

OnPostmodernism

The online directory for all things Postmodern

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Overview of Postmodern Movies

Like television, postmodern movies and films are a mainstay of mass-market American culture. The range of independent films to big budget Hollywood blockbusters all exhibit (and build off of) many of the Postmodern motifs shared by other art forms. Below you will find a description of the most significant themes and examples of related moves.

Pastiche	Self-referential, tongue-in-cheek, rehashes of classic pop culture
Flattening of Affect	Technology, violence, drugs, and the media lead to detached, emotionless, unauthentic lives
Hyperreality	Technologically created realities are often more authentic or desirable than the real world
Time Bending	Time travel provides another way to shape reality and play "what if" games with society
Altered States	Drugs and technology provide a darker, sometimes psychedelic, gateway to new internal realities
More Human than Human	Artificial intelligence, robotics, and cybernetics seek to enhance, or replace, humanity

Postmodern Movies by Category

Pastiche

- [Pulp Fiction](#) - Quirky tribute to old Hollywood crime dramas and "Pulp" magazines, filled with numerous pop culture references
- [Jackie Brown](#) - Tarantino's spin on "blaxploitation" action flicks of the 1970's that manages to reinvent Pam Grier and her co-stars
- [Kill Bill, Volume 1](#) - Stylized fusion and tribute of Hong Kong action flicks and spaghetti Westerns, filled with exaggerated stereotypes
- [Scream](#) - A postmodern slasher movie, where the killer and his victims knowingly play out the clichéd plots of classic horror films
- [Scary Movie](#) - Low brow, third order simulacra is a pastiche of other pastiches (Scream and I Know What You Did Last Summer)
- [Elvira, Mistress of the Dark](#) - Campy cult comedy that follows a vampire TV hostess as fate brings her to suburbia
- [Buffy the Vampire Slayer](#) - Tongue-in-cheek horror/comedy that follows a suburban high school student and vampire hunter
- [This is Spinal Tap](#) - Mockumentary about a fictitious British band on their American comeback tour
- [Austin Powers](#) - Mock Bond film pays homage to the popular culture of the Swinging 60's, British Invasion, and ridiculous Spy flicks



Flattening of Affect

- [2001 - A Space Odyssey](#) - Sci-Fi space tale where the ship's computer (HAL) shows more emotion than the machine-like human crew
- [Natural Born Killers](#) - Victims of traumatized childhoods become serial killers glorified by the mass media
- [A Clockwork Orange](#) - A dystopian examination of ultra-violence, social conditioning, free will, and post-industrial alienation
- [American Psycho](#) - A look at our culture's desensitization to violence via a Wall Street professional and cold blooded killer
- [Rules of Attraction](#) - A modern love triangle between numbed, self-absorbed, over-privileged students at a fictional New England college
- [Less Than Zero](#) - A rich college student in the 80's binges on sex, drugs, and alcohol and goes from having it all to having nothing
- [The Stepford Wives](#) - Postmodern-feminist tale where the dull subservient lives of suburban women is part of a plot to replace them
- [Fight Club](#) - Violent and schizophrenic tale of a man and his underground society, full of plot twists, ironies, and anarchy
- [Gattaca](#) - Dull and sterile society where genetic imperfections relegate "real" people to menial lives
- [Apocalypse Now](#) - Classic movie where the horrors of war lead to detachment and insanity
- [The Deer Hunter](#) - Commentary on the futility of war follows long time friends trying to cope with their return to "normal" lives
- [Taxi Driver](#) - A life of loneliness and alienation in the big city drives this taxi driver (Robert DeNiro) to insanity and violence
- [Lost in Translation](#) - A chance friendship of two lost souls in a foreign land brings true emotion to their affectless lives



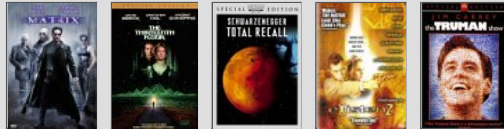
Hyperreality

- [The Matrix Trilogy](#) - Cyberpunk twist where the world is in fact a simulated prison for humanity run by intelligent machine agents
- [The Thirteenth Floor](#) - Murder mystery set in a virtual recreation of 1930's Los Angeles

[Total Recall](#) - Adaptation of a Philip K. Dick story with the ambiguous premise that the whole experience was an implanted memory

[eXistenZ](#) - A designer gets lost in her own virtual reality game, full of Kafkaesque references and hallucinations

[The Truman Show](#) - A sense that the world is not quite right leads Truman to find that he is the star of an expansive reality TV hoax



Time Bending

[12 Monkeys](#) - A man is forced to travel through time to find the reason for humanity's near extinction by a deadly virus

[Paycheck](#) - A scientist investigates why he turned down a \$90M paycheck for a self-addressed envelope he doesn't remember sending

[Dark City](#) - A retro-futuristic setting where mysterious beings bend space and time to test the limits of humanity

[Minority Report](#) - A cop uses knowledge of the future to make arrests before crimes are actually committed

[Primer](#) - Time-travel thriller that looks at the paradoxes and ethical implications of the ability to change the past

[Memento](#) - Flashbacks lead the viewer back in time to better experience the life of a man with no long term memory

[Donnie Darko](#) - Cult classic about a troubled teenager and his attempt to save the world, covers topics like time travel and free will



Altered States

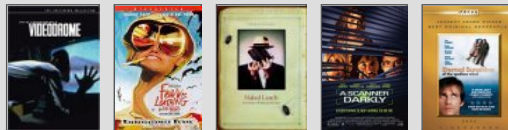
[Videodrome](#) - Sleazy cable TV operator's hallucinogenic nightmare of the "new flesh": merging of television with the human body

[Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas](#) - The drug-fueled chronicles of a journalist's hallucinogenic search for the American Dream

[Naked Lunch](#) - A fusion of Burrough's novel and his own life, follows a junkie author through his paranoid and Kafkaesque experiences

[A Scanner Darkly](#) - An undercover narcotics agent gets hooked and leads a double life as the hunter and the hunted

[Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind](#) - A mind-bending look at reality when altered memories are used as a cure for heartbreak



More Human than Human

[Blade Runner](#) - Simulacra-focused movie follows an android hunter who himself may be one of the "more human than human" copies

[Screamers](#) - Another movie based on a Philip K. Dick story, features a war against machines self-evolved to mimic humans

[Artificial Intelligence](#) - Pinocchio-like story of a robot boy and his quest to be "real"

[Robocop](#) - A cybernetically enhanced cop seeks to regain his identity in a dystopian future driven by capitalism and the mass media

