

Good essay about blurred boundaries: capitalism, modernism and post-modernism

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The post-modern era, which is from the 1970s up to now, is defined as one dominated by computer technology and globalization. This cultural shift has had a profound effect on capitalism. Before the post-modern era, First World countries were involved in a Modern Industrial Age. The Industrial age focused on mass production while the post-modern era focuses on the production of specialized items for niche markets. Producers only have access to these niche markets due to globalization and the connectivity of the Internet. On the other hand, perhaps these niche markets only developed because of the ability of the relative minority to connect through technology and develop their own consumption patterns (Wood 1997).

Modernity was a Ninetieth Century movement that made popular many ideas such as: science as universal truth, technology, and rational thought (Wood 1997). Post-modernity rejects the ideas of universal theory in favor of fragmented ideas that exemplify personal philosophies. However, modern ideas, including science and technology, for the most part, still dominate public life.

The idea of capitalism was born of the modern era, but, in the article *Modernity, Postmodernity or Capitalism?* Wood argues that the identification of capitalism with modernity is false (1997). She believes that capitalism should be more closely identified with the post-modern era because post-modernity highlights the gap between those able to participate in capitalism and those who are not able to participate because of poverty or third-world status. Wood believes that capitalism is a fluid thing that has always existed and it is only the light of post-modernity that the world is able to full grasp the concept. She states, “ it [capitalism] only needs to be released from its

chains - for instance, from the fetters of feudalism - to be allowed to grow and mature," (Wood, 1997 p 542).

Post-Modernity, Religiosity and Gens X and Y

Similar to capitalism, religion has always existed, but unlike capitalism, modernity and post-modernity threaten to dissolve the institution. While modernity emphasized science, which could reduce religion to superstition, posts-modernity champions individual paths. At first, this break seems to suggest that members of Generations X and Y, those born and raised in the post-modern era, might flock towards religion as an expression of their personal beliefs. But, that is not what happened. Instead, access to information has allowed people to craft their own belief systems and few of these systems look like institutionalized religion. Those who choose may use access to information to disprove religion altogether.

Conclusion

While technology allows people to personalize their lives, search for unique information, and fore their own paths, capitalism will always be a force that brings people together. There are certain products and services that almost everyone wants and needs, food, housing, and entertainment are some of these goods. As technology progresses, new necessary products, such as the Internet and cell phones, become available to a world wide consumer base. Types of food and types of cell phones may become more unique and fragmented as people demand personalized goods and niche producers rise to the occasion. Capitalism should not be tied with modernity any more than religion should be tied with it. While religion and capitalism have always

been a part of the human landscape, the purpose and shape of these institutions change along with times.

References

Wood, Ellen M., (1997) Modernity, Postmodernity or Capitalism?. Review of International Political Economy, Vol. 4, No. 3, The Direction of Contemporary Capitalism (Autumn, 1997), pp. 539-560. Taylor & Francis, Ltd.