton, Canada, the city with the world's largest mall, features a shopping mall in the center of the university campus, which combines restaurants and commercial venues with student housing, public spaces for study and conversations, and classrooms, erasing distinctions between learning, living, eating, and shopping.

The implosive function of postmodern architecture stands in bold contrast to the differentiating emphases of modern architects. Le Corbusier's monastery of La Tourette, for example, was divided into separate areas for study and prayer, spaces of solitude and collective life, and his urban designs divided metropolitan areas into different quarters for work, leisure, and government, as well as distinct zones for automobile traffic and pedestrian circulation. On Le Corbusier's vision, the city should be divided according to the "seven V's" (voies, "ways") composed of a regional road, a major urban highway, traffic circulating around residential apartment complexes, a shopping street, two streets providing access to individual dwellings, and one for pedestrian travel to schools, clubs, sport stadiums, and other places.

Postmodern architecture not only displays an awareness of the principles of implosion, simulation, and hyperreality as discussed by Baudrillard, it enacts them through ironic historical referencing to past styles. In its use of quotation, decoration, irony, and humor, postmodern architecture attacks the serious, rationalist, and utopian character of modern architecture. Postmodernists espouse a more "modest" approach to architecture and see modern ambitions as pompous and dangerous. In place of modern political and philosophical concerns, most revel in the innocent play of form. In place of modernist beliefs in "progressivist technology" and social regeneration through architecture, postmodernists accommodate themselves to popular culture and tastes. The "end of grand narratives" that Lyotard defines as central to the postmodern condition resonates in architecture as well as theory. In reaction to this loss of confidence in rationalism, innovation, progress, and monumentalism, postmodern architects abandon grand themes and heroic monuments and instead draw their inspiration from popular culture and common tastes, an attitude most blatantly on display in Venturi et al.'s Learning from Las Vegas.

The postmodern turn also opens up perspectives on the proliferating spaces of simulation, cyberspace, and other new terrains for architecture. Indeed, architecture is now rapidly imploding into simulation, deploying computer models of houses so that customers can enter virtual domains, change rooms and decor from simulation models, and envisage their homes in virtual space. Moreover, a new architecture of cyberspace is emerging that is producing an innovative spatial and cultural domain, an original configuration of space that is also a new mode of living, as more and more people spend increasing amounts of time in virtual communities and cyberspace. New virtual reality devices are on the horizon which will present yet more novel

spaces to structure, organize, and live in, so that the construction of space will take on more and more postmodern, dematerialized forms as we head toward the new millenium.

As in the other aesthetic fields, we find that in architecture one can draw a distinction between ludic and oppositional postmodernism. Both groups celebrate difference and plurality, but to different ends: one to change art, the other to change life. We see Venturi as an example of a ludic postmodernist who indulges in stylistic play and irony for its own sake while holding uncritical attitudes toward consumer and media culture. On the other end, we see Kenneth Frampton (1983) as an example of a critical or engaged postmodernist in his advocacy of a regional architecture that provides a sense of place, interacts dialectically with nature, facilitates public interaction, resists the homogenizing forces of the megalopolis, engages more senses than just the visual, and ultimately seeks to advance a critical perception of reality. Building on these positions, in the next section we suggest ways that space, urban design, and architecture can be reconceived and reconstructed to create more livable and democratic public sites where individuals can create participatory communities and transform their societies.

A Requiem for Postmodern Architecture

Democracy needs something basically better than a box.
-Frank Lloyd Wright

During the 1970s and into the 1980s, postmodernism was the dominant form of architecture. But by the 1990s, for many critics, it had become as stale, boring, and pretentious as modern architecture, and just as irrelevant to human needs (see Blake, 1993). Just as the modernist steel and glass buildings became tedious clichés, so too did various forms of postmodern architecture become repetitive and trite. Hence, while the postmodern turn continues to be a strong force in theory and society, it has become somewhat passé in architecture, having been eclipsed in some quarters by "deconstructionism."

"Deconstructivist architecture" was formally defined and discussed in 1988, with the publication of Philip Johnson's and Mark Wigley's Museum of Modern Art catalogue Deconstructivist Architecture and a special issue of Architecture Design Profile. It is an application to architecture of poststructuralist theoretical principles, specifically as developed by Jacques Derrida, both to criticize architectural design and to concoct literal embodiments of Derrida's concepts. The result is asymmetrical, paradoxical forms of space that play binary oppositions off one another and construct and subvert spatial relations of hierarchy. While leading practitioners like Peter Eisenman uphold deconstructivist architecture as something entirely new, Michael Benedikt (1991a) claims that deconstructive attitudes and practices were already used in modern architecture and design pedagogy. What is new is the importation of a theoretical framework to discuss these principles in a sophisticated way and to exaggerate them in asymmetrical designs.

Benedikt argues that there is an intimate relation between Derrida's thought and architecture, since Derrida's work turns on the use of numerous architectural metaphors such as grooves, inside and outside, margin, center, and boundary. But Benedikt also displays an impatience with the highly theoretical, abstract, and semiotic nature of both postmodern and deconstructivist architectures, which abound in "the amoral delight of irony, pseudo-history, allusion, pyrotechnic

self-reference, and fabulism" (1987: ix). Seeking a return to an "architecture of reality," Benedikt espouses a "High Realism" that conveys a strong sense of reality and allows one to have, to the extent possible, a "direct aesthetic experience" of an objective world that exists before linguistic framing and the contrived meanings of postmodern architecture and the media world (66ff.).16

Frank Gehry, conversely, combines dadaist techniques of using found materials with a form of deconstructionist architecture. His own house (1978) tends to look, in Ross King's description, "as if bombs had hit them" with "broken walls, bits pulled off and strewn around, crumpled bits often in cheap industrial materials, beams and columns seemingly in the wrong places" (1996: 165). Other examples of deconstructive architecture play with the pieces of traditional architecture but arrange them in eccentric ways, as in Eisenman's Wexner Center for the Visual Arts at Ohio State University, which links existing buildings to ones yet to be created, excavating the foundations of an armory once upon the site and with Mercator grids providing the scaffolding to a galleried street. Eisenman describes the structure as a palimpsest, "a place to write, erase, and rewrite," in other words, a deconstructive text à la Derrida (quoted in King, 1996: 164-165).

Although often semiotically sophisticated, much postmodern and deconstructive architecture is ludic in fatuous and offensive ways, replacing the iron cage with a neon cage, just as oppressive and indifferent to human needs as the worst modern architecture. In response to the asignifying, formalist nature of the International Style, postmodern architecture strives for "complexity," but often this is pursued for its own sake, yielding a meaningless chaos of forms, as most evident in Jean Renaudie's Jeanne Hatchette Center (Ivry, France, 1969-1972), where, in Klotz's vivid description, "a riot of prickly triangles and spiky trapezoids is unleashed for the mere purpose of dramatizing the sensationalist claims of originality" (1988: 34). Similarly, in reaction to the overly zealous attempts of certain modern architects to embody rational transformation through universal geometric forms, postmodernists spurned the idea that architecture should have social relevance. Against efforts to advance substantive social and political ideologies, many postmodern architects limit themselves to strictly stylistic and aesthetic concerns.

And yet architecture can only indulge in whimsy or pastiche in a decorative sense, for it must conform to the basic rules of design, function, and form lest it collapse. That is to say, it has a utilitarian dimension that the other arts lack. Moreover, it is a uniquely public art, and if the strict concern for style for its own sake is divorced from any substantive concerns with urban design and politics, the postmodern architect marginalizes his or her role and capitulates to larger political and economic interests. As Diane Ghirardo puts it:

> For nearly every project, the architect arrives last on the scene. Contemporary practice shrinks the role of the architect from that of an active agent in the construction of community and its structures to that of an exterior designer or an interiors specialist. Leasing agents, developers, commercial loan officers, planning and zoning commissions make the important decisions, leaving for the marginated architect the trivial task of selecting finishes and glosses inside and out. The utopian aspirations, social and political commitments, philosophical rigor and lofty self-confidence of the Modern Movement recede even further into the distance. Stylistic Post Modernism's exclusive preoccupation with style can be seen as a pathetic acceptance of the trivialization of the profession. (1984-1985: 190)

Hence, in architecture as in other fields, some forms of postmodernism entail the evacuation of

normative, political, and utopian concerns. Under the hegemonic power of capital, one has to question the validity of the alleged "populism" of much postmodern architecture. If the architect is marginalized, how much more so must be the ordinary citizen, who Jencks claims plays a major role in design through competitions but whose contribution really seems limited, at best, to decoding "populist" signifieds that for most are probably unnoticed in the haste of everyday life.17 Rather than being condemned to marginalization and irrelevance, while uncritically celebrating fashion, design, style, and consumerism, the architect should engage substantive social and political issues and design buildings that meet the needs of people. In a world of homelessness, joblessness, and hunger, the manifestos for today should be those of a pragmatics of human need concerned with producing decent housing and urban environments for all. But though postmodern architecture is clearly an advance over the International Style in its semiotic and stylistic richness, it is often just as indifferent to real human needs, providing more glitter and glitz than genuine enhancement of human life.

We should not move, therefore, from failed modern visions of new cities and housing complexes to a postmodern cynicism that dismisses utopian values as it fetishizes signification. Beginning in the mid-19th century, architects felt compelled to respond to the complex problems of urban housing, seeking to create affordable living units where human beings lived in harmony. Le Corbusier, for example, in 1922 developed plans for a ville contemporaine that would house around three million inhabitants, and throughout his life he proposed plans to reconstruct cities so as to improve the lives of the ordinary citizen. Acutely aware of the realities of the modern age, he rejected earlier visions of small, decentralized colonies and town villages. If "garden cities" are what the architect should build, Le Corbusier argued, these must be constructed vertically to maximize an efficient use of space in overcrowded cities. Hence, he designed large apartment blocks on the outskirts of Marseilles, Nantes-Rezé, Berlin, and elsewhere as models of modern urban life. His Unité d'habitation in Marseilles featured the innovative form of stacked duplex apartments with open terraces. In these complexes, Le Corbusier struggled to balance the need for individual privacy with the need for human community by integrating individual living units into a larger complex that provided services and places to shop.

Although his apartment complexes are far more subtle and sophisticated than the oppressive compounds built in the United States during the 1960s, Le Corbusier is often condemned as the inspiration for later architectural debacles, and his buildings and city designs are frequently criticized as too monotonous, sterile, linear, rigid, and overscaled. Lewis Mumford, for example, charged Le Corbusier with "Baroque insensitiveness to time, change, organic adaptation, functional fitness, ecological complexity" and cited his "sociological naiveté, his economic ignorance, and his political indifference" as major "deficiencies" that "reflected perfectly the financial, bureaucratic, and technological limitations of the present age" (1968: 114). With Mumford, Jane Jacobs argued that Le Corbusier's vision of urban life and architectural designs decisively influenced later models, proving to be "all but irresistible to planners, housers, designers, and to developers, lenders and mayors too" (1961: 23).

In many ways, Le Corbusier has been a scapegoat for the worst aspects of modern architecture, and critics often miss the nuances of his work, such as his attempts to account for regional conditions even when advancing a universal vision of design. Yet Le Corbusier clearly was too uncritical of modern values and was too optimistic about the role architecture could play in

changing social life.18 His visions anticipated what was to come, and the seeds sown in his designs and plans for the "radiant city" unfolded into massive empires of finance towering over congested, polluted, and dangerous streets, monumental realizations of his description of a city as "the grip of man on nature." His binary scheme of "architecture or revolution" evinces a naïveté regarding the colonizing power of capitalism, a failure to grasp how capital forms and deforms architecture, thwarts all rational visions, and produces environments suitable only for the maximization of profit while choking efforts to realize human needs.19 As one critic puts it:

> Viewed in retrospect, Le Corbusier's visionary schemes seem to epitomize that optimistic peak of the modern movement marked by confidence in the splendors of the dawning machine age. As the honeymoon of man and machine persisted, it remained possible to derive a romantic excitement from automobiles, airplanes, and tall buildings. It was possible for architects to imagine that redesigning the city would accord with progress, and the new architectural imagery was accepted by many as a symbol of both technical and social advancement. (Evenson, 1987: 245-246)

Consequently, we are calling for an architecture between the modern and the postmodern, rejecting the excesses of both, building on strengths and overcoming weaknesses. Modern architecture is admirable in its utopian impulses, its emphasis on social relevance, and its drive to build a better world. Some of its best work by Wright, Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Mies is still extremely impressive, but it congealed into a deadening orthodoxy, in the service of corporate capital, that produced boring buildings and unlivable cities. This orthodoxy violated the very spirit of modernism, which extolled creativity, innovation, and a constant drive to "make it new." The emphasis on innovation in postmodern architecture, its historicism, eclecticism, and return to ornamentation, surely represents a positive step forward in comparison to the orthodoxy of the International Style. But postmodern architecture fell prey to ludic excess, to banal eclecticism and bad taste, and itself became repetitive, predictable, and boring, leading some to call for a revival of modernism.

In our current postmodern climate, where the metanarratives of modernity are in shreds and the consequences of large-scale, uniform, and centralized planning are all too evident, the optimism of modern architecture is no longer credible. Postmodernists are rightly skeptical of facile visions of freedom, abstract universals, totalizing schemes of industrial rationalization, authoritarian modes of planning, and the notion of an artistic elite as the guardians of society, but their skepticism often unfolds as a cynicism about human amelioration in any form, retreating into a staid aestheticism that is no less elitist than modernism. Against the trivial pursuits of postmodern architecture, we claim that modern architecture is an unfinished project: We still need adequate public housing; democratic urban planning; innovative models for bringing together large numbers of people (where this is necessary) in homes, apartments, and neighborhoods that are clean and safe, as well as for decentralizing cities into a more human scale; and a harmonious integration of urban and natural environments. It was the historical task of modern architecture to make the first attempts at satisfying these needs, however problematically, but postmodern architecture is on the whole a sterile detour from the urgent problems of housing and urban planning. Of course, the real project is not architectural design but social design, the reconstruction of society from the standpoint of ecology and participatory democracy; the task is not "architecture or revolution" but architecture and revolution.

In particular, a new architecture could combine modern emphases on function and social

relevance with the postmodern focus on style and meaning. At its best, not only is architecture functional and useful for living, working, playing, exercising, and studying-operating well on a technical and design level-but it can also inspire us, comfort us, and make us feel relaxed and at home. Buildings are definitely works of art in their own right, as well as environments for living. These principles did not go unnoticed by the Situationists, who advanced an important critique of the alienating architecture in modern homes and the urban environment. No environment, they argued, was phenomenologically neutral; rather, it affected the individual in distinct ways. The study of the lived impact of space and architecture on the emotions and behavior of individuals Situationists termed "psychogeography." "We are bored in the city . . . we really have to strive to discover mysteries" (Ivan Chtcheglov, quoted in Knabb, 1981: 2). The alienation of the modern condition, they argued, was as evident on our faces as in our buildings. The Bauhaus movement sought to provide the "education" artists needed to assume their place within the machine age; the Situationists sought to destroy the mechanization of life to liberate creativity.

In contrast both to modern functionalism and the towers of postmodern babble being erected, Situationists called for a poetic architecture that helped awaken imagination and desire. Through architecture, they argued, liberatory experiments with human nature and possibilities begin: "Architecture is the simplest means of articulating time and space, of modulating reality, of engendering dreams. It is a matter not only of a plastic modulation and articulation expressing an ephemeral beauty, but of a modulation producing influences in accordance with the eternal spectrum of human desires and the progress in realizing them" (Chtcheglov, quoted in Knabb, 1981: 2). The new architecture and space they envisage is to have an evocative power that, like a surrealist painting, can recreate and reawaken the fantastic, mysterious, and ambiguous aspects of existence. When the paintings of Giorgio de Chirico become architecture rather than just art, "there will be rooms more conducive to dreams than any drug" (3). To effect such changes, architecture will become modifiable, easy to change and manipulate; designs that incorporate rotating walls, for example, or that allow one to open the ceiling to gaze at the stars, will facilitate an active interaction with one's environment. The domestic space will stimulate human interaction, producing "houses where one cannot but love" (2).

The streets of the city, redesigned to facilitate the dérive, will be divided into "distinct psychic atmospheres" that stimulate various desires and moods. In general, the Situationists see architecture as the most important art form since it takes us far beyond the limitations of plastic art as a visual spectacle to the constructed situation where art is lived as a new form of space. "That which changes our way of seeing the streets is more important than what changes our way of seeing painting" (Chtcheglov, quoted in Knabb, 1981: 25). Their hope to revolutionize life through art makes them one of the last significant forms of an avant-garde movement. Thus, Chtcheglov suggested that "the hacienda must be built" (quoted in Knabb, 1981: 1), that new houses, cities, and sites for living must be constructed that will produce a new mode of everyday life.

At its best, modern architecture often achieved the poetic environments celebrated by the Situationists. The emotional effects of Le Corbusier's architecture, for example, are dramatically evident at La Tourette, where sunlight pours through large round circles onto a raised altar, at the church of Ronchamp, whose sloping walls are punctuated by irregularly shaped windows cut in stone, or in the magnificent lobby of the Assembly Hall at Chandigarh, where huge pillars

capped with cone-shaped tops support the tall ceiling like mushrooms sprouting from the marbled floor. Le Corbusier was very concerned with both the texture of his materials and, in the case of Ronchamp and the Phillips Pavilion, with the acoustics of his rooms, whereby he attempted to devise a total audiovisual experience, or a "landscape acoustics." Through such considerations, Le Corbusier anticipated the multisensory architecture important to the Situationists and Kenneth Frampton.

Reconstructing social space requires insight into the social interests that control architecture, design, and urban planning. A more democratic politics of space would allow citizen input into the design of their communities and an appreciation for the specific contributions to the construction of space by women, youth, and people of different ethnic and subcultural groups. As Jane Jacobs pointed out, women have traditionally made important contributions to the construction of domestic space, community, and neighborliness, but their creativity has not been fully esteemed. The same could be said of youth subcultural groups, ethnic subcultures, and gay and lesbian cultures, which have often constructed imaginative and aesthetically pleasing habitats for members of their group, which provide a sense of comfort and belonging not found in the impersonal or oppressive public spaces of the contemporary city.

Dolores Hayden (1984), for instance, criticizes the ways that male and commercial culture deface the city (quasi-pornographic billboards, advertising, displays of macho violence, etc.) and discusses how the Los Angeles Woman's Building, an arts workshop, gets women involved in the construction of public spaces and public art. Jane Jacobs, Hayden, and others also endeavor to promote the appreciation of women's contributions to constructing community and to produce spaces and institutions, like daycare centers, rape crisis shelters, and community health centers, that meet women's needs. In King's view, a feminine spatial design will be very different from the male: "It will break things down, make them accessible; remove the steps and the podia; break the facades with flowers and scented fruits; reduce the scale; reinstate the tactile, the sounds of water and birds, the places of children's play (Nietzsche's 'play that calls new worlds to life'), the impermanent and the appropriable" (1996: 236-237). Mobilizing women to create community art and performance, to participate in the construction of alternative cultures, draws on women's abilities to achieve habitability and the even more extraordinary quality of the variety and freshness that flows from subtle change, adaptability, textures, and new sites and surfaces.

A postmodern philosophy of space would accordingly valorize the construction of domestic space and public space that would include not only new buildings and structures but new textures, sights, sounds, smells, and aesthetics, reinstating the tactile, the aural, the olfactory, and the auditory, thus affirming all of the senses as key constituents of the environment. This would involve an aestheticizing of everyday life and a reconstruction of the look, feel, and experience of social space with new buildings, public spaces, nature, and forms of art appropriate to specific local regions and sites. The reconstruction of social space would involve the reintegration of nature and the social, the resurrection of the senses, and new spaces to fulfill and cultivate the many-sided needs and potentials of the human being. The postmodern aestheticizing of the environment would thus realize the earlier avant-garde aspirations for the merger of art and life and would bring architecture, sculpture, paintings, and the other forms of visual culture into a closer relationship in a reconstruction of culture and society.

The Postmodern Turn in Painting

The question of imitation, the gestural look of Abstract Expressionism, and of the words that had been hurled as insults for as long as we could remember-illusionistic, theatrical, decorative, literary-were resurrected, as art became once again ornamental or moral, grandiose or miniaturized. . . It was defying all the proscriptions of modernist purity.
-Kim Levin

As with architecture, the postmodern turn in painting similarly endorsed connecting visual culture with everyday life and renounced the trends toward abstraction in high modernism, returning to representation and to popular and historical images and references. Although the postmodern turn in culture was first advanced in discourse and practice in architecture and literature, a distinctive anticipation of postmodernism in the arts is found in the works of Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, and the New York avant-garde of the 1950s, and in our narrative, postmodernism in the arts appears vividly in the works of Andy Warhol and in pop art. By the 1980s, the postmodern turn toward historicism, eclecticism, populism, and ludic play with tradition-evident in architecture-constitutes the dominant trend of the visual arts, reversing the modernist emphasis on formalism, aesthetic purity, innovation, and negation of tradition.

The Modernist Moment in Painting

A picture-before being a warhorse, a nude woman, or some sort of anecdote-is essentially a surface covered with colours arranged in a certain order.
-Maurice Denis

Picasso, Braque, Mondrian, Miro, Kandinksy, Brancusi, even Klee, Matisse and Cezanne derive their chief inspiration from the medium they work in. The excitement of their art seems to lie most of all in its pure preoccupation with the invention and arrangement of spaces, surfaces, shapes, colors, etc., to the exclusion of whatever is not necessarily implicated in these factors.
-Clement Greenberg

The modernist insurrection in the visual arts erupted in 19th-century Europe as a rebellion against traditional academic and classical forms. Painters like Monet and Manet in France broke with the conventions of French academic painting, interjecting new subject matter and forms into their work. The modernist artist, like Gauguin and van Gogh, was often an outsider, seeking novel experiences, visions, and modes of painting in isolation from cliques and official art institutions. The result was a series of modernist aesthetic revolts in which painters created their own unique styles and forms and innovative works and artistic breakthroughs.

European modernists in the 19th and 20th centuries also formed avant-garde movements, with each new group claiming to be the vanguard of art, the most advanced art of its day (hence the military metaphor of the "avant-garde"). In the field of painting, modernist groups promoting French impressionism, German expressionism, Italian futurism, Russian constructivism, and cubism crossed national borders and spawned new movements, like dadaism, surrealism, and vorticism, that called for revolutions in art and life (Burger, 1984). "Modern art" therefore

became both a movement and a slogan to attack traditionalism and dominant academic forms while advocating the creation of new ones.

The histories of painting and visual culture most in favor during the modernist era tended to celebrate modernism as a successful revolution against traditional art and to view the history of art from the perspectives of high modernism, especially abstract expressionism, which was seen as the contemporary realization of the modernist program.21 One of the insights of postmodern theory is that histories are constructs written from the perspectives of specific standpoints, with all their defining biases, assumptions, and prejudices. In the following sections, we will provide a rereading of the history of modern visual art from the perspectives of the postmodern turn, which produces a different artistic pantheon and appraises the major modernist movements and painters quite differently from the way modernist perspectives do.

Histories of modern painting focus on France, seeing Manet, the impressionists, Cézanne, cubism, and others as the heroes of modernism. In these histories, Paris is considered to have been the world capital of painting during the first decades of the 20th century, and indeed most of the great modernist painters moved and worked there, including Picasso, Braque, Matisse, Gris, Leger, and countless others. French modernism, especially cubism, sought a world of painting autonomous from everyday reality and moved relentlessly toward abstraction, striving to establish a new world of art as a realm unto itself. Breaking with the illusionism of Renaissance perspective and classical efforts to create three-dimensional surfaces, cubism reduced paintings to abstract lines and planes, rejecting the traditional concept of depth and seeking to flatten the surface of art to a depthless physical field. The cubists, following the pathway of Cézanne, also abstracted objects into "cubes" or geometric shapes, while painters like Picasso or Braque emphasized relationships among these forms, producing new surfaces that accented the interrelatedness of objects and provided a multiperspectival view. Such paintings existed in their own space, creating their own world, a field that abstracted from the denseness and heaviness of the social world in order to construct a purified realm of forms, images, and abstract representations of the real. Of course, cubist paintings also tended to be iconic signs of the everyday world; thus, their representations of guitars or apples, for example, alluded to real ones, standing as signs of everyday objects.

Cubist paintings also included actual elements of everyday life such as newspapers or labels of wine bottles in their paintings, although the formalist readings, which dominated during the succeeding decades of high modernism, stressed that the cubist formal experiments and collages were carried out in order to provide purer, more geometrical forms, shapes, and lines and thus to advance the modernist agenda of purifying art into its essential constituents. For the histories of art that dominated during the following decades of high modernism, formalist painters like Cézanne, those in the cubist and constructivist movements, and other stylistic innovators were seen as key figures in 20th-century art history. Yet every era must reconstruct its own history, and from the perspective of the postmodern turn in art, the collage elements in cubism, the bringing of everyday objects into painting, was an important anticipation of the postmodern efforts to collapse art into life, to subvert its autonomy, to create new aesthetic forms, strategies, and effects.

In fact, the cubist works of Juan Gris anticipate the postmodern turn more than do the abstract

earlier "analytical cubist" works of Braque and Picasso. Gris's cubist paintings of objects were more decorative, colorful, and stylized than his predecessors as were the works of German expressionists and other painters influenced by cubism.22 From the perspective of the postmodern turn, it was thus the innovations in the decorative, the development of new collage forms, the aestheticizing of objects of everyday life, and the ludic play with appearances of Gris, the fauvists, and Matisse that anticipated the postmodern turn that began in the 1950s.

Moreover, the dada movement and iconoclasts like Marcel Duchamp take on new importance as anticipations of the postmodern turn. The dadaists' mocking assaults on the institution of art, on the religion of art and the artist, and on belief in the autonomy of art, combined with their attempts to redefine art and to greatly expand its field, prefigured later postmodern projects. These motifs were taken up by Duchamp, whose appropriations of classical images and objects of everyday life would impress later artists involved in the postmodern turn. Yet cubism plays a very important role as well in our story of 20th-century art. Not only are its stylistic innovations important for later formalist movements like abstract expressionism, but its use of collage, its spurning of signification, and its blending of art and the objects of everyday life anticipate the postmodern turn in art, which we will map in this chapter.

Abstract Expressionism: The Final Ecstasy of High Modernism

We had a lot to say and we did pick up the cudgel of abstract art, which was left behind by the Europeans. They dropped it, and we picked it up and carried it on.
-Philip Pavia

Hell, it's not just about painting!
-Abstract Expressionist Credo

The drive toward abstraction and nonrepresentational art was significantly advanced by U.S. painters of the New York scene of the 1940s and 1950s, who produced what in retrospect can be seen as one of the last flowerings of high modernism in art. Previously, the United States was something of a backwater in international art, with U.S. painters achieving few breakthroughs and little international renown. The abstract expressionists, however, took up the challenge of European modernism, to continually revolutionize art and to produce new aesthetic forms and styles. In the 1940s and 1950s, they created the first internationally significant U.S. art and catapulted New York to the center of the art world-where pop art and postmodernism would follow as internationally important art forms and movements.

New York was the preferred site for European émigrés who were fleeing from German fascism and World War II. Such luminaries as André Breton and Duchamp from France, the German émigrés Hans Hofmann and Josef Albers, Willem de Kooning from Holland, and others brought the impulses of European modernist art to the United States. The synergy of the European-born painters and the U.S.-bred talent created a dynamic cultural matrix that generated a vast wealth of world-class art. The cosmopolitanism of the New York scene anticipated the coming global culture, though the commitment to high cultural purity and the aversion to mass culture sharply distinguished the ethos and work of high modernism from the coming postmodernism.

The New York-based abstract expressionists were determined to create a new modern art that embodied their own experience, vision, and aesthetic form. In Emile de Antonio's documentary film Painters Painting (1973),24 Barnett Newman tells how painting was dead for him and his colleagues in the 1940s and how they sought to produce a new modernist art. In the somber experience of the Great Depression of the 1930s and the carnage of World War II, Newman and his colleagues could not think of producing a beautiful art. Newman himself did not want to create a world of pure forms either, in the idealized style of cubism or the perfect geometric forms of Mondrian. Thus, the painter had to start from scratch, Newman insisted, which for him meant abstracting from the world completely, totally negating both the everyday world of objects and an ideal world of purified natural forms, in order to explore a new subject matter of color, shapes, lines, and forms.

The move within abstract expressionism toward a more abstract and nonrepresentational art constituted something of a political rebellion and rejection of the existing society and world. The "ugliness" (as it initially appeared) of a work by Pollock, Kline, de Kooning, or Newman is registered from this perspective as a renunciation of the existing world, as a refusal to beautify or idealize it, while attempting to produce an alternative vision and new forms of art. The abstract expressionist painters thus opposed the official world of art and the society it beautified, even if they did not make explicitly political statements themselves in their work.

Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) is frequently presented as the initiator of the dramatic breakthrough toward abstraction in post-World War II American art.25 Pollock emphasized the expressive aspects of his painting, that he was rendering into concrete form the turmoil of his inner life, expressing his feelings and subjective vision. Pollock's "action painting" helped launch a movement that came to be called "abstract expressionism." It was more abstract and nonrepresentational than any previous form of American art, but it was also expressive and highly subjective in the tradition of German expressionism.26 As with the German expressionists, the abstract expressionists were angry artists who refused the existing bourgeois world and who created alternative worlds and visions with their distorted images, violent colors, and sometimes bizarre shapes and forms. But Pollock and the abstract expressionists went much further toward a nonrepresentational art than did their German predecessors.

The group of painters who produced new aesthetic breakthroughs by creating a variety of forms of nonrepresentational art came to be known as the "New York School," or the "American School." These artists formed various groups and coteries, deeply influenced each other, and undertook a combined research program into the possibilities of abstract painting and the project of creating art free from traditional forms, conventions, and style. In a sense, the abstract expressionists embodied perfectly the modernist ethos and ideology. They rebelled against aesthetic and societal conventions, created highly innovative works, and took art deadly serious, dedicating their lives to the creation of monumental artifacts. They thus shared the modernist religion of art, the concept of the artist as genius and hero, and undertook the quest to develop lasting and monumental works that had societal and spiritual importance and universal meaning.

A 1939 essay, "Modern Art and Kitsch," by art critic Clement Greenberg enunciated the modernist principles that legitimated the artistic revolution being carried out by the abstract expressionists (collected in Greenberg, 1961). His essay is as important for modernist aesthetics

as Jameson's 1984 essay "Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" is for articulating the postmodern turn. Greenberg envisaged art as a purely autonomous activity that had its own norms, techniques, and goals. His aesthetic was strictly formalist, with the goal of art being to delineate a pure world of form, autonomous from extraneous considerations. "Avoid content like the plague," Greenberg prescribed, and in turn he championed the contemporary modes of painting that he saw as embodying his formalist aesthetic, which was congruent with the modernist project in architecture represented by the International Style.

A coterie of abstract expressionist painters carried out formal innovations in the arts, advancing the program of modernism sketched by Greenberg; they included the German émigré Josef Albers, who experimented with form and the perception of color, and the Dutch émigré Willem de Kooning, who combined stunning color, expressive abstraction, and impressive innovation. Franz Kline explored abstract form and empty surface space, Helen Frankenthaler developed color-field painting with her pigment-dyed canvases reworked with abstract designs, and Robert Motherwell experimented with scale, massing, design, and gesture. Barnett Newman created nonrepresentational canvases that were divided by vertical stripes into vibrant fields of color, while Mark Rothko produced abstract and enigmatic paintings that exuded spirituality. Color-field painters like Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, and Larry Poons painted abstract fields of color. Frank Stella in turn constructed works exhibiting a flat, nonrepresentational surface without subject matter, content, or theme.

Pollock, Newman, Gottlieb, Motherwell, and other abstract expressionists exhibited a heroic impulse to create paintings larger than those accommodated in the usual home or gallery space. The violence, aggressivity, daring, innovativeness, monumentality, risk, and extreme individuality in abstract expressionism is typically American and created the first American art movement that generated worldwide acclaim. In a sense, abstract expressionism was the art form of the hegemony of U.S. global capitalism, expressing the energies, drive, and mastery of of U.S. global power. U.S. capital generated the wealth to purchase and inflate the prices of the masters of abstract expressionism and to exhibit their monumentally large art in large corporate spaces. Thus, although abstract expressionism in ideology was anti-corporate and anti-mass culture and had its spiritual pretensions, it fit all too well into the triumph of U.S. capitalism in the global market.

Between Modernism and Postmodernism

As the paintings changed, the printed material became as much of a subject as the paint (I began using newsprint in my work) causing changes of focus. . . There is no poor subject (Any incentive to paint is as good as any other).
-Robert Rauschenberg

Abstract expressionism manifested the modernist urge for the monumental, grandiose, and highly original work that would project the exalted vision of the modern artist-hero. High modernism in painting had reached its apogee by the mid-1950s. A new generation of abstract expressionists tended merely to imitate the previous masters. Some New York painters-most prominently Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns-began moving beyond abstract expressionism and toward incorporating objects of everyday life into painting. Influenced by

composer John Cage and painter Marcel Duchamp, both of whom wished to redefine art to present the material of everyday life as art objects, Rauschenberg combined the formal experiments of abstract expressionism with the development of a new type of collage art.

Making art out of his bed, newspapers, advertisements, found objects, and other debris of the consumer and media society, Rauschenberg overcame the separation between high art and lowly everyday life that was one of the key features of high modernism. He utilized the collage form to expand the field of painting to include both the abstract images and rebellious use of color and form monumentalized by the earlier generation of abstract painters and quotations of classical paintings and ordinary objects and images, all thrown together into his canvases in a seemingly random order and often exhibiting an exuberant dadaist spirit of humor and rebellion. His jokes and dadaist irony, such as erasing a drawing of de Kooning and then exhibiting it, broke with the seriousness of high modernism, and his use of quotation and pastiche rejected the modernist tendency toward innovation, originality, and purity of image, mixing a wide range of materials and styles in his heterogeneous works.

For instance, one of Rauschenberg's collages, Bed, was made from his bedspread, sheets, and pillow, and his Monogram featured a stuffed goat, which he had bought at a secondhand shop, standing in a tire and serving as the center of a collage of everyday objects. Factum I and Factum II juxtaposed seemingly identical collages to undermine the notion of authenticity and to call attention to the constructed nature of the artifact. His collages were thus significantly different from the more formalist cubist collages, with his scraps of newspapers, found objects, and images of traditional art (dis)assembled into postmodern work that scattered objects and images in a random and seemingly disorganized and unruly fashion. Whereas modernist collages organized materials into an aesthetic unity and harmony, Rauschenberg's and later postmodern work would present collage material in its very fragmentation without attempting to make a coherent statement or to organize, unify, and produce an aesthetic effect of harmony.

Jasper Johns also collapsed distinctions between high art and mass culture in his paintings of targets and U.S. flags and in his sculptures made of beer cans and coffee cans. In addition, Johns made a central feature of his painting the sort of flat, one-dimensional, nonexpressive image that would be, in Jameson's (1991) view, characteristic of postmodern culture as a whole. Deeply concerned with the formal problems of painting, Johns abstracted from the concreteness of flags to create a depthless, formal image. Representations of the flag or targets were thus chosen for their formal qualities rather than for their symbolic associations, thus flattening the image and striving to drain it of meaning and symbolism. The goal was not to paint his impression of flags or to faithfully mirror and reproduce the flag in ultrarealist fashion. Rather, Johns wished to create the flag as a pure art object, as a self-enclosed form, as a pure iconic image.

Obviously, this painterly and formalist goal puts Johns in tune with the motifs of modernist abstract art, but he also developed postmodern themes. Johns often noted the "detachment" and "distance" from his subject matter in his painting of targets, numbers, and other objects from everyday life. In a 1989 documentary, he describes his efforts to "feel removed" from the objects of his work and to be "detached and not involved."27 Johns's self-image instantiates the "absence of affect" that Jameson would eventually identify with the postmodern sensibility. Thus, where the modernist Pollock attempted to project his feelings into his work and to express himself with

exuberance, Johns coolly chooses to display the objects themselves, abstracted into aesthetic form.

Reacting against purism and formalism in painting, Rauschenberg utilized recognizable figures of consumer and media culture in collage paintings, and Johns made bronze sculptures of everyday objects like beer cans. This move constituted a rebellion against the tendencies of high modernism to abstract itself altogether from mass culture and its commercial flora and fauna. Rauschenberg's work with EAT (Experiments with Art and Technology) also imploded distinctions between art and technology (see Tomkins, 1975). Working frequently with other avant-garde performers in theater, happenings, and concerts in the 1960s, Rauschenberg constantly erased boundaries between the arts. Here he was influenced by his friend John Cage, and, indeed, Rauschenberg and Johns worked with Cage, Merce Cunningham, and others in the New York avant-garde throughout the 1960s in performances that would later be called "postmodern" with their erasure of traditional aesthetic boundaries and subversion of traditional codes, combining dance, music, theater, and spectacle.

Thus, whereas modernists sought to separate the various arts and to pursue each one's own autonomous logic, postmodernists created multimedia works and mixed together artistic genres. The 1960s New York avant-garde wanted to bring the audience into the artworks themselves, stressing how audiences created meanings. Rauschenberg believed that viewer perception of his white paintings, with the shadows and modalities of light projected on them, helped create their meaning and experience, making the audience participants (Tomkins, 1965: 203). In fact, he, Cage, and others anticipated the turn to the audience as the creator of meaning that has been developed by cultural studies (see the discussion in Kellner, 1995a). John Cage has said on the album cover to Variations IV:

Most people mistakenly think that when they hear a piece of music, that they're not doing anything but that something is being done to them. Now this is not true, and we must arrange our music, we must arrange our Art, we must arrange everything, I believe, so that people realize that they themselves are doing it, and not that something is being done to them.

On the same album cover, Joseph Byrd cites aesthetician Morse Peckham's position in Man's Rage for Chaos that art constitutes "any perceptual field which an individual uses as an occasion for performing the role of art perceiver." In other words, it is the perceiver, the art audience, who constitutes the object as "art," not any apparatus of critics, any coterie of artists, or any consensus of the art establishment. This position was also taken by Duchamp, who, according to Calvin Tomkins's summary of a 1957 seminar in Houston, Texas,

proposed a somewhat surprising definition of the spectator's role in that mysterious process known as the creative act. The artist, Duchamp said, is a "mediumistic being" who does not really know what he is doing or why he is doing it. It is the spectator who, through a kind of "inner osmosis," deciphers and interprets the work's inner qualifications, relates them to the external world, and thus completes the creative cycle. The spectator's contribution is consequently equal in importance to the artist's, and perhaps in the long run even greater, for, as Duchamp remarked in another context, "it is posterity that makes the masterpiece." (Tomkins, 1965: 9)

The "happenings" staged by the New York avant-garde literally involved the participation of audiences in multimedia performances, thus undoing the separation both of the audience from the work and of the various media, like theater or film, from each other. This form of artistic

rebellion and redefinition of art appealed to Rauschenberg, who enthusiastically carried out moves toward a postmodern turn in painting and participated in various multimedia creations. Rauschenberg pastiched his own previous paintings, redoing his notorious white paintings of the early 1950s in 1968. Other postmodern painters would also aggressively quote previous art forms; for example, Larry Rivers cited Dutch masters and cigars; Alfred Leslie replicated Italian masters and reproduced Thomas Cole's Hudson River valley paintings; Tano Festa pastiched in a photomat series Michelangelo's painting of Adam in the Sistine Chapel; and there were numerous other appropriations of classical paintings in postmodern art.

These artists who began the postmodern turn were carrying forth some of the program of dada and were in turn labeled "neo-dada" during the 1950s and early 1960s. In retrospect, dada can be seen as a virus that entered the body of modernism and affected many later modern artists, causing it to mutate into postmodernism. With the exception of some abstract expressionists who maintained a religion of art, the spirit of dada entered into contemporary painting, creating a critical distance from tradition and an iconoclastic attitude toward bourgeois culture. Via the mediation of Duchamp and several important dada and surrealism exhibits in the 1950s (see Craft, 1996), the dada virus was especially active in the New York intellectual scene, affecting Rauschenberg, Johns, Cage, Warhol, and others. Thus, the spirit of dada is constitutive for the postmodern appropriation, hyperirony, and play with tradition, although much ludic postmodernism renounces the earlier dada emphasis on art as a vehicle of social change and the avant-gardist pretensions of many dada artists.

It was thus Duchamp's more ironic and apolitical version of dada that most influenced the later artists who would begin the postmodern turn away from high modernism in the arts. Duchamp himself began coming to New York during World War I, frequently visiting the city, including a long interlude during World War II. He had successful museum and gallery shows and influenced many young painters associated with the postmodern turn (see Tomkins, 1965). His readymades redefined the art object and broke down barriers between art and everyday life. His appropriations of previous aesthetic images, such as drawing a mustache on an image of the Mona Lisa and labeling it with a provocative title (L.H.O.O.Q, which pronounced phonetically in French becomes "Elle a chaud au cul," meaning "She has a hot ass"). These aesthetic games anticipated key postmodern strategies, as did his experiments with photography, film, and other media. In addition, Duchamp's adoption of a fictive name (Rrose Selavy), doubling his identity as an artist, prefigured the postmodern insight that identity is constructed, flexible, and multiple, pointing to the overlaps between postmodern theory and art and to the complex ways that they interact and mutually influence each other.

Within the field of painting, Duchamp's hard-edged abstractions anticipated the work of American abstractionists like Frank Stella and color-field painters such as Noland and Olitski, who moved toward the sort of flat, euphoric, nonsignifying images that would be associated with postmodernism. Duchamp's cover design of a 1936 issue of Cahiers d'art "superimposed red and blue hearts (Coeurs Volants) in which the juxtapositions of the two colors set up chromatic vibrations that created the illusion of depth-a discovery that preceded by thirty years the 'optical' art of Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and a number of others" (Tomkins, 1965: 59). Yet the endeavors of the later American high modernists to develop nonrepresentational and nonsignifying images were accompanied by moves toward the formal purity and autonomy of art

celebrated by modernism.

The artists influenced by Duchamp whom we discussed in this section are between modernism and postmodernism, as they combine motifs from both. Although they brought the objects of everyday life into art and participated in the multimedia happenings and artistic experiments characteristic of the postmodern turn, they maintained important elements of modernism in their work. Rauschenberg combined the abstract motifs and painterly gestures of high modernism with the detritus of the consumer society in his works, and although Johns pictured targets, flags, and other everyday objects, he also had a rigorously formalist aspect to his painting and soon turned to more abstract and nonrepresentational work. Both Rauschenberg and Johns thus had a highly developed painterly dimension to their work that would distinguish them from many later postmodern artists who employed the technologies of serial reproduction, the techniques of hyperrealism, or the slick mechanical look of commercial art. Thus, we must look to the pop art of Andy Warhol and others for more consequent moves toward a postmodern turn in painting that decisively broke with abstract expressionist nonrepresentational art and that returned to the materials of everyday life as the substance and form of art, imploding art into objects of everyday life, commodities, and hyperreality.

Pop Art and the Postmodern Turn

The canvas is an absolutely everyday object, on the same plane as this chair or this poster.
-Andy Warhol

The philosophy of representation-of the original, the first time, resemblance, imitation, faithfulness-is dissolving; and the arrow of the simulacrum . . . is headed in our direction.
-Michel Foucault

In those artists labeled as representatives of pop art (Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, et al.), there was less rage, less alienation, and a more comfortable attitude toward U.S. society than in the previous generation of abstract expressionists. The public persona of Andy Warhol, who surfaced as the Prince of Pop, is especially revealing of how the concept of the artist had changed from the earlier days of abstract expressionism, which had continued the romantic mythology of the artist as heroic outsider at war with society. Emile de Antonio's filming of his longtime friend Warhol in Painters Painting caught him in characteristic poses in his downtown studio. Filmed in a mirror sitting beside his assistant Brigid Polk, Warhol declares that painting is over, claims that he hasn't done any painting in three years and that Polk has been doing his work, and is generally self-deprecating. What is significant about Warhol's self-presentation is the way that he deflates the usual aura of pretension that surrounds major artists. Indeed, Warhol constantly comments in the form of put-ons, highlighting his commercial aims and downplaying the aesthetic significance of his work, thus utilizing masks and simulating indifference to the traditional aesthetic goals and values that had been apotheosized in high modernism (see also the interviews with Warhol in the film Andy Warhol Superstar).

It is also very significant for delineating a postmodern turn in the arts that Warhol enthusiastically embraced commercial art and the artifacts of media culture in order to produce pop art. Whereas Rauschenberg and Johns did commercial art in the 1950s to support

themselves, they quit when they achieved success in the New York art world. For them, it was either/or, and they choose high, or serious, art. Warhol, by contrast, continued doing commercial art even after he won approval as an officially sanctioned artist and arguably collapsed the distinction, turning commercial art into museum art and highlighting the commodity status of art itself-indeed presenting art as the supercommodity.

Whereas Jasper Johns painted representations of the real objects of everyday life, turning them into art objects with an intensely painterly dimension, Warhol tended to work with images of images, drawing on photography, advertisements, and various reproductions of "real" objects. Warhol's pop art thus produced simulacra of images of commercial objects, as well as replicas of representations of stars like Marilyn Monroe or Elvis Presley, political figures like Mao Tse-tung, or newspaper photos of such things as an electric chair or traffic accident. Warhol's pop art was thus an art of simulacra, second-order images, representations of representations, and was in this sense more abstract than his predecessors, even though his objects looked more "real." But Warhol's "real" was a hyperreal, a realer-than-real, producing purified images from preexisting representations whose ultimate "origins" in the social world may be difficult to detect.

Warhol's use of silk screens, which literally reproduced a series of images from photography or other sources, proliferated his art of simulacra. Furthermore, his attempt to produce totally bland, nonsignifying art that renounced deeper meanings beyond the images themselves and his presenting himself as an empty one-dimensional character ("I want to be a machine") anticipates postmodernism, which renounces the real in favor of depthless collages of images and words. Warhol thus erased the very concepts of the artist, artwork, and creativity, leveling the significance of the art object to a mere sign among other signs, undermining a depth hermeneutic whereby one sought meaning behind, within, and beyond the artwork. For Warhol, the creator was just a technician without anything to say, and his style was simply that of the existing image world.

Although there remains a residue of tongue-in-cheek dadaist irony and aesthetic subversion in Warhol, it is without the political bite of earlier dada and is more affirmative of its objects than destructive. On the whole, pop art not only depicted the objects of the consumer and media society as the subject matter of art but utilized commercial methods and techniques to produce art. Whereas Johns and Rauschenberg continued to make painterly pictures, with signs and traces of their work as artists, Warhol and other pop artists tried to be as impersonal and objective as possible, seeking to erase all personal and stylistic elements from their work. They thus enacted the theme of the disappearance of the subject and "end of the author" central to some versions of postmodern theory (e.g., Barthes, Baudrillard, Foucault, and Derrida). Moreover, the pop artists returned to the representation of images and objects of everyday life and eschewed the nonrepresentational elements still evident in the work of Johns and Rauschenberg.

Thus, the pop artists repudiated major tenets of modernism, and certainly Andy Warhol represents a totally different figure of the artist from the modernist concept, played to the hilt by the abstract expressionists, of the artist as hero and cultural warrior. Instead, for Warhol and pop art, the artist is merely a chronicler of the images of the day, a participant in the media and consumer society, a producer of images within the society of promotion. The successful artist, on Warhol's example, is the artist who most effectively circulates his or her work, and Warhol once

said that "publicity" is the greatest art of the 20th century. Indeed, Warhol himself was a master of publicity and became a superstar celebrity as well as an internationally renowned artist.

The pop artist also renounces the spiritual and universalist concerns of high modernism, found at the core of abstract expressionism, and abandons transcendence for total immersion in immanence, in the existing society. The artist is thus no longer an outsider, no longer the representative of alienation and nonconformity, no longer the cultural warrior against the crass bourgeois society. Instead, for Warhol and pop, the artist is merely a player in the game of contemporary commerce, publicity, and image construction, a member of the hip, chic, and-if successful-rich.

If abstract expressionism represents the triumph of heroic individualism, pop art reveals the triumph of the spectacle of the consumer society, its colonization of every aspect of life, including art. Pop puts on display the commodification of art, the reduction of art to commodity, but also art as a commodity spectacle of the affluent consumer and media society. Pop art exposes the role of image in reproducing capitalist culture and the reduction of art, culture, style, and identity to image, to a hyperreal simulacrum, to an infinite Möbius-like play of signifiers without a real or stable referent. The interminable precession of images in pop art highlights the spectacles of the media and the commercial culture of glitz, where everything is for sale. Its meticulous reproductions dramatize the spectacle of new technologies that can produce exact replicas and reproductions of the "real," moving art into the sphere of the hyperreal.

Warhol's forte was that he understood that the new media culture was a culture of images and their technological reproduction and dissemination, and he produced and reproduced images of the newly dominant media culture in his work. He thoroughly deconstructs the modernist notions of authorship, creativity, originality, authenticity, and auratic art, creating a new art form based on serial reproduction. His sculptures of Brillo boxes, pictures of Campbell's Soup cans, and silk screens of celebrities such as Jackie Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe themselves became defining images of media culture. Such work is emblematic of the loss of aura, the erasure of uniqueness and authenticity, in the postmodern image culture and the ways that images are commodified, mass-produced, and circulated in the infotainment society.

Warhol's work therefore is of essential diagnostic value in dissecting the nature and values of contemporary culture. His work puts on display the icons, celebrities, and forms of a culture that was increasingly becoming a media culture, based on mass-produced images, commercialism, and spectacle. Warhol saw that images permeated and constituted every realm of society, from economics to politics to culture and everyday life. He faithfully reproduced the images of advertising, politics, consumer culture, and the icons of everyday life as images, as simulacra of commodity and media culture. Warhol thus perceived the move toward a culture and politics of the image in U.S. life, in which all of social life is filtered through the media, politics becomes a battle of images, and identity is mediated through image and look (Kellner, 1990, 1995a). Warhol also saw that the media culture was becoming a culture of celebrity and that anyone could become a celebrity-at least for 15 minutes. And finally, Warhol grasped that art itself was a question of images, of producing pleasing and resonant images that were attractive and appealing. Warhol's own work-especially his painting-did indeed produce compelling images that resonated with cultural experience.

Crucially, Warhol showed that art is a commodity and a commercial business, that the commodity is the fetish of late-capitalist society, that commodity fetishism is its organizing principle, and that art has itself become the fetish of fetishes and a thoroughly commercial activity in a fashion- and publicity-driven business culture. Yet although Warhol could have provided a demystification of art and the banality of commercial culture with these insights, instead he remystified it, providing an aesthetic aura to the commodity, sanctifying art as a commercial activity, affirming and celebrating its commodity status, and thus ultimately advancing the values of capitalism. The same is true of his insights into media culture and hyperreality: Warhol could have put on display the mechanisms of celebrity fetishism, demystified the culture of the image, and shown the hyperreal to be a degraded and illusory form of the real. Instead, he chose to revel in the world of celebrity, image, and promotion, assiduously circulating his own image as pop artist and himself becoming a major celebrity and figure of the pop scene in the process. Warhol's work thus inhabits a space between a possible demystification of the commodity and media world of contemporary capitalism and its remystification in aestheticized images of the commodity and the hyperreal. With Venturi and others, Warhol belongs to the camp of conservative, ludic postmodernists.

Warhol's work could be compared with that of Duane Hanson, whose sculptures of shoppers in a market mock and attack commodity fetishism, or with Oldenburg's works, which by exaggerating the fetishistic aspects of commodities, media images, and art create a critical distance and tension lacking in the work of the Prince of Pop, who did not distance himself from commodity culture but, rather, immersed himself in it. Indeed, Warhol thrived on the commodity fetish and made his fortune within it, thoroughly integrating his art into the marketplace and commodity aesthetic. Much postmodern painting replicates this ludic play with existing capitalist and media culture, although, as we shall see in the next section, there are also striking examples of a postmodernism of resistance in the visual arts. Thus, as we shall see in the next section, postmodern art is a contested terrain between opposing tendencies and forces.

The Vicissitudes of Postmodern Art

Generally speaking, the play on quotations is boring for me. The infinite nesting of box within box, the play of second and third degree quotes, I think that is a pathological form of the end of art, a sentimental form.
-Jean Baudrillard

In the illusory babels of language, an artist might advance specifically to get lost, and to intoxicate himself in dizzying syntaxes, seeking odd intersections of meaning, strange corridors of history, unexpected echoes, unknown humors, or voids of knowledge . . . but this quest is risky, full of bottomless fictions and endless architectures and counter-architectures . . . at the end, if there is an end, are perhaps only meaningless reverbations.
-Robert Smithson

Warhol himself became an image, a trademark, a celebrity, an icon of the pop culture that he chronicled, tracked, and immersed himself in. As Venturi et al. (1972) remarked, pop art had a tremendous impact on what we can now see as a postmodern turn in architecture, and it

influenced fashion, design, advertising, TV, film, and other forms of media culture as well. And, significantly, in the spirit of Warhol, the art world itself fell under the sway of its publicity machines, which generated excitement over the emergent trends of the 1960s, when new movements attracted attention one after another-op art, conceptual art, minimalism, photorealism, earth art, and the like. Indeed, after the moment of pop in the early 1960s, aesthetic pluralism seemed to be the dominant tendency in U.S. art, with an explosion of forms, reappropriation of past images and styles, frenetic revivalism, and hype that would later be identified with the postmodern turn.

The art world thus reflected the new world of commodity spectacle and media culture dominated by publicity, specialized markets, and intense commercialization. The art object became part of a circuit of global capital and media culture in which fashion and consumer trends rapidly circulated from country to country. Obviously, the financial wealth of an expanding U.S. geopolitical global empire made possible both the financing and inflation of prices of the U.S. art of the period, as well as its promotion (see Guilbaut, 1983). For a brief moment, the United States ruled the world of art, producing the most significant artists and aesthetic breakthroughs, from abstract expressionism to pop art and the proliferating movements of the 1960s. We now live in a more decentered world, with no artistic core, in which a plurality of styles uneasily coexist, and there is no aesthetic consensus as to what is quality or advanced art, as there was in the 1960s when New York reigned as the art capital of the world. Instead, the art world, like postmodern culture in general, is ruled by fragmentation and the hype of media and consumer culture, with its cacophony of competing trends, works, and artists.

In the 1960s, there was a rapid proliferation of the last modernist movements, with all logical possibilities seemingly exhausted. With minimalism, conceptualism, and earth art, anything could be an artwork, or at least part of one, thus bringing modernism to an end with a whimper and not a bang. Postmodernism in turn absorbed the characteristics and strategies of all modernist movements, which it either revived in a neo or retro mode or combined, undoing boundaries between genres and styles, and between art and life. The postmodern moment in the visual arts had thus arrived.

By the 1970s, the label "postmodern" was frequently applied to new trends and forms in the visual arts. In popular journalism and art journals, voices were beginning to suggest that modernism in the arts was finished and that a new postmodern art had arrived, although no major manifestos for postmodern visual art and against modernism appeared comparable to Jencks's or Venturi's interventions in architecture, or John Barth's essays legitimating a postmodern turn in literature.30 Brian O'Doherty (1971: 19) noted that the term "post-modernism came into common usage in the late sixties" but indicated that "though it is our diagnosis for what surrounds us, one never hears it defined." Moreover, he presented it rather negatively as an "angry dumbness . . . fundamentally an anger at being forced to complete its own obsolescence." Articulating what would later become a standard conception of the term in the arts, Kim Levin pointed to a postmodern turn in articles written in the 1970s and 1980s, and collected in a 1988 volume Beyond Modernism. She pointed out that terms that were insults in the modernist vocabulary, such as "illusionistic, theatrical, decorative, literary," were resurrected as positive terms in new postmodern art that renounced modernist purity and reveled in ornamentation, quotation, and resurrections of tradition (1988: 3).

A variety of radical critics associated with the journal October and other art journals developed a wealth of accounts of a postmodernism of resistance in the late 1970s and the 1980s. Douglas Crimp (1980) valorized a more political and oppositional form of postmodern art that renounced the aesthetic purity legislated by high modernism and generated works that crossed disciplinary boundaries and produced mixed-media forms. In a similar vein, Rosalind Krauss (1983) presented the postmodern turn as a positive renunciation of the fetish of originality and an undoing of boundaries that expanded the aesthetic field. Craig Owens (1983) claimed that postmodern appropriation, hybridization, eclecticism, and other strategies described an "allegorical impulse" that defined the postmodern turn and that Hal Foster characterized as a series of "recodings" that could be given critical and oppositional inflections (Foster, 1983, 1985).

Every account of postmodern art constructs new genealogies of contemporary art, with different histories, evaluations and canons, and emphases and judgments. In our view, the postmodern turn in art mobilized motifs from cubism, dada, and the works of Duchamp into a new (anti)aesthetic that rejected key tenets of modernism in order to create new types and styles of art for the contemporary era. In our rereading of the history of contemporary art from the perspective of the postmodern turn, we see postmodern art as radicalizing the anti-modernist tradition of Duchamp, whose readymades subverted the canons of modernist style, and as extending the principles of dada and cubist collage to go beyond modernism. Postmodern visual art ranges from the transitional collage and representations of objects of everyday life of Rauschenberg and Johns, to the pop art of Lichtenstein and Warhol, which replicates the icons of consumer society, to neo-geo and simulation art, which seeks to capture the new forms and experiences of the computer society, to the works of Jenny Holzer, Hans Haacke, Barbara Kruger, Laurie Anderson, and David Wojnarowicz, which use the strategies of postmodern art to advance critiques of the media and consumer society.

As do postmodern architecture and literature, postmodern visual art opposes the key trends and tenets of modernism and embodies a new aesthetic against much of what modernism stood for. The postmodern pastiche and quotation in painting, for instance, was not only a joke or a commentary on the circulation and proliferation of images in a media society; it also signaled a return to tradition, the vernacular, and reference, which were spurned in the modernist aesthetics of originality, innovation, purity, and formalism. Its return to past forms and styles consciously enacted a form of historicism that renounced modernist notions of progression in art and its cult of originality. Deployment of pastiche and quotation repudiated the notion of the author as original creator and the notion of the authenticity and auratic uniqueness of the art object.

Furthermore, postmodern forms like fluxus, happenings, environmental and earth art, and various modes of interactive art and performance art undid the boundaries between art and audience, between art object and world, thus merging art with its environment and everyday life and contesting the conservative function of the museum. Happenings and plays by the Living Theater and Performance Group implicated the audience in participation in dramatic spectacle; the earth art of Michael Heizer, Walter De Maria, and Robert Smithson involved the spectator in the art environment and collapsed boundaries between art and nature; Christo's projects blended art, commerce, and politics, bringing "art" to a diversity of sites, urban and rural; and sculpture

merged into buildings, landscapes, and urban environments as never before, becoming part of an expanded aesthetic field that undid the boundaries and aesthetic of previously classical and modernist art. Rosalind Krauss claimed that such postmodern sculpture extended and reconstituted the field, undoing the modernist isolation of sculpture from environment and architecture (in Foster, 1983), thus in effect integrating art with everyday life.

Joseph Beuys, for example, referred to his performance pieces as "social sculpture" because he intended his art as a political force to promote thought and social change, in effect helping to create and shape a new society and humanity, thus imploding art into education and politics. The implosion that we have seen is central to postmodern theory is thus also a key to depicting postmodern culture as a whole.33 Implosion in the arts involves an undoing of boundaries among the arts, as well as, in some cases, the merger between text and audience and between art and life. The postmodern turn thus subverts classical conceptions of art as independent from mass culture and its everyday world. Rejecting notions of the autonomy of art, it questions the museum and other spaces in which art is publicly represented, thus attacking the institution of art and its field of exhibition, publicity, and distribution (see Crimp, 1983)-though few postmodern artists have been able to resist exhibiting in museum shows when offered under favorable circumstances.

Within the field of painting and the visual arts, the term "postmodern" is generally applied to artifacts that plunder the entire history of art for styles that range from neo-realism to neo-expressionism. Much postmodernist painting consists of playful pastiche and repetition, quotation, and allusion to painting of the past. Indeed, in the 1970s and 1980s there was a frenzy of revivalism, with Chia and Cucchi rekindling the forms of neo-primitivism, and a variety of American and European artists generated a neo-expressionism, while Julian Schnabel and Francisco Clemente appropriated a variety of neo-romantic forms and Jeff Koons engaged in reappropriations of baroque and rococo styles. Even more recent trends such as pop art and op art were revived, with Philip Taaffe, for instance, redoing Bridget Riley's 1964 op art work Crest as Brest in 1985. Thus, specific iconography and im-ages of previous painters were appropriated, reproduced, and quoted à la Rauschenberg.

Against complex modernist meaning machines, ludic postmodernism plays with cultural forms or deploys nonsignifying surface images, randomly juxtaposed to resist interpretation, preferring, à la Warhol, an aesthetic of the surface rather than depth, form rather than meaning, and randomness and discontinuities over well-wrought aesthetic artifacts and unities. The title of the film Stop Making Sense by David Byrne and the Talking Heads enunciates the tendency of this form of postmodern art, perhaps first articulated by Susan Sontag (1967), to seek pleasure in aesthetic forms and surfaces and to eschew systems of meaning, polysemic and multilayered complex artifacts that demand depth hermeneutics, and works that intend to make personal or political statements.

Many artists labeled "postmodern" play with historical and traditional images and forms, in accord with the descriptions of postmodern theory that evoke a depthless, one-dimensional, and nonsignifying image culture as characteristic of the present moment (Jameson, 1984, 1991). Painters like David Salle utilize flat, vivid surfaces and broken images to present a schizophrenic fragmentation of images with no clear narrative or structural organization. Frequently

appropriating images from other painters, Salle provides cold depictions of fragments of contemporary life, disconnected and without context. His Sextet in Dogtown, for instance, juxtaposes 10 images that do not connect in any obvious way, presenting fragments of a disconnected postmodern condition from the media, urban life, and the consumer society.

The fragmentation and disorder in much postmodern art of the 1980s can be read as exhibiting a loss of ability to contextualize, narrate, and provide order to experience (Taylor, 1985). The fragmented and inexpli-cable juxtapositions in the paintings of Salle, Robert Longo, Schnabel, and others has been interpreted as the dissolution of the creative and synthesiz-ing artistic ego into a neurotic, narcissistic, and schizophrenic conscious-ness lost in private fantasies, disparate images, and desperate attempts to salvage beauty or transcendence from the fragments of an otherwise barren world, bereft of community, shared traditions, or aesthetic norms. The renunciation of meaning and interpretation privileges the retinal over the conceptual, the eye over the mind, thus reversing one of the major currents of modernism that had run from cubism through the work of Duchamp and abstract expressionism. Hyperrealism and the revivals of pop, op, and other recent trends can also be seen as an escape from self, interpretation, and meaning.

Other artists, like Jeff Halley, utilize the forms of computer art to depict the complexity of new communications environments and the new aesthetic of a simulated world, while Nam June Paik deploys video to highlight the new media image world and its fragmented flow and never-ending proliferation of images. Jeff Koons exhibits objects from everyday life and pays artisans and commercial firms to replicate kitsch ornaments, objects, and advertisements in neo-realist verisimilitude. Halley and others belong to the neo-geo revival of abstraction, specifically as influenced by Baudrillard's theory of simulation. An example of such "simulation art" is found in Allan McCollum's 1983 installation of hundreds of "generic paintings" featuring different sizes of black squares framed in white squares, which presents a commentary on how all works of art are ultimately reduced to the abstraction and homogeneity of exchange value in a commodity market.

Yet one can distinguish between a ludic and "conservative-pluralist" posture of "anything goes" in art, characterized by pastiche, quotation, and play, and a more "critical-oppositional" strain of postmodern art (Foster, 1983; Wallis, 1984; Conner, 1989). This more deconstructive and socially critical art retains the same openness to a wide range of form and media of its more ludic-conservative variant, but in addition it attempts to develop a new postmodern vision, as in the work of Erich Fischl, who represents contemporary forms of alienation, anguish, and worse (see Kroker and Cook, 1986), or Thomas Lawson, who in Don't Hit Her Again (1981) presents a shockingly large face of a battered small child as an emblem of child abuse.

Political and oppositional forms of postmodern art refuse the anti-hermeneutic approach of ludic postmodernism in favor of a densely signifying practice that endeavors to subvert dominant meanings. A variety of radical critics, such as Crimp, Krauss, Owens, Foster, and Hutcheon, valorize different forms of political postmodern art that offer critical visions of culture and society and that advance oppositional practice. Several of these critics identify one such postmodern practice, "postmodern photography," as a model of political postmodernism, a "political art of the first order" (Hutcheon, 1989: 13). They see postmodern photography as generating a critique of realism and mimesis, "showing photography to be always a

representation, always-already-seen. Their images are purloined, confiscated, appropriated, stolen. In their work, the original cannot be located, is always deferred; even the self which might have generated an original is shown to be itself a copy" (Crimp, 1980: 98). All images-including those of photography, which seem to present an objective view of the world-are challenged as arbitrary, conventional, and coded interpretations and constructions rather than objective snapshots of reality.

As Owens (1983) shows, many women artists have made use of postmodern strategies to advance radical and feminist critiques and politics. Martha Rosler's The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems problematizes images and languages as means of depicting social reality and raises questions concerning how such things as the Bowery and drunkenness can be represented. Sherrie Levine's Photograph after Edward Weston crops a photo of Weston's son near the top of the penis, signaling how art idealizes the male body and that women can deploy artistic forms and strategies to attack patriarchy. Cindy Sherman's Untitled Film Still presents the artist in a pastiche of a Marilyn Monroe figure, alone in a dark night in a film noir setting, evoking the dangers to women in predatory urban environments-and from the distortions of stereotyped systems of representation. In turn, Barbara Kruger's montages of images and discourse problematize systems of representation, and her billboards and public art break down boundaries between art and environment, politics and aesthetics (images from these artists are reproduced in Foster, 1983: 68-76).

Similarly, Richard Prince deconstructs the images of advertising, and Hans Haacke exposes the lies and deceptions of corporate and political advertising and of the art establishment. As Debord emphasized two decades earlier, these postmodern artists are suggesting that contemporary life is thoroughly mediated by representations. The Situationists, in fact, anticipated this parodic "photo-piracy" by a couple of decades in their technique of détournement (see Chapter 3), and their critical image art was anticipated by dadaist montage artists such as John Heartfield, who made photomontages exposing the corruption of German capitalism and its complicity with Hitler and the Nazis (i.e., Heartfield's famous montage of the meaning of the Hitler salute shows Hitler in salute taking money bags from German capitalists).

Thus, postmodern image appropriation can be an ex-propriation, seizing already-existing cultural images to use against the grain to reveal the artificiality, derivativeness, and conventionality of dominant images, to criticize hegemonic forms of representation and social ideologies. It can advance a "politics of representation" that challenges dominant images, ideologies, and cultural stereotypes and suggests their role in constituting subjectivity. Following a modernist strategy advanced by the Russian formalists, the surrealists, Brecht, and others, oppositional postmodern image artists such as Barbara Kruger, Negativland, and the Tape Beatles seek to "denaturalize" the familiar image environment, to expose it as a contingent construction rather than an icon of the real, and to prompt critical awareness of the mechanisms that produce allegedly natural signs and images.34 Subverting realist notions that representations are objective and transparent pictures of reality, oppositional postmodern artists intend to show how all meanings are socially and historically constructed.

At the same time, by blatantly stealing images, they are debunking the humanist ideology informing modernist notions of artistic genius, originality, and autonomous language, arguing

that no language ever escapes from a historically constituted web of intertextuality. The main weapon of appropriation art is parody, which, as Hutcheon (1989) rightly argues, is not simply a detached irony or nostalgia for the past but, rather, a key strategy for contesting both realist epistemology and modernist autonomy. As postmodern, this art is much more ambivalent and contradictory than is modernist art and, like postmodern art in general, it simultaneously installs and subverts ideologies, being both critical and complicit, making us aware of the power of the image and the ways that representations constitute our subjectivity and modes of seeing the world. As suggested by the title of one of Victor Burgin's works (1986), postmodern photography is "between" various boundaries, operating on the fault lines between art, politics, and theory, undoing oppositions between text and image, high art and mass media, and artistic practice and theory. Indeed, as Burgin's work shows, the work of postmodern image artists is extremely sophisticated and theoretical, drawing on Marxism, feminism, semiotics, psychoanalysis, and deconstruction.

Women, gays and lesbians, and people of color, often excluded from official art worlds, also used new art forms like film and video as means of aesthetic subversion and cultural critique. Martha Rosler's political videos attack oppression and the complicity of intellectuals therein; Joan Braderman's videos take apart the forms and ways of reading women's magazines and tabloids; Yvonne Rainer's films deconstruct traditional forms of cinema and attempt to discover new forms and aesthetic strategies to advance feminist critique; Marlon Riggs's films and videos critically analyze images of blackness and gayness and depict the tensions between these conflicting aspects of his identity; Julia Dash uses film to interrogate black identity and history; and Laurie Anderson deploys performance art, film, and video to play with and comment on contemporary technological culture and society.

Interestingly, following the lead of Anderson and others who began using video and film, superstar postmodern artists such as Longo, Salle, and Schnabel all turned to film in the mid-1990s as vehicles of artistic expression, taking conventional genres of Hollywood film as a medium for aesthetic practice (e.g., Longo utilizing the SF-cyberpunk genre in Johnny Mnemonic, Salle deploying the crime-gangster genre in Search and Destroy, and Schnabel producing an artist biopic in Basquiat). Film and video can capture aesthetic experience and through techniques of mechanical reproduction can distribute artworks through much broader channels than can traditional art, which requires presence and immediacy of response; and these technological mediations are increased even more by the possibility of Internet circulation of artistic materials.

Indeed, the visual arts are especially important in a postmodern media and consumer society because the image is the semiurgic force that generates thought, behavior, and the very ethos of everyday life. In a world saturated with images, the Situationists use image to fight image. Painting and visual art freezes representations into crystallized icons of experience and vision. In a highly speeded-up media and consumer society, the still and quiet images of painting or photography can serve revelatory functions, showing the role of image in the media and consumer society and producing counterimages that can generate critical insights. The Situationists and postmodern artists like Kruger and Holzer juxtapose image and text to promote critical reflection on the forms and messages of the media and consumer society.

But a postmodern culture involves sound as well as sight, discourse as well as images, music as well as visual art. Indeed, juxtapositions between word and image, sight and sound, are characteristic of postmodern culture, which brings spectacle into musical performance and sounds into many visual art installations, as well as making use of video and computer art. The spoken word-as well as graphics presenting concepts and texts-is very important in the works of Martha Rosler and Joan Braderman, who use the power of the word to demystify and deconstruct dominant images and to encourage thought and reflection. Music is central to many forms of postmodern avant-garde art ranging from the works of John Cage to Laurie Anderson. In Home of the Brave (1986) and succeeding performance art, Anderson mixes media, genres, and aesthetic forms to provide critical commentary on the media and consumer society. Reviving the art of storytelling, dormant in a media culture, Anderson tells stories about the postmodern technoculture, punctuated and illustrated by a cornucopia of sights, sounds, and spectacle.

With the postmodern turn in art, critics are now more inclined to look toward women's art, the art of people of color, non-Western art, and art from sources previously excluded from the established pantheons for new and exciting developments than they were during the first decades of the postwar period when there was still something of an aesthetic consensus and establishment, with its pantheon of largely white male artists. Now aesthetic values are up for grabs, and there are continual redefinitions of art and controversies concerning the most appropriate and advanced art of our time. There is, as of yet, no established history, genealogy, tradition, or canon of postmodern art. Rather, there continue to be intense controversies between defenders of the modern and the postmodern and an overwhelmingly diversity of new postmodern artifacts, with heated controversy over their significance and value.

The variety and diversity of postmodern forms of art is by now bewildering, and it is impossible to survey here the multiplicity of contemporary postmodern interventions in the arts. During the past decade, the postmodern turn has not produced many new art heroes, canons, or monuments. It seems that perhaps there is too much irony, renunciation of originality, and revival of the past to win acclaim for new works and artists. Yet by the mid-1990s, the postmodern turn in the arts seems to have facilitated more exhibits in galleries and museums by younger artists, and the contemporary scene appears to be ever more multicultural and international in flavor, tending toward postmodern eclecticism and pluralism (see the articles in The New York Times, May 17, 1996: B1, and May 26, 1996: section 2: 1). Many younger and established artists are turning to multimedia productions, and one imagines that the computer, the Internet, and new technologies will be crucial to new postmodern developments within art.

It has also becoming strikingly evident that the postmodern turn is helping to generate a new global culture, with postmodern forms in architecture, painting, media, computer, and consumer culture, and other spheres currently traversing the globe with incredible speed. New information and media technologies make possible instantaneous communication and circulation of images, ideas, and artifacts from one corner of the world to another. Thus, one sees similar architecture arising in Tokyo, London, Sydney, and Los Angeles. Japanese architects like Tange Kenzo, Isozaki Arata, and Ando Tadao are among the most advanced promoters of the postmodern style, and neighborhoods in Japan, such as the Aoyama and West Shinjuku districts of Tokyo, exhibit some of the most striking postmodern architecture.35 Indeed, cities today are increasingly global and cosmopolitan (see Sassen, 1991), and both the International Style and postmodern

architecture are visible everywhere.

Media culture too is increasingly global and a bearer of postmodern forms that seem to travel easily across borders. MTV is now international, with different versions on practically every continent of the world. Forms of popular music such as rap, heavy metal, and grunge have their analogues all over the planet: Japanese youth tan themselves, Westernize their eyes, and cultivate dreadlocks, affecting the mannerisms of African American rap singers, and imitations of rap, heavy metal, and grunge music are found everywhere. And now the Internet is instantaneously conveying global culture from one side of the earth to the other, making accessible the latest ideas, forms of culture, and modes of interaction. The global village is clearly the habitat for postmodern selves, and the ideas of the postmodern itself have gained currency and force from the new global culture and modes of communication.

Thus, there is no question of the significance or global nature of postmodern cultural forms, but it is not certain that the postmodern is yet the dominant as Jameson (1984, 1991) claims. Rather, much of the world lives in a nonsynchronous, overdetermined mixture of the traditional, modern, and postmodern, with these cultural forms often synthesized and overlapping. Indeed, we have been arguing that even in more advanced capitalist countries, we are currently between the modern and the postmodern, in an interregnum between paradigms, experiencing the breakdown of modern theory, culture, and society and the emergence of new postmodern forms. This ferment in the contemporary situation, this transition from the modern to the postmodern, is dramatically apparent in the field of science, in which new postmodern paradigms are assaulting previous modern concepts, leading to controversies within and about contemporary science. Indeed, as we show in the next chapter, the emergence of postmodern forms of science is contributing to the genesis of a new postmodern paradigm that we delineate in Chapter 6.