





# Tartalom

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Introduction</b> .....  | 4  |
| <b>Method</b> .....  | 7  |
| <b>Literature Review</b> .....   | 11 |
| <b>Theoretical Framework</b> .....   | 14 |
| <b>Chapter 1</b> .....   | 23 |
| <b>Chapter 2</b> .....   | 33 |
| 2.1  .....  | 34 |
| 2.2  .....  | 38 |
| <b>Chapter 3</b> .....   | 46 |
| 3.1  .....  | 47 |
| 3.2  ♂..... | 52 |
| <b>Conclusion</b> .....  | 57 |
| <b>Works Cited</b> .....   | 60 |

## **Abstract**

This essay examines how the GenZ Bible reinterprets traditional religious narratives within the context of digital discourse and meme culture. Focusing on both the book of the GenZ Bible and the TikTok videos posted by social media users, the study investigates how contemporary youth use humor, irony, and sincerity to engage with sacred texts in a way that is emotionally powerful and culturally relevant. Drawing on metamodernist theory, semiotics, and digital discourse analysis, the essay explores how symbolic meaning is constructed through visual elements, language, and internet memes, such as ‘POV’, voiceovers, and emojis. The GenZ Bible represents a metamodern attitude that embraces ambiguity, reflexivity, and emotional depth. It illustrates how spiritual content can be reimagined to maintain its significance in a post-ironic, highly mediated age—where truth and authenticity are no longer fixed, but deeply felt and performed.

This essay explores the emotional and symbolic layers of the GenZ Bible through a metamodern lens, focusing on its use of irony, sincerity, and digital language. Across the three chapters, my research analyzes the interplay between religious history, performative storytelling, and the visual aesthetics of TikTok.

## Introduction

In recent years, the intersection of social media and religion has given rise to a unique and unexpected cultural phenomenon, called the GenZ Bible, that is primarily circulated through TikTok. As the title suggests, it is a modernized reinterpretation of biblical stories that heavily relies on contemporary slang and digital-era linguistic techniques, including unconventional punctuation and capitalization. The use of social media communication indicates that it makes the text feel accessible and authentic to its intended audience—namely, Generation Z and Generation Alpha. It gained great popularity amongst the younger users of the digital platform, who actively participate in increasing the trend's reach. The short-form videos showcase users either reading passages out loud or incorporating them into funny or thought-provoking visual narratives. These videos often contain reactions from other people, meme-inspired imagery (featuring stylized depictions of biblical figures), or even AI-generated voiceovers as well. On the surface level, the juxtaposed texts appear to be a light-hearted joke that fits into today's postmodern-literature tradition, which is mainly characterized by the fragmented plot, the unreliable narrator, and the use of irony in order to further complicate the story. This idea is supported by the anonymous creator of the GenZ Bible as well, who has stated that the artwork was “created purely for entertainment purposes, with no deeper agenda” (Karimi). Nevertheless, the GenZ Bible evoked strong reactions in people, sparking important discussions about its cultural, artistic, and societal implications. It actively demonstrates that, in fact, the text touches upon deeper questions about generational relationships with faith, tradition, and digital media.

Historically, religious scripts have been subjected to reinterpretation and adaptation that reflect the dynamic values of various communities and display the influence of time, space, and sense of belonging on societies. These writings offer alternative perspectives in connection to the original story; furthermore, they provide valuable insight into how religious

traditions adapt to new contexts and respond to cultural and political shifts. It is important to note that

Those who are rewriting the biblical texts relate to the same history and same characters as found in the original texts, but they have an entirely new agenda for their readers. Audiences have changed since the originals were composed. Times have changed. New needs have arisen. (Godfrey)

However, the viral nature of social media accelerates this process in unexpected ways, since it leaves space for different evaluations and utilizations of the texts that could potentially enhance or diminish the spiritual significance of the Christian canon. While some view the GenZ Bible as a creative way to engage younger audiences with religious themes, others see it as an inappropriately rewritten version of the sacred book. Whichever the truth may be, it indicates that the publication of the GenZ Bible highlights the evolving role of social media in shaping contemporary discourse on belief systems and culture.

In this thesis, I aim to analyze the GenZ Bible as a cultural, artistic, and societal phenomenon, since it has a multidimensional role in the globalized world. I will refer to the collection of texts as an artwork, emphasizing its ability to construct meaning, evoke emotions, and challenge the perception of grand narratives of Christianity and history. My goal is to explore how these different aspects interplay with each other in the digital landscape. In order to fully comprehend the artwork, it is crucial to situate it within the broader context of contemporary cultural production, meme culture, and digital discourse while examining the diverse characteristics that contribute to its popularity. Metamodernism is particularly relevant in understanding this phenomenon, as it reintroduces meaning, engagement, and emotional depth, which are key factors in how younger generations interact with both faith and social media. This process blends together “the naïve metaphysical systems of the past as well as the superficial materialism of postmodernity, resulting in a

project of reconstruction” (Dempsey). In addition, the fragmented stories of the GenZ Bible echo the “nihilistic state of society” (Woodward 51), which makes the artwork ambivalent at its core. While it incorporates “themes of despair, randomness, and a longing for nothingness” (Woodward 52), it simultaneously seeks to (re)construct meaning.

Feelings are placed in the center of my analysis, since their role in society is often overlooked, even though they “shape cultural patterns and forms reflecting a particular spirit of the time or atmosphere of the age” (Williams qtd. in Vanke). Therefore, the main research question of my essay arises: how does the GenZ Bible resonate with the concept of metamodern structure of feeling (on TikTok) in contemporary times? The main research question will be divided into three sub-questions, which will be analyzed in three chapters. The first sub-question touches upon the position of the text in modern social media practices: what is the role of meme culture in the GenZ Bible, and why is it important in the context of digital discourse? The second sub-question focuses on the religious and historical content of the GenZ Bible: in what ways does the GenZ Bible reflect on religion and history by reinterpreting biblical stories through modern language? The third sub-question investigates the binary oppositions that are embedded in the nature of the artwork: how does the GenZ Bible critique or support the metamodern attitude towards the discourse of authenticity, post-irony, and parody?

## Method

This section outlines the methodological framework that will help to conduct my analysis of larger conceptual themes within my master's thesis. As my case study, I have chosen the GenZ Bible, which I will examine through the lens of semiotics to explore how meaning is constructed, deconstructed, and reimaged within the fragmented narratives. During the research process, I will summarize the methods used to collect, analyze, and interpret diverse texts, with the goal of uncovering underlying patterns and semiotic structures that contribute to the GenZ Bible's ambivalent nature—both its nihilistic tendencies and its potential for narrative reconstruction. By applying semiotic analysis, I will investigate how signs, symbols, and intertextual references operate to both reflect and challenge dominant cultural discourses within the GenZ Bible. In addition, I will discuss how this methodological approach aligns with my broader research objectives for textual analysis.

The primary aim of my thesis is to investigate the GenZ Bible from a metamodernist approach, since it navigates between sincerity and irony while blending traditional biblical discourse with contemporary expressions and slang in order to create a dynamic reinterpretation of the sacred text. The incorporation of modern language is an important distinguishing feature of this artwork, since it not only does make it unique within the literary field, but it also reflects and critiques the developing ways of storytelling in the digital age. Therefore, semiotics provides a useful framework for analyzing how the GenZ Bible constructs meaning through language. Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of the signifier and signified is particularly relevant in understanding how linguistic transformations influence interpretation across time and space. According to Saussure's concept, the "signifier represents the form of the sign, while the signified indicates the meaning of the sign (which could be more than one signifier)" (qtd. in Walton 28). This dynamic process highlights how language is not a neutral medium but an active participant in manifesting knowledge. It

actively demonstrates that there is a certain power struggle over the meaning-making process, which results in creating political categories (such as femininity or masculinity) rather than presenting natural facts. Even though “art and politics are different domains, all art is political, since the ability of art to propose another world or other worlds, other ways of being in the world, other configurations or transformations of the world is a political act” (Barriero qtd. in Teixeira).

The world consists of complex sign systems, which structure reality by creating a hierarchy through which ideas, beliefs, and traditions are communicated and preserved in our minds. Language serves as the primary tool for coding the world around us, shaping not only personal thought processes but also collective cultural perceptions. In the case of the GenZ Bible, by containing internet slang, memes, and digital-era expressions, the texts become a space for meaning-making that is in parallel with modern-day linguistic patterns. This evolution of language demonstrates how linguistic adaptation is crucial for the relevance of any text, particularly one as historically and culturally significant as the Bible. The rewriting of the Bible in the 21<sup>st</sup> century shows how language changes to meet the communicative needs of each generation. While the original texts were inscribed in ancient languages with historical and theological significance, their reinterpretation in a digital, post-ironic landscape speaks to the necessity of linguistic transformation. This modernization does not merely translate words; it recontextualizes their meanings, ensuring that they remain culturally and emotionally relevant. In this way, the GenZ Bible functions as a semiotic bridge between the sacred and the contemporary, demonstrating how linguistic innovation can preserve and extend the influence of religious and philosophical texts.

Beyond textual adaptation, language also plays an important role in the construction of meaning through images. According to Roland Barthes, linguistic messages “support and reinforce the persuasive power of visuals, ultimately determining how ideas are constructed

within a culture” (qtd. in Walton 46). This interaction between word and image guarantees that the message is not only understood but also embedded in the semiotic structures that define contemporary cultural consciousness. This perspective aligns with post-structuralist semiotics, which “challenges the balanced core of the signifier-signified relationship” (Popan), emphasizing that meaning is not fixed but is constantly changing and reinterpreted through context. Within the field of meme culture and digital communication, this instability becomes especially relevant, as images and text interact in fluid, ironic, and often contradictory ways. For instance, meme, as a cultural sign, rarely points to a single signified; instead, it indicates multiple layers of meaning through intertextual references, differing responses, and reinterpretation. This dynamic is essential to my research, as it demonstrates how memes—particularly within metamodern contexts—operate not merely as visual jokes but as complex semiotic constructs that reflect and shape contemporary Gen Z discourse.

In analyzing the GenZ Bible, I will apply semiotic theory to examine how signs and symbols function within its fragmented narratives, digital aesthetics, and linguistic choices. By deconstructing the relationship between signifiers (such as language, emojis, memes, and visual elements) and their signified meanings, I will explore how the GenZ Bible constructs, disrupts, and reinterprets meaning within a metamodern framework. Furthermore, I will investigate the connotative layers of these signs, studying how they evoke cultural references, intertextual meanings, and emotional responses. Special attention will be given to how post-irony, authenticity, and absurdity shape the interpretation of the texts. In the later chapters, this semiotic approach will allow for a deeper discussion on how the GenZ Bible operates as both a reflection of and a response to contemporary cultural anxieties, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on meaning-making in the digital age.

All in all, by applying the concept of semiotics to the GenZ Bible I will be able to finalize my thesis, highlighting various aspects of the main research question. The role of

language in this process is central, as it determines not only how messages are encoded and decoded but also how they are emotionally and intellectually received by a new generation of readers. Therefore, the GenZ Bible is not just a translation of religious text but a reinvention of its communicative function, ensuring that its themes continue to resonate within the ever-evolving structures of language and culture.

## Literature Review

Throughout my research process, it became evident that there is a notable gap in academic literature specifically addressing the GenZ Bible and its cultural significance. While there are many studies that explore digital culture, grand narratives, metamodernism, and the tendency of reinterpreting sacred texts, few—if any—engage directly with this unique online phenomenon. As a result, this thesis aims to contribute to the emerging research by analyzing the GenZ Bible within theoretical frameworks such as post-structuralism, semiotics, and metamodernism, offering new insights into how contemporary youth culture interacts with and reshapes religious narratives in the digital age.

In order to get an answer to my research question, several sources will be studied to examine the issue. Firstly, *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism* (2017), edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, provides a detailed background on contemporary aesthetics and culture while connecting them to modern and postmodern ideas. The book is an important basis for my research, since it discusses the most relevant theories that all contribute to the emergence of metamodernism as a structure of feeling. The various chapters helped me to better understand the underlying structure of the metamodern thought, particularly its emphasis on oscillation, affect, and the interplay between sincerity and irony. These concepts are crucial for analyzing how the GenZ Bible reframes traditional religious narratives within a contemporary, digitally mediated cultural landscape. Furthermore, through the lens of van den Akker and Vermeulen, the GenZ Bible exemplifies the core dynamics of metamodernism while creating a space where emotional engagement and critical distance coexist. Although there are sections that touch upon the artistic and philosophical movements of modernism and postmodernism, they only mention them in connection to metamodernism. Furthermore, according to Courtney Krentz, “van den Akker and Vermeulen oversimplify the postmodern to only its most negative

traits, and in doing so, they overlook how postmodernism has actually impacted our current historical moment” (3). Therefore, it is essential to recognize the nuanced ways postmodernism influences contemporary culture, including how it challenges grand narratives and encourages the playful blending of different ideas. Francis Fukuyama writes about the postmodern concept of ‘End of History’, and in his paper, “Reflections on the End of History, Five Years Later” (1995), he emphasizes the importance of postmodernism in shaping contemporary political and cultural narratives by questioning traditional ideologies and highlighting the ongoing development of societal values beyond fixed historical ideals. However, Fukuyama is criticized by many scholars who do not agree with his ideology, namely that History, will end with the worldwide triumph of Western liberalism. For instance, Hirst explains that “what is wrong with Fukuyama is his staggering complacency. History is over because all problems can be settled by fully developed liberal institutions that give us all the freedom we are ever likely to get.” Moreover, he argues that

Democracy may now be dominant, but it is also deeply compromised in its major heartlands. Our liberal-democratic polities offer low levels of accountability and citizen influence when measured against democratic ideals rather than against ailing autocracies (Hirst).

It indicates that it is essential to approach these different theories critically and consider their limitations and strengths in order to develop a more thorough understanding of cultural and historical expressions and truths.

In my master’s thesis, I also analyze the GenZ Bible from the aspect of digital discourse as well; therefore, other scholarly sources are needed. Dita Ayu Lestari et al.’s “Meme Culture: A Study of Humor and Satire in Digital Media” (2024) article gives a wide range of information about meme culture in digital media. The text examines the impact of memes in shaping individual and group identity, allowing them to challenge the status quo

and encourage social change. The paper mainly analyzes memes as “effective communication tools that reflect societal norms and values” (Potapova qtd. in Lestari et al. 136); nevertheless, it does not discuss the cultural codes in connection with them. Therefore, Yulia Petrova’s essay, “Meme Language, its Impact on Digital Culture and Collective Thinking” (2021), will be studied. The article investigates the influence of the expanding Internet content on cultural codes through the example of “meme language” (Petrova 1). Moreover, Petrova uses the notion of memes as an “attempt to explain the spread of new linguistic and cultural customs, highlighting how digital communication adopts these practices across diverse communities” (Petrova 7). In addition, Pamela Hartman, Jessica Berg, Hannah Fulton, and Brandon Schuler’s essay discusses the different artistic responses to memes throughout which people are able to form meaningful relationships with texts. In their research paper, “Memes as Means: Using Popular Culture to Enhance the Study of Literature” (2021), they explore the role of memes and how they encourage consumers to enter, explore, and enjoy stories and characters. This is especially relevant in the context of the GenZ Bible, as it relies on meme culture to create a shared language and community for the young audience. I will discuss the role of social media in the first chapter of my analysis, when I connect the way TikTok makes complex ideas more accessible and relatable through humor and digital references.

## Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will discuss the concept of metamodernism in order to analyze the TikTok phenomenon, namely the GenZ Bible. The metamodernist approach to art will be applied to the text along with the themes of authenticity, truth and parody, allowing for a detailed analysis that moves beyond surface-level interpretation. By engaging with the defining characteristics of metamodernism (such as the duality of sincerity and irony), this theoretical framework will help to uncover the underlying themes embedded in the GenZ Bible. I will touch upon the existential questions concerning the absence of grand narratives in our modern society; furthermore, I will examine the process of cultural fragmentation, as well as the endless search for meaning in a hyper-mediated world.

By applying the metamodern perspective on the GenZ Bible, I am able to position it as a serious cultural artifact, situating it within contemporary literary and artistic discourse rather than dismissing it as a mere digital trend. My aim is to highlight the complexity of the text while simultaneously demonstrating how it navigates the tension between critique and emotional engagement, ultimately reinforcing its significance within modern literature. Given these points, first, I will briefly discuss the definition of the structure of feeling and its alterations over the years. Additionally, I will explain how it helps to understand the modern literary practices in the digitalized age. I will then move on to examine the modern and postmodern elements within metamodernism and analyze them in a way that highlights their interconnectedness and influence on each other by taking another shape and, more importantly, “a new sense, a new meaning, and direction” (van den Akker and Vermeulen qtd. in Ermens 12). Lastly, I will provide a short evaluation of different approaches to metamodernism while arguing its main relevance to my research. Within the context of digital discourse, metamodernism explores the modernist approach of structure of feeling and

redefines it while “negotiating between the modern and the postmodern” (van den Akker and Vermeulen qtd. in Ermens 12).

The concept of structure of feeling was first used by Raymond Williams, who considered it an important “element for his understanding of social and cultural change” (qtd. in Matthews 122). For Williams, this idea served as a “conceptual focus within his distinctive method of thinking about language and society, it was a theory and practice” (qtd. in Matthews 122) that enabled him to focus directly on difficult areas within the process of change, offering a way to engage with the transitional and liminal aspects of culture that might otherwise go unnoticed. Through this perspective, his goal was to uncover the underlying forces that shape human experience and cultural expression over time. Williams described the structure of feeling as a “cultural hypothesis which is distinct from, though may include or be evident in, other mere rigid conceptualizations of elements of society (such as, for instance, ‘belief system,’ ‘world view,’ ‘ideology,’ ‘institution’)” (qtd. in Matthews 124). It indicates that the notion

describes an area of feeling and thought, of experience, that has not achieved articulation, which is at the limit of coherence and comprehension; it is a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each is in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and definite exchange. (Matthews 123)

This interplay is exceptionally complex, as emerging feelings and thoughts interact with and challenge existing frameworks. Williams stressed that although ‘feelings’ are not clearly articulable, belonging to the fluid regions of the affective consciousness, they are nonetheless part of a public, “structured formation representing living processes which are much more widely experienced” (qtd. in Matthews 123). Feelings are also part of online interactions, social media trends, and digital narratives, however they often exist in a state of flux—partially formed, deeply felt, yet not always fully articulated. This continuous negotiation

between emerging and established discourses mirrors the complexity that Williams described, demonstrating how structures of feeling evolve within new technological and cultural landscapes.

Metamodernism is a structure of feeling that extends and reinterprets this idea within contemporary digital discourse while emerging from and reacting to both modern and postmodern ideas. It suggests that it is used “both as a heuristic label to come to terms with a range of aesthetic and cultural predilections and as a notion to periodize these preferences” (Hutcheon qtd. in van den Akker and Vermeulen, *Notes on Metamodernism* 4). Therefore, metamodernism could thrive in the in-between spaces where irony and sincerity, detachment and engagement, fragmentation and wholeness are not seen as contradictions but as coexisting modes of being. They are “characterized by the oscillation between a typically modern commitment and a markedly postmodern detachment” (Vermeulen and van den Akker qtd. in MacDowell 30). Modernism provides a “truthful tension” (Holland qtd. in van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s” 9) in the contemporary art field, which refers to the “encapsulation of the twenty-first century mood of possibility for connection within self-conscious acts of language” (Holland qtd. in van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s” 9). On the other hand, artists often “employ similar strategies to their postmodern predecessors as well in the way that they eclectically quote past styles, freely use older techniques, and playfully adopt traditional conventions” (van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s” 10). It indicates, that “indeed, they, too, recycle the scrapheap of history” (van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s” 10). By blending together the modernist and the postmodernist approaches, “metamodern artists attempt to move beyond the worn-out sensibilities and emptied practices of the postmodernists—not by radically parting with their attitudes and techniques but by incorporating and redirecting them towards new positions and horizons” (van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s”

10). This results in a “‘dialectical oscillation’ between modernism and postmodernism that seems to accommodate both while being neither one nor the other (a ‘both-neither dynamic’)” (Eshelman 199).

In the context of digital culture, metamodernism often manifests through layered aesthetics, self-aware nostalgia, and emotionally charged yet critically informed expressions. It acknowledges the chaos and uncertainty of the present while still seeking meaning, depth, and authentic connection. Rather than rejecting grand narratives entirely, it reconstructs them while being aware of their flaws but drawn to their potential. The metamodern structure of feeling is “most clearly, yet not exclusively, expressed by the Neo-Romantic turn of late” (van den Akker and Vermeulen qtd. in Šporčić 127) and proposes “a pragmatic romanticism unhindered by ideological anchorage” (Turner qtd. in Šporčić 127) as one of the ways of understanding the interplay between modernism and postmodernism in metamodernist attitudes. Moreover, a parallel can be drawn between the general notion of “the Romantic as oscillating between attempt and failure and the modern enthusiasm and the postmodern irony” (Berlin qtd. in Šporčić 128) as it mirrors the metamodern attitude toward grand narratives. It actively demonstrates that feelings alongside with layered affect are reinterpreted in the “ongoing Neo-Romanticist cultural, artistic, and social movement, noting that it is where “metamodernism appears to find its clearest expression” (MacDowell 37). Although Neo-Romanticism is a broad movement that has spanned through decades and has crossed into a variety of disciplines and boundaries, its main characteristic has remained the same, which is to view the world from an intimate/intense perspective. It results in a vivid representation of the artist’s internal feelings, which resonates with the notion of the metamodern structure of feeling. It indicates that, artists who “create art in a Neo-Romantic style are inherently metamodern because their work exists within the tension created by oscillation” (Barbieri 6). According to Isaiah Berlin, Romanticism consists of a

collection of co-existing binaries such as unity and multiplicity, beauty and ugliness, art for its own sake and art as instrument of social salvation, strength and weakness, individualism and collectivism, purity and corruption, revolution and reaction, peace and war, love of life and love of death. (qtd. in Šporčič 128).

Such understanding of Romanticism allows for an interpretation of Neo-Romanticism as a key element of the emerging metamodernist sensibility. Van den Akker and Vermeulen propose that “the Romantic attitude can be defined precisely by its oscillation between these opposite poles” (*Notes on Metamodernism* 8), which captures the essence of metamodernism since it establishes a framework to analyze contemporary cultural expressions without forcing them into binary categorizations. In other words, Romanticism is not a fixed phenomenon but rather a dynamic mode of engagement that constantly moves between extremes. This pattern is echoed in the fast-paced, algorithm-driven environment of social media platforms (such as TikTok), where users rapidly shift between contrasting tones of content, indicating that Neo-Romanticism, then, does not arise from a sense of parody or nostalgia. Moreover, it suggests that Neo-Romanticism is not only an attempt to return to Romantic ideals, but rather it is a reinterpretation of their emotional and philosophical tension within a contemporary, metamodern framework, which is increasingly shaped by digital discourse. In the context of online platforms, especially social media, this Neo-Romantic attitude encourage users “to perceive a new future that was lost from sight” (van den Akker and Vermeulen, *Notes on Metamodernism* 12). There are many other notions that have influenced metamodernism; however, I have chosen Neo-Romanticism because of its escapist sentiment. It suggests that the concept has an “attitude of emotional and intellectual commitment (or affirmation, hopefulness, sentiment) in the face of a nonetheless-present potential for skepticism (or irony, consciousness of absurdity)” (MacDowell 34). Therefore, it is relevant to my research, as it mirrors the emotional and aesthetic tendencies found in the cultural and digital expressions of

Generation Z. Neo-Romanticism taps into this by allowing emotional intensity to coexist with self-awareness, offering a mode of expression that is both affective and reflective. It revives the emotional core of Romanticism not as naive sentiment but as a conscious engagement with feeling in a fragmented online world, where communication is instant, cultural shifts occur rapidly and there is a constant movement between sincerity and irony, hope and doubt, presence and absence.

This brings us once again to the metamodernist use of oscillation as a key tool in dealing with the postmodern legacy of contemporary ontological dissatisfaction and general state of nihilism. The discourse of nihilism began in modernity; however, it has since evolved, adapting to the shifting cultural, philosophical, and socio-political conditions of each era, reflecting the anxieties and existential needs of the societies in which it has re-emerged. Nihilism as a philosophical concept was given its most definitive form by Nietzsche, for whom it is “the radical repudiation of value, meaning, and desirability” (Nietzsche qtd. in Woodward 50). It is important to mention that there are multiple forms of nihilism; however, in connection to metamodernism, the concept of “radical nihilism” (Woodward 55) is particularly relevant. In addition, postmodern nihilism also plays a significant role in shaping the philosophical foundation of metamodernism. Through the interplay between these two forms of nihilism, a more subtle understanding of metamodernism emerges, which represents its ambivalent yet more optimistic and playful approach to meaninglessness.

According to Nietzsche, radical nihilism contains two possibilities: the passive nihilism of accepting a meaningless world in despairing resignation, or the active nihilism of seeking to destroy what remains of the traditional categories of valuation. Active nihilism is the attempt to destroy all values, including those that were attached to the ‘true’ world. (qtd. in Woodward 55)

With this notion, “Nietzsche attacks on traditional religious, moral, and philosophical values such as God, metaphysics, truth, pity, compassion, and humility” (Woodward 55), which are all indicators of the absence of grand narratives in contemporary times. Following the idea of “active nihilism, it leads to accomplished or ‘complete nihilism,’ which is attained when no values whatever remain” (Woodward 55). It indicates “the completed destruction of all values but it is paradoxically also the overcoming of nihilism” (Woodward 55), since it allows people to “leave nihilism behind and actively create new categories of valuation that will be wholly affirmative and free from nihilism” (Woodward 55). To put it in another way, “the absence of all traditional, transcendent values allows a new era in which new values may be posited, values that are immanent and apply only to this world” (Woodward 55), which aligns with the metamodern structure of feeling that creates “a crucially self-aware literature that is aware of being literature operating in a modernist vein, and through postmodernist literary techniques turned towards modernist goals” (Holland qtd. in van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s” 9). However, radical nihilism (particularly active nihilism) has a rather negative view on the idea of meaninglessness, treating it as a condition to be overcome through the complete rejection of existing values, which limits its capacity to rationalize the ambivalent dimension of metamodernism that drives toward reconstruction and hope. By contrast, postmodern nihilism introduces a possibility for a reflexive attitude that is more liberating in its essence; therefore, it could capture the optimistic aspect of metamodernist ideas. The concept is mainly “concerned with the idea that nihilism cannot truthfully say that there is no truth” (Slocombe 151). It implies that “this formulation would not attempt to remain outside of that which it negates, meaning that the statement itself would be both true and untrue, or, as it is nihilism, neither true nor untrue” (Slocombe 151), which aligns with the metamodern sensibility of embracing paradox and ambiguity while refusing to impose a singular, absolute truth over competing perspectives.

As I have already mentioned, in my thesis, I will primarily use the definition of metamodernism as a “structure of feeling” (van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s” 4), which refers to the “emergent Neo-Romantic sensibility” (van den Akker and Vermeulen qtd. in MacDowell 37) in contemporary times. It actively demonstrates that I will consider the concept to be something more philosophical and abstract, such as a mental state that affects the mood or sense of a person, that “lies deeply embedded in our lives; and it cannot be merely extracted and summarized; it is perhaps only in art that it can be realized and communicated as a whole experience” (Williams qtd. in van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s” 7). I am aware that there are other scholars who interpret metamodernism as a rather practical approach to contemporary art. For instance, according to James and Seshagiri, the goal of metamodernist artists is to “extend, reanimate, and repudiate twentieth-century modernist literature” (89), and there is a certain ambition attached to them, “to reassess and remobilize narratives of modernism” (89). Although the GenZ Bible does display characteristics of modernist literature, this particular attitude is not thorough enough to analyze the texts, since they operate within a broader digital and cultural system and not only in the field of literature. Furthermore, the texts are not only intended to critique or support modernist ideals but to make religious stories more relatable within the fast-paced, fragmented, and highly visual world of the new generations’ online experience.

In conclusion, even though metamodernism re-utilizes elements from modernism while re-contextualizing its ideas, postmodernist tendencies are still present within its embrace of irony, self-awareness, and skepticism toward the perception of truth, allowing for a fluid interplay between sincerity and detachment in contemporary expressions. Various unique techniques are manifested in today’s artistic representations, cultural mediations, and political discourses, reflecting the complexities of modern life and responding to the layered interplay between tradition, innovation, and the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Metamodernism offers a means of understanding the shifting nature of human experience and how it shapes collective consciousness. Moreover, through its lens, we gain insight into evolving processes that define both historical and contemporary discourse.

## Chapter 1



The GenZ Bible provides insight into themes of irony, nihilism, and, globalization that are interconnected within the concept of meme culture, forming a hybrid aesthetic that resists clear categorization. These elements reflect the evolving sensibilities of younger generations who navigate a hyperconnected digital landscape, using layered humor and affective detachment as tools for negotiating identity, meaning, and social belonging. Meme culture is a unique phenomenon in online media that plays an important role in digital communication and culture and has become a popular tool for conveying information and ideas that spread rapidly on the internet and social media platforms. This chapter aims to better understand the GenZ Bible as an online phenomenon and its relation to popular TikTok trends and the notion of ‘going viral.’ In this section, I will be focusing on the dynamics and fluid strategies of memes and how they create meaning through comedic satire while investigating the question: what is the role of meme culture in the GenZ Bible, and why is it important in the context of digital discourse? Firstly, I will briefly discuss the definition of a ‘meme’ and how it has evolved over the years. I will then move on to the impact of memes in shaping popular culture, since they are “not silent, passive, and ready-made texts, but rather they are used in the form of satire and criticism of things” (Lestari et al. 1) that are going viral and how these issues affect social media in the real world. It is crucial to examine the community-building aspect of meme culture in this chapter, and how does the shared creation and circulation of memes influence identity construction? Additionally, I will explain the platform of TikTok and how it operates within the online discourse. Lastly, I will provide a critical viewpoint on meme culture and why it potentially has a negative effect on the globalized network of consumers.

The name of the online phenomenon comes from Richard Dawkins, who defined memes as parallel to biological genes, since their only purpose is to make copies of themselves. The concept of ‘meme’ has been around longer than the digital age, and some linguists argue that humans have used memes to communicate for centuries. However, “meme culture has undergone a dramatic transformation from an internet phenomenon to an essential part of digital culture” (Lestari et al. 134). “This is especially true for humor and satire” (Lestari et al. 134), which function as powerful tools for social critique, allowing individuals to engage with complex or uncomfortable topics through irony and exaggeration. At first, memes became popular for their ability to make people laugh and be surprised, reflecting the chaos and obscurity of contemporary symbolic production and exchange. Nevertheless, nowadays they are widely known as conduits for cultural conversations and an opportunity to participate in different internet trends, which is “followed by the process of decline, variation, and selection” (Lestari et al. 134).

Meme culture has evolved in three generations. Characters mark the first generation, emojis mimic the faces of the second generation, and narrative elements mark the third generation. Each generation has different narrative elements, which contribute to the development of virtual communication and online culture. (Lestari et al. 134)

This progress reflects broader shifts in cultural patterns. The first and second generations, with their emphasis on symbolic representation, can be associated with modernist ideas of structure, meaning, and expression. In contrast, the third generation’s embrace of fragmented narratives, irony, and intertextuality aligns more closely with postmodernist sensibilities, emphasizing a move toward self-referentiality and playful deconstruction within digital spaces. “Memes abound on the Internet and can last in popularity anywhere from a week to years” (Hartman et al. 68), highlighting the ambivalent nature of digital culture. Due to the rise of social media, the new generations (who are the primary users of the various online

platforms such as Instagram and TikTok) are aware of the power of this medium, and because of their cultural familiarity, they tend to commonly incorporate memes in their daily conversations.

“In French, the word ‘même’ translates to ‘same’, and the Greek word ‘mimoúmai’ means ‘to imitate’” (Benveniste), which indicates the core logic of memes as culturally profound units of relatable texts, since they are “influenced by external experiences, internal experiences, and emotions” (Lestari et al. 135). Furthermore, this etymology reflects the nature of memes not only as viral fragments of digital content but also as shared social expressions that mirror everyday life in accessible yet often reflective ways—embodying the very concept of collective relatability and affective engagement that are crucial aspects of the contemporary digital discourse. Therefore, the name ‘meme’ signifies “a new replicator, a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation” (Benveniste). According to Limor Shifman, there are other components to a meme as well, such as the idea of “remaking and parody” (qtd. in Hartman et al. 68), that highlight the participatory and humorous nature of digital culture, where users actively engage with and reinterpret content to produce new meanings, often blurring the lines between creator and consumer, original and copy. It indicates that “the power of memes lies in their transmissibility and unique knack for being cross-cultural, since they possess the uncanny ability to capture a moment while distracting people from reality” (Benveniste). Memes often rely on visual elements such as emojis and characters to convey emotions, reactions, or cultural references, thus highlighting their communicative capacity while simultaneously enabling nuanced layers of meaning that can be interpreted differently depending on the viewer’s cultural background, digital literacy, and general knowledge about socio-political factors.

In the case of the GenZ Bible, the incorporated memes (for instance, the exaggerated AI-generated pictures from the Bible or the modernized description of a character) “inspire the creation of other texts that follow, build upon, or even parody the form of the original” (Hartman et al. 68) sacred book. Due to the use of various memes in the rewritten version of the Bible, the popularity of the entertainment was accelerated on TikTok, since it “encapsulated the era we are living in while also reminding people that it’s not all that serious” (Benveniste). The online phenomenon “brought people together through humor and can act as a catalyst for creating social or political commentary” (Benveniste) that not only encouraged a sense of collective identity within digital communities but also enabled users to engage with complex societal issues in a way that is both accessible and relatable. Simplicity is a key element here, “because it allows people with different skills and interests to reproduce memes quickly and easily” (Shifman qtd. in Hartman et al. 79) and post them on social media. Nevertheless, “this simplicity refers to the construction of the meme, not the thought process behind it” (Shifman qtd. in Hartman et al. 79).

As I have mentioned before, “memes and their meanings are co-constructed by multiple users in a social context” (Benveniste), which indicates that different perspectives might add to, contradict, or challenge each other within the same content. Moreover, due to the contemporary postmodern nihilistic mindset, these different ideas do not struggle for recognition in the public sphere, but they are able to coexist together. This open attitude could potentially encourage individuals to reflect on their own point of view and consider the following question of how they engage with certain texts. Even though the GenZ Bible is revealed to have one singular author, because it was posted on TikTok the possibility to alter it (for instance, adding images to the script or making an AI-generated voiceover for the text) had become available to any user. Therefore, the GenZ Bible becomes more than just a written text. It is a compilation of juxtaposed visual and textual fragments drawn from various

cultural sources, memes, and internet trends that makes it a broad, metamodern artwork. As a result, by not claiming sole possession over the artwork, the GenZ Bible advocates for a deeper reflection on the consumers' positionality, cultural context, and the subjective nature of interpretation in digital environments. Furthermore, this collective authorship mirrors the multifaceted structure of the Bible as well. Many would think that there is not much in common in the two very different texts (besides the obvious: the characters and the story); however, there are studies that investigate the writing process of the Bible, and they conclude that it was composed by multiple authors over an extended period of time. It proves that the book was actually composed by multiple authors, historical layers, and diverse genres that are open for interpretation through the lens of individual observation while maintaining a dialogic relationship with tradition and community. As Richard Friedman has stated, it is essential to be "aware of the Bible's extraordinary history and its resulting complexity" (243), since it offers insight into past writing practices that might not differ as much from modern techniques. He continues to say, "We can read a page of the Bible and know that three or even four persons, all artists, were writing from their own experience, in their own historical moments; only they were separated by centuries, nevertheless they all contributed to composing that page" (244). This juxtaposed aspect-where multiple voices, contexts, and temporalities coexist within a single text-offers a parallel to the way memes function in contemporary digital culture. Much like the biblical manuscript, memes are constructed through layers of meaning, often drawing from a wide range of cultural references, social perspectives, and evolving contexts. In other words, both the canonical texts and memes were/are reinterpreted and reshaped by diverse creators, each contributing their voice to an ever-expanding (digital) narrative. This intertextual and collaborative nature enables manuscripts and memes to speak across audiences and timeframes, making them a rich site for cultural negotiation, reconstruction, and critique.

Around 2022, the first video of the GenZ Bible was posted on TikTok, and since then it has been reposted and shared by multiple users. TikTok is a social media platform that allows users to create, watch, share, and post (and potentially repost) short-form videos. People on the app mainly create content that is less than a minute, and they tend to incorporate fast (and/or multiple) cuts to their recordings, making them more dynamic and vibrant. This attitude represents the increasing pace of modernity and the need for quick transitions that maintain the consumers' interest and curiosity. The most common form of communication on TikTok is the "language of memes that allow users to create relevant and stable representations that determine aspects of people's lives" (Petrova 2), which indicates that social media has a great influence on our everyday lives. The language of memes consists of elements such as cultural objects, images, videos, phrases, and music" (*Cambridge English Dictionary* qtd. in Petrova 2). These components function effectively in an energetic, quick video format, whose primary purpose is to reach as many people as possible within the attention economy of digital platforms. "The content of memes is understandable to every Internet user, regardless of age, language, culture, and nation" (Petrova 2), which highlights its inclusive nature and emphasizes the role of memes as global signifiers that go beyond traditional boundaries of communication. "Not only do they cross languages, the link they create makes a sense of belonging among Internet users" (Petrova 2), which demonstrates that memes function as participatory cultural tools. They help construct a collective identity through shared humor and values, "whether they use meme language to express their feelings on certain issues or to heighten their obsession with famous celebrities" (Petrova 2). "Their appearance in a daily online space helps to strengthen strong relationships in the community" (Petrova 2), while sustaining a shared environment where meaning is negotiated collectively. Moreover, by frequently engaging with memes, this practice not only does contribute to a sense of continuity within the network, but it also helps to maintain the current online trends.

On an individual level, “memes are mostly conceived as a shared code between members of online communities” (Giorgi), which indicates that they function as an inside joke or symbolic language that helps people to recognize each other, communicate efficiently, and signal belonging. Therefore, memes can be “regarded as the cultural embodiment of the so-called “networked individualism” (Shifman qtd. in Giorgi). “Identity is transmitted through the use of a specific language of meme during interactions; that is the marker of discourse,” (Petrova 1), in which the use of specific visual and linguistic codes becomes a key tool for self-expression. It allows users to develop new ways of preserving identity by adapting cultural symbols and language to become part of their individual aesthetic.

The short-video format on TikTok is heavily based on communal codes of humor, irony, and absurdity that are widely recognized within internet subcultures, allowing readers to feel seen, understood, and connected. In this way, *The GenZ Bible* mirrors the affective logic of online communities, where identity is not stable or singular but performed, negotiated, and affirmed through collective interaction. In addition, satire plays a central role in this process, serving not only as a tool of entertainment but also as a mechanism of critique and cultural distancing. By parodying the sacred structure of religious texts while embedding contemporary anxieties, internet tropes, and generational concerns, the artwork allows Gen Z readers to navigate their individual and/or communal contradictions. Memes play a crucial role in the unique representation of the biblical characters in their panels to be symbolic in nature rather than literal since it allows people to interpret them in more varied ways. By disconnecting these core figures from their traditional religious context, memes offer a space for creative reimagination that is aligned with contemporary cultural, political, and social themes. These new portrayals of the sacred characters allow individuals to project their own experiences, beliefs, and worldviews onto them, which reflects the broader nature of meme culture, where meanings are not fixed but are constantly renegotiated in response to changing

contexts, digital trends, and collective sensibilities. By transforming God, the Virgin Mary, and Jesus into multifaceted symbols rather than static religious icons, the GenZ Bible makes them more relatable and authentic. I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 2, where I will be analyzing the reinterpretation of the biblical characters, the storylines, and the overall representation of the sacred book in connection to the metamodern approach to history and religion.

The GenZ Bible serves as both a cultural object and a performative space where identity and community are co-constructed through shared digital literacy, in this case more specifically “meme literacy” (Giorgi), which incorporates “the knowledge of both meme formal conventions and the logics regulating specific groups or communities, and it is continuously negotiated through intergroup discussions” (Giorgi). Meme literacy is an important aspect of a community, since it “also marks the boundary between in-group members (being ‘in the know’) and outsiders” (Giorgi). It actively demonstrates that the “established social conventions not only dictate the norms for transformative creation but also function as gatekeepers, excluding the uninitiated” (Giorgi), therefore reinforcing existing hierarchies within the cultural production and limiting access to creative legitimacy to those already familiar with the dominant discourses. According to Nissenbaum and Shifman, “meme literacy has a direct influence on members’ status within the community—thus conceptualizing them as a form of ‘cultural capital’” (Giorgi). This exclusionary dynamic becomes particularly relevant in digital spaces, where recognition is often governed by algorithmic trends, making it harder for marginalized voices to participate in shaping cultural narratives. Although memes have the power to build an online community and they are helpful to (de-/re-)construct one’s identity, it is important to mention that they do have a “negative side in cases where the communication is limited to the exchange of pictures, the use of memes to exacerbate hostile and prejudiced attitudes towards certain people, gender,

religion, etc., which may contribute to the split between people” (Petrova 2). This emphasizes the dual nature of memes as both tools of solidarity and instruments of division. While their rapid spread and visual accessibility can advocate for inclusivity, these same qualities make them easy to misuse. Because of their visual impact, memes could potentially oversimplify complex social issues, leading to the spread of misinformation, the reinforcement of stereotypes, and the normalization of harmful ideologies under the name of humor. Furthermore, it is difficult to hold creators or sharers accountable for their memes due to the fact that they usually have an ambiguous tone. As I have mentioned earlier, nowadays online platforms require a higher shock value that sometimes results in insensitive content that thrives on rage or exclusion rather than inclusivity. It actively demonstrates that, while memes play a central role in shaping digital culture and collective identity, it is crucial to approach their use with awareness of their broader sociopolitical implications.

To sum up everything that has been stated so far, the GenZ Bible utilizes memes as instruments for both cultural expression and collective reflection, allowing digital communities to navigate the complexities of contemporary life through parody, imitation, and remake. “Memes utilize humor, relatability, and visual-textual interaction to engage audiences and convey ideas effectively in the digital world” (Dashkova qtd. in Lestari et al. 134), and as an expanding social content, they contribute to the variability of cultural codes and consequently change an individual’s cultural identity throughout life. Through the language of memes, people are able to use a new type of communication product in modern society, which makes them “surprised and laugh while looking for ways to solve information chaos” (VITIUK et al. qtd. in Lestari et al. 135). In this chapter, I explored how memes function in our digital world and demonstrated that they have great influence on digital culture and collective thinking. They serve as a powerful medium that critiques socio-political realities while simultaneously advocating for shared values and a defined sense of identity. Memes, in

this context, become tools of both resistance and adaptation, throughout which younger generations reframe dominant narratives, question ideologies, and articulate identity in fragmented but meaningful ways. “The evolving intelligence of digital culture consumers is determined by the high level of awareness and understanding of Internet culture” (Petrova 7), which emphasizes their ability to navigate complex layers of irony, symbolism, and intertextuality. In order to stay critical towards the discourse of meme culture, I have also examined the negative aspects of it and explored how its reliance on irony and ambiguity can contribute to the spread of harmful stereotypes, the oversimplification of serious issues, and the reinforcement of exclusionary narratives. All in all, the GenZ Bible represents how an online viral moment can be interpreted as not only an empty trend but as a rich, layered artwork that captures the emotional, political, and philosophical concerns of our time. The online phenomenon reflects on the fluidity of language and cultural boundaries, where identities and ideologies constantly change, creating a dynamic space where meaning is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed in real-time by a global, digitally literate audience.

## Chapter 2



In recent years, there has been a shift in how religious texts are being presented and consumed by younger generations. There are multiple reasons why this has been happening, including: the cultural shift from postmodernism - marking the start of a new metamodernist approach to life, society, and thought - and the rapid growth of digital culture (I have already discussed its significance in Chapter 1). One of the most outstanding examples of this change is the GenZ Bible. Rather than strictly translating the Bible to the contemporary English language, the GenZ Bible uses internet slang, memes, emojis, and cultural references in order to create a unique way of approaching old religious stories. This unconventional approach raises important questions about how sacred texts can remain relevant or be reappropriated in a rapidly evolving world and what it means to preserve the core messages of religion while reshaping its expression for a modern audience. Furthermore, the GenZ Bible comments on the composition of historical narratives as well, actively calling out the inconsistencies often embedded in them, such as the selective inclusion of events, the glorification of certain figures over others, and the lack of marginalized voices that could potentially challenge the grand narrative.

In this chapter I will explore the boundaries between religion, history, and metamodernism and how they interplay with each other in the texts of the GenZ Bible, while addressing my second sub-question: in what ways does the GenZ Bible reflect on religion and history by interpreting biblical stories through contemporary language? Firstly, I will be investigating the use of contemporary language in the texts, mainly focusing on the way it shapes the reimagination of religion and history outside of the online phenomenon. I will apply Saussure's theory of semiotics to specific characters and symbols in order to comprehend the complex systems of meaning-making and the evolving relationship between

signifiers and their cultural interpretations in the texts. Secondly, I will be analyzing the impact of metamodernism on how individuals construct meaning and interpret their places within the world through religious narratives. In addition, it is essential to mention the contemporary idea of the so-called “postmodern End of History” (Fukuyama 28), which positions liberal democracy in the center of ideological revolution. I will connect Fukuyama’s theory to the metamodern concept of “Bend of History” (van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s” 2) that challenges such linear progress narratives by emphasizing historical cycles and cultural oscillation. This framework will help examine how the GenZ Bible constructs its world—not as a fixed ideological endpoint, but as a dynamic, self-aware space that mirrors the complexity and contradictions of contemporary life.

## 2.1

The GenZ Bible presents the religious story as a ‘chat conversation’ with no capitalization or punctuation marks. Instead, there are emojis in the texts in order to express any type of emotion, for example, when God says, “Go forth and vibe in this Minecraft Paradise I seeded 🌱” (*GenZ Bible*, Genesis 1), implying that he values and loves Adam and Eve. By adding emojis to the texts, the GenZ Bible broadens the symbolic order within which it is created. As a result, more signifiers are added to one specific signified, forming a complex network that expands the meaning of the signified. It actively demonstrates that, according to the GenZ Bible, the concept of ‘God’s love’ could be articulated in many more different ways, such as by saying, “He’s got mad love and mercy that never runs out” (*GenZ Bible*, Psalm 136.26), or “God loved the world so much that he sent his one and only Son, so that those who trust in him will not be destroyed but will have never-ending life” (*GenZ Bible*, John 3.16), or putting a 🤝 [hand-heart emoji] at the end of a sentence. The emoji is sufficient enough for the young generation to understand the core message of the text, as it is able to incorporate a complex narrative into a short, contemporary linguistic habit. The

subjects that enter the symbolic order are the original religious characters from the Bible, who are reshaped by the new system of signs governed by the code of internet discourse. It actively demonstrates that the GenZ Bible reconceptualizes the traditional biblical signifiers—words, phrases, and metaphors—by embedding them in contemporary cultural contexts. These figures (signifiers) already had ideas (signified) attached to them; for instance, the Virgin Mary, as her name suggests, is known to be pure and immaculate; hence, she is the chosen woman by God. However, the new symbolic order assigned different concepts to the already-existing personas by reinterpreting their traditional descriptions and modernizing them according to contemporary sensibilities, lived experiences, and cultural codes, ensuring their relevance and resonance within present-day frameworks of meaning. Therefore, Virgin Mary becomes a “pick-me girl for God” (*GenZ Bible*, Luke 1.26-34), which still highlights her special position within the narrative, but in a more negative way, since the term ‘pick-me’ describes a girl who does everything for mostly male validation. From a semiotic and structuralist perspective, this alteration reflects a reorganization of signs within a changing cultural code, where the signifier ‘Mary’ is rearticulated within a new system of oppositions and meanings. In other words, based on the original information about her character, her symbolic function is reconstructed in the narrative. It implies that from a current point of view, Mary and her behavior are not as virtuous as they are written in the Bible, which repositions the cultural expectations of the character and challenges traditional principles about femininity. Whichever version of Mary is the ‘Real’ one, it is impossible to determine, as the symbolic operates as a filter through which the ‘Real’ could partially appear. This suggests that language (as part of the symbolic order) distorts access to one’s true self, making contact with the ‘Real’ unattainable. A clear example of this can be seen in the Gen Z Bible’s portrayal of Jesus. His identity is mediated through irony and memes, for instance when: “Jesus was like, ‘Yo, go and show John what’s up with the stuff you’re hearing and

seeing, okay? 😎” (*GenZ Bible*, Matthew 11.4). This reinterpretation (including the smiling emoji wearing sunglasses, which within the contemporary cultural codes mostly refers to someone/something that is perceived as cool) presents him as a more relatable person but also highlights how any notion of an ‘authentic’ Jesus is constructed through layers of symbolic representation. Such semiotic layering reflects how contemporary audiences read and produce meaning through culturally specific signs, shaped by present-day sensibilities. Furthermore, the norms and expectations that shape society have evolved over time, meaning that the social structures we navigate today differ significantly from those in place when the Bible was originally written. Therefore, values and roles embedded in biblical narratives are now filtered through contemporary cultural expressions, resulting in reinterpretations that reflect current social norms, identities, and communicative practices. In the case of Jesus, this means that he is no longer respected because he is the son of God but because he is “the Real Deal” (*GenZ Bible*, Luke 4.41). Furthermore, he is depicted as a leader who is “chill and eats and drinks with the squad” (*GenZ Bible*, Luke 5.33) rather than describing that he is “eating with sinners” (*GenZ Bible*, Luke 5.29-39), which removes the authoritative tone of the biblical script and replaces it with humor. The subtle alteration through the process of translation reshapes theological ideas in terms that emphasize inclusion, emotional connection, and informality over moral hierarchy. Moreover, it suggests a shift from rigid virtue and purity and advocates for a more individualized form of spirituality that resonates with the contemporary identity and allows individuals to relate to religious figures without feeling guilt or shame over their flaws. This mindset is further manifested in people who call themselves “spiritual but not religious” (Ceriello 4), which reflects a desire for personal experiences of meaning and belief outside of the boundaries of institutionalized religion. There are comments under the videos of the GenZ Bible saying that “the fact that this is how I talk when I pray to Jesus” (comment on Rick/TTS bestie’s video), refers to the casual tone of

the GenZ Bible, which not only does suggest skepticism toward strict doctrines but it also emphasizes a more personal relationship with God.

Throughout the process of translating the old scripts to contemporary language, the seemingly stable relationship between signifier and signified is collapsed; therefore, the meaning of certain words has changed. For example, Jesus' followers are called "fam" (*GenZ Bible*, Luke 8.20) in the GenZ Bible, which is a more affectionate term highlighting the closeness between Christ and the people who believed in him. 'Fam' is also the slang word for family, which further strengthens the sense of communal belonging and intimacy within the Christian tradition. This process resonates with the question of how communities make sense of the world through signifying practices and presents God and his followers as one big, happy family. In addition, in the GenZ Bible in Luke 4:24, Jesus mentions the word "hood" (which refers to a country), saying that "no prophets gets embraced in their own hood, ya know?" (Luke 4.24). This example reinforces the post-structuralist view on language, describing it as a discourse that is not only a tool for communication but it also operates as a system that produces and structures knowledge. The term 'hood' functions as a signifier whose meaning is shaped by its relation to other signs within a given symbolic system. It actively demonstrates that, the signifier can differ in interpretation and meaning depending on the background of the reader, as words do not carry fixed meanings but are understood within specific cultural and social contexts. As a result, there is "no authoritative author who has complete control over the narrative, but instead the reader plays a central role in interpreting texts" (Popan). To connect it to the example of the 'hood,' for individuals outside of that system, particularly those who do not identify with the cultural or socio-economic experiences of the 'hood,' the word may be interpreted through dominant media stereotypes, evoking associations with gangsters, thugs, or violence-thereby reinforcing structural oppositions such as safe/dangerous or civilized/uncivilized. However, these binary oppositions are

interdependent on the established knowledge systems, reflecting historically constructed power relations rather than objective truths. Post-structuralism exposes the “complex interplay of signifiers while emphasizing the performative form of language” (Popan). To demonstrate this with another example, when John says the following about Jesus: “He’s gonna drench you with the Holy Spirit and set you on fire, not literally though!” (*GenZ Bible*, Luke 3.16) it illustrates language as an inherently unstable system. For a religious person, ‘fire’ could indicate the presence of the Holy Ghost (according to the Bible, at Pentecost the Holy Spirit in the form of flames came to rest on each one of the apostles, filling them with faith); however, for a non-religious, younger person, ‘set you on fire’ is interpreted as causing them to be excited. Furthermore, the humorous disclaimer ‘not literally though’ draws attention to the gap between signifier and signified, acknowledging that while the understanding of the ‘fire’ metaphor may vary across cultural and linguistic contexts, they often share a common emotional investment or spiritual orientation.

## 2.2 ✨

The memes in the texts resonate with the philosophical and social concept of the end of the world, originally proposed by 19th-century German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, who understood history as a “rational, linear progression toward absolute knowledge and freedom” (qtd. in van Erp 2). According to Hegel, the End of History is the “moment in which reason recognizes itself in its objective products as this spiritual power over natural time” (Hegel qtd. in van Erp 4). Within the story of Creation, the use of ‘POV’ could be interpreted as an example of this idea. ‘POV’ is another online trend that tries to get the audience to be more involved in the content of a video, therefore making it more interactive and reflective. The line “POV: you realize you have free will” (*GenZ Bible*, Genesis 1) is a progressive realization of freedom and reason that functions as a note for the consumers, inspiring them to recognize their autonomy and moral agency within the religious framework. Furthermore, it

reflects on the moment when human consciousness rises and sees its own rational development embedded in the world it has created; therefore, it could be a symbol for the Hegelian idea of the ‘End of History’. It is an ambiguous notion, which indicates that “firstly, its ultimate goal at which rational activity is directed. As such, it could be a transcendent ideal or a merely regulative idea. Secondly, it could be seen as a moment or a period in time” (Hegel qtd. in van Erp 4). The latter was adapted by postmodern studies that depict the ‘End of History’ as an “empirical statement describing the current condition of the world” (Fukuyama 28). In the GenZ Bible it is mentioned that not everyone “understands the holy bro’s assignment” (Luke 1.74), which actively demonstrates that people no longer believe in universal truths or ideologies (also known as grand narratives).

The ‘end of grand narratives’ was declared by Lyotard at the end of the 1970s (early postmodern times). In his essay he “concludes that the grand narrative of philosophical paradigm (which is also associated with Hegel) is dead” (Browning 3), that includes Christianity as well. According to Lyotard, grand narratives

lay buried underneath the ubiquitous performativity of contemporary society and are superseded by our recognition of multiple dissonant forms of experience, which are not to be trammled by the monotony of a one-dimensional grand narrative.

Plurality and dissonant forms of experience, whether imagined as language games or genres of discourse, disrupt the epistemological and normative claims of grand narratives, while society operates by ignoring ideological distractions to concentrate on what will work to increase the performativity of the system. (qtd. in Browning 3)

This quote addresses the core idea of postmodernism that results in a fragmented cultural condition where overarching ideologies, such as religion and history, are rejected. Lyotard argues that modern society prioritizes efficiency, performance, and fitting into the norms, often at the cost of individual, complex, or conflicting experiences. In contrast, by adapting

one of the most influential texts of Western civilization, the GenZ Bible contradicts this postmodern idea from Lyotard. This rewriting choice suggests that even though religion is no longer seen as the sole framework of truth, it could still remain relevant in modern societies, especially when sacred texts are understood as flexible cultural artifacts open to reinterpretation. The GenZ Bible does not attempt to restore religion as a grand narrative in the traditional sense; rather, it offers a way of relating to the divine that reflects our current, post-narrative condition. Moreover, in his quote, Lyotard also critiques how society suppresses alternative ways of thinking in order to maintain a simplified narrative. Although the GenZ Bible follows a rather straightforward and clean storyline, its layers of irony, parody, and emotional sincerity complicate the goals and desires of the characters, therefore creating a more complex network of connections. For example, in the case of the character of Judas, although the verses are written in a more light-hearted tone, there is enough space to feel empathy towards him, in contrast to the original version of the Bible. Instead of only stating the event, the GenZ Bible has a sorrowful description of Judas' repentance: "Then he threw the money on the ground and left the temple. Feeling hopeless, he tragically ended his own life" (Matthew 27.5). As opposed to other modernized parts of the texts, this particular segment does not contain any contemporary slang words, which makes this section stand out from the rest of the stories. Because of the lack of emojis and memes, the text intentionally shifts the focus to the tragic aspect of Judas's suicide rather than framing his death as the justified fate of a traitor. By depicting Judas as a more humane character and allowing people to feel remorse for him, the GenZ Bible rejects the initial Christian religious narrative. This reinterpretation challenges the traditional view of Judas solely as a betrayer and instead represents him as a complex individual shaped by circumstance and emotion. Furthermore, this part about Judas could also be interpreted as a sign of declining reliance on grand narratives to dictate moral judgement emphasizing a contemporary preference for

individualized ethical reasoning. This passage invites readers to question long-held assumptions about good and evil while highlighting the importance of plurality, contradiction, and diversity in how people understand themselves and the world.

The GenZ Bible is aware of its historical contradictions, and instead of trying to hide them, it enhances them through the use of memes. For instance, there are “two different versions of Jesus’ birth in the Bible” (Marina); however, TikTok users prefer Luke’s description with the shepherds because its translated version contains more slang expressions such as

So, like, right after the angels were like, ‘peace out’ and went back to heaven, the shepherds were like, ‘Yo, let’s go check out this crazy thing the Lord told us about, going down in Betlehem’.

So they like, rushed over and found Mary, Joseph, and the cute little baby just chillin’ in a manger. (*GenZ Bible*, 2.8-16)

Meanwhile, the displayed memes or paintings in the videos do not always align with the narration. In this specific case, the consumers are likely to see the three wise men represented as well, even though they are in Matthew’s version of the story and not in Luke’s ([gen.z.bible.stories](http://gen.z.bible.stories)). Apart from Jesus’ birth, there are other instances where a biblical event has multiple available variants; therefore, online creators are able to freely choose from a more diverse selection to incorporate them in their content. It indicates that there is no dominant narrative that claims to explain the development of civilization, morality, and human purpose. Hence, the GenZ Bible challenges the notion of history as a “coherent and directional transformation of human societies that affects the whole, or nearly the whole, of mankind” (Fukuyama 32). Instead of describing a unified and linear progression of events, the texts deconstruct and reimagine sacred historical scripts through a fragmented, meme-based lens, calling the story of the Bible, as the “divine dad lore” (*GenZ Bible*, Genesis 3). In slang,

‘lore’ refers to a legend that accompanies a particular dogma. By referring to the Bible as ‘lore,’ the Gen Z Bible frames religious stories as inside jokes or mythic events—ones that may not be verifiable but are still treated as canon within the faith. This phrasing introduces a sense of self-awareness, emphasizing that sacred texts could function as shared mythology within a belief system. As Francis Fukuyama writes:

Prior to the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe, there could be a high degree of continuity in history: whether one looks at political organization, family life, or economic production, did not look terribly different in various time periods. But with the development of the scientific method, a process of economic development began that has encompassed virtually the whole of humanity. (32)

History and its perception had become an even greater dilemma when postmodern scholars started to take into consideration the ethical aspect of it, revealing that it is often represented from a limited point of view. By asking questions such as, “Why not tell another story, say, the story of indigenous peoples crushed by modernization, or the story of women, or the story of family life, each of which would follow a very different trajectory?” (Fukuyama 34), it ultimately facilitated the collapse of modernist metanarratives, including religion as well. In the GenZ Bible, the retelling of the story of Creation already challenges the idea that God is always virtuous. In this version, Satan says to Eve, “Baby girl, he’s gatekeeping all them dubs. Me personally, I would not let that slide” (*GenZ Bible*, Genesis 3.2). In contemporary slang, ‘gatekeeping’ has a negative connotation, referring to the intentional withholding of information, knowledge, access, or opportunity. It indicates that God is trying to control the lives of Adam and Eve, while Satan is the one who is helping them gain power over their consciousness. By using only one different word to describe the situation, the first text of the GenZ Bible already establishes its open approach to different perspectives, and it does not

follow the dogmatic Christian view on God. This new way of representation could be interpreted as a response to contemporary cultural production and political discourse as well, which capture the increasing awareness of ideological disposition, claiming the return – or rather bend - of History. In the GenZ Bible, as the consumer gets more and more invested in the characters and the narratives, it becomes clear “there is something at stake, yet we are still very much unsure what this something—hidden around the bend, as it were—might be (and we will only really know in hindsight)” (van den Akker and Vermeulen, “Periodising the 2000s” 2). This narrative tension is represented in the GenZ Bible as well, for instance in the depiction of Peter during and after his denial of Jesus. Instead of portraying his denial as a simple failure of faith, the GenZ Bible portrays Peter as a deeply human figure torn between fear and loyalty. The texts express a greater contrast between Peter’s dismissive refusal of his association with Jesus, as he is using slang words (“Nah, dude, I’m not” (*GenZ Bible*, Luke 22.58)), and his emotional collapse, as he realizes his actions: “And Peter totally broke down, like, he was crying so hard” (*GenZ Bible*, Luke 22.61). This juxtaposition not only does deepen the overall impression of the character but it also highlights the emotional cost of moral failure, emphasizing internal conflict over doctrinal certainty. While Peter struggles with his own moral dilemma, Jesus is captured and tortured by the Roman soldiers, which represents the current sensibility of Bend of History’s “free-floating intensities amounting to the euphoric immediacy of so many disconnected presents” (van den Akker, “Historicity” 22). By presenting two different kinds of suffering as emotionally intense but temporally disjointed experiences, these moments evoke emotional responses from the reader without the comfort of moral resolution. Moreover, the narrative shifts rapidly between internal conflict and external violence, mirroring a fragmented historical consciousness in which meaning is reconstructed. This narrative fragmentation draws attention to the symbolic construction of meaning, aligning with the semiotics idea that myth transforms history into nature—rendering

culturally constructed signs as natural or eternal truths. In this sense, the GenZ Bible exposes the mythologized figure of Jesus not as fixed or absolute, but as a dynamic sign open to reconceptualization. Especially throughout his sufferings, Jesus is depicted not as an untouchable divine figure but as a historically grounded human being confronting the existential weight of his role. His vulnerability—expressed through moments of anxiety and isolation, for instance, when he says, “Yo, Dad, if there’s any chance, can you please take away this heavy situation from me?” (*GenZ Bible*, Matthew 26.38) reveals a deep self-awareness of his place within a larger narrative arc, yet without the assurance of its ultimate meaning or impact. In these moments, Jesus embodies a historical consciousness: he is a “man present to himself as a being in history” (van den Akker, “Historicity” 21), since he acts with the knowledge that his decisions are part of “various modalities in which one can relate past, present, and future (or be in history)” (van den Akker, “Historicity” 23), yet he experiences them through immediate human fear and doubt.

In conclusion, after analyzing the characters, the memes, and the storylines of the GenZ Bible, I have discovered that the contemporary language and context greatly influence our understanding of the sacred texts. By applying semiotic analysis to the narrative, I was able to better comprehend the complexity of language and the dynamic relationship between signifier and signified. The GenZ Bible illustrates how meaning is not fixed but constantly renegotiated through cultural codes, symbols, and evolving interpretive frameworks. This approach has deepened the awareness of how signs function within both religious discourse and digital culture, highlighting the interplay between textual form, cultural context, and the reader’s interpretation. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the GenZ Bible does not aim to replace the original scripts, since it follows the pattern of the original texts and does not try to correct its mistakes or contradictions. Rather, the texts add more depth to the religious scripts by offering a more accessible style for readers who might otherwise be

alienated by the archaic language or the rigid formalities. This shows that there is a metamodern “re-engagement in the form of a cautious return to grand narratives” (Clasquin-Johnson 5), while staying critical and ambiguous about history and religion as well. All in all, the GenZ Bible reflects a broader historical pattern of reimagining religious stories for new audiences and cultural moments, continuing the long tradition of adapting faith to fit a particular period of time.

## Chapter 3



Truth and authenticity are essential aspects of both the Bible and its contemporary version as well; however, the GenZ Bible reinterprets these values through the lens of personal experience, emotional relatability, and moral ambiguity, rather than relying on historical authority and centering God as the sole source of truth. Before starting my analysis, it is important to emphasize that, even though truth and authenticity are often used as synonyms, in reality they carry slightly different meanings. Therefore, they do not have the same significance within the context of the GenZ Bible. Instead, they contribute distinct layers to its representation of both the divine and the human characters as well.

In my previous section, my arguments revolved around the historical and religious background of the GenZ Bible and how they are (re)negotiated within contemporary linguistic practices. In contrast, my final chapter functions as a reflective space that discusses truth and authenticity within the context of metamodernism, specifically in connection to the GenZ Bible. Rather than offering conclusions, I would like to invite the reader into an open-ended exploration of how the concepts of truth and authenticity are reshaped in the current cultural climate that values both irony and sincerity. By engaging with the GenZ Bible as my case study, this chapter examines how traditional notions of objective truth transform into a more fluid form of meaning-making. Furthermore, this section argues how authenticity, while deeply personal and often performative, becomes a key element for evaluating truth in contemporary times. In order to find an answer to my third sub-question: how does the GenZ Bible critique or support the metamodern attitude towards authenticity and truth within the broader cultural landscape of metamodernism?, I will be examining five TikTok videos, mainly focusing on their visual narrative. By analyzing the visual elements of these contents, my aim is to uncover how aesthetic choices—such as composition, symbolism, and visual

tone—contribute to the construction of authenticity and shape the audience’s perception of truth in digital representations of the GenZ Bible. Firstly, I will analyze the metamodern manifestation of truth (post-truth) and connect it to the depiction of God (and Jesus) in the GenZ Bible. The character of God is a key figure in this chapter, since His portrayal mirrors the evolving notions of truth, authority, and authenticity, revealing how divine identity is reimagined in response to contemporary cultural and emotional sensibilities. I will briefly study the Bible itself as well, since truth and authenticity are all part of the core message of the original scripts. Therefore, their reinterpretations in the GenZ Bible highlight a continuous incorporation of traditional values, which indicates that they hold enduring significance in human experience. Secondly, I will investigate how the TikTok videos deconstruct conventional religious narratives and stylistic norms associated with metamodern authenticity. This includes examining the use of irony, memes, fragmented storytelling, and informal language as strategies that reframe the above-mentioned concept within a metamodern framework.

### 3.1

As I have already mentioned, truth and authenticity represent distinct concepts. In general, truth implies an objective reality. Truth in metamodernism is often situational and emotionally charged. It recognizes the limitations of absolute objectivity, yet resists completely accepting radical nihilism (see in Theoretical Framework). In addition, metamodernism offers an opportunity to search for meaning, treating ‘truth’ as something that may be uncertain or evolving but still worth pursuing in good faith. Within this framework, truth is no longer only a matter of factual accuracy, but it also involves feeling ‘connected.’ Therefore, it becomes subjective, experiential, and co-constructed rather than dictated from above. Whereas authenticity (on a surface level) refers to some sort of verification process that “describes the evaluation of some truth or fact” (Lehman et al. 4), even if “it is ultimately

not about the facts per se but rather about interpretations regarding those facts” (Lehman et al. 4). It actively demonstrates that authenticity is not a property of entities but, instead, “a claim that is made by or for [them] and either accepted or rejected by relevant others” (Peterson qtd. in Lehman et al. 4). However, the underlying framework of authenticity is interpreted through multiple cultural and theoretical lenses. I have chosen a definition that is “rooted in work on semiotics” (Baudrillard qtd. in Lehman et al. 7), as this structure helps me to better explain how the GenZ Bible constructs authenticity through culturally coded signs, language, and symbols that resonate with contemporary audiences (as I have already discussed it in Chapter 2). In this context, authenticity is considered as a “connection between an entity and a person, place, or time as claimed; therefore authenticity is reconceptualized as a matter of connection via provenance, transference, or symbolism” (Lehman et al. 7). It indicates that “certain entities contain an ‘essence’ or a quality that audiences cannot directly observe but which they perceive as fundamental to the entity’s identity, authenticity, or value” (Gelman qtd. in Lehman et al. 38). To demonstrate this through an example, in a viral video from 2023, a 20-year-old girl reads a Bible verse out loud, and she confidently calls God the “Top G” (AlwaysCandid 00:38). Because of her lack of pause and positive delivery (she smiles while saying the words), viewers perceive her expression as genuine, which makes the character appear authentic in the world of the GenZ Bible. Therefore, they accept the ‘new’ version of God in a more effortless way, repositioning him within a contemporary framework of internet masculinity and social dominance. Furthermore, the young woman is not confused by the words, which indicates that she must know that ‘Top G’ signifies someone with power, respect, and status—often linked to figures of influence in digital culture. In addition, she recognizes the similarity between the cultural codes of ‘Top G’ and the original representation of God. Thus, the new “iconic sign relates to its signifier insofar as it imitates or resembles to the old one” (Mick qtd. in Lehman et al. 39), constructing meaning through conceptual

similarity that allows the audience to recognize and interpret the sign based on shared perceptions or experiences. This awareness makes her role crucial in the video, since through her background knowledge she is able to connect the feeling of authenticity to the contemporary TikTok viewers by embodying a form of relatable spirituality. This moment in the TikTok video offers consistency in the story of the Bible, and it also makes the reimagined world within this version feel sincere. While watching the social media content, all sentences of the texts are subjected to the authenticity valuation, throughout which the consumer is able to determine what is considered 'Real' or important in the narrative. It actively demonstrates that the "concept of truth and the criteria of truth in fictional narratives are also subordinated to the concept of this authentication" (Doležel 15). By delivering the new name of God in a nonchalant way, it becomes authentic within that world, therefore counting as true in the story. It indicates that once the reimagined biblical universe accepts this kind of representation as authentic, new events or characterizations are judged based on whether they fit that tone and aesthetic, thereby perceived as the truth.

According to the teachings of Christianity, Jesus is the son of God; therefore, he is sharing one divine essence with God, which makes him part of the Holy Trinity. However, he was born to a human mother, and he experienced human emotions (such as sadness, fear, and pain), and he also had human needs (for example, food and water), which means he was also a human being. Throughout the narrative he navigates his conflicting identity by balancing his understanding of his deity as the Messiah with the experience of living in a human body within the world. The GenZ Bible emphasizes this inner conflict, and it also plays a significant role in the visual narrative of the TikTok videos. For instance, in Sophia's video, there are many different images of Jesus; a few of them are paintings, but there are AI-generated pictures as well. The voiceover tells the story of Jesus' baptism, which is an important milestone in his life. There is a notable contrast in how the 'real' paintings and the

'fake' images depict Jesus. In the paintings, Christ is portrayed with a divine halo around his head, and he is painted in the center of the frame, which could be considered the standardized representation of Jesus. He is depicted as pure and unreachable to the common man; that further highlights his deity. However, in the AI-generated picture, he appears more like an average human being, wearing a simple white gown, and his hair is illustrated as messy and wet. Furthermore, John the Baptist is put right next to him, holding his hand, which points to a more intimate relationship between them, emphasizing that Jesus possibly had a social life. Due to this emphasized duality, he represents the metamodern structure of feeling, where the truth lies in this "oscillating in-betweenness, or, rather, in the dialectical movement that identifies with and negates—and hence, overcomes and undermines—conflicting positions, while never being congruent with these positions" (van den Akker and Vermeulen, "Periodising the 2000s" 10). In examining the portrayal of his character in different pictures within the same TikTok video, metamodernism is situated "as a way of viewing reality that may be particularly fruitful as we try to understand the religious impulse" (Clasquin-Johnson 5). By combining multiple theories together, "metamodernism embraces the paradoxical" (Abramson qtd. in Clasquin-Johnson 4). This indicates that "certain ideas can be 'objectively' true for an individual even though the individual also understands that they are not universally true" (Clasquin-Johnson 6). As I have mentioned earlier, it points to a "paradoxical relationship between how we conceive of truth 'locally' and how we conceive of it at the level of society, as we are simultaneously aware of how we individually operate and how that differs dramatically from how others do" (Clasquin-Johnson 6). It indicates that the representation of Jesus "is thus the articulation (or re-casting) of what 'sees (itself) coming'—'a process through which individual subjectivity repeats the moments of the 'divine alienation'" (Malabou qtd. in Toth 45). The term 'divine alienation' refers to the disengagement from an absolute truth, which, according to Christian doctrine, is equal to God

and what is right in His sight. However, the emphasis is on the notion of what is ‘seen,’ not just in an ironic way but to “access beyond his alienation into something more sincere” (Williams 33). This concept is also represented in Sophia’s video when, at the end of her narration, she incorporates a ‘real’ painting of Jesus, but instead of focusing on him as the central figure and highlighting his divine identity, she zooms in on the white bird above his head while saying in a higher-pitched voice, “Foot note: the dove was a paid actor” (Sophia 01:20). The clear shift in perspective alters the viewer’s focus, guiding it away from the ‘expected’ subject of the video (Jesus) towards a minor, symbolic detail. The close-up of the bird, combined with the light-hearted vocal tone, destabilizes the authority of the image while paradoxically inviting closer engagement with its symbolic content. The dove, a classic signifier of the Holy Spirit, becomes a site of both irony and meaning, since its role is exaggerated but not dismissed. In addition, by actively calling out the painting’s depiction of the presence of the Holy Ghost, Sophia’s creative choice reframes the spiritual message, suggesting that divine presence can be recognized through humorous subversion as well. It actively demonstrates that even if we shift the focus from God, it is possible to make the articulation of its truth in the form of what is (always still) to come.

When someone reads a passage from the GenZ Bible out loud to a religious person, it is interesting to see the different reactions they display. In the video, posted by Heather, she reads the verses from the Genesis to her pastor husband. It is clear from the short recording that the husband interprets the GenZ Bible as inappropriate, and he is confused (in the added caption it is written that he “checks [book] cover: what is happening” (Heather 00:23), which is supposed to represent his thoughts during the reading). In contrast, the wife finds the text amusing; she is smiling while trying to act out the incorporated memes to the pastor. The viewers can even hear someone laughing in the background, which suggests that for others, the humor adds a layer of engagement. These diverse reactions illustrate the coexistence of

multiple truths in a globalized world, where a single text can simultaneously trigger discomfort, laughter, and appreciation. These emotions may seem opposing; however, to the metamodernist approach, the fact that there is a paradox does not mean that one is wrong and the other right, or that one has to be relegated to a mere subjective truth. Paradox, in this context, is not limited to contradictory truth claims, but it is an existential acknowledgement of various types of differences. Furthermore, when she reaches the infamous ‘POV’ slang (mentioned in Chapter 2), she tells her husband to look at her as she acts out the sign for the signifier (it is also added to the caption for the viewers in the form of emojis: “👁️👄👁️”), with which she not only does help the pastor to understand the contemporary meme, but at the same time she also recreates the moment when Adam and Eve gained self-consciousness. The framing of the video is intimate and shot on a phone camera at eye level, which mirrors the ‘POV’ trend stylistic conventions and strengthens the viewers’ sense of participation. In addition, her exaggerated facial expressions (wide eyes and raised eyebrows) perfectly mimic the social media meme’s aesthetics while translating the significant biblical event into the affective language of her own generation. This performative immediacy—rooted in humor, facial expression, and a shared digital code—enables viewers to perceive the truth of the narrative not through historical authority, but through emotional recognition and cultural relatability.

### 3.2 ♂

But is the metamodern understanding of truth enough to comprehend the biblical characters as complex subjects? The notion of truth is connected to the idea of ‘depth,’ or what Vermeulen calls “depthiness, that articulates the creation of ‘depth’ as a performative act” (“Metamodern Depth” 148). ‘Depthiness’ refers to the impression of seriousness or honesty that is staged or evoked, often through aesthetic symbols, emotional tone, or narrative structure. In the context of metamodernism, this performative depth does not necessarily

undermine truth; instead, it gestures toward a truth that is felt rather than proven. For the performance to be effective, it must also convey a sense of “sincerity and authenticity” (Vermeulen, “Metamodern Depth” 149). Authenticity is needed because it assures the audience that the performance reflects a deeper belief. In addition, sincerity has a “theatrical connection to a notion of performance” (Kelly qtd. in 54 Williams). It indicates that “there is always duality within performance, in the presumed ‘authentic’ inner intentions along with an outer more performative presentation” (Williams 54).

This tension between the inner and outer self in performance plays directly into the metamodern oscillation. Metamodern performance finds its poignancy in embracing its sincere, confessional intentions that are characteristically communicated through an ironic exterior. (Williams 54)

In the case of the GenZ Bible, these key motifs are combined with the AI-generated “hyperreal style, which is used not to flatten the characters (and confine them in viewers’ eyes to performers)” (Gibbons 86) but to manifest layered sensibilities. Furthermore, the so-called ‘sincerity’ is not achieved through traditional religious authority but rather through the use of slang and ironic responses; for instance, in Chapter 9 in the book version of the GenZ Bible (shown in Tazvazbaybee’s video), Jesus is depicted as the ‘exhausted sitting fox’ meme. In this image, Christ is portrayed as tired and tormented; therefore, the audience can sense that he has had enough with Satan’s temptation. In his sitting position, he slightly leans forward, and he claps his fingers together, the same way as the fox is depicted in the meme. One of the differences between the two characters is that Jesus is staring at the ground in front of him, whereas the fox maintains eye contact with the viewers, which could be indicated as a sign of open confrontation, suggesting a more direct engagement with the audience compared to Jesus’ more private inner struggle. Nevertheless, Christ, with his dirty face and stained clothes, looks just as messy and burned out as the animal. This example illustrates that “irony

clashes with authenticity to render emotional depth” (Gibbons 86), thereby depicting Jesus as a dynamic but ultimately more lovable figure in the story. He is no longer represented as an unattainable religious ideal who exists beyond the reach of ordinary experience. Rather, while watching the TikTok videos or reading the GenZ Bible, he is “experienced as authentic” (Culler qtd. in Huber and Funk 155), “within the staged and artificial” (Williams 33). In other words, even though the social media content is clearly constructed through irony and performance, it can still feel emotionally real and meaningful to viewers. It reflects a key feature of metamodernism, where authenticity is not destroyed by irony but often emerges through it, indicating that “perhaps there is something to be learned from the metamodern desire to empathize towards those you do not understand or relate to” (Williams 33). Applying this concept to the contemporary representation of Jesus, in a video posted by the account of Christianity, Christ “starts livestreaming and the chat filled up” (*GenZ Bible*, Matthew 5.1), which means he teaches the gospel to the mass. There is only one painting in the video that depicts Jesus as the center of attention, as he sits taller than anyone else; furthermore, he is wearing a vibrant red toga that distinguishes him from the commoners. At first glance, it seems like this is the systematic representation of Jesus, and it should not be culturally relevant for the contemporary audience. However, what makes this specific content emotionally accessible is the narration and the cinematography. The narrator is an older man who has a deeper voice (possibly AI-generated, but it remains uncertain for the viewer); therefore, he sounds authoritative enough to be accepted as the ‘voice of God.’ In the religious context, he could be perceived as the divine voice, who communicates with humans. In contrast, the TikTok viewers know that he might ‘just’ be a regular guy who records this video at home - or perhaps he is not even a real person at all. And yet, it is precisely this ordinariness that gives the performance a deeper sense of authenticity, as the voice of Jesus might be either performed by a non-professional figure or generated by artificial intelligence.

In either case, the aura of sacred authority is diminished, drawing attention to the constructed nature of digital personas on social media platforms. Furthermore, it is clear from the video that he does not have a great budget for filming, since there is not much editing in the content. He only moves the camera—thereby shifting the focus—between Jesus and other characters. The relatable voice and the visual aesthetic bridge the gap between the divine and the human. This contrast does not undermine the message of Jesus but rather reinforces it. In this situation, “something ‘must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic it is mediated, a sign of itself, and hence lacks the authenticity of what is truly unspoiled, untouched by mediating cultural codes’” (Culler qtd. in Huber and Funk 155). It actively demonstrates that, while the video aims to make Jesus feel ‘Real,’ this authenticity is inevitably a performance, structured by cultural codes and digital aesthetics. Jesus may seem relatable, but his representation is highly mediated and filtered through the logic of viral moments, humor, and norms. Therefore, the Jesus of the GenZ Bible is not the same sacred figure of traditional religious scripts but rather a constructed character who appears authentic to the modern audience because he is embedded in the signs and signifiers of contemporary (digital) culture. This indicates that authenticity is never outside of the symbolic system; rather, it is always already a signifier pointing to an imagined ‘Real’. It serves as the base of reconstruction; however, “this reciprocity is not a consequence of rational comprehension but of ambiguity and paradox, and it emerges rather than results” (Huber and Funk 163). In this context, the GenZ Bible does not reveal the true Jesus; instead, it produces a version of him that resonates within the symbolic order of TikTok. Authenticity, in other words, “aspires to unformed immediacy and non-fictive truth but can only ever manifest in and as fictive form” (Huber and Funk 155).

In conclusion, as I have mentioned earlier, truth engages with questions of narrative credibility and reinterpretation of doctrinal content, while authenticity is more concerned with

sincerity while emphasizing emotional resonance, cultural relevance, and the subjective experience of faith. As it is discussed in this chapter, in the context of metamodernism, these two ideas coexist in a dynamic tension: individuals seek emotionally authentic experiences while acknowledging the instability of truth. This reflects a broader metamodern condition, where emotional truth and authenticity are often prioritized over traditional religious or historical accuracy, and where narrative authority is achieved by perceived sincerity instead of a strict Christian doctrine. In addition, the metamodernist framework embraces the oscillation between irony and sincerity, fact and feeling, allowing for new forms of meaning-making in which emotional impact is valued more than empirical truth. In the GenZ Bible both of the concepts (truth and authenticity) have a great influence on how the readers/consumers view the characters and the overall narrative. Moreover, this performative authenticity also reflects the ways in which identity and belief are increasingly mediated through digital culture. On platforms such as TikTok, where the GenZ Bible circulates, meaning is shaped not only by the content itself but also by the format, aesthetic, and context of delivery. The humor and virality of these videos facilitate quick emotional engagement, which often calls for deeper religious reflection. As such, faith becomes a participatory and affective experience rather than a fixed ideological status. This shift mirrors the post-truth condition, where subjective resonance can override factual explanations. The ‘truth’ of Jesus as represented in these texts is not based on religious consistency but on his ability to be felt as real, relevant, and emotionally compelling within the digital symbolic order. Furthermore, the GenZ Bible adopts the metamodern features of optimism, empathy, and sincerity, with which it reframes traditional religious narratives in a way that they resonate with contemporary audiences. Jesus, in this reimagined context, becomes relatable and ‘authentic’ not despite the memes and slang, but because of them. However, it is important to note that this authenticity is performative in its nature, therefore inherently constructed.

## Conclusion

The GenZ Bible incorporates multiple aspects of digital culture, different attitudes towards grand narratives, and contemporary ideals as well (such as truth and authenticity). Upon closely examining the artwork, it is certain that it should not only be regarded as only a viral phenomenon. In an era where social media plays an increasingly dominant role in shaping cultural narratives, understanding the significance of such a complex case is crucial. By blending ancient biblical narratives with the contemporary informal language of Generation Z, the texts have sparked many debates around the boundaries of respect towards religion and history, raising questions about whether sacred content can maintain its spiritual authority when reframed through humor, memes, and internet slang. These discussions highlight broader tensions between tradition and innovation in religious discourse, as well as the role of digital media in reshaping how sacred texts are interpreted, shared, and experienced by younger generations. On the online platform of TikTok, the GenZ Bible has inspired a diverse range of consumers to post various types of content featuring the modernized religious texts. This dynamic illustrates how the GenZ Bible functions as a shared cultural artwork that invites many forms of engagement. Its circulation across age groups and religious backgrounds suggests a metamodern sensibility that allows individuals to navigate their faith with both irony and sincerity, blending traditional belief systems with contemporary cultural frameworks. Rather than completely rejecting or blindly embracing religious narratives, many people adopt a reflective perspective, which indicates that while they value religious meaning, at the same time they remain aware of its symbolic and constructed nature. As I have discussed in my chapters, in the videos, the content creators often break the fourth wall, use self-aware captions, or pair sacred texts with casual slang or emoji-based expressions, with which they purposefully exaggerate the fact that the viewers are witnessing a reframed

version of the sacred story rather than a literal representation. This performative style—marked by memes, humorous commentary, and cultural layering—invites audiences to actively participate in the reinterpretation of the texts, while navigate their own personal belief through a metamodern lens.

From a semiotic perspective, the GenZ Bible exposes the shifting relationship between signifier and signified. Religious figures and narratives are conveyed with new cultural meanings, which reinterpret their symbolic significance through the lens of contemporary values, humor, and digital expressions. By disconnecting them from their original religious contexts, the newer version of the Bible represents these figures as culturally familiar and emotionally accessible characters, thereby reestablishing them within the contemporary symbolic order. The sacred becomes re-signified through digital signs—slang, emojis, memes—which both transform and reconstruct how belief is communicated and understood. Therefore, the GenZ Bible exemplifies a postmodern cultural phenomenon—where meaning is not fixed but fluid, negotiated continuously through interaction and irony—while simultaneously incorporating modernist sensibilities in its search for deeper, universal truths through reinterpretation.

Moreover, the GenZ Bible offers a unique intersection of history and religion. Religion, deeply rooted in historical tradition, often relies on fixed narratives that continuously dominate the social norms and moral frameworks of societies, shaping collective identities and legitimizing cultural practices over centuries. However, the GenZ Bible disrupts this strict presentation by translating biblical stories into the informal, meme-driven language of digital culture. This process challenges the conventional relationship between historical authority and sacred narrative, since History, in this context, becomes a flexible aspect of the story rather than the absolute truth. The GenZ Bible hence becomes a site of both continuity and disruption—preserving core religious themes while reshaping their form.

With this research I want to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the role of religion in the digital age and how social media serves as both a platform for engagement and a site of struggle in the ongoing development of religious discourse. In addition, this thesis attempted to emphasize the multilayered aspect of the GenZ Bible, offering insight into its complex structure, its various connections to the metamodern structure of feeling, and its unique way of navigating faith, identity, and humor. While there is much more to explore within the GenZ Bible, it is my hope that my research contributed to a deeper understanding of the texts' cultural and literary significance.

## Works Cited

- AlwaysCandid. "Another Gen Z Bible Story." TikTok, 30 December 2023,  
[vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPu59E/](https://vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPu59E/)
- Barbieri, Gina. *The Emerging Metamodern Sensibility in Narrative: A Case Study of Things Left Forgotten and the Dai Gyakuten Saiban Games*. University of Denver, 2020,  
 digitalcommons.du.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2722&context=etd.
- Benveniste, Alexis. "The Meaning and History of Memes: Internet Culture is Saturated with Memes, but How Would You Explain a Meme to Someone Who Doesn't Get it?" *New York Times*, 2022, [www.nytimes.com/2022/01/26/crosswords/what-is-a-meme.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/26/crosswords/what-is-a-meme.html).
- Browning, Gary. *Grand Narratives Revisited*. Oxford Brookes University, 2023,  
 radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/file/d9eed01-5066-4b64-9c37  
 b248772045f3/1/Grand%20narratives%20revisited%20-%202023%20  
 %20Browning.pdf.
- Ceriello, Linda C. "Special Issue: Metamodernism: The Metamodern Bend: Theorizations for Religious Studies and a Review of Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism." *Religious Studies Review*, 2022. *ResearchGate*,  
 doi.org/10.1111/rsr.16195.
- Christianity. "Gen Z Bible Stories p12." TikTok, 2 September 2023,  
[vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPgVKw/F](https://vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPgVKw/F)
- Clasquin-Johnson, Michel. "Towards a Metamodern Academic Study of Religion and a More Religiously Informed Metamodernism." *HTS Theological Studies*, vol. 73, no. 3, 2017.  
 AOSIS, [hts.org.za/index.php/hts/article/view/4491/9407](https://hts.org.za/index.php/hts/article/view/4491/9407).
- Dempsey, Brendan. "[Re]construction: Metamodern 'Transcendence' and the Return of Myth." *Notes on Metamodernism*, 2014,

[www.metamodernism.com/2014/10/21/reconstruction-metamodern-transcendence-and-the-return-of-myth](http://www.metamodernism.com/2014/10/21/reconstruction-metamodern-transcendence-and-the-return-of-myth).

Doležel, Lubomír. "Truth and Authenticity in Narrative." *Poetics Today*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1980, pp. 7–25. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1772407>.

Ermens, J. P. M. *Metamodernism: Modernist Elements in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction*. 2018, [theses.uhn.nl/server/api/core/bitstreams/a97adf03-1db3-4d0a-8f8a8c45623afb73/content](https://theses.uhn.nl/server/api/core/bitstreams/a97adf03-1db3-4d0a-8f8a8c45623afb73/content).

Eshelman, Raoul. "Notes on Performatist Photography: Experiencing Beauty and Transcendence after Postmodernism." *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*, edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, Rowman and Littlefield International Ltd, 2017, pp. 183-200.

Friedman, Richard Elliott. *Who Wrote The Bible*. 2nd ed., HarperSanFrancisco, 1997, [archive.org/details/who-wrote-the-bible-2nd-edition-richard-elliott-friedman-1997/page/n3/mode/2up](http://archive.org/details/who-wrote-the-bible-2nd-edition-richard-elliott-friedman-1997/page/n3/mode/2up).

Fukuyama, Francis. "Reflections on the End of History, Five Years Later." *History and Theory*, vol. 34, no. 2., pp. 27–43. *Wiley for Wesleyan University*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2505433](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2505433).

*GenZ Bible: Translated from KJV*. genz.bible.

Gen.z.bible.stories. *Shepherds Visiting Jesus*. TikTok, 12 October 2023, Account now banned.

Gibbons, Alison. "Affect: Metamodern Affect." *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*, edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, Rowman and Littlefield International Ltd, 2017, pp. 83-85.

Giorgi, Giulia. "Memes and Identity." *Meme Studies Research Network*, 2020, [memestudiesrn.wordpress.com/2021/08/21/memes-and-identity](http://memestudiesrn.wordpress.com/2021/08/21/memes-and-identity).

Godfrey, Neil. "The Gospels as Creative Rewriting (Like Rewritten Biblical Books)." *Vridar*, 2017, [vridar.org/2017/01/13/the-gospels-as-creative-rewriting-like-rewritten-biblical-books](http://vridar.org/2017/01/13/the-gospels-as-creative-rewriting-like-rewritten-biblical-books).

Hartman, Pamela, et al. "Mememes as Means: Using Popular Culture to Enhance the Study of Literature." *The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*, vol. 26, 2021. *University of Tennessee*, [trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1381&context=jaepl](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1381&context=jaepl).

Heather. "Reading: The Gospel by Gen Z to My Pastor Husband for His Reaction." TikTok, 10 January 2024, [vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPpCCD/](https://vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPpCCD/)

Hirst, Paul. "Endism: Why 1989 was not the 'End of History.'" *OpenDemocracy*, 2019, [www.opendemocracy.net/en/endism](http://www.opendemocracy.net/en/endism).

Huber, Irmtraud, and Wolfgang Funk. "Reconstructing Depth: Authentic Fiction and Responsibility." *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*, edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, Rowman and Littlefield International Ltd, 2017, pp. 151–65.

James, David, and Urmila Seshagiri. "Narratives of Modernism." *Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution*, Modern Language Association of America, 2014, [www.academia.edu/5909527/Metamodernism\\_Narratives\\_of\\_Revolution\\_and\\_Continuity\\_#loswp-work-container.Esh](http://www.academia.edu/5909527/Metamodernism_Narratives_of_Revolution_and_Continuity_#loswp-work-container.Esh)

Karimi, Faith. "A Popular TikTok Account Puts a GenZ Spin on Bible Stories. Some Religion Experts Give it the Side Eye." *CNN*, 2024, [edition.cnn.com/2024/12/24/us/gen-z-bible-stories-tiktok-cec](https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/24/us/gen-z-bible-stories-tiktok-cec).

Krentz, Courtney. "*Is It Real? 'Cause You're Online': The Legacy of Postmodern Ethics as a Critique of Metamodernism*. University of British Columbia, 2022.

Lehman, David W., et al. "Authenticity." *Academy of Management Annals*. *ResearchGate*, [www.researchgate.net/publication/327276702](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/327276702).

Lestari, Dita Ayu, et al. "Meme Culture: A Study of Humor and Satire in Digital Media." *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary*, 2024, pp. 134–40. doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2024.4.4.3013.

MacDowell, James. "The Metamodern, the Quirky and Film Criticism." *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*, edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, Rowman and Littlefield International Ltd, 2017, pp. 25–40.

Marina, Marko. "50 Contradictions in the Bible: The Biggest, Most Shocking Differences." *Bartehram*, 2025, [www.bartehrman.com/contradictions-in-the-bible](http://www.bartehrman.com/contradictions-in-the-bible).

Matthews, Sean. "The Structure of Feeling of Raymond Williams." *Studies in Languages and Cultures*, no. 9, 1998, pp. 117–33. doi.org/10.15017/6057.

Petrova, Yulia. "Meme Language, its Impact on Digital Culture and Collective Thinking." *Interagromash*, 2021. *Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0*, [www.e3sconferences.org/articles/e3sconf/pdf/2021/49/e3sconf\\_interagromash2021\\_11026.pdf](http://www.e3sconferences.org/articles/e3sconf/pdf/2021/49/e3sconf_interagromash2021_11026.pdf).

Popan, Elena. "Post-Structuralism." *EBSCO*, 2025, [www.ebsco.com/research-starters/social-sciences-and-humanities/post-structuralism](http://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/social-sciences-and-humanities/post-structuralism).

Slocombe, Will. *Postmodern Nihilism: Theory and Literature*. University of Wales, 2003, [pure.aber.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/9830542/Postmodern\\_Nihilism\\_Theory\\_and\\_Literature.pdf](http://pure.aber.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/9830542/Postmodern_Nihilism_Theory_and_Literature.pdf).

Sophia. "The Gospel by Gen Z by a Millennial." TikTok, 28 June 2024, [vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPsG95/](https://vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPsG95/)

Šporčič, Anamarija. “A Metamodernist Utopia: The Neo-Romantic Sense and Sensibility of the Bridgerton Series.” *Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies*, vol. 22, 2022, pp. 122–38. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ausfm-2022-0015>.

Tazvazbaybee. “*The Gospel by Gen Z*.” TikTok, 14 August 2024, <vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDP3Aa6/>

Teixeira, Maria Palma. “‘All Art is Political, Even Art That Does not Want to Be’: An Interview with Pedro Barreiro, Artistic Director of O Espaço do Tempo.” *On Record* Pt. 23, 2023, [aerowaves.org/on-record/pt23/all-art-is-political](http://aerowaves.org/on-record/pt23/all-art-is-political).

Toth, Josh. “Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* and the Rise of Historioplasmic Metafiction.” *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*, edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, Rowman and Littlefield International Ltd, 2017, pp. 41–53.

van den Akker, Robin. “Historicity: Metamodern Historicity.” *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*, edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, Rowman and Littlefield International Ltd, 2017, pp. 21–23.

van den Akker, Robin and Timotheus, Vermeulen. “Notes on Metamodernism.” *Aesthetics & Culture*, vol. 2, 2010, [www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.3402/jac.v2i0.5677?needAccess=true](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.3402/jac.v2i0.5677?needAccess=true).

van den Akker, Robin, and Timotheus Vermeulen. “Periodising the 2000s, or, the Emergence of Metamodernism.” *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*, edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, Rowman and Littlefield International Ltd, 2017, pp. 1–20.

van Erp, Herman. “The End of History and Hegel’s Conception of Modernity.” *Ideas Y Valores*, vol. 107, 1998.

- Vanke, Alexandrina. "Structure of Feeling: A Conceptual Tool in the Study of How 'Ordinary' People Live and Struggle." *The Raymond Williams Society*, 2024, raymondwilliams.co.uk/2024/03/27/structure-of-feeling-a-conceptual-tool-in-the-study-of-how-ordinary-people-live-and-struggle.
- Vermeulen, Timotheus. "Metamodern Depth, or 'Depthiness.'" *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*, edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, Rowman and Littlefield International Ltd, 2017, pp. 147-150.
- Walton, David. *Doing Cultural Theory*. SAGE, 2012.
- Williams, Louise. *'Maximum Irony, Maximum Sincerity': What Is Metamodernism and How Is It Reflected in Contemporary Art Practice?*, University of Westminster, 2020.
- Woodward, Ashley. "Nihilism and the Postmodern in Vattimo's Nietzsche." *Minerva – an Internet Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 6, 2002, pp. 51–67.  
minerva.mic.ul.ie/vol6/nihilism.PDF.
- Zavale, Eddie. Comment on the TikTok video "*The New Testament for Gen Z*", uploaded by Rick/TTS bestie, 1 July 2024, [vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPgFaJ/](https://vm.tiktok.com/ZNdDPgFaJ/). Comment posted 16 July 2024.