

Contend
postmodernism
represents a break
cultural studies essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Introduction (254)

After the Second World War, the modern socialist construction occupies an important position. Modernist architecture has been described as an innovation in 18th century art and architecture. Van Der Rohe said " Less is more" in 1959 (Gössel and Leuthäuser, 2001, p 225). From that moment, architecture style went back to basics. It reduced architecture's ornamentation of the buildings in order to reveal its structure which it returned to the essential (Ruby, Sachs and Ursprung, 2003, p 24). The modernist notion of architecture that is it should be devoid of links with tradition and produce a technologically rational, austere and functionalist architecture. However, some modernist architects had different theories of architecture. In the United States and Western Europe architects are against wanted to correct it since the 1960s. For example, some people in postmodern architecture, such as Robert Venturi, Philip Johnson and Michael Graves, wanted proposed views and styles, doubts and criticisms. According to the schizophrenic solution Jencks on his book Critical Modernism defined that architecture is professionally based and popular and new techniques and old patterns (Jencks, 2007). Postmodernism is the continuation and transcendence of the modernism, also it has double meaning as the continuation of modernism and its transcendence. Michael Graves played a key role in the postmodern architecture which is a transition between abstract modernism and postmodernism (arch daily, 2012). This essay will use Michael Graves's development strategy to analysis and discuss postmodern architecture is devoid of links with traditions, produce a technologically rational, and functionalist, but it is no austere. Modernism/

Postmodern: (422)The modernism in architecture is a rejection of historic precedents and tradition, strongly focus on the function and the use of new technology. There are three defined principles of the modern movement which include architecture as volume, regularity and avoidance of decoration (Hitchcock, Johnson, 1932). Modernism architecture disregard for the historical context, it is a response to the Second World War. Louis Sullivan in 1896 proposes that Form follows Function. This principle associated with modern architecture. It means the form of the building should be based on its function or purpose. The key architecture of the modernist architects included Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Louis Sullivan. Le Corbusier states five principles in the modern architecture in 1912 which include: pilotis (columns support the building on the ground) □ roof gardens (flat roof and platform on the roof) □ free plan (the wall freely to move within the space without being confined by structure) □ Horizontal window (which express the non structural character of the external walls); free facade which is the free design of the facades of the building) (Wintle, 1981). This principle is highly influence the modern architecture in the 1900s. The key materials used of modernism architecture which are concrete, steel and glass. The direct consequence of the modern movement is the postmodern movement. Postmodernism reacts against modernism. The key aims of the postmodernism which is architecture should look back to the past for inspiration of history and tradition, ideas of complexity theory, double coding, irony and cultural context (Jenks, 2007). Robert Venturis also in his first book, complexity and contradiction in architecture (1966), he states that use a series of visual preferences against modernism and less is bore. For example: complexity and contradiction vs simplification □ ambiguity and <https://assignbuster.com/contend-postmodernism-represents-a-break-cultural-studies-essay/>

tension rather than straightforwardness; 'both- and' rather than 'either- or', doubly-functioning elements rather than singly working ones, hybrid rather than pure elements and messy vitality (or 'different whole') rather than obvious unity (Jencks, 1991[p 70]). Robert Venturi rebutting Mies Van Der Rohe in his book complexity and contradiction in architecture (1966), he declared "Blatant simplification means bland architecture, it is meaningless." Postmodern architecture is against elitism and mistake of modernism (Jencks, 1991). They are preferred use history elements into his own work, such like Mannerist, Baroque and Rococo. In addition, Postmodern architecture is professionally based on new techniques and old pattern (Jencks, 2007). As well as, Michael Graves use of color, texture, and classical allusion as his design strategy to defied modernist principles. Michael Graves developed strategies (356) Michael Graves has been interest in drawing and painting since his childhood that has continued to his career in architecture. He spend two years in Rome, studying painting and drawing the building and the landscape. During that moment, Michael Graves was not only critic and analysis the great classical architecture, also exposed to the literature of criticism of architecture. This experiences influence his academic career as well as his architectural design. As shown in Figure 1, his early painting was very colourful and abstractive. Michael Graves identified as one of The New York Five in him early career. New York Five include Peter Eisenman, Richard Meier, Charles Gwathmey, Michael Graves and John Hejduk and appeared in 1969 (Gelernter, 2001). They all believe pure form of architectural modernism, then attempted to follow Le Corbusier's austere white house of the 1920s (Gelernter, 2001). They wished architecture form should without content. For them, designing only need concern geometry

<https://assignbuster.com/contend-postmodernism-represents-a-break-cultural-studies-essay/>

and shapes, without concern there meanings. Michael Graves played a significant role in transition between abstract modernism and postmodernism, he's work representation was a sense of playfulness and sophistication by using a clear point of view. His design style has huge change, from early modernist style to a series of a classical interest of abstract collage of postmodern architecture, Michael Graves uses traditional elements such as typically through arches, columns and pediments to balance with is building, and also exploration with color against with modern architecture in his later work (architecture biography, nd). Michael Graves start evolved relative use of color and figurative architecture that incorporates traditional elements, then disregard for modernism architecture when he start his own work. Martin Filler said: " The man who is rewriting the language of color" (architecture biography, nd). Michael Graves uses colours represent nature and materials. For example, He uses terra cotta to represent the earth; this color always shows at the base of his structure. He uses blue metaphor for the sky, is often show for the ceiling of the building. Michael Graves uses color as symbolism in his architecture work. This architecture composition influenced his design of building in the exterior and interior.

Michael Graves – Portland public services building, 1980-82

The Portland public serves building built in 1980-82; it is a municipal office building in Portland, Oregon of United States. Portland building is a 15-story innovative high-rise building. Michael Graves completely rejects the modernist principles of his earlier works. The building response to postmodernist, by unorthodox use of color, classical elements allusion defied

modernist principles. Jencks (2007) in his book *Critical Modernism* proposed "the building looks like a box with decorations." The base of the building structure was placed on a green-tiled base. As shown in the Figure 2, on the front facade, it decorated by the classical elements, such as projecting capitals, abstract pilasters and roman keystone. As shown in the Figure 3, on the Back facade, it placed four pilasters against glass reflections and a garland motif (Kimball & Edgell, 2002, p600).

History context

The modernist architecture decorated building to look technological and rational. However, Michael Graves realized that architecture should decorated by different stylistic principle (Gelernter, 2001, p302). The significant of the Portland building was a return to neoclassicism building, for example, on the facade; it was use art, ornament and symbolism to explain traditional language. The reason of Michael Graves used art and ornament on the facade was because it represents return architecture to the wider western tradition of classicism the free-style tradition (Galinsky, 1992, p4). Multistory pilasters are surrounding by three-meter-high projecting "capitals," above of the capitals which tinted strip window (javin □□□).

Galinsky (1992) in his book proposed "The earth-red tiled walls form a five-keystone, which incorporated modernist strip windows, pierced at the centre by a romantic belvedere which convincingly reasserts human scale". Vaguely Art Deco garlands frozen in mid-flap added additional ornament to the side facades, while a stylized classical temple capped the top. There has a bronze statue of the Portlandia kneels on a podium at the west side of the building. The abstract sculpture is emphatically rejecting the modernist principle, also

strongly support to the older tradition of figural in public statuary. It is meaning this building is not a modernist box. Modernist architecture typically uses primary color on the facade of the building. However, Graves unorthodox use of color represents nature and materials in his design. In this building, he complexly mixed color like rusts, ochre, steely blues and terra cotta. Graves use terra-cotta tile and energetic color in his design, because it inspired by Italy architectures. This project was blatantly attacked the modernists in 1980s. Modernists strongly objected to the Portland building. It states that building ornamentation has no relationship to the structure or construction. The Portland building is the first large-scale postmodern structure in the US. Michael Graves notices modern skyscrapers were without context and boring. In this building, stylistic features include small windows, columns on the sides and bottom, keystones, pilaster and columns at the top. The ribbons on north and south sides of the building, those were originally supposed to be drapes.

Double coding

In the architecture of Michael Graves, he uses three oppositional subsystems, such as such as column/ wall, volume/ column, volume/ wall, to combine classicism and modernism (Gandelsons & Morton, 1980). His buildings have the characteristic of postmodern architecture, and double meanings. Jagodzinski (1997) in his book point out that " Michael Graves contends that technology has released certain architectural units from their original functions so that the column and the wall can act like empty signs which the architect uses as he pleases". Jencks states that use historical elements and decoration into the building, but no clear belong to any one

definite historical style. Jencks in his book calls double coding, which is use architecture language to communicate with user of the building and architectures (Jencks, 2007, p49). Michael Graves use double coding into the Portland building, for example, the Portland building describe of " post-modern Architecture" as " half-Modern, half-conventional", it combines modernist functionalism forms and classical columns and ornamental motifs of premodern architecture(Friedberg, 1993, p160). Jencks defines postmodernism most assertively in term of style: a " double-coding" of elite and the popular, the old and the new, a continuation of modernism and its transcendence (Friedberg, 1993, p160).