

# Stephen Hicks: Postmodern Resentment

by Sally Ross



Stephen Hicks is probably the foremost elucidator of postmodernism at large today. His brief talk on **Postmodern Resentment** can be found at the blog **Vlad Tepes**, which for some reason doesn't seem to be available to hyperlink (wonder why?) but you can still find it on [YouTube](#).

To better understand just what's got into those guys from Antifa and the rest of the out-of-control-out-of-their-minds leftists, here is a partial transcription of his brief talk.

(If you really want to wrap your head around "The Concept That's Corrupting our Kids" you can also find the full 6-hour and 15-minute audio book [Explaining Postmodernism](#) also on **YouTube**. Hicks says:

*In older Socialist writing you can always see signs of resentment, envy, anger, exalting in what the destruction of the socialist revolution will bring, how those capitalists will finally get what's coming to them and I find that for me what is most illuminating is Nietzsche's concept of **ressentiment**.*

**Ressentiment** in French is close to the English resentment, but

it's got a more curdled bitterness, you know, it's more seething, and poisoned, and bottled up for a long time – that's **ressentiment**. I want to use Nietzsche against Postmodernism for a change. Nietzsche uses the concept of **ressentiment** in the context of developing his account of master and slave morality.

Master morality for Nietzsche is the morality of the vigorous, life-loving, strong. It's the morality of those who love adventure, delight in creativity and their own sense of purposefulness and assertiveness. Slave morality is the morality of the weak, the humble those who feel weak, victimized, afraid to venture forth into the big bad world.

Weaklings are chronically passive largely because they are afraid of the strong. As a result, the weak feel frustrated. They can't get what they want out of life they become envious of the strong and they also secretly start to hate themselves for being so cowardly and weak.

But no one can live thinking that he or she is hateful and so the weak invent a rationalization, a rationalization that tells them that they are the good and the moral because they are weak, humble, passive. Humility is a virtue, and so is being on the side of the weak and the downtrodden, people just like you and so of course, the opposites of those things must be the evil. Aggressiveness, pride, independence, being physically and materially successful.

Eventually the smart weakling will feel such a combination of self-loathing and envy of his enemies that he will need to lash out. He will feel the urge to hurt in any way he can his hated enemy, but of course, he can't risk physical confrontation – he's a weakling – his only weapons are words.

Now in our time the capitalists are the strong – the exuberant, the active. For a while in the past century socialists could believe that revolution was coming – that woe

would come to them that are the rich and blessed would be the poor, but that hope has been dashed cruelly. Socialism is the loser and if the socialists know that they will hate that fact, they will hate the winners for having won, and they will hate themselves for having picked the losing side. Hate as a chronic condition leads to the urge to destroy, but again, your only weapons are words. How can you use words to destroy? I think the whole idea of deconstruction comes out of this. Postmodernism is populated by large numbers of people who like the idea of deconstructing other peoples work. It's the opposite of constructing something of your own.

Now consider examples from the world of visual art. I think the visual art world was a little bit ahead of the postmodernist this century.

Asked to submit something for display at the Art institute of Chicago, (nb: **I think this is incorrect it was Society of Independent Artists in New York and it was at first rejected**) Marcel Duchamp sends a urinal which was then displayed. This makes a statement about art – art is something you piss on. Or there is the painter DeKooning's version of the Mona Lisa – a reproduction he makes of Leonardo's masterpiece with a cartoonish moustache added. Now that too, makes a statement: Here's an achievement that I can't hope to equal and so I'll turn it into a joke. In fact, I'll destroy it. So, you become a bully and a thug, not because it destroys something bad but just because it feels good to wreck something.

So, if words are your weapons now, and you want to destroy the achievements of Western Civilization, especially the Enlightenment, how do you do it?.....

What follows is a quick explanation of how they do it which ends with the final hypothesis:

I call it the nihilist explanation for obvious reasons. I think some Postmodernists, the worst of them anyways are

*people of deep ressentiment – psychologically and that the combination of alienation, bitterness, envy, and rage leads them to lashing out with an intent to destroy any aspect of culture that seems to be the opposite.*

I'm not sure about the full Nietzschean explanation – as a nerdy, wordy, weakling myself I have never quite felt the urge to smash up statues or go to extremes to *Épater les bourgeoisies*. It also doesn't completely explain how the many successful and well-heeled people in the media and government came to go along with all this nonsense but then I've yet to listen to the full 6 hours plus audio book.