

# POSTMODERNITY AND POSTMODERNISM

- Problems with defining the term
- problem to distinguish it from modernism
- a radical break from modernism

- Beginning: the 1960s, with the rise of postmodern architecture
- Beginning: WWII
- End: the turn of millenium/ the fall of the twin towers. Today: post-postmodern time.
- No end yet: we still live in a postmodern age

# Ihab Hassan: *The Dismemberment of Orpheus* (1998)

<b>Modernism vs Postmodernism</b>	
<i>Modernism</i>	<i>Postmodernism</i>
purpose	play
design	chance
hierarchy	anarchy
finished work	process
presence	absence
depth	surface
signified	signifier

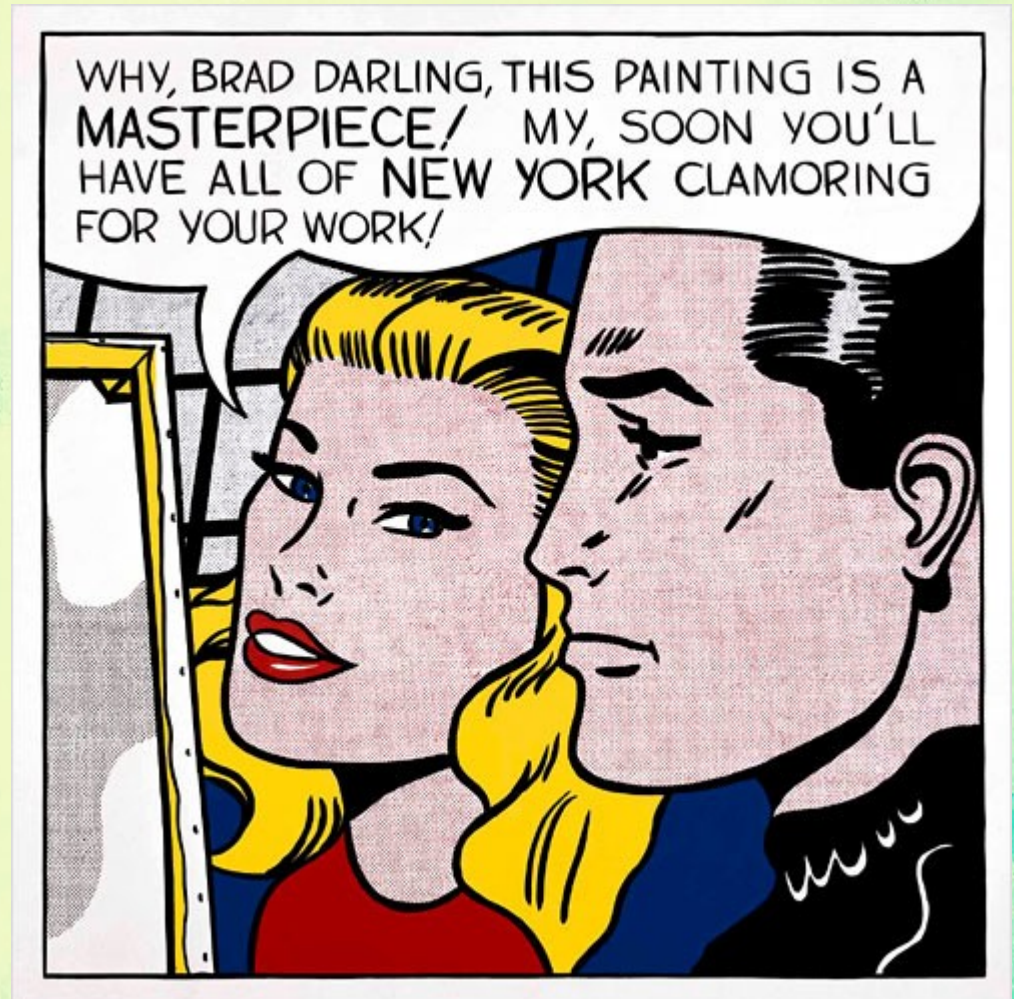


# Postmodern features

## 1) **extreme self-reflexivity**

making reference  
to its own  
artificiality

Roy Lichtenstein:  
Masterpiece (1962)



## 2) irony and parody

the tendency of postmodern artists, theorists, and culture to be playful or parodic

<http://www.albinoblacksheep.com/flash/has>



The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975)



### 3) a breakdown between high and low cultural forms

Postmodernists often employ pop and mass-produced objects in understandable ways, even if their goals are still often complex



Andy Warhol's commentary on mass production

## 4) a questioning of grand narratives

Questioning such traditional concepts as law, religion, subjectivity, nationhood

Madonna videos questioning traditional Christianity ("Like a Prayer"), gender divisions ("What It Feels like for a Girl")

### Queen

(I want to break free)  
I want to break free from your lies  
You're so self satisfied I don't need you  
I've want to break free  
God knows, God knows I want to break free

....

It's strange but it's true  
I can't get over the way you love me like you do  
But I have to be sure  
When I walk out that door  
Oh how I want to be free, baby  
Oh how I want to break free



## **6) visuality and the simulacrum**

predominance of visual media (tv, film, media advertising, the computer), the line separating reality and representation has broken down

films:

Blade Runner

Matrix

Total Recall



# postmodern authors

- Vladimir Nabokov
- John Barth
- Donald Barthelme
- Kurt Vonnegut
- Thomas Pynchon
- E. L. Doctorow
- Kathy Acker
- Ursula Le Guin
- Paul Auster
- Don DeLillo