WHEN DOES POST-POSTMODERNISM BEGIN?

by Dennis Sexsmith

A. 1983/84, plus-or-minus five years. From Proposition 13 (1978) to the Fall of the Wall (1989). The following is a list of one-hundred starting points of the era of the generation that comes of age after the Baby Boom Generation (with a postscript on the end of the post-postmodern generation in A.D. 2000).

"We are, certainly since Nietzsche and Spengler, 'terminalists.'"
—George Steiner

100. California's Proposition 13 cuts property taxes by up to 50% (1978). Middle-class tax revolt signals the end of the New Deal and the dawn of Reaganomics.


60. Joan Bakke


63. Picasso's Guernica is removed to Madrid (1981). The decline of New York, the resurrection of Europe.


65. Ridley Scott's film Blade Runner fascinates with its androids (1982). Are we "hollow men"? How do we treat humanoids?

66. The thirty-year trend of expanded opportunity. Invoked by the G.I. Bill after World War II, began to reverse itself (1982). The percentage of American private college and university students from less affluent families began to fall.

67. Michel Foucault dies of complications from AIDS (1984). "You used to have to read Marx. Now you have to read Foucault." —Peter Hall, speaking in 1992.

68. First hyper-text novel. Bob Swigert's Portal designed to be read on the Apple Macintosh. Allows the reader to take different paths through the story (1986). The reader as author.


70. The last contemporary art exhibition before the National Gallery of Canada's move to a new building. Image—Object—Text in the pleasuring Several changes came to Songs of Experience when the exhibition opened (1986). The same work, redenominated.


72. Jürgen Habermas's article in Die Zeit (July 11, 1986) opens the "Historiker-Schied", or Historians' Controversy, by attacking conservative German historians who are beginning to say that Hitler's crimes were no worse than Stalin's.

73. A Long Beach, California, rap concert headlined by Run-D.M.C. is halted by a riot as gangs crash the show (1986). "This incident incites RAP CAUSES VIOLENCE rhetoric and is the first national inking that Southern California's gang problem is out of control." —Nelson George.

74. Margaret Thatcher's "Big Bang." The dramatic deregulation of British banking, strongly felt in Canada and the Far East (1986). Global banking comes into effect.


76. Starbucks Corp. buys out Starbucks, an elder and smaller company (Bounded 1971), to launch Italian-style coffee bars beyond Seattle (1987). The $4-0-5 fits of work declines.
18. "The '80s Are Over; Dredge Goes Out of Style," NewswEEK (Jan. 4, 1988)."Ding, the signs of increased altruism," the decade is declared dead over two years early.
23. Seattle University sociologist David McCloskey publishes his map of "Cascadia," named after Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest (1988): FTA and Quebec separatism generate other ideas about redrawning borders.
25. Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie for The Satanic Verses (Feb. 14, 1989). If he'd known what would happen, Rushdie later says, he'd have written a more critical book.
31. Student occupation of Tiananmen Square, Beijing, violently suppressed by People's Liberation Army (June 4, 1989): China is changing, but slowly and reluctantly.
32. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" The National Interest (summer 1989): "We are, certainly since Nietzsche and Spengler, 'terminalists,'" —George Steiner, writing in 1972.
35. State Communism in most of Eastern Europe begins to disintegrate, symbolized by the opening of the Berlin Wall (Nov. 9, 1989).
36. P.S. When will the Post-Postmodern era end? Presumably when the generation after the so-called "generation X" comes of age; those born between 1980 and 2000 will turn twenty from 2000 onward.

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