

**Meta Modernism: The Emergence of a New Era and the
Preservation of Cultural Artifacts through Virtual Reality and
Non-Fungible Tokens**

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that,

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing my degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party,
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4. The thesis does not contain material that has been accepted or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
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Approval

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Thank you.

Abstract

In philosophy, art, design, film, and other areas of human endeavor, there is a new movement emerging, which is called metamodernism. In a wide range of ways, metamodernism is conveyed in several ways. The Modernist and Postmodernist movements came before it. They started in the late 18th century and the early 19th century, respectively. Modifications and oscillations in form and way of thought and conduct constitute metamodernism. This dissertation looks at the main ideas of three literary movements—modernism, postmodernism, and metamodernism—and how they relate to each other. Together, these three topics show how critical thinking has changed during important times in the 20th and 21st centuries. The thesis talks about this fairly new term and how it might help usher in a new time in this digital world. This paper aims to explain metamodernism and how it differs from postmodernism, and modernism and show the progression from pre-modern to metamodern thinking and the emergence of metamodernism with the help of technological inventions, which include virtual reality and non-fungible tokens.

Keywords: Metamodernism, Postmodernism, Modernism, virtual reality, NFT, oscillation.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	2
Approval.....	3
Acknowledgment... ..	4
Abstract.....	5
Table of Contents.....	6
Chapter1: Introduction	7
1.1: What is Metamodernism	7
1.2: Beyond the End of History and Art	9
1.3: What is the Virtual Reality and Non-Fungible Tokens?.....	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	16
2.1: Research Questions and Methodology	16
2.2: Related Works... ..	17
2.2: Elements of Metamodernism.....	22
Chapter 3: Metamodernism... ..	27
3.1: Metamodernism in Science Fiction Movies.....	27
3.2: Metamodernism and the Internet... ..	29
3.2: Methods of Metamodernism... ..	32
Chapter 4: Virtual Reality and Non-fungible Tokens... ..	35
4.1: Virtual Reality in Digital Preservation in Museums... ..	35
4.2: Virtual Reality in Times of Cultural Emergency.....	38
4.3: Usage of Virtual Reality in Metamodernism... ..	40
4.4: Preservation of Cultural Heritage through Non-Fungible Tokens.	42
Chapter 5: Conclusion... ..	43
Work cited... ..	46

Chapter One

Introduction

What is Metamodernism?

Metamodernism is a term that has been gaining recognition little by little in recent years. It talks about changes in modern culture that go beyond the postmodern style of the late 20th century. Amid the many disasters of the past twenty years, like global warming, the collapse of the economy, political conflicts, and the pandemic, there has been a strong rise in the desire for change. Even more so after the COVID-19 pandemic, which shook the world and forced people to go online, people need to change and become more diverse than ever. As a critical and intellectual movement, postmodernism is marked by deconstruction, sarcasm, parody, universalism, nihilism, and the refusal of grand narratives. On the other hand, according to Vermeulen and Akker (2010), metamodernism is about the return of sincerity, hope, romanticism, affect, and the possibility of grand narratives and universal truths, without giving up what we have learned from postmodernism.

Since the turn of the 20th century, there have been a lot of "new" artistic movements that often overlap with earlier times. These include the New Romanticism in the arts; the New Aesthetic in design; the New Sincerity in literature; etc., where each work tries to use postmodern frameworks and aesthetic ideals while going beyond them. At the same time, we are seeing that the realist and modernist styles, techniques, and goals in literature are coming back (to which the metamodern and postmodern have completely different relationships). In 1975, Mas'ud

Zavarzadeh, an academic, used the word to describe a group of styles or attitudes that had been changing in American literature since the mid-1950s. (Ma'sud, 1975). Moyo Okediji used the word "metamodern" in 1999 to describe contemporary African-American art that challenges modernism and postmodernism (Moyo, 1999). This is the preeminent cultural logic of capitalist culture in the West. We use the term "metamodernism" as both a heuristic label and a concept for putting a wide range of aesthetic and cultural preferences into periods. But it is important to say at the start that this study is not like a Greenbergian argument or a Jencksian categorization of postmodernism. Instead, it is an attempt, no matter how unpopular or controversial, to use the works of art to understand the current situation and its cultural values, aesthetics, and politics.

By no means is the phrase "meta modernism" new. It has been used in areas as different as nontraditional poetry, technological research, science, business, and Eastern philosophy. For example, recent science fiction movies like Christopher Nolan's "Interstellar" (2014), Denis Villeneuve's "Arrival" (2016), and Spike Jonze's "Her" (2013) all use science fiction techniques that allow a unique expression of this metamodern oscillation, the multiplicity of realities and subjectivities, and the crossing of borders. In other words, the phrase has a lengthy and illustrious past and has been getting recognition in recent years. Our planet is being confronted with an unprecedented number of hazardous situations. The world's environment is in bad shape, the financial system is getting harder to control, and the world's political structure is starting to look as unstable as it has always been unfair. The policymakers say "yes we can" every time they go in front of a camera or speak to the media about their "desire for change." And for this, the new generation is looking for a change. Turner (2015) says that the rise of cultural, social, and political ideologies over the past few years has made metamodernism more popular. Reconstruction and mythology have taken the place of deconstruction, parataxis, and parody in

the work of younger artists. Postmodernism no longer adequately explains these new patterns and inclinations. People show an (often guarded) sense of optimism and (sometimes fake) sincerity, which suggests that things could turn out differently. emotional structure and discourse. The end of history, it appears, is moving beyond its ending point, and the new is starting to take place.

Beyond the End of History and Art

The era of postmodern abundance, pastiche, and parataxis has ended. In his 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*, American theorist Francis Fukuyama makes the case that mankind has attained its pinnacle with the rise of Western liberal democracy, which happened after the Cold War (1945–1991) and the fall of the Soviet Union (1991), and that humanity has achieved “not just...the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: That is, the end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.” (Fukuyama, 1992). The postmodern era probably ended quickly because of things like climate change, financial crises, terrorist attacks, and the digital revolution. But it could also end more slowly as the internet and technology improve and there are fewer physical events and more cultural mixing around the world. As the intellectual and cultural foundations of postmodernism began to fall apart, there was a growing call for a completely new artistic point of view. Since the 1990s, many seminars and critical works have talked about the change from the postmodern to the metamodern age, predicting or announcing that postmodernism is dead. In the second edition of *The Politics of Postmodernism* (2002), Linda Hutcheon declared: “It’s over.” (Hutcheon, 2002). But if these analysts accept that the postmodern status has been abandoned, they are less in agreement on

how to interpret the state it has been replaced with. So, Hutcheon ends the epilogue of her book with an urgent question to which she does not yet know the answer:

The postmodern moment has passed, even if its discursive strategies and its ideological critique continue to live on—as do those of modernism—in our contemporary twenty-first-century world. Literary historical categories like modernism and postmodernism are, after all, only heuristic labels that we create in our attempts to chart cultural changes and continuities. Post-postmodernism needs a new label of its own, and I conclude, therefore, with this challenge to readers to find it—and name it for the twenty-first century.

(Hutcheon, 181).

Various theorists and critics have sought to respond to Hutcheon's query. Gilles Lipovetsky, in his *Hypermodern Times*, claims that the postmodern has offered ascendance to the hypermodern. According to Lipovetsky, contemporary cultural activities and social relationships have lost essential significance and triggered both hedonistic pleasure and existential suffering. Philosopher Alan Kirby has said that the current way of thinking is either digital modernism or pseudo-modernism. A cultural theorist named Robert Samuels has also said that our time is the auto-modernist era. Moreover, several critics have embraced the grammatically accurate but conceptually empty phrase “post-postmodernism”¹. Most of these concepts of modern discourse are organized around technical developments. The next Bourriaud article makes people feel the same way: the meaning of “alter modernism” is as vague and misleading as the structure of the argument. According to our understanding, Bourriaud describes ‘alter modernism’ as a combination of modernism and postcolonialism (12). According to Bourriaud, this harmony is

¹ Most of these concepts of modern discourse are organized around technical developments.

articulated by "heterochronicity"², "archipelagraphy", "globalized world", "vision", "pastoral nomads", and assertion of otherness as well as the discovery of elsewhere. It seems that many of Bourriaud's observations about "alter modernism" are accurate. Bourriaud says that this change has led to the heterochrony of globalized societies with different levels of modernity and a worldwide archipelago without a center; to temporalities that cross the world and geographies that are linked through history. So, as he correctly points out, neither the modern language of the universal gaze of the white man nor the postmodern language and lines can be used to describe the modernity of today. Bourriaud thinks that globalized perception, cultural nomadism, and creolization are better ways to describe it. The "alter modernist" (artist) is a "*homo viator*"³ who is free from (an obsession with) his or her origins. This means that he or she is free to travel and explore, seeing the world and the "*terra incognita*"⁴ of history in a new way.

However, the primary issue with Bourriaud's argument is that it mixes epistemology with ontology. Bourriaud knows that the shape and purpose of modern works of art have changed, but he does not know how or why. To bridge this crucial difference, he simply believes that experience and explanation are the same. His ideas about "alter modernism" are "all over the place" and never quite clear, let alone convincing. This is clear from the way the exhibition and his writing do not make sense. Bourriaud observes, say, seven varieties of fireworks disguised in seven different ways: one is red, one is yellow, one is blue, one is round, one is angular, etc. But he can not see that they are all caused by the same tension: metals, sulfur, and potassium nitrates going back and forth. Metamodern will be used to describe this tension, which moves between

² According to Bourriaud, contemporaneity is historically incorrect. Heterochronicity is equivalent to the temporal multiplicity that is productive.

³ Christian Existential philosopher Gabriel Honore Marecel coined the phrase *homo viator*. It means the traveling man or man on the journey of life, the man whose goal is to get Home by embracing the adversities that life presents.

⁴ *Terra incognita* means unknown or unexplored territory.

and beyond the electropositive nitrates of the modern and the electronegative metals of the postmodern.

What is Virtual Reality and Non-Fungible Token?

"Virtual reality" refers to computer-generated models of real-world environments, such as pictures and sounds, that may be engaged with, in a supposedly real or tangible manner, by a human utilizing appropriate electronic equipment. It can send visual information, audio information, and a variety of sensations to users by way of a headset, giving them the impression that they are in a simulated or imagined world. It creates a new environment that is the same as the real world but is not there. This is called a "virtual world."

The founder of VPL Research, Jaron Lanier, came up with the term "virtual reality" in the mid-1980s, when he started making the goggles and gloves that were needed to experience what he called "virtual reality." However, before that, technologists were already creating virtual worlds. The Sensorama in 1956 was a significant event. Morton Heilig has a history in the Hollywood film business. He desired to determine how viewers might feel if they were "in" the film. At Sensorama, you "rode" a motorbike through a simulated city. In the constructed "world," multisensory stimulation allowed the user to see the road, hear the engine, feel the tremor, and smell the motor's exhaust. In 1960, Heilig also patented a head-mounted display device known as the Telesphere Mask. His basic work would be built upon by several inventors. Ivan Sutherland, another inventor, came up with the idea of "the Ultimate Display" in 1965. This would be a head-mounted device that would be a "window into the virtual world." The 1970s and 1980s were prosperous periods for the industry. Optical improvements were made at the same time as

haptic devices and other tools that let you move in virtual space were being made. And it is now clear that VR has reached its full potential as a form of recreation. More than 230 organizations around the world are now working on virtual reality (VR) innovations and making a variety of VR-related devices. Some of these businesses are global powerhouses such as Samsung Electronics, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft. Virtual reality (VR) technologies include virtual reality (VR) headgear, a computer, and a screen. According to Robin Berkrater-Bodmann, in recent times, the addition of seats, gloves, and sensors has developed alongside goggles that are fitted on a headband known as VR headsets. They come with either a speaker or headphones in their packaging. Haptic feedback systems are virtual reality (VR) devices that allow the user to feel vibrations and other sensations by using a game controller, gloves, or a chair.

Now, to define NFT, or non-fungible tokens, simple examples are best. The term "non-fungible" refers, more or less, to anything that is unique and cannot be exchanged for something else. For instance, a 100 taka bank note is fungible with another 100 taka banknote, so if one is swapped for the other, the end product is the same item. However, a non-fungible condition applies to a trading card or a piece of art that is one of a kind, unique, or that cannot be swapped for another. If a person were to trade a unique card for a different card or piece of art, the end product would be a new item. Because the cards are unique, the person will end up with a different card. Therefore, a non-fungible token is a kind of digital asset that represents a physical good or service, such as works of art, songs, films, or video games. The NFTs are non-interchangeable and comprise a one-of-a-kind piece of data that is saved on the blockchain⁵. Minting is the term

⁵ Blockchain is a distributed, unchangeable database that enables the recording of transactions and the tracking of assets in a business network. An asset might be tangible (a house, vehicle, cash, or land) or intangible (intellectual property, patents, copyrights, branding). On a blockchain network, virtually anything of value may be recorded and sold, reducing risk and costs for all parties involved. No one can copy nor alter the information on the blockchain. So, it will have the record of that exact product and thus, the product cannot be copied.

used to describe the procedure that results in the fabrication of non-fungible tokens. Some websites do not charge for the minting process but do so when they sell the NFT.

Although other blockchains have also built their own versions of non-fungible tokens, the vast majority of non-fungible tokens (NFTs) are now included on the Ethereum blockchain. Ethereum is a cryptocurrency like bitcoin or dogecoin. But the blockchain that Ethereum is built on also keeps track of who has and sells non-fungible tokens (NFTs). It means that if a picture of artwork is minted as a non-fungible token and a certain individual is the owner of that NFT, then anyone anywhere in the world can find out that this individual is the owner of that NFT. On the internet, however, anyone can take a screenshot of a non-fungible token and claim it as their own, but that does not change the fact that the person is the original owner of that NFT because anyone can see the original owner of the NFT on the Ethereum blockchain. For example, a person can search for "Mona Lisa" on Google and get thousands of images of the artwork. That individual can then download a high-resolution picture of the Mona Lisa and frame it on their wall. However, that does not mean that the individual is the actual owner of the Mona Lisa painting. The original work of art by Leonardo da Vinci will still be at the *Louvre* Museum. People can have a screenshot version of the original work, which is the NFT, but that does not mean that they are the owners or that the screenshot is the real one. And anyone can verify this through the blockchain.

Almost everybody writes NFT using the pronunciation "en eff tee." Those who are courageous refer to them as "gifts". A big part of the conversation is about how NFTs are the next step in the evolution of collecting fine art, but with digital art instead. So, is it the future of collecting art? It is certain that some individuals really want that to be the case, such as the person who shelled out

approximately \$390,000 for a 50-second music video created by Grimes or the person who shelled out \$6.6 million for a music video created by Beeples.

If we go back to metamodernism, virtual reality and non-fungible tokens are small parts of it that could be important. Using Virtual Reality to conserve ancient structures and historic wonders such as the Great Pyramid, Machu Picchu, Taj Mahal, and the Great Wall of China is a fantastic way to immortalize them for future generations. These marvels may one day be destroyed by war or natural disasters, but anybody can put on a headset and go into a virtual world to see these magnificent structures whenever and wherever they like. Some museums only exist in virtual reality, like the "Museum of Other Realities," which is a completely virtual museum. Google Arts and Culture has a database of global sites called "Open Heritage," which uses VR to give viewers a 3D picture of the places. Cultural heritage experts have found a unique way to use virtual reality: to make copies of sites that are in danger of being destroyed in the real world.

Similarly, in the meta-modern world, the technology of non-fungible tokens is revolutionary. Artists can freely express their creativity on the internet without the fear of other people stealing their work. By minting their art, they can sell or capture contemporary art on the blockchain, which will remain there forever without any scratches. Over the course of human history, many paintings, sculptures, and other works of art have been destroyed or otherwise lost. With Virtual Reality and non-fungible tokens, future generations will not have to worry about losing these priceless artifacts. Instead, they will be able to keep them safe for as long as people are still living on Earth. Through the use of Virtual Reality and non-fungible tokens, the meta-modern world will forever be recognized as the domain of digital artwork, monuments, and sculptures by future generations.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Research Questions and Methodology

This paper approached this thesis topic with great enthusiasm but little understanding of metamodernism, virtual reality, and NFTs because they are still in their infancy. One of my personal goals was to look into the many online resources that could help me learn about these hard topics. My dissertation's fairly ambitious aim is to present these new ideas to an audience that has never heard of these terms. Therefore, the primary research question of this project is this: "Are we now living in a new period that is not post-modern but rather something new?" Moreover, how is metamodernism different from postmodernism and modernism? This brings us to questions about what is, in fact, metamodernism and how exactly can we use Virtual Reality and NFTs as the highlights of metamodernism? Can virtual reality preserve cultural artifacts, paintings, monuments, and sculptures around the world? Can we use NFT to preserve art in a place where it cannot be damaged or decayed? And finally, are metamodernism, virtual reality, and NFTs the future generations' ways of the world? ⁶ These questions, and many more, guide the dissertation through analyzing this new way of thinking, which is metamodernism.

This dissertation focuses mostly on a topic that is relatively new and for which little study exists. Nevertheless, because of the COVID-19 epidemic, individuals are compelled to be online, and

⁶ The way of the world means how to view the contemporary world through the metamodernist lens. It also means the way of preserving paintings and artifacts that are important to us.

this subject is more relevant than ever. People increasingly do business, purchase, and spend more time online than offline. Along with this new style of life comes a new way of thinking. Traditional methods are being overtaken by new, more efficient methods ⁷. However, metamodernism is just starting out, so this paper will use reliable online sources to do in-depth research on how to define this idea. So, to learn more about these topics and get a better grasp on them, the research will use a qualitative approach or technique, such as the close reading of texts and critical analysis of secondary sources on Metamodernism. In addition to the book *Meta Modernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism* by Akker, Gibbons, and Vermeulen, I will be using a variety of publications to research and compile information for my paper from credible online sources.

Related Works

There has not been a thorough examination of metamodernism because there are not nearly enough articles, literary texts, or films about it. Although metamodernism has not developed into a formal academic theory yet, it is getting the attention of many theorists, such as Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker. Vermeulen and Akker, two cultural theorists, came up with the idea of "metamodernism" in 2010 to explain the current state of human philosophy after the end of "postmodernism." According to Alan Kirby, postmodernism is extinct. Many theorists and critics said that the postmodern era was over because younger artists stopped following the deconstructionist aesthetic principles and started making more experimental work. Metamodernism may be used to define the current culture, which is neo-romantic, nostalgic, and

⁷ For example, we can order groceries, and food right at home, we do not need to go to grocery shops anymore. This is a more efficient way of shopping. specially for the old people and people who is unable to go out for shopping.

futuristic⁸. That does not mean we should accept them or stop being critical; in the metamodern, it may be even more important to constantly reflect on modernity's difficulties. It is challenging to establish a general agreement among different philosophers and critics on the meaning or concept of "metamodernism," particularly considering South Korea's and Japan's developing artistic communities and branding, which produce an infinite amount of contemporary art for international markets. Why did Vermeulen and Akker start researching and using the phrase "metamodernism"? The word "postmodernism" was not quite accurate. After the 2008 financial crisis, Vermeulen and Akker felt it would be possible to reverse the whole research process instead of just declaring "this is how the world appears" (Vermeulen and Akker, 2015). They published a follow-up piece in 2015 called *A Few Misunderstandings and Clarifications*. This piece was made since they believed that in the early notes on metamodernism there had been some misinterpretations of their intentions, and they had a couple of discussions with other critics about the theory of the Meta-modern in their new article.

To have a better understanding of postmodernism, let us go back to Alan Kirby's well-known and famous quote: "Postmodernism is dead and buried." (Kirby, 2016)⁹ from *The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond*. However, postmodernism, like post-industrialism, is not universally considered to be extinct by certain critics. When you think about how art and culture are always coming up with new ways to communicate, you can see that art concepts have changed a lot over the last few generations. This is so that they can fit the situations and conditions of artistic

⁸ People desires to go back to the Golden age. The golden age is defined by mental characteristics. It occurs when people begin to think holistically and reorganize their lives or living situations. Humans recognized that the world that we are living cannot continue much longer. This Golden age is still light years away if there is war, oppression, exploitation, racism, poverty, hunger, and extreme environmental degradation.

⁹ The exact page number is not attainable. The website: https://philosophynow.org/issues/58/The_Death_of_Postmodernism_And_Beyond

creation and methods that have been updated and changed because of their knowledge rather than because of the influence of interaction.

Let us examine some emerging advances and patterns in contemporary aesthetics to explain what we mean by metamodernism and to indicate the extent to which it has evolved to dominate the cultural consciousness in recent years. Just as modernism and postmodernism represented themselves via a multitude of frequently conflicting techniques and styles, so does metamodernism present itself through a multitude of activities. Raoul Eshelman, a German scholar, has identified “performatism: as one of the most significant metamodern activities. Eshelman defines performatism as the deliberate self-deception of believing in, identifying with, or solving something against one's own will. He cites a return of theism in the art world and the regeneration of openness in architecture ¹⁰, for instance,

Performatist works are set up in such a way that the reader or viewer at first has no choice but to opt for a single, compulsory solution to the problems raised within the work at hand. The author, in other words, imposes a certain solution on us using dogmatic, ritual, or some other coercive means. This has two immediate effects. The coercive frame cuts us off, at least temporarily, from the context around it and forces us back into the work. Once we are inside, we are made to identify with some person, act, or situation in a way that is plausible only within the confines of the work as a whole. In this way, performatism gets to have its post-metaphysical cake and eat it too. On the one hand, you're practically forced to identify with something implausible or unbelievable within the frame—to believe in yourself—but on the other, you still feel the coercive force causing this identification to take place, and intellectually you remain aware of the

¹⁰ R. Eshelman, ‘Performatism, or, What Comes After Postmodernism: New Architecture in Berlin’, *ArtMargins* (April 2002).

particularity of the argument at hand. Metaphysical skepticism and irony aren't eliminated, but are held in check by the frame. (Eshelman, 3)

Jerry Saltz, a famous American art critic, has also seen the emergence of another perception that oscillates between ideas, expectations, and sentiments:

I'm noticing a new approach to artmaking in the recent museum and gallery shows. It flickered into focus at the New Museum's "Younger Than Jesus" last year and ran through the Whitney Biennial, and I'm seeing it blossom and bear fruit at "Greater New York," MoMA P.S. 1's twice-a-decade extravaganza of emerging local talent. It's an attitude that says, I know that the art I'm creating may seem silly, even stupid, or that it might have been done before, but that doesn't mean this isn't serious. At once knowingly self-conscious about art, unafraid, and unashamed, these young artists not only see the distinction between earnestness and detachment as artificial; they grasp that they can be ironic and sincere at the same time, and they are making art from this compound-complex state of mind—what Emerson called "alienated majesty" (Saltz, 2010)¹¹

Saltz focuses solely on trends in American art, yet the same attitudes may be observed on the European continent. "Vectors of the Possible" is the name of a group show that was recently organized by the newly formed BAK Foundation in the Netherlands. Simon Sheikh, the show organizer, described the show:

This show examines the notion of the horizon in art and politics and explores how artworks can be said to set up certain horizons of possibility and impossibility, how art partakes in specific imaginaries, and how it can produce new ones, thus suggesting other

¹¹ J. Saltz, 'Sincerity and Irony Hug It Out', *New York Magazine*, May 27, 2010. The page number is unattainable. The website: <https://nymag.com/arts/art/reviews/66277>

ways of imagining the world. Counter to the post-1989 sense of resignation, [it] suggests that in the field of art, it is the horizon—as an “empty signifier”, an ideal to strive towards, and a vector of possibility—that unites...and gives...direction. The artworks in this exhibition can be seen as vectors, reckoning possibility and impossibility in (un)equal measures, but always detecting and indicating ways of seeing, and of being, in the world. (BAK, 2010)¹²

And the highly acclaimed up-and-coming Museum Tanja Wagner launched its inaugural exhibition with very similar words:

“The works [on display] convey enthusiasm as well as irony. They play with hope and melancholy, oscillate between knowledge and naivety, empathy and apathy, wholeness and fragmentation, purity and ambiguity, ...looking for a truth without expecting to find it.” (Galerie Tanja Wagner, 2010)¹³.

Jorg Heiser, a literary critic, has seen elsewhere, the growth of what he terms "Romantic Conceptualism." (Heiser, 2008). Heiser claims that the logical, calculating abstract art of Jeff Koons, Thomas Demand, and Cindy Sherman is being overtaken by the emotive and sometimes emotional distortions of Tacita Dean, Didier Courbet, and Mona Hatoum. Whereas Demand replicates the most visible pastiche, Dean develops never-realizable subjective illusions. Courbet is obsessed with the ever-increasingly antiquated, whereas Koons is obsessed with the filthy. In contrast to Sherman, who condemns subjectivity, Hatoum promotes the subjective diversity of identity. If postmodernism is focused on deconstruction, then Romantic Conceptualism is focused on reconstruction. (Vermeulen and Akker, 2010). James MacDowell, a movie critic, has

¹² BAK, 'Press Statement Vectors of the Possible' (August 2010) (Press statement)

¹³ Galerie Tanja Wagner, 'Press Statement The Door Opens Inwards' (September 2010) (Press Statement)

recently observed the rise of a type of wacky movie linked with the works of Michel Gondry and Wes Anderson. (MacDowell, 2010). James MacDowell, a movie critic, has recently observed the rise of a type of wacky movie linked with the works of Michel Gondry and Wes Anderson. 28 In contrast to the postmodern "intelligent" films of the 1990s, which were marked by irony and cynicism, MacDowell identifies "wacky" as a new trend in amateur movies defined by an attempt to bring back childhood innocence to the jaded world of grownups. Nicholas Bourriaud would suggest that this diversity of techniques reflects a diversity of emotional frameworks. Nonetheless, they share a characteristically metamodern oscillation.

Elements of Meta Modernism

The progression of philosophy, art, and culture in contemporary times has become a difficulty for defining the postmodern period. In 1975, the word "metamodernism" first arose to characterize an artistic movement. According to Luke Turner (2015), metamodernism has gained traction in recent years due to the rise of cultural, social, and ideologies. Thus, post-modernism holds the concepts of fragmentation, sarcasm, skepticism, nihilism, and denial of grand narratives, but metamodernism discusses the return of sincerity, optimism, love, emotion, and the possibility of grand narratives and universal truths (Turner, 2015). The term "meta" may also be used to describe the sense of "after" or "post," but the definition of "meta" should go farther than that (Akker and Vermeulen, 2010). Baciú, Bocos, and Urzica (2015) assert that Meta modernism is a movement that strives to reconcile the divergent ideologies of modernism and postmodernism

via unification, harmony, and compromise¹⁴. Once again, the term "meta" might be used in reference to the debate that exists between modernism and postmodernism. Postmodernism has been replaced by metamodernism by contemporary events which demonstrate that there is no such idea as "postmodernism" in the contemporary age. In "Notes on Meta Modernism," Vermeulen and Akker (2010) state that metamodernism is a theme of metaxies, The literal translation of metataxis is "between." Through Plato and later the German theorist Eric Voegelin, it has become linked with the sense of being and awareness. This is how Voegelin characterizes metaxas:

Existence has the structure of the In-Between, of the Platonic metaxy, and if anything is constant in the history of mankind, it is the language of tension between life and death, immortality and mortality, perfection and imperfection, time and timelessness, between order and disorder, truth and untruth, sense and senselessness of existence; between amor Dei and amor sui, l'âme ouverte and l'ame close. (Voegelin, 119-120)

Thus, for Voegelin, metaxis refers to the degree to which we are simultaneously here, there, and nowhere. According to Avramenko, metaxis is "formed by the tension, nay, the irreconcilability of man's participating existence between finite processes on the one hand and an unlimited, intercosmic or transmundane reality on the other." (Avramenko, 116). Thus, it can be said that metamodernism is an area gap between modernism (organized) and postmodernism (unorganized). The metamodern is created by the pressure, rather, the double-bind, of a modern need for meaning and a postmodern skepticism regarding the significance of everything.

¹⁴ Metamodernism is a continuity of both modernism and postmodernism that seeks to deliver exactly what the prior movements tried to offer, but through new mediums and various ways of expression.

Metamodernism has been defined by a number of researchers. According to Seth Abramson's article "Ten Basic Principles of Metamodernism" (2015), is a framework of reasoning and architecture of feelings. Fundamental tenets of metamodernism were laid forth by Abramson, which are briefly discussed in the following,

Both modernism and postmodernism are riddled with inconsistencies and ambiguities that make understanding them difficult. Each reveals different ways of looking at things. Metamodernism seeks to find a middle ground between these two philosophies or -ism so that they might work together to create a new perspective that supports both ideologies with unique perspectives.

Metamodernism promotes the cause of conversation rather than "the languages over conversations," which postmodernism promotes. Additionally, Metamodernism promotes "metanarratives." It welcomes mystery while mediating between generality (modernism) and uncertainty (postmodernism). Metamodernism centers mostly on the digital world and online communication¹⁵. Metamodernism also celebrates not just geographical, religious, or cultural differences, but also mental or conceptual ones. The multiplicity of perspectives reflects how we grow, engage, connect, and eventually establish our personal and social personalities. As a result, metamodernism aims to bring people together to collaborate on their ideas, perspectives, and thoughts. Coordinated actions are encouraged as a result of this.

Optimism is a key component of metamodernism, which encourages people to take action in the face of adversity. As an illustration of this, consider the worldwide response to the COVID-19 epidemic. Even though the plague quarantined mankind for two years, optimism prevailed.

¹⁵ It focuses mainly on the digital and online environment due to the development of technology. Given its rapid development, technology enables humans to do tasks more effectively and precisely. With the current COVID-19 outbreak, nearly everyone was compelled to go online, as the trend toward a digital world accelerates. Thus, metamodernism focuses mostly on the digital environment.

Metamodernism is concerned with rapid responses. Metamodernism does not imply a full breakdown of modernism and postmodernism's basic concepts. Instead, it pulls from both traditions to articulate its ideas and conceptions.

Not only did Abramson discuss metamodernism, but other theorists also contributed their own perspectives. Just like Abramson's basic principles of metamodernism, Turner (2011) also shares his eight metamodernism manifestos. According to Tawfiq Yousef (2017), metamodernism is a continuing ideological and artistic growth process. Additionally, metamodernism serves as a bridge connecting the two ideologies, which are modernism and Postmodernism. Below is a table that shows elements of all the three periods respectively to understand the difference between these

Modernism	Postmodernism	Metamodernism
Belief in rational thoughts	Belief in the irrational	Belief in real thing ¹⁶
Emphasis on science	Anti-Scientific	Interest in origin
Belief in universal values	Belief in Local Value	Belief in Ethics
Life is purposeful	Life is meaningless/Absurd	Belief in authenticity
Meaning is objective	Meaning is subjective	Meaning is wavering
Favor simplicity	Favor complexity	Favor real/essential things
Creative	Interest in the past	Interest in all times
Unity	Plurality	Sincerity
Accepts the grand narratives	Accepts the small narratives	Accepts all narratives
Opposes history	Interest in pastiche	Interest in duality
Concern with allusion	Concern with intertextuality	Concern with origin
Interest in man	Experimental	Historical
Value construction	Value deconstruction	Value reconstruction

¹⁶ By "Real things" I mean things that are right in a practical sense. Modernists believe in logical thinking, Post-Modernists believe in the irrational, but for Meta-Modernists, rational or irrational thoughts are irrelevant as long as the item in question is actual and practical.

Hope	Skepticism	Engagement
Interest in cause and effect	Beliefs in chances	Seeks reality

Table 1: The elements of Modernism, Postmodernism, Metamodernism (Yousef, 2017)¹⁷

From the above table, we can see that the Meta modern elements, thinking, and ideas are slightly different from the past two periods of literature.

Ulysses by James Joyce and *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf are two important modernist works. *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut and *White Noise* by Don DeLillo are two masterpieces of postmodernism. Unlike modernism, which emphasized approaches such as stream-of-consciousness writings to illustrate the internal conception of reality, postmodernism emphasized the influence of culture on how we see reality. Post-postmodernism arrived as a replacement term for what followed after postmodernism. Researchers and critics noticed the emergence of a trend in the United States known as "New Sincerity." It was not all sarcasm and irony; a newfound excitement and sincerity rose behind the sarcasm. *The White Teeth* by Zadie Smith, *Infinite Jest* by DFW, *The Corrections* by Jonathan Franzen, and *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* by Dave Eggers are some of the most renowned instances of the NewSincerity in literature. Shia Labeouf started an art piece where you could hear his pulse instantaneously after studying Luke Turner's meta-modernist manifesto. The comparison is simple: using irony to avoid extremism is like keeping your heart from going crazy. Engaging in physical activity may help stave off boredom by getting your heart rate up and your blood flowing. It is a delicate juggle to keep everything in check. Meta-modern in its purest form.

¹⁷ The table is taken from Mohd Ekram Al hafis Bin Hashim's Article *Defining the Element of metamodernism Art: A Literature Review*. He created this table form Tawfiq Yousef's Article *Modernism, Postmodernism, and Metamodernism: A Critique*, pp. 33-43.

Chapter Three

Meta Modernism

Metamodernism in Science Fiction Movies

Frequently, science fiction films communicate very complicated philosophical concepts. Using fantasy tropes such as time machines, artificial intelligence, and outer space, they investigate themes of individuality, freedom, and awareness and participate in intellectual conversations regarding the consequences of real-world scientific advancements. However, the manner in which these films tackle such issues is influenced by modern cultural and ideological views. Sci-fi movies like *The Matrix* and other mass entertainment from the 1990s, for instance, were strongly inspired by the fashionable philosophy of postmodernism. As quickly became apparent, however, the primary problem with postmodernist ideology is that it frequently results in pessimism, despair, selfishness, and nothingness.

According to Konstantinos Pappis in the online article “Back to Sincerity, Hope, and Love: Metamodernism in Sci-Fi” in Christopher Nolan's polarizing film “*Interstellar*”, there is an oscillation between and overcoming of time's limits, facilitated by the medium of cinematography, which is essentially a time capsule. (Pappis, 2019). According to critic Vivian Sobchack, Christopher Nolan “has expanded—and compounded—the relativity of space-time and its effects by layering them in the multiple dimensions not only of *Interstellar*'s narrative but also of the film's overall structure and its immersive mise en scene.” In metamodern words, there

is a conflict between temporal and eternal. Except for the opening shots in the film, the first act begins with a straight narrative centered on family conflict. Before departing Earth, Cooper tells his 10-year-old daughter, Murphy, "Time is going to change for us." The movie textually and technically explores Einstein's relativistic concept of space-time. In the third act, Nolan depicts a really unique, mind-boggling, and chronologically complicated continuity, an endless universe, in which the borders between the past, present, and future have shattered and various worlds and universes cohabit. To revert to Vermeulen and Akker's "Notes on Metamodernism":

...the metamodern should be understood as a space-time that is neither ordered or disordered. Metamodernism displaces the parameters of the present with those of a future presence that is futureless, and it displaces the boundaries of our place with those of a surreal place that is placeless. Indeed, that is the "destiny" of the metamodern wo/man: to pursue a horizon that is forever receding. (Vermeulen and Akker, 2010).

Thus, despite its intricacy, the dislocation of time in *Interstellar* is essentially there to educate us with a metamodern message about optimism, inspired by a postmodern understanding of the nothingness of time: that even though science makes it difficult to explore the past to influence the future, artwork should depict it as attainable so that we might influence the current, that exists within our control. To regain sense, it dismantles fact. This matches Dylan Thomas's poem, which, in Sobchak's words, challenges "all of us watching in our fading lights to do more than quietly accept our inevitable demise."

Spike Jonze's "Her" is a romantic science fiction film that varies significantly from "Interstellar" because it focuses less on space and aliens and much more on love, as it depicts the connection between a lonely author, Theodore, and his highly sophisticated system software, Samantha. Although it has been termed "postmodern," the filmmaker has also been connected with

metamodernism for being a member of the contemporary "witty" cinematic movement that best exemplifies the oscillation between honesty and sarcasm, connection and disengagement. Nevertheless, reviewers were quick to notice the film's altering tone: we may return to Manohla Dargis, for instance, who described it as "both a clever intellectual joke and a really heartfelt romance." It is described as "sad, humorous, and quietly disturbing" by Steven Rea, while Elizabeth Weitzman questions, "Will you connect more to the sour or the sweet?" And ultimately, Joe Williams creates a second "2001: A Parallel to Space Odyssey" that emphasizes the same distinction: "As the friendly ghost in the computer," she adds, "Samantha is a more appealing partner for the tremendous jump ahead than HAL9000 could ever hope to be." Thus, it can be concluded that "Her" is a part of the current era of (meta-modern) movies in which "science fiction has learnt to love," as noted by film critic Andrew Harrison¹⁸.

Metamodernism and the Internet

Modernism is commonly related to the Age of Radio. Poet Ezra Pound's 1934 quote "Make it new!" shows the heart of modernism, which pushed artists to leave behind old cultures and rethink everything about life. It is a maximalist ideology in which artists strive to escape their own death by creating history. Post-World War II, roughly between 1945 and 2005, saw the emergence of postmodernism, which rejected the great narratives of modernism. It is usually marked by cynicism, sarcasm, and a belief that all cultures are equal. It is related to the Television Age. Postmodernism was criticized by many people for being pessimistic and promoting condescension. After all, why do scientific research if nothing is true? as well as the

¹⁸ These reviews were taken from Konstantinos Pappis' article "Back to Sincerity, Hope, and Love: Metamodernism in Sci-Fi". Website link: <https://ourculturemag.com/2019/09/14/back-to-sincerity-hope-and-love-metamodernism-in-sci-fi/>

physical impossibility of humans to not believe everything? As Craig explains in the essay “*God Is Not Dead Yet,*”

The idea that we live in a postmodern culture is a myth. Postmodern culture is an impossibility; it would be utterly unlivable. People are not relativistic when it comes to matters of science, engineering, and technology; rather, they are relativistic and pluralistic in matters of religion and ethics. But, of course, that is not postmodernism; that is modernism! That is just old-line verificationism, which holds that anything you cannot prove with your five senses is a matter of personal taste. We live in a culture that remains deeply modernist. (Craig, 2008)

However, these discussions are now recognized as the post-postmodernism argument. The cultural theory that preceded modernism and postmodernism is not post-postmodernism. Rather, it is the collaborative hunt for what should follow; a drive for a more harmonious worldview that takes into consideration both the positivity of modernism and the diversity of postmodernism.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, metamodernism has been the most popular answer to that fundamental question. It is connected to the age of the internet and is about accepting the polarizing character of humans. Without faith, there cannot be any uncertainty. Without experience, there is no defeat. Life can bring both feelings and cynicism, honesty and sarcasm, happiness and sadness. Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker, cultural theorists, state that “metamodernism can be conceived of as a kind of informed naivety, a pragmatic idealism... for the metamodern generation, grand narratives are as necessary as they are problematic; hope is not simply something to distrust; love is not necessarily something to be ridiculed” (Vermeulen, 2012)¹⁹. In a nutshell, we moved from modernism—“Make something fresh!” Let's influence

¹⁹ TANK Magazine interviews Timotheus Vermeulen.

history! to postmodernism, “Everything stinks! Absolutely nothing matters!” and then metamodernism: Perhaps things are not that binary? Perhaps there is a compromise position?

Here are a few examples of metamodernist works that are often found online:

Fanfiction: People who write fanfiction are aware that they will never become historical figures (a goal associated with the modernist ideal), but they believe in the value of producing something new, even if it is inspired by previously published works (as opposed to the postmodernist perspective that rejects progress).

Remixes: In the last 15 years, many of the most successful songs have been covered in various versions. The 1996 Sublime song "Doin' Time" is covered by Lana Del Rey. Everyone, from Beyoncé to Taylor Swift, has recorded a remake or remix of another artist's song. Metamodernism can be seen in the way that the old and the new are mixed to make something new.

Memes: Indeed, memes are meta-modern. We cannot go about our days without seeing memes on the internet. Metamodernism is alive and well in the meme sphere! Or at the very least, the act of creating your own viral content. When a movie scene is taken and subtitles are added to it, it becomes a meme. There is no escape from the universe of memes. It is present all over the internet and in social media venues. However, memes are not only a kind of comedy; they also provide a creative outlet for expressing one's inner views. In an age of language repression, people utilize memes to send messages to those in authority. Through meme creation, Twitter is one of the most popular social media platforms for expressing unhappiness towards corporations, governments, etc. By concealing the underlying message underneath a form of enjoyment, memes are unquestionably a meta-modernist method of expression. On March 14, 2018, students

around the United States marched out of their classrooms to condemn gun crime and commemorate the 17 students murdered in the Parkland school massacre. Twitter was swamped with images of students marching, staying quiet and carrying extremely potent and appropriate protest placards. A photograph of a certain placard has gone viral on social media.



On March 14, 2018, an unidentified photographer captured this image of the protest²⁰. The image is a meme demonstrating that former United States president Donald Trump cares more about the National Recruitment Agency (NRA) than the lives of the country's citizens. This demonstrates that despite the humor, there is a clear message underneath the humor.

Vlogging: Self-reflection in this shared practice is a blend of personal and collective, the commonplace and the creative. It has the potential to impact more than just writing history. Through video recordings, millions of people establish new communities. Vlogging is torn between casualness and seriousness, frankness and sincerity. Film recording allowed us to experience history via video rather than paper. People in the future will be able to see clearly what has happened in our time. All significant protests, events, and other remembrance-worthy occurrences are now documented on film.

²⁰ The photo was collected from a Twitter post by @Rachel_Handler from www.twitter.com/rachel_handler/status/973950091974324224

Methods of Meta Modernism

In his essay "After Postmodernism: Eleven Meta-modern Methods in the Arts," Greg Dember gives a list of eleven of these techniques and methods. Some "metamodern" cultural artifacts only use one of these techniques, while others use more than one. This is not to say that any of these creators thought they were creating something meta-modern. The artist did not have any of these notions in consideration. Like a postmodernist or modernist style, a metamodern style does not have to be planned and managed by the artist. Greg Dember named these eleven ways: Hyper-Self-Reflexivity, The Narrative Double Frame, Oscillation Between Opposites, Quirky, The Tiny, The Epic, Constructive Pastiche, Irony, Normcore, Over-Projection, and finally Meta-Cute. The paper will briefly explain a few of these below.

First, the idea that life is a movie or hyper-self-reflexivity, suggests a greater focus on the individual. Whether it is the author, the reader, the work, or even a certain genre or media, the "ego" might be anything. Metamodernism and postmodernism both value self-reflection, but the two conceptual frameworks use it in different ways. When it comes to meta-modern and postmodern self-reflexivity, they are both "hyper-self-reflexivity". Postmodern work uses self-reflection to break down or question limits and assumptions that are taken for granted. Rather than accepting that individual works of art and intellectual endeavor are self-evident findings of an unbiased and standardized reality, postmodern art and writing often emphasize how the author's own options, imperfections, and ideologies can misrepresent any significance that can be derived from the work, even if it is just by focusing on the fact that there is an author at all. Like this, the reader is cautioned that a post-modernist work is a piece of literary work and, as such, cannot be completely trusted. Self-reflexivity, which is inherited from postmodernism, is repurposed in a way that, usually speaking, helps to confirm actual reality. This is how

metamodernism works. When the author is the "self" in a metamodern work, the real, internal experience of the author is brought out. As a result, the writer's consciousness serves as a basis for the viewer's consciousness and emotional sensations. When a reader or viewer is told that they are taking part in a piece of writing that has a format, style, or media, they are told that they are in the presence of that work, which is why they are studying it. Putting the perspective of the person doing the task front and center once again.

Secondly, Normcore. It was made up by the trend-spotting branding firm K-Hole in 2013 to describe people who say they are "outside the mainstream" but want to dress like "normal" people. The big deal about dressing in your most basic clothes is that it is subtly but fundamentally metamodern in its focus on relationships and the ability to engage with one's own conscious experience as well as the conscious experience of others. This contrasts with externally focused concerns with cultural groupings and category labels.

Thirdly, over projection or anthropomorphizing. Metamodernism is the projection of the human psyche onto non-human beings or inanimate things in a way that is not embarrassed or ashamed of what it is showing. As a result, the writer and the reader are overflowing with felt experience, which manifests in non-human beings as well. This can be seen in protagonists who are speaking of wildlife, vehicles, as well as other artifacts that are made to look like they have a human face.

Then there is Constructive Pastiche. Pastiche is another strategy that started in the postmodernism theory of knowledge but is used in metamodernism in a somewhat different way. A pastiche is a mix of parts from different artistic and cultural traditions that do not seem to go together. While meta-modernists argue that pastiche may be creative, postmodernists argue that it is disruptive. Dissociative pastiche puts different parts against each other, which sometimes leads to hilariously stupid results. This was done to test the untested ideas of each part. But a

meta-modern construction pastiche makes a place that has a feeling that is not in any of the parts alone. It might also be said that, with the use of creative pastiche, an artwork can include the diversity of cultural mashups that individuals have in real life, despite the traditional boundaries that separate them.

And finally, there is oscillation. Vermeulen and van den Akker's conceptual frameworks for metamodernism, which seem to see oscillation as the key to metamodernism, focus on the oscillation between postmodern and modern extremes. As a means of connecting two opposing variables without their killing one another out or falling into the equilibrium region between them, oscillations may be used. A meta-modernist way of thinking could be seen as a return to positivism, but with a sense of humor and a different point of view. Metamodernism is frequently misinterpreted as advocating tolerance for opposing viewpoints. The term "metamodern" could be used to describe somebody who voted for Trump and Democrats at the same time. Being expansive is not metamodern. In the end, we can say that meta-modern oscillation is a movement between modernist and postmodern traits, or at least between different sets of expressive or creative traits that are at odds with each other, not between different religious or philosophical beliefs.

Chapter Four

Virtual Reality and Non-Fungible Tokens

Virtual Reality in Digital Preservation in Museums

There are various museums focused only on VR, such as the “Museum of Other Realities,” a completely virtual museum. Google Arts & Culture has its own database of global sites and a program called “Open Heritage,” which utilizes VR to provide viewers with a 3D picture of the locations. Open Heritage is just one of many online recreations of culturally important places. It has 26 distinct authentic and visitable 3D landscapes. Several of these places include: “parts of the Roman city of Pompeii,” “Native American cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde in southern Colorado,” and the “1000 year old Temple of Kukulcan in the Mayan city of Chichén Itzá.” (Leslie, 2022). These virtual places give views of the monuments as they are now as well as how they may have looked when they were in use hundreds or thousands of years ago. In addition to Google's Open Heritage program, many other groups, such as *TIME* and *National Geographic*, have also tried out their own VR versions. The Work of *TIME*, which was a trailer for a film directed by British filmmaker Christopher Nolan, employed virtual reality to take the user to the Battlefield of Dunkirk during World War II.

As emphasized in the article *VR for Cultural Heritage Valorization: A Communication Problem*, *Virtual Reality* (VR) is unquestionably a legitimate tool for interacting with 3D objects and a crucial aid in making art more easily accessible to the general public and in capturing,

conserving, and preserving cultural assets. (El-Razaz, 2007). Virtual reality can help the curator of a museum adapt the cultural presentation and knowledge of the artifacts to the different kinds of tourists. (Reffat, 2013). Also, as Reffat explained, a digital and collaborative display can be made entirely with editing software, and its materials can be shared over the internet through haptic displays in the museum itself.

In October 2019, the Louvre in Paris debuted "Mona Lisa: Beyond the Glass," a virtual reality (VR) experience that investigates Renaissance artwork as part of its spectacular Leonardo da Vinci show. People can learn more about art through interactive multimedia, music, and moving pictures. For example, they can see how the grain of the wood frame has changed over time and how it looks now. The event is available in five dialects, may be booked directly at the Louvre, and can be downloaded from the VR app store or Apple app store.



This is a screenshot of the Virtual Experience "Mona Lisa: Beyond the Glass" by the Louvre in 2019.

The purpose of the experience designed by the Parisian VR company Emissive is to educate people more about the Mona Lisa's artwork and background so that people may enjoy it more fully in person. People who are unable to visit the Louvre may get the same pleasure from the convenience of their own homes. Within the show, HTC offers a unique area with 11 Vive Cosmos headgear for people to test out. In an interview the museum's head of explanation and cultural programs, Dominique de Font-Réaulx, "It's the first time that we are using virtual reality as an experience for visitors within the Louvre"²¹. The Tate Modern in London has also embraced the VR trend in the United Kingdom. Alongside their 2017/18 Modigliani exhibition, they produced a wonderful VR installation. A 3D recreation of the artist's Paris studio allowed visitors to feel an immersive experience. The exhibition replicated the original studio area. The chamber remains, but it is not the same as it once was. After extensive study, the museum faithfully recreated the artist's last workshop as it would have appeared a century ago. The head of digital content at Tate, Hilary Knight, believes that virtual reality is a great tool. She said, "It's a way of conveying feelings, helping people feel a connection with an artist. It's a different way of absorbing that information, and it makes the artist a living person." The Kremer Museum has gone one step beyond the previous examples. In actuality, the museum does not exist as a physical place. It features around seventy Dutch and Flemish ancient masters from the 17th century. They are exclusively accessible via the Virtual reality headset and do not exist as a real library. Such initiatives do a great deal to make the modern museum encounter more appealing. For instance, they can assist those with mobility challenges and enjoy exhibits from the convenience of their own homes. VR can take tourists to museums located on the opposite side of the globe, without the need to board an airplane. Some may be concerned that VR might

²¹ The interview was taken by Vivearts on 12th October 2019 and published in an online article titled "Mona Lisa: Beyond the Glass: An Intimate Encounter". The website like: <https://www.vivearts.com/features/mona-lisa-beyond-the-glass-editorial-an-intimate-encounter>

discourage people from going in person. Regarding initiatives such as the Kremer Museum, it appears doubtful that virtual reality experiences will totally dominate. The President of the National Museum of Natural History in Paris is Bruno David. He told the New York Times on virtual reality at museums: “People are coming to a museum to see real objects because real objects are emotional”²². In conclusion, VR displays are not designed to replace the current model, but rather to improve and supplement it. There is a risk of utilizing virtual reality as a spectacle or to look more contemporary. However, when treated with caution, it may bring collections to life. Virtual Reality may improve a museum visit. These organizations have designed displays that establish a true relationship with visitors.

Virtual Reality in Times of Cultural Emergency

These are not exactly unusual occurrences. Virtual museums have been discussed for many years as a method of providing tourists with access to sights and activities that would normally be unavailable. It is surprising how far we have gone from the clumsy interaction of those previous attempts, and how many ways digital as well as on-site interactions have started to merge. However, while the war between Russia and Ukraine continues, now is the ideal time to consider how we might save centuries-old cultural relics that are being destroyed by the conflict. The conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, and Iraq continue to take lives and exile millions of people. Alongside the devastating human costs of these battles, there is a rising worry over the cultural losses imposed upon these old civilizations. Drone-captured video in Syria has provided unparalleled access to and proof of the devastation of Syria's historic heritage. UNESCO has

²² The interview was published in New York Times as an article title “European Museums Get Adventurous With Virtual Reality”. The website link:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/12/arts/european-museums-get-adventurous-with-virtual-reality.html>

started an emergency campaign to protect the cultural heritage of Syria. These advances, according to Michael Danti of the Syrian Heritage Initiative at the American Schools of Oriental Research, include, “the worst cultural heritage emergency since World War II”. The Aleppo Great Mosque was constructed between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. It is typically considered to house the bones of John the Baptist's father, the prophet Zechariah. It was one of Aleppo's biggest and oldest mosques, situated within the Old City wall. During the battle of the Syrian Civil War, it was destroyed. It is still unknown what caused the skyscraper to fall. The mosque was held by anti-government troops at the time, and Syrian President Bashar al-regime Assad has accused al-Qaeda-affiliated rebels of the destruction. In the meantime, rebels said the facility had been destroyed by Syrian Army fire.²³

No matter what caused this loss, it seems likely that wars and other conflicts are destroying many cultural landmarks and wiping out a lot of our history. To prevent the loss of this vital information about early human civilization, it is time to construct 3D models of these structures for virtual reality and save them in an online database so that even if the worst case happens and these beautiful sites burn to the ground, we can always remember them in our virtual world.

Usage of Virtual Reality in Metamodernism

Dr. Valerie Hill (Head of the Public Virtual Archive) considers that meta literacy is well-aligned with our current period, which many people are slowly starting to refer to as "metamodernism." *Her most recent book is Metamodernism and Changing Literacy: Emerging Research and Opportunities.* It focuses on metaliteracy for people of all ages by looking at the metamodern

²³ According to an article by Becky Little, titled “7 Cultural Sites Damaged or Destroyed by War” published in an online site *HISTORY*. The website link: <https://www.history.com/news/cultural-sites-heritage-wars>

period. As Thomas Mackey comments in the prologue of this book: “Hill provides a fascinating exploration of metamodernism through the perspective of metaliteracy. This intersection between both theories is vital to our understanding of the relationship between digital culture and literacy” (Mackey, 2011). COVID-19 has pushed teachers and students into virtual classrooms in recent years. Many teachers have rushed to understand ZOOM and other app-based technological solutions. Online teaching with a webcam has challenges and restrictions since it limits hands-on learning. Virtual learning systems require metaliteracy and the ability to think about what you know in different ways. Literacy is no longer just reading and writing; hence, metaliteracy is crucial. Studying into our philosophical age in connection to literacy helps us appreciate deep learning now and in the future.

As described by Thomas Mackey and Trudi Jacobson (2014)²⁴, metaliteracy refers to the necessity for internet users to evaluate their education in a worldwide digital age across 4 categories: motivational, conceptual, emotional, and metacognitive²⁵. Metaliteracy was a great fit for the changing age of postmodernism and the rise of networked culture. However, as we move past postmodernism, it has become even more important. Newly emerging conceptions such as metamodernism

Students and teachers are finding it harder and harder to choose the right environment for learning because online classroom websites and apps only offer webcam and chat. But virtual environments like Virtual Reality (VR) keep growing because they can build a whole school in a virtual world. It is important to figure out what you need to do to achieve certain educational goals. Being in school with other people and having them close by can be very helpful. Students

²⁴ Mackey, T. & Jacobson, T. (2014). *Metaliteracy: Reinventing information literacy to empower learners*. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman.

²⁵ Metacognition is the function of reflecting upon one's own learning and thought processes.

may learn and do lessons in a three-dimensional setting with their classmates. They can do anything they could do offline by creating avatars to represent themselves in their virtual world. This virtual space might be crucial in duplicating offline lessons without leaving the house. Virtual environments, such as Second Life or Kately, provide students the resources to create independently or with others. Metaliteracy is required in these virtual learning environments when users utilize new abilities such as adding online video, programming, and writing; using speech or text; and using scientific concepts.

In conclusion, there is great promise for learning and producing in virtual settings. Nevertheless, there is also a need for an equilibrium between the virtual and actual worlds. Metamodernism advocates for harmony and respect for both worlds. The practice of metaliteracy is a lifetime practice, and the metamodern adult must be conscious of the obligations we all carry as digital people. The unusual lockdowns produced by COVID-19 have given us a new awareness of our physical surroundings and human interactions.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage through Non-Fungible Tokens

Non-fungible tokens (NFT) are distinctive data kept in a blockchain's global database. NFTs can be used to identify things that are easy to copy, like photos, movies, music, and other digital content. In the same way that a certificate is given when purchasing artwork, costly jewellery, or even special edition trading cards in the physical world, the owner of the NFT will also be able to confirm the legitimacy and possession of the digital asset. This characteristic has attracted the attention of the art world, which often deals with fragile and one-of-a-kind artifacts. Cultural heritage-based NFTs have the potential to become valued treasures for a youthful,

digital-oriented public as well as an advanced digital revenue source for institutions. The British Museum's *LaCollection* is a new NFT platform that encourages people to create, find, and collect materials based on real works of art. But how can it help to preserve cultural heritage? A non-fungible token can be any digital item, such as a photograph, movie, or song. So, it can keep alive, in the form of film and photos, a number of civilizations that are about to die out. One may argue that individuals now have YouTube and Google to keep photographs, movies, and knowledge about civilizations, but it is about ownership of intangible objects. An NFT is a proof that you own something online, like a tweet, a movie, or a digital photo. In a time when copying and pasting are so simple, individuals worry that their artwork may be stolen or replicated. Fortunately, artists now have the option of establishing ownership over their work. Authentic works of art may be sold online by artists without fear of theft. This legitimacy will drive writers and artists to create more works that represent the current civilization or civilizations that are on the verge of extinction. Due to the fact that these artworks are virtual, they cannot be damaged or decayed and will be maintained for several years to come.

Yat Siu, co-founder and chairman of Animoca Brands, a company that makes non-fungible token (NFT) games, thinks that NFTs offer a new way to keep culture alive in the digital world. Regardless of the fact that the engineering underpinning NFTs is fairly recent, Siu argues that the urge to "maintain our own culture"²⁶ has existed since the dawn of humanity. He also said, "What is art?" Works of art are a cultural storehouse" before saying that we regard the NFTs as historical warehouses because they represent a particular moment in history. Siu co-founded Animoca Brands in 2014. Since then, the company has released notable NFT projects like The Sandbox, It has invested in OpenSea, a marketplace for buying and selling NFTs. In a nutshell, in

²⁶ All his quotes are from a YouTube video titled "YAT SIU - Why 2022 Is The Year of Blockchain Gaming & NFT Mass Adoption For Crypto & DeFi". Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGmlzjV3Znl>

the meta-modern world where everything is becoming digital, it is high time we look into things that will authenticate the things that we purchase online, and non-fungible tokens are one of them. Giving authenticity to photos, videos, artworks and also allows us to preserve legitimate cultural knowledge and preserve them for future generations.

Chapter five

Conclusion

In conclusion, metamodernism is ultimately concerned with uncertainty, restoration, discussion, cooperation, and artistic contradiction. It involves enabling oneself to be many individuals at once. It is about amplifying the voice of the person whose work you are collecting with your own. It is about having an original artistic direction as a designer. It is amusing to connect three phases in human history: modernism, postmodernism, and metamodernism with human life. As children (modernism), individuals are obsessed with producing what they believe to be distinctive (creating history). As teens (postmodernism), individuals often oppose everything. (Rejects history). Lastly, as adults (metamodernism), individuals have a far more complex perspective of the world (neither fully rejects nor fully accepts history). Metamodernism combines the best parts of the modern and postmodern eras but from a different point of view. A meta-modernist is like a post-modernist in that he knows that stories are silly but is still be optimistic about values. He extracts the truth from all or certain stories. While a post-modernist breaks down and criticizes narratives, a meta-modernist builds a new one to get through life,

even though they know the new one has flaws. Postmodernism rejects all narratives as insufficiently real and discards them. Metamodernism encourages competition and the acceptance of many different stories. It also requires existentialist values to show the truth in a more realistic way. This paper is not saying that all postmodern activity will end in the near future. Uncontrolled anarchy, nihilism, irony, deconstruction, and a dozen other classics will still be around as we try to live in an endless world with an infinite population. Pluralism is here to stay. However, people are becoming more and more interested in this new type of concept that we name "metamodernism," which indicates that the popularity of metamodernism is slowly rising. Not everyone with a viewpoint accepts the precise definition of metamodernism. It is important to remember that those who analyze metamodernism neither have the responsibility nor the capability to bring it into existence. Something is going on in the world. Paintings, movies, songs, and other forms of art and culture are being made with a common sense of style. Some individuals would want to call this new sensibility "metamodernism." However, this new sensibility would remain irrespective of what title people gave it and whether people gave it a name at all.

With new technological advancements and the emergence of new concepts, ideas, and ways of thinking come a plethora of innovative developments. Virtual reality and non-fungible tokens are two cutting-edge inventions that complement metamodern ideas and the future in a meaningful way. With the use of Virtual Reality and NFTs, humans may preserve their cultural knowledge and artifacts without fear of degradation or destruction for many years into the future. Overall, change is necessary for evolution; as technology progresses, so does the world; and it is time to embrace a new period in human history known as "metamodernism."

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