

A Requiem for Postmodernism— Whither Now?

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The Certain Doom of Postmodernism

Postmodernism is highly overrated.¹ While one theologian after another is rushing to turn out books and articles about some aspect or implication about “the end of modernism” and “the implications of postmodernism,” I assert that postmodernism is overrated and predict that it will come to a certain and perhaps soon demise, or at least will be relegated to the realm of “curious but passé.”

First of all, modernism (which holds that reason is autonomous and that scientific truth is normative and universal, and which propounds amelioristic optimism and proud confidence in technological fixes), while not the only worldview, is still alive and well at the educational and cultural shaping institutions of western Europe and North America. In speaking recently with graduate students at two major Ivy League research universities in North America, the Ph.D. students said that while one did certainly find postmodern thought on the campuses (particularly in English and related departments), the intellectual culture of the university was still predominantly modern.² They frankly said that they basically ignored postmodernism.³ One only has to skim the university press catalogues to find out that modernism is alive and well. Ironically Foucault, Derrida, and other French postmodernist thinkers have been passé in France for a good while, substituted by a generation of younger scholars one can only call

“neoconservatives” (see further below).

Second, the simple reason why postmodernism’s days are numbered is that it commits epistemological suicide. Postmodernism holds to the premise that truth is a “social construct” and “truth” is whatever your colleagues let you get by with.⁴ If that is the case, then postmodern thought is also just another social construct and has neither universal nor normative force. Therefore there is no reason that I or anyone else should be compelled to let it be a normative criterion to shape and determine my beliefs. And if one takes their idea of “the hermeneutics of suspicion” seriously, then there is every reason to believe that their whole academic exercise is simply a thinly veiled disguise to get political power over anyone who holds a view different than their own.⁵ Particularly since they have shown their hand, I will not be taken in by their verbal con game. Most simply stated, postmodernism is guilty of being self-referentially absurd. When one has given up the idea of normative, universal and absolute truth, there is no reason whatsoever to take what they say as true (particularly since they have conceded up front that “truth” does not even exist).

There have been several excellent critiques of postmodern thought from an evangelical Christian and solid philosophical perspective.⁶ This paper will not add to those critiques. It commends those who have resisted reshaping theology to conform to yet another outside philosophical influence. The study of his-

torical theology is often a study of how theology has been shaped and conformed to alien ideologies and philosophies that have had the effect of neutering the basic content of historic orthodox Christian theology. Sometimes Christian thought needs to challenge and contest philosophy, not conform to its demands. Process theology is a perfect example of a philosophy to which theology has been conformed.

Let's take process theology as an example. Here is a philosophy that rarely lives in philosophy departments, except as a relic in the history of philosophy division, since its credibility as a philosophical system has been fundamentally rejected. Yet it lives on as a parasite in theology departments. The same may well be the destiny for "postmodern thought." Solid work has demonstrated the deficiency of the thought of those evangelicals all too ready to reshape doctrine and their agenda to conform to some of the major tenets of postmodernism. The common fundamental error of such scholars is in making the false assumption that the evangelical scholarly approaches they criticize have "sold out" to modernism.⁷ The great irony is that Carl F. H. Henry is often singled out as the most egregious example of an evangelical whose system is determined (or undermined?) by modernism. Henry, in his great six volume work *God, Revelation and Authority*, has been one of the severest critics of the Enlightenment's view of the sufficiency of autonomous human reason unaided by revelation, has fundamentally decried the naïveté of secular humanism's amelioristic optimism and would categorically deny that science is savior.⁸ He also knows that human reason and the laws of logic were not an invention of the Enlightenment. When one reads certain writers on

postmodernism (including some evangelicals), one would get the impression (if one did not know better) that reason, along with its attendant inferences of the reality of objective truth and the legitimacy of a rational defense of the faith, is the illegitimate child of the Enlightenment. Several have indeed suggested the abandonment of apologetics and the natural theology project. While most evangelicals enamoured with postmodernism say that they do not want to give up the "metanarrative" truth claims of the Christian faith, they do think that a rational defense of the faith is not a legitimate area to which Christians should give attention. What the church needs, it is said, is not apologetics or the rational defense of the faith,⁹ but a loving and caring Christian community (for that is a postmodern priority). No doubt it is of the highest priority for the church to be a caring and loving body (this is not just postmodern; this is simply biblical). One cannot avoid the following embarrassing question, however: How do we adjudicate between conflicting truth claims (religious or otherwise)? Moonies or Mormons may well have equally caring communities with Christians. Then what? Like it or not, if one is going to make a truth claim for the Christian faith, reason and the testing of truth claims will play a significant role in the process.

The Coming Transmodern Period?

Since both modernism and postmodernism have been dealt with substantively and, in this writer's opinion, adequately, the question we shall examine is not from whence the culture has come or where it is (premodern, modern, postmodern), but whither shall it go. Paul Vitz has suggested that it is time for conferences on

“The Death of Postmodernism.” He sees indicators of a new transition in culture on the horizon that he calls the coming transmodern period. By transmodern, he means “something that *transforms* modernism, something that *transcends* it and moves beyond it. In doing this, it certainly does not reject all things modern, and thus it is far from a reactionary vision of the future.”¹⁰ Trans-modernism would indeed constitute a rejection of both the overreaching claims of modernism and the nihilistic absurdity of postmodernism, while benefiting from positive contributions of both. Is there evidence for “the birth of this new ideal of hope, of wisdom, of virtue and the good, of beauty and harmony, . . . the resurrection of classicism and other pre-modern concepts in the different arts and the intellectual life itself”?¹¹

Indicators of the quiet dawning of this new vision are discernable from several segments of our culture, including music, architecture, the visual arts, poetry, literature, and the core of intellectual tradition, including philosophy and moral theory. While it is too soon to identify a movement (even as it is difficult to identify a postmodern “movement”), there are common characteristics and a shared vision that appears to be emerging at varied, unexpected, and non-coordinated places.

Transmodernism in Music?

In music, an alternative to John Cage’s music of irrationality and chance is appearing: a music that is informed from beyond modernistic or postmodern naturalism. While American composer Terry Riley (who was called the greatest pianist since Prokofiev in his reviews at the Sergei Kuryokin Festival in St. Petersburg)¹² and John Adams (whose works have been performed by major European orchestras and

virtually every major orchestra in the USA),¹³ are minimalists with an Eastern spiritual bent, there is a virtual wave of non-pop musicians who are influenced by explicit classical Trinitarian Theism. This is a sign of a change in the wind.

When a classical album rises to Number 6 on the British charts right behind Paul McCartney (*Gramophone’s* “Best-selling CD in 1993”), prompts a review by *Rolling Stone* magazine, and is introduced into mainstream retailers like Sound Warehouse so that the CD is found on the checkout counter in Muleshoe, Texas, even the most casual cultural observer begins to notice that there’s a disturbance in the cultural force. Such was the case at the 1992 release of Catholic and Polish composer Henryk Gorecki’s *Third Symphony*. Gorecki has been associated with the avant-garde wing of contemporary classical music. The *Third Symphony* was composed in 1976 and the title is “Symphony of Sorrowful Songs.”

He grew up in the Polish town of Katowice, an unknown town except for its neighbor—Oswiecim, called Auschwitz in German. The texts of the three movements that drive the symphony are (1) a lamentation of 15th century monks; (2) a prayer by a teenager imprisoned by the Gestapo written on a wall where she tries to find the good out of her dire circumstances; and (3) the demanding question of a mother who asks, “Why did you kill my son?” While the work is appropriately titled sorrowful, it nevertheless clings to vestiges of hope in the face of despair. Gorecki saw his art as a form of prayer and he has continued to produce significant works “carrying forth the musical, emotional and spiritual concerns with which he has been preoccupied from the beginning.”¹⁴

Many people all over the world were introduced to the works of John Tavener when his composition was featured at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. Tavener joined the Russian Orthodox communion in 1977, and his spiritual concerns have been prominent in his numerous works since then. The desire that shapes his work is to “create an icon in sound.”¹⁵ His *Fall and Resurrection*, which premiered in January 2000 in London at St. Paul’s was wildly popular. In the same year he was knighted for his “Services to Music.”

Arvo Part is an Estonian who has incorporated Russian Orthodox spirituality into his minimalist compositions.¹⁶ It has been said, “by means of almost purely tonal structure, frequently broken triads and scales, Part creates an inner balance of form and harmony, which can be understood in terms of his deep religious faith and inclination to mysticism.”¹⁷

Acclaimed as “the foremost composer of the Nineties,” Scottish composer James MacMillan’s “music is notable for its extraordinary directness, energy and emotional power. Strongly-held religious (which in his own words he calls a “spiritual anchor”) and political beliefs coupled with community concerns inform both the spirit and subject matter of his music.”¹⁸ MacMillan’s setting of the *Magnificat* has been performed at Wells Cathedral (and BBC’s Radio Three Evensong) and he collaborated on *Parthenogenesis* (the Virgin Birth), “an extended song-cycle with theatrical potential ... featured in the first BBC Philharmonic’s mini-series, MacMillan in Manchester.” The story of the Virgin Birth as a theatrical production in the West End of London would send a significant cultural signal.

Paradigm shifts come rarely in any

discipline, whether science or music. But pop musical prognosticators have said that there is a new rock group on the horizon that will redefine rock music in much the same way that the Beatles did. Simon Raymonde was so impressed with the Denton, Texas group “Lift to Experience” that he exclaimed that they represented “the future of music” (presumably rock music).¹⁹ After hearing the group perform at the famed South by Southwest musical showcase in Austin, Texas, Raymonde and his “Cocteau Twins” musical partner Robin Guthrie signed the unknown group to the Bella Union label of London that very night. (If you have never heard of these names, it would be like saying you had never heard of Mozart in the classical world!). One critic said, “they use dynamics and instrumentation to surround you and draw you into the mood they create. One of the ways that mood is created is through emotion-filled lyrics that are full of gospel and cultural references.”²⁰ The band learned church hymns and gospel songs from the cradle in central Texas, and those roots are evident in their music and ethos. In May and June of 2000 the band took Europe by storm with the release of their new CD *The Texas-Jerusalem Crossroads*.

Contemporary rock bands rarely are fundamentally influenced and shaped by a Trinitarian theistic belief system and a naturalistic postmodern ethos frequently finds a comfortable home there. Occasionally a Christian pop singer will “cross over” into the secular market—but that only means that they are better than the average pale imitation of the secular culture that Contemporary Christian Music is. As one prolific Christian songwriter admitted, “for the most part (contemporary Christian music) is a homogenized

knock-off of pop music.” While contemporary Christian music has no doubt served the Christian subculture, it has always lacked a distinct identity as a musical discipline and has failed to affect the musical culture at large—CCM is almost always an imitation (often of inferior quality) of secular music.

A paradigm shift happens only with extreme infrequency. But it seems that “Lift to Experience” may indicate that a paradigm shift is underway. Another critic has written,

many of the vocal parts had a lonesome 21st century cowboy sound to them that exists somewhere between Pedro the Lion and U2’s “MLK.” There is so much invention and originality in this group; they take the whole wall-of-noise-with-romantic-melodies shoe gazer sound into the 21st century and make every shoe gazer band before them sound anachronistic. The lyrics are some of the few in popular music that have a mature understanding of Christianity and a genuine, heartfelt sense of worship and longing for the Creator, quoting scriptural concepts and phrases while leaving out the Christianese cliches. All this in pioneering, cutting-edge music for a change! This is what music is supposed to do—touch the heart in the deepest, softest place and enrich the life of the listener.²¹

Transmodernism in the Arts?

In the world of the arts, publications like *Image* and the *American Arts Quarterly* have provided a forum for this new wave. *Image* in particular intentionally explores the relationship between the Judeo-Christian faith and the various arts. In nominating *Image* for its twelfth annual Alternative Press Awards, the *Utne Reader* said, “taking to task the representation of spirituality and religion in the arts, this quarterly journal digs into the depths of a

taboo subject: what it means to be a spiritual being in the modern world.”²² One artist featured, for example, is Mary McCleary, whose work represents a “fullness of vision.... It is a particular and peculiar kind of fullness, one that is engorged with the fecundity of earth and the senses, and yet simultaneously inhabited by a silent and spiritual presence hovering—both immanent and transcendent—amidst all that is sensuous and of the earth.”²³

“Transmodern art” is not breaking onto the scene without controversy. An intense debate went on at the Norwegian Academy of the Arts and in the newspapers of Norway in the mid 1990s over the issue of whether the Academy should offer classes in traditional figurative painting—seen by many as reverting to a reactionary classical education and a rejection of modernistic experimentation—and whether Odd Nerdrum, one of Norway’s best known artists, should teach these classes. In the end, he withdrew his candidacy but classical figurative painting was restored to the curriculum at the Academy.²⁴

Ian Hamilton Finlay, known as “Scotland’s leading concrete poet,” draws on classical traditions while presenting his poetry almost entirely through visual art—“an art which led naturally to the arrangement of words on stone, wood, and other materials ... (which) led naturally to the art of incorporating concrete poetry with garden design.”²⁵ In Englishman Roger Wagner’s art, one finds several strands of artistic tradition merging: biblical themes and the pastoral English landscape, as well as the Renaissance. Wagner’s work is fundamentally rooted in the belief that God’s love brings hope in the face of evil and despair. Through

his landscapes and still life paintings, American David Ligare affirms that “painting is not only about what is, but what must be done ... about goodness and morality ... and a renewed sense of humanist values and social responsibility.”²⁶ Art historian Charles Jencks says, Ligare “adopts unadulterated traditional conventions, but puts them to non-ideological use.”²⁷

Bruno Civitico, an Italian contemporary classical painter who now resides in Charleston, S.C., has specialized in the idealized female form. While he is not seen as a reactionary “resistant anti-modernist,” “classicism in the hands of Civitico is a traditional linguistic structure that is used to suggest a very contemporary story.”²⁸ Sculptor Frederick Hart, who has been called America’s greatest living representational artist, has challenged the accepted “wisdom” in the contemporary art world. Against the current he affirms that the chief criteria of his artwork is beauty and substance. “My work,” he says. “isn’t art for art’s sake, it’s about life. I have no patience with obscure or unintelligible art—I want to be understood.”²⁹ The Chairman Emeritus of the National Art Gallery, Washington, D.C. was quoted in the New York Times as saying, “in the contemporary spectrum Hart represents one end of it in comparison to contemporary sculptors who are working in total abstraction or dissolving the medium into mutations. In his chosen end of it, he was as good as they get, a superb craftsman, a deeply spiritual person who was concerned with spiritual values.”³⁰ His distinct contribution is summarized as follows: “In a century marked by nihilism, abstraction, and deconstruction, Hart exemplifies a returning tide to aesthetic and moral agendas embodied in the great

ages of art in the past.”³¹ A circle of artists and other people of letters (self-named “Centerists”) have gathered around Hart to perpetuate this vision with meetings and continued discussions.

Transmodernism in Architecture and Poetry?

Notice should also be made in the field of architecture. Leon Krier is probably most popularly known as the planner of Poundbury, a planned British town in Dorset (created under the sponsorship of the Prince of Wales). Similar New Urbanism ideas lie behind such communities as Seaside in Florida (the setting for *The Truman Show*). Krier’s goal is for architecture to help us understand our place in history and the world. This “humane classicism,” or “modernity of traditional architecture,” has been opposed by others in the discipline and he has been predictably called “reactionary.” In *Architecture: Choice or Fate* he argues that those architects are responsible for producing their own obsolescence: “As long as artists arbitrarily assume the right to decide what is or is not art it is logical that the public will just as arbitrarily feel that they have the right to reject it.”³²

As Dean of the School of Architecture at Notre Dame, Thomas Gordon Smith leads a revival of classicism—but with tradition continued in innovative and creative ways.³³ On January 11, 1997 Belgian architect Maurice Culot issued his “First Architectural Manifesto of the Operetta Style.”³⁴ Among the affirmations of the manifesto are: be “receptive to all periods in history”; “a building is successful when it conveys the impression that it has always existed”; “claim cross-cultural interest in seeking inspiration in a wide range of revival styles”; and one is not to

simply reproduce those styles without thought but rather, “fearlessly commit ... to promoting local colour and ambience.”³⁵ These architects are not just reactionary but affirm that the past must be consulted for models of form and beauty.

Poet Dick Allen says, “we’ve gone on too long about how poetry should ‘show, rather than tell,’ when actually many—perhaps even most of our finest poems tell, make a judgment, are even didactic.”³⁶ Allen believes that poetry should play a role in changing people’s lives, and hence it has a teaching role. Poets, in other words, can assist people in changing their lives. The recovery of narrative and formalism is seen in Allen as well as poets like Jack Butler, Lewis Steele, Paul Lake, and Fred Feirstein, while the modern and postmodern dominated university has been passed by. In reviewing Feirstein’s *Ending the Twentieth Century*, Arthur Mortensen says that we are reminded

of what we nearly lost in the long academic obsession with confessional poetry. We nearly lost what we find in Feirstein’s narratives: character; coherent story; historical context; location; and all those details of life external to the author’s private thoughts that make poetry worth reading, nearly sacrificed on the alters of Modernism and post-Modernism, whose high priests presumed the telling of stories outside one’s self to be not possible.³⁷

Transmodernism in Philosophy?

In the more strictly philosophical tradition, Alexander Argyros in *A Blessed Rage for Order: Deconstruction, Evolution, and Chaos* levels a substantive critique of Derrida.³⁸ Argyros “presents a complex argument which attempts to align chaos theory to a cultural paradigm that posits an active role to the ‘natural world,’ thus offering ‘an alternative to the decon-

structive worldview,” leading to a vision of cooperation between science and art.³⁹ Frederick Turner argues that

recent research in many fields including comparative anthropology, performance theory, human evolution, neuroscience, oral literature, time studies, cosmological physics, ethology and chaos theory suggest a reconsideration of the whole topic of aesthetics, and promises to regroup the humanities in a radical way. The sense of beauty, it is proposed, is not just an individual preference based on psychobiographical contingencies or political power relations or arbitrary cultural fashions, but possesses, like language, a deep common structure. The genres of aesthetic experience seem to correspond to and describe real features of the objective universe—and may even compel us to question the easy poststructuralist dismissal of such concepts as “the objective universe.” A natural classicism may be possible, that would offer a new theoretical grounding for the next cultural era: the one that will succeed modernism, and its postscript, postmodernism.⁴⁰

If the gurus of postmodernism such as Foucault and Derrida are passé in their own homeland, what thinkers are beginning to shape philosophical thought in France today? One would find students reading such radical statements as the following from Philipps Beneton:

Tolerance is an ambiguous word greatly valued by the zeitgeist. Who dares declare himself against tolerance? There would be nothing left to say, however, if the contemporary idea of tolerance was not fundamentally distorted. Properly understood, tolerance implies respect for people but not agreement with their error or fault. Thus ideas do not have to be ‘tolerant’—it is enough if they are correct. Real tolerance, in other words, is not incompatible with either firm convictions or the desire to persuade others. Tolerance sim-

ply rejects force and intimidation toward those who think differently. But today tolerance generally signifies something else—initially it tends to be equated with relativism and then it is identified with new norms of human life and thought. Put differently, tolerance now speaks a double language: The Reduction of Truth to Opinion.⁴¹

Beneton challenges this reduction.

French political philosopher Pierre Manent argues that contemporary western liberal democracies find themselves in a situation where political life does not serve any higher purposes. He traces this idea back to Machiavelli, who desired to separate politics from any idea of a cosmological moral order. Manent says the West has found itself in a situation where it has rejected the laws of God and of nature in its quest for autonomy. The acquisition of this autonomy has come at a great loss: the meaning of humanity. Since everyone is autonomous and there are no objective common virtues, a common moral language of discourse has evaporated. The solution to this dilemma is to address the root causes by drawing upon the resources of both the classical and Christian tradition.⁴²

Lastly we turn to North American philosophy. Recent decades have shown a massive resurgence in the traditional philosophical disciplines from Christian theists. In recent years, books and articles written for the philosophical community from a Christian theistic perspective have flooded the press. The journal *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* has provided institutional support for influencing the discipline strategically.⁴³ Noticeable is its influence and direction in moral and political philosophy. Natural law theory has its ablest defender in John Finnis of Notre Dame.⁴⁴

Robert George of Princeton University, also a leading authority on natural law, defends objective truth, traditional marriage, and the sanctity of human life.⁴⁵ In a public debate, George won an amazing concession from a leading postmodernist, Stanley Fish, when Fish, who denies the existence of universal truths, admitted that important moral issues can be debated even when people proceed from very different starting points.⁴⁶

Western tradition from Aristotle to Aquinas has affirmed that moral law was innate. While modern philosophy has (1) fundamentally refuted that notion since man is reduced to mere “ideological reflexes” (Marxism), or (2) affirmed a distinction between “fact” and “value” (analytic philosophy), or (3) posited moral statements as a social construct/fiction (postmodernism à la Richard Rorty or Michael Foucault),⁴⁷ other thinkers are now pointing forward by looking backwards.

Alasdair MacIntyre leads the renewal of interest in the concept of virtue.⁴⁸ The language of moral discourse has been ripped from its historical context. So while we have words like “good” and “moral,” true moral reasoning has been undermined. Leaving Marxism behind, he draws upon the resources of both theology and the Aristotelian tradition. Martha Nussbaum, Bernard Williams, and Iris Murdoch (both in her technical philosophy as well as literary output) have led the attack against such contemporary cultural assumptions as Kant’s identification of morality with duty and Hume’s erroneous “Is/Ought” distinction.⁴⁹ In this same tradition Philippa Foot argues that virtue is necessary for happiness. As a theologian Stanley Hauerwas seeks to build up moral discourse within the

Christian community and wants to see virtue as a fundamental component of the Christian life.⁵⁰

James Q. Wilson argues in *The Moral Sense* against Thomas Hobbes (as well as the majority of contemporary philosophical theories of human behavior) that people have an innate moral sense, rooted in our biological make-up, while simultaneously being influenced by the environment and the socialization process. He argues that the cultural relativists focus too much on difference and not on cross-cultural similarities like fairness, self-control, and duty.⁵¹

It should also be noted that in the culture at large over one million copies of one Spanish Benedictine album have been sold, over two million hardcover copies of William Bennett's *The Book of Virtues* as well as several million copies of John Paul II's *Threshold of Hope* (1994), where he articulates a transmodern vision.

Conclusion

A new transmodern vision seems to be emerging from diverse disciplines. This vision is neither uniform nor monolithic. Nor is it necessarily theistic. But what it has in common is the rejection of the absolute claims of modernism (autonomous reason, amelioristic optimism) and the rejection of the fundamental premises of postmodernism (truth is a community fiction, morals are social constructs, and tradition and classical influence are undesirable and illegitimate). Transmodernists assert objective and normative truth without capitulating to a naturalistic scientism and affirm true moral values and virtues. They hold out beauty, harmony, and wisdom as real possible entities. Cynicism based on modernistic naturalism or postmodern "fictions" is substituted for

hope based on the very nature of things. I do not deem to predict the future of this movement—if indeed it can be called a movement. But there does seem to be movement on the horizon that might well indicate that a cultural paradigm shift is in the offing. Time will tell. However, as Christians, we already have a hope fundamentally grounded in One who guarantees our future, regardless of contemporary cultural movements.

ENDNOTES

¹Many challenge the legitimacy of the term "postmodern" and assert that in reality it should be called "ultra-modern" since postmodernism is in many ways the logical extension of modernism, or as Anthony Gideens calls it, the "radicalizing of modernity" (*The Consequences of Modernity* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990] 52). Paul Vitz calls it "morbid" modernism because "postmodernism ... is the dissolving of modern certainties using modern logic itself" (Paul Vitz, "The Future of the University: From Postmodern to Transmodern," in David Lyle Jeffrey and Dominic Manganiello, eds., *Rethinking the Future of the University* [Ottawa, Canada: University of Ottawa Press, 1998] 106).

²The politicization of the university with homosexual, feminist, and politically correct agendas has undermined the scholarly credibility of many academic disciplines. See Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

³One was a political philosophy major at Princeton University and the other in the humanities at Yale—one can find few if any postmodernists in the science departments—at least when they are ap-

plying the precepts to their own academic discipline.

⁴Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 6-7.

⁵M. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977) 162.

⁶For a sampling, see the following: Millard J. Erickson, *Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998); Roger Lundin, *The Culture of Interpretation: The Christian Faith and the Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Douglas Groothuis, *Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000); D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); Peter Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth: A Creative Proposal for a Postmodern Age* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1998); Dennis McCallum, ed., *The Death of Truth* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1996); and D. A. Carson, ed., *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000).

⁷For critiques of these evangelicals, see esp. Erickson's and Groothuis's works cited above.

⁸Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols. (Waco, Texas: Word, 1976-83).

⁹For example see the following: Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith:*

Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); and the essays in Chapters 7 and 8 in Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm, *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press: 1995). Ironically the publishers are probably producing more works on apologetics than ever before, and evangelical schools are teaching more apologetics than before. Also, churches specializing in reaching "postmoderns" often make great use of apologetics. Two examples of popular apologetics picked up by Harper Collins Publishers are Lee's Strobel's *The Case for Christ* (Zondervan/Harper Collins, 1998) and Jeffrey L. Sheler's *Is The Bible True? How Modern Debates and Discoveries Affirm the Essence of the Scriptures* (Zondervan/Harper Collins, 1999). Strobel was formerly a teaching pastor at Willow Creek Community Church (Chicago), known for reaching the secular culture. He is now on staff at Saddleback Valley Community Church in Southern California, holding a similar position that he had at Willow Creek.

¹⁰Vitz, 13.

¹¹Ibid., 116.

¹²<http://www.terryriley.com/biography.htm>.

¹³http://www.schirmer.com/composers/adams_bio.html.

¹⁴<http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish%5Fmusic/composer/gorecki.html>. For an extensive list of works, discography and bibliography, see the following: http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/

[VEPM/gorecki/gortitle.html](http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/VEPM/gorecki/gortitle.html).

¹⁵<http://www.schirmer.com/composers/tavener/bio.html>.

¹⁶Paul Hillier, *Arvo Part: Oxford Studies of Composers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁷http://members.dencity.com/metestudio/mete_arvo_period.htm.

¹⁸<http://www.peercom.com/partick2000/pages/conmusic.html>.

¹⁹<http://fakejazz.com/reviews/lift.shtml>.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹<http://dallasmusic.com/101600/lift101600.html>.

²²<http://www.imagejournal.org>.

²³Wayle L. Roose, "A Fullness of Vision: Mary McCleary's Collages," *Image* 23 (Summer 1999) 32.

²⁴For a sample of his works see: <http://www.nerdrum.com>. See the discussion of the issue from the Academy director's perspective (where he conceded that such classical training was making a comeback in Europe) see <http://www.norway.origo.no/culture/embla/art/pettersson.html>. For a very interesting and intriguing discussion of attempts to "change the guard" of the New York art establishment (complete with protests) see "Adieu to the Avant-Garde: As the Artistic Regime Shifts, Realism, Rhyme, and Representation Make a Comeback" by Kanchan Limaye in *Reason Online* at <http://www.reason.com/9707/fe.limaye.html>.

²⁵For a discussion of the history and development of concrete poetry see: <http://www.greenfairy.com/dissertation.intro.html>.

²⁶See <http://www.hackettfreedman>

gallery.com/hfg/html/contemp.html/ligare_html/ligare_main.html for some of his paintings.

²⁷Charles Jencks, *Post-Modernism: The New Classicism in Art and Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1987) 37.

²⁸http://www.free-times.com/reviews/art_reviews/civitico.html. Other artists to be considered in this wave would be James Aponovich's landscapes and still lifes and the works of John Stuart Ingle, Martha Mayer Erlebacher, and Audrey Flack. As evidence of a growing interest in this traditional approach to art pedagogy, the New York Academy of Art: Graduate School of Figurative Art in New York City attracts people from around the world to come and study traditional approaches to painting, figure drawing, anatomy and art history and sculpture. Ironically one of the founders of the institution in 1982 was Andy Warhol because he felt that his artistic preparation was lacking because of the absence of this kind of curriculum.

²⁹<http://www.frederickhart.com/hexton.html>.

³⁰<http://www.frederickhart.com>. See this site for a fair sampling of his works and bibliography.

³¹Ibid.

³²<http://www.salon.com/books/sneaks/1998/10/29sneaks.html>.

³³Thomas Gordon Smith, *Classical Architecture: Rule and Invention* (Layton, UT: G. M. Smith, Inc., 1988) presents the case for the revival of Classical forms and precepts.

³⁴<http://homepages.starnet.fr/>

Anciens%20abonn%C3%A9s/cesar.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶<http://www.csf.edu/countermeasures/colloquium7-4.html>.

³⁷<http://home.earthlink.net/~arthur505/rev996.html>. He continues: "Jump outside of poetry for a moment and imagine *Paths of Glory*, Stanley Kubrick's picture of the First World war. Take away the portraits of corrupt general officers, of the four young men condemned to die, of the colonel caught in the middle of a conspiracy. Take away the precisely observed life and death of trench warfare. Take away the enlisted men's club where Dietrich sang. Take away the refined insulation of the officers' club. What's left? Of course nothing is left. Yet for a long time after the Second World War, particularly since the late 1960's, critics and poets alike in America have debunked what is interesting in narratives, rationalizing that by saying that the storyteller's choices are only personal or political preferences, thus giving the lie to the narrator's claim to be able to tell a story outside of his or her own prejudices. What bunk! Of course authors pick according to their preferences; so do all human beings. Where there is a conjunction of an author's preferences with those of other people, an author gets an audience, and, if that conjunction lasts or reoccurs later on, the author will come back into fashion. So what? This is news? Frederick Feirstein has wondered about that kind of intellectual sleight-of-hand for decades, written essays about it,

demonstrated on behalf of different directions he felt were right, but his most significant action was to be one of the founders of the Expansive poetry movement, which for the last 20 years has been the most exciting source of poetry in America. For, in joining that cause, Feirstein bucked theory and went to work as a poet. The results, both here, and in his other books, are strong stories, vivid characters, and unforgettable locations, all conveyed with a poetic art as good as anyone in his generation."

³⁸See Alexander J. Argyros, *A Blessed Rage for Order: Deconstruction, Evolution and Chaos* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991) 2.

³⁹Barbara Riebling, "Remodelling Truth, Power, and Society: Implications of Chaos Theory, Nonequilibrium Dynamics, and Systems Science for the Study of Politics and Literature" in Nancy Easterlin and Barbara Riebling, eds., *After Post-structuralism: Interdisciplinarity and Literary Theory* (Evanston: Northwestern U.P., 1993) 177-202. For an introduction to chaos theory see James Gleick, *Chaos: Making A New Science* (London: Cardinal, 1988).

⁴⁰<http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/ah/cd/spring97/huas8390001.html>.

⁴¹<http://www.catholic.net/RCC/Periodicals/Crisis/Apr96/beneton.html>. See how this plays out in the human rights in Philipps Beneton, "The Languages of the Rights of Man," *First Things* 37 (November 1993) 9-12.

⁴²Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism* (Princeton:

Princeton University Press, 1996) and also *The City of Man* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

⁴³In the USA names such as Alvin Plantinga, George Mavrodes, Nicholas Wolterstorff, William P. Alston, Robert Adams, Robert Audi, Eleonore Stump, Peter van Inwagen and many others too numerous to name have made historic theism a force to be reckoned with in the philosophical world.

⁴⁴John Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) and *Moral Absolutes: Tradition, Revision and Truth* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1991).

⁴⁵Robert George, *Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) deals with public policy while his authority on natural law was established with *In Defense of Natural Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁴⁶Robert George had critiqued Fish's liberal views on abortion and particularly the issue whether the right to life of a fetus was a purely "religious" issue. Fish held that it was, until he was convinced by George's arguments and proceeded to publicly repudiate his former pro-choice views at the American Political Science Association. See story at: <http://www.boundless.org/1999/departments/isms/90000029.html>.

⁴⁷In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Rorty says that there is no normative and universal answer to the question, "why not be cruel." Of course, if morality is a fiction, then he is right. Ironically Rorty and Fou-

cault make all kinds of moral judgments but since the basis for those judgments has evaporated, the result is incoherence.

⁴⁸See especially Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989). For a helpful overview, see Edward T. Oakes, "The Achievement of Alasdair MacIntyre," *First Things* 65 (August/September 1996) 22-26.

⁴⁹For a summary of Murdoch's thought, life and complete bibliography see the following: <http://kirjasto.sci.fi/imurdoch.htm> and <http://murdoch.shape9.nl>. On the theological importance of Murdoch's writings see, Alan Jacobs, "Go(o)d in Iris Murdoch," *First Things* 50 (February 1995) 32-36. For a bibliography of Nussbaum's works see: <http://sun3.lib.uci.edu/individ/scctr/philosophy/nussbaum.html>.

⁵⁰Stanley Hauerwas, *Christians Among the Virtues* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), *Wilderness Wanderings: Probing Twentieth Century Theology and Philosophy* (New York: Westview, 1997), and *Sanctifying Them for the Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998) are three of his recent works that build his virtue-based Christian ethic.

⁵¹James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense* (New York: Free Press, 1995). A writer having a significant influence in the area of modern identity-formation is Canadian Charles Taylor

in his works *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) and *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). He deals foundationally with the formation of human identity. He affirms the inherent cultural worth in "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).