

College Lit

April 29-30, '14

Agenda

- 1st and 2nd Round Poetry Results? NOT SO FAST.
- TMMWLYGATCW/O #3-4
- Postmodernism
- For Next Time...

Poetry Madness Results!

- Here they are....
 - OH WAIT NO THEY'RE NOT BECAUSE TOO MANY PEOPLE SKIPPED CLASS MONDAY AND I DON'T EVEN HAVE EVERYBODY'S BRACKETS YET.
 - Get your bracket in if you haven't yet, and then I can share results.
 - HINT: SOME OF YOU ARE TOTALLY DOMINATING! AND THERE WERE SOME HUGE UPSETS (The poem that got the MOST votes for going ALL THE WAY was eliminated in the first round, for example. Ouch.).

More on that next time. In other news:

- TMMWLYGATCW/O #3
 - Get to know your professors.
- TMMWLYGATCW/O #4
 - About skipping classes...
 - Don't.
 - Get it out of your system early.
 - Don't skip classes from which people will notice you're missing.

-ISMS AGAIN!

- So far, you have four critical lenses to work with:
 - New Criticism (looking at how form and meaning intersect in a text)
 - New Historicism (looking at a text in its historical/cultural/political context)
 - Marxist Criticism (looking at messages about class/power in a text)
 - Feminist Criticism (looking at messages about gender roles in a text)
- You also have a philosophy to put in your toolshed:
 - Existentialism!
- Today, you're going to get something that's a combo of a philosophy and a literary movement. Plus, you get a couple of historical eras. Keep up, son!

Inventory of Attitudes about Truth

- Answer each question as thoughtfully and thoroughly as possible. If you don't understand the question, then ask.
- Feel free to discuss, but stay on task. We've got lots to do today, suckas—I mean, students!

These ideas/attitudes reflect...

- MODERNITY.
 - A time period spanning Western Civilization from the Age of Enlightenment (18th century) to, arguably, the mid-late 1900s.
 - Main ideas: Reason, Truth, Cause and Effect, Order.
 - (Modernism as an art movement was already starting to question this...)

And postmodernity is...what, exactly?

- POSTMODERNITY is a period in which there is a greater sociological tendency to REJECT or QUESTION enlightenment ideas about truth and language (the ones you responded to on the opinionnaire)
 - Reaction to *Modernity*
- In a postmodern world, people are more likely to disrupt “master narratives”—stories and explanations of the world that people of a culture take for granted as true

Remember modernism?

- **Everything is more complex and less certain than we once thought.**
- **Literature and the experience of reality it re-presents must be restructured to reflect this.**
- **In general, the fact that we can't depend on others or others' ideas to make sense of our life is a bit of a downer. *grimness***
- **Literature should be complex, layered, artfully crafted, symbolic, difficult.**
- **Let's quick read something modernist to remind ourselves of what it is.**

Modernism

- *Invisible Man*, T.S. Eliot's poems ("Lovesong," "Preludes")
- <http://poetry.rapgenius.com/Ts-eliot-the-love-song-of-j-alfred-prufrock-annotated>
- Informed by disillusion, chaos, existentialism, the feeling that the world has no logic, makes no sense.

**That was before
postmodernism.**

This! This is, on the other hand, sorta postmodern!

- Poetry a la Colbert
- <http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/216596/january-21-2009/elizabeth-alexander>

What is postmodernism, then?

- A philosophy and movement in art (literature, architecture, music, etc) in which the fragmentation started by modernism is expanded—exploded, really
 - Reaction to modernism

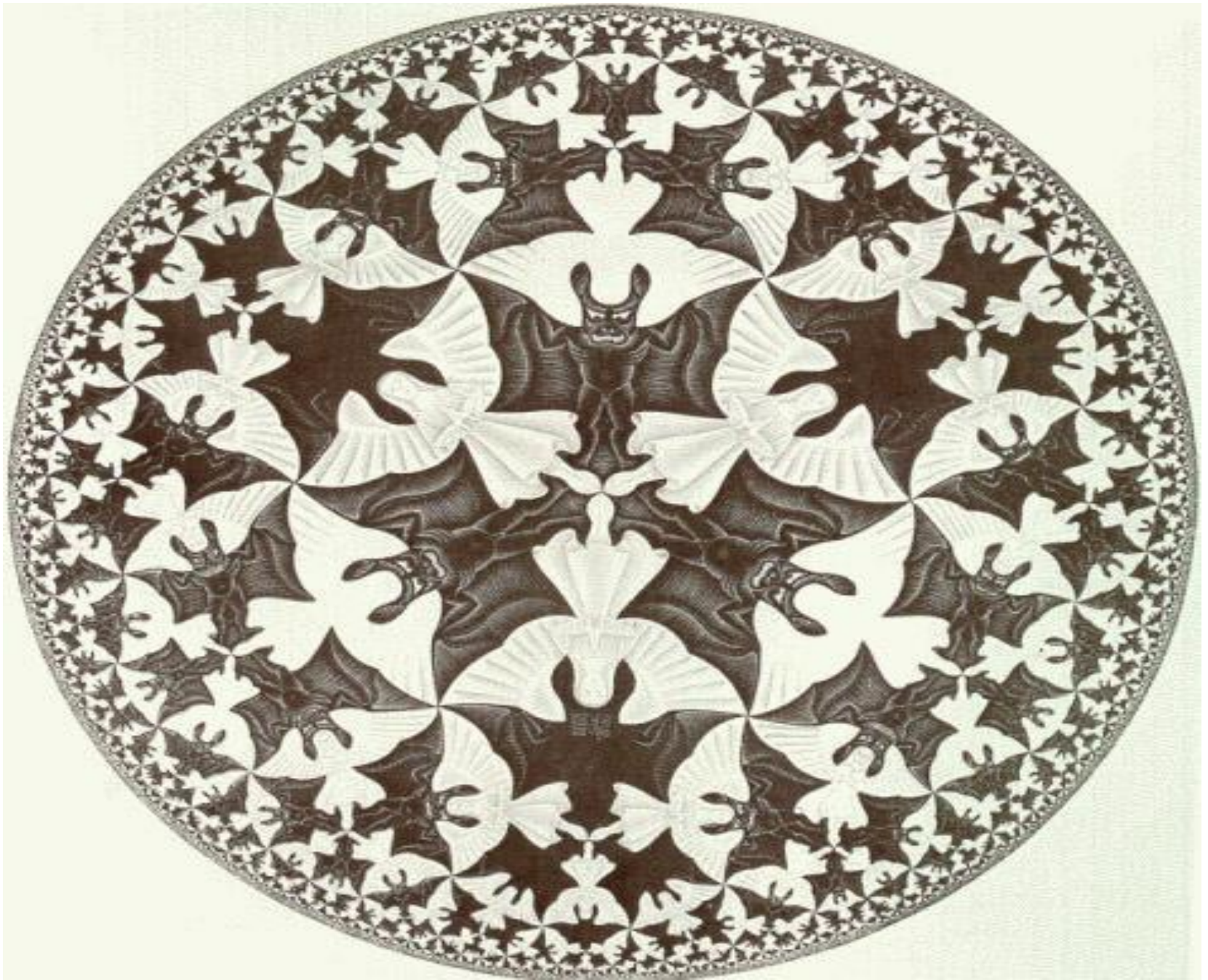
The postmodern attitude

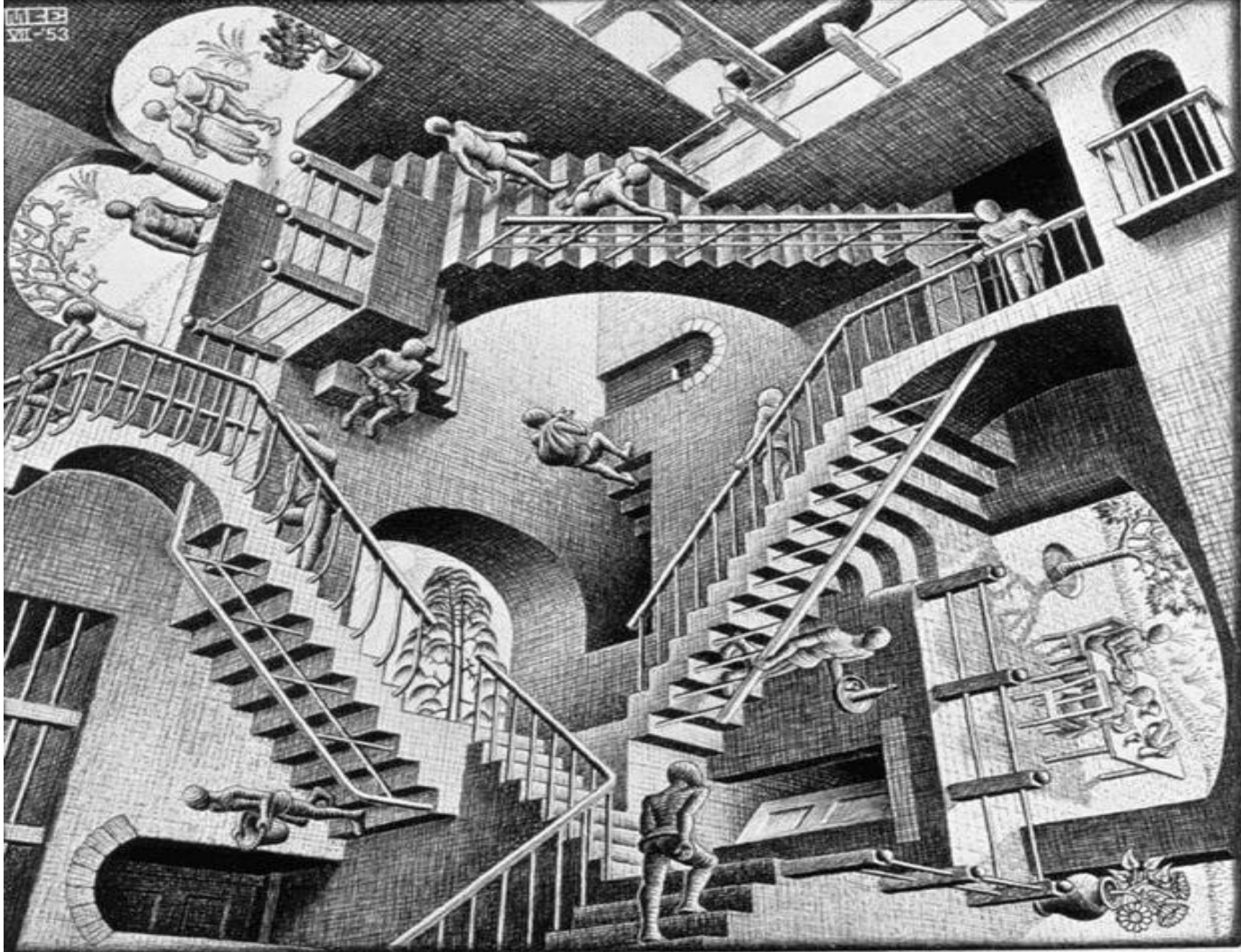
“Modernism... tends to present a fragmented view of history (as in, it's all random and senseless), but presents that fragmentation as something tragic, something to be lamented and mourned as a loss. Postmodernism, in contrast, doesn't lament the idea of fragmentation, but rather celebrates that. The world is meaningless? Let's not pretend that art can make meaning then, let's just play with nonsense.”

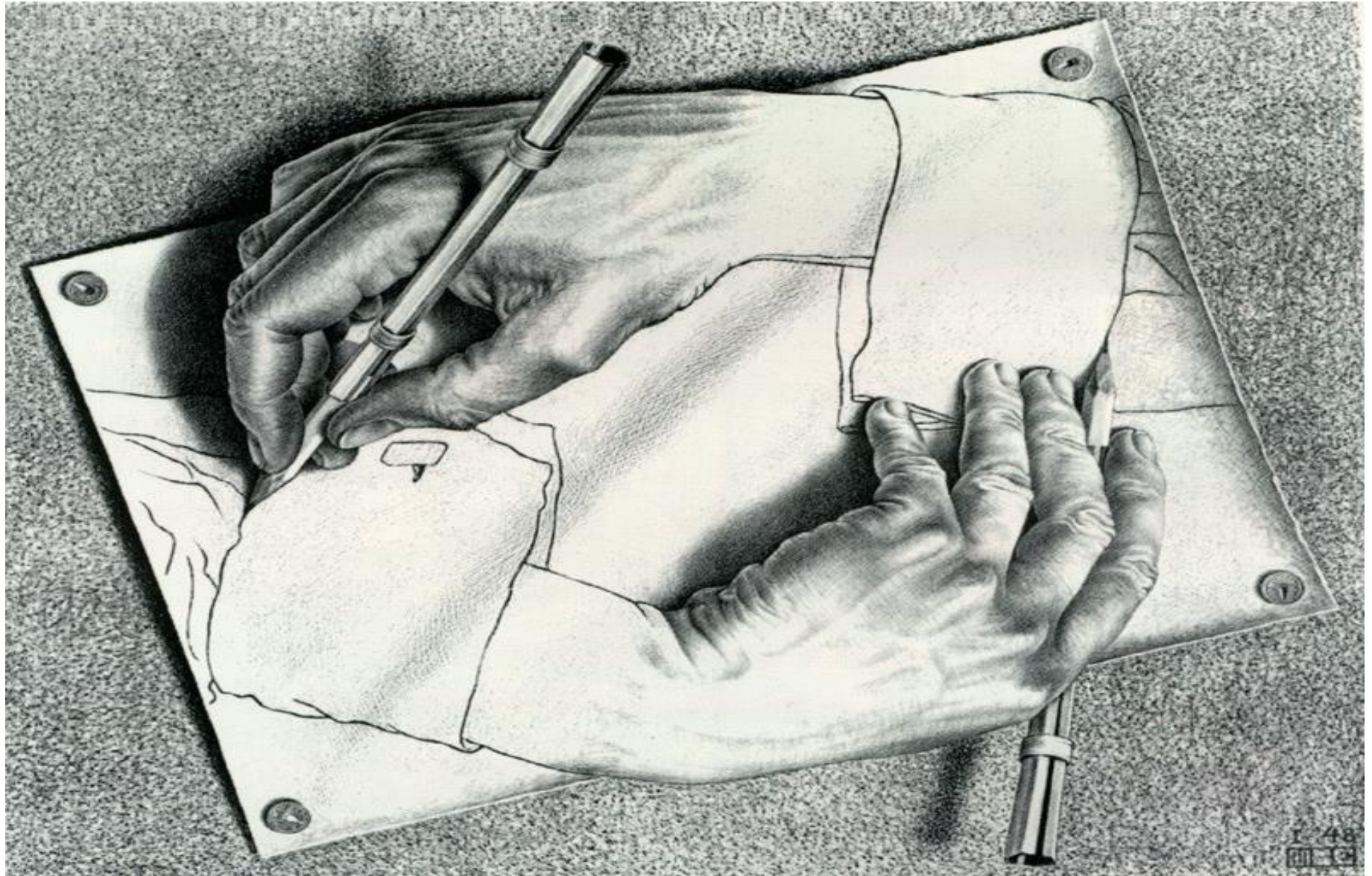
**“Everything you
know is wrong”:
Postmodernism
and Postmodernity**











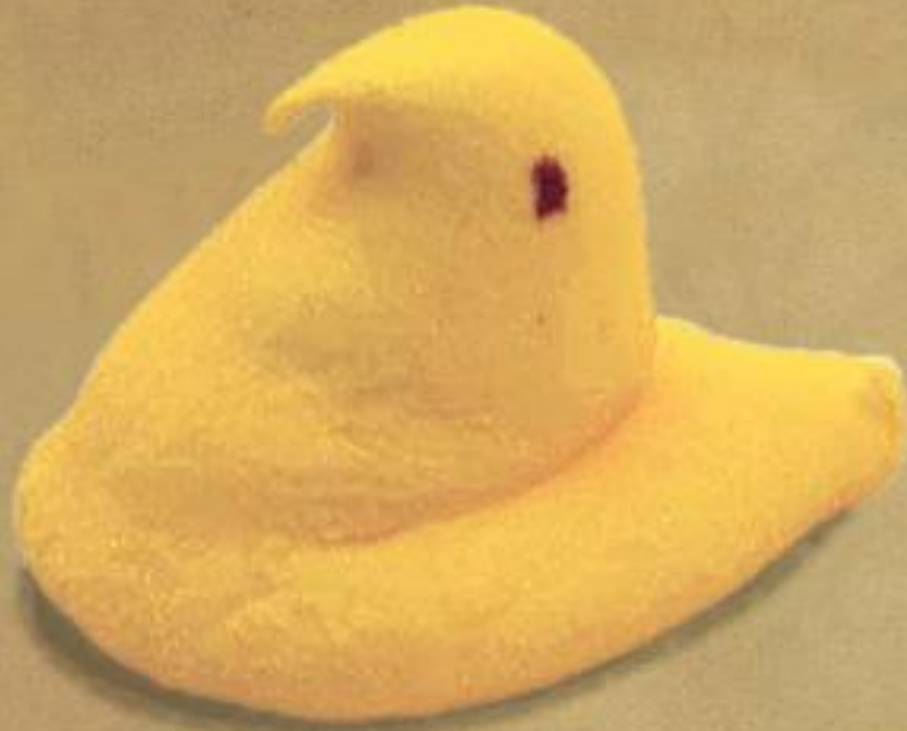
Common characteristics of postmodern literature and art

- Points out the “constructedness” of texts
 - calls attention to its own status as a production, as something constructed and consumed in particular ways
 - Focus on SURFACE rather than depth, reflecting the process of its own creation rather than some greater truth-purpose
- Dissolves borders—between “high” and “low” culture (pop culture); between genres; between “truth” and “fiction”

- Focuses on PLAY—with language; with “reality”; with the reader/viewer
- Tends toward fragmentation rather than unity—narratives are often disrupted or split in some way (extension of modernism here)
- Hyper-acknowledgement of INTERTEXTUALITY: “Nothing new under the sun”
 - The idea is that we can’t possibly say something without ripping somebody off/plagiarizing, so let’s play with that instead—let’s make blatant how OUR work rips off, comments on, or otherwise makes use of other texts.
 - Modernists started this with all their allusions...postmodern writers take it to the next level.

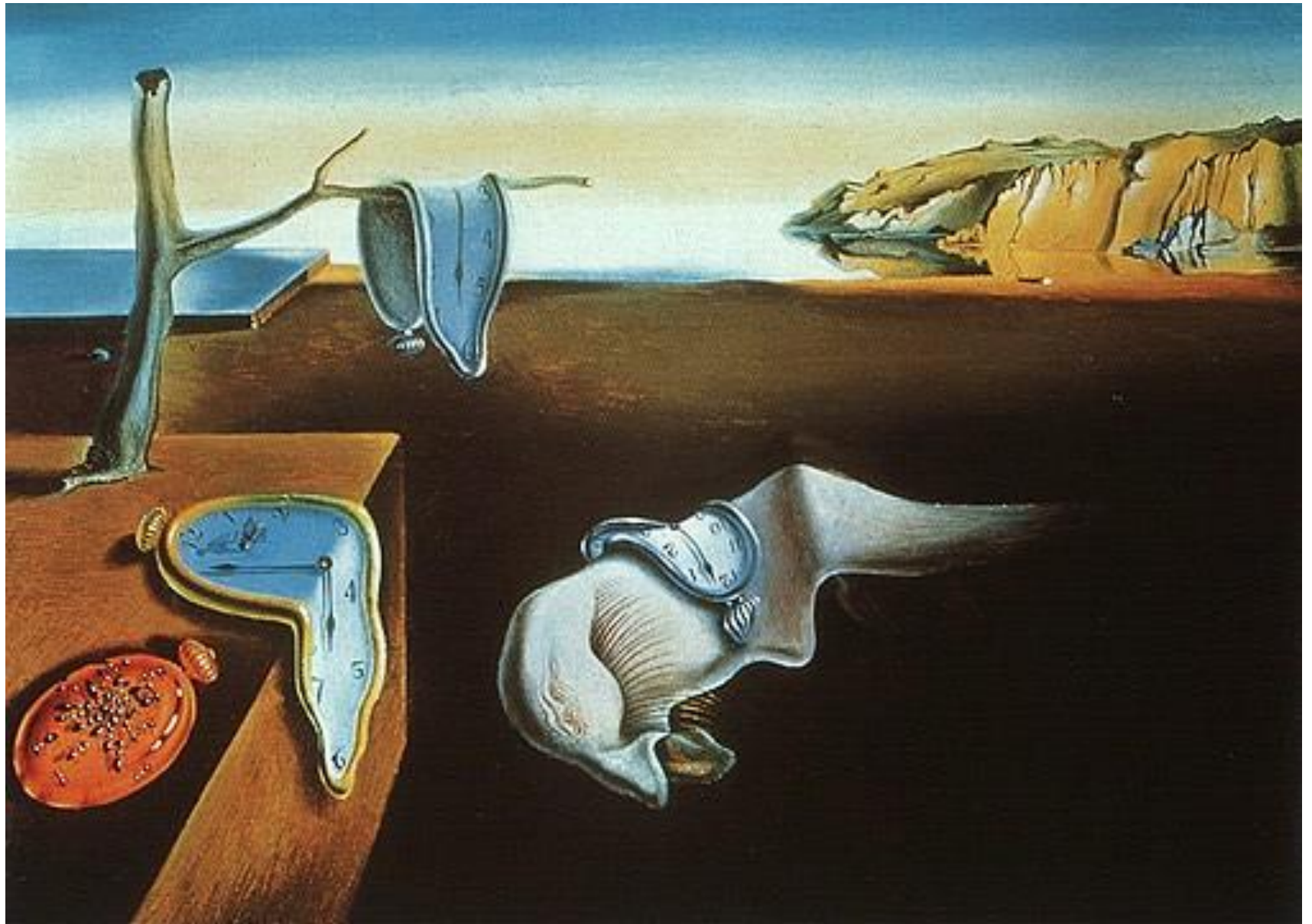


Ceci n'est pas une pipe.



Ceci n'est pas une peep.

Clade





“Continuity of Parks”

- What’s going on here?
- How is this postmodern?
- Have I given you the “Postmodernism in a Very Tiny Nutshell” handout yet? Oh! Well, let me do that, then!

With the time that remains...

- Read and annotate this really difficult essay on postmodernity/postmodernism!
 - I borrowed a lot of the text from online, but didn't cite my sources last year and can't find them now. I AM SORRY/GRATEFUL, ANONYMOUS CONTENT DONOR!

For Next Time:

- Get $\frac{1}{2}$ way through your lit circle book.
- Write 3 decent discussion questions about what you've read so far. Bring them next time.