

Stages and History of the Development of the American Postmodern Literary Movement

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Abstract: *Postmodernism is a cultural, artistic, and literary movement that emerged in the mid-20th century, characterized by a skeptical attitude to narratives, self-awareness, questioning of traditional conventions, and exploration of the complexities of identity and reality. It often includes irony, paradox, and a playful attitude towards established norms, reflecting the chaotic and fragmented nature of modern life.*

Keywords: *postmodernism, literary movements, modernism, paradox, paranoia, black humor, sarcasm, high and low culture, irony, minimalism, pessimistic outlook, depression, parody, confusion.*

Introduction.

Postmodern literature is a form of literature characterized by its stylistic and ideological reliance on literary conventions such as fragmentation, paradox, unreliable narrators, often unrealistic and completely impossible plots, games, parody, paranoia, black humor, and authorial idiosyncrasies. Reference.

Postmodernism has been described as both a continuation of and a departure from modernism. The two genres share a number of commonalities, including:

- a rejection of distinctions between high and low culture
- an exploration of meaninglessness and absurdity
- an interest in mixing genres in a single work
- an obsession with difficult philosophical and psychological questions

Postmodern works are seen as a reaction against Enlightenment thought and modernist approaches to literature. Postmodern literature is characterized by its heavy reliance on techniques such as fragmentation, paradox, and dubious narratives, and is often (though not always) identified as a style or trend that emerged in the period following World War II. Postmodern literature, like postmodernism in general, resists definition or classification as a "movement". Popular themes in postmodernism include:

- irony
- playfulness
- dark humor
- minimalism
- slow development of traditional character

An important point to note when studying postmodernism is that in order to fully understand postmodernism, one must first have a good understanding of modernism in literature. Modernism was a literary and artistic movement that developed in the early 20th century, especially after World War I. Modernists were concerned with a rapidly changing and industrialized society, which lacked many of the

stable and predictable elements that had once existed. Their works expressed a sense of depression and meaninglessness as they sought to restore some meaning to their lives. Modernist works had scattered or inconsistent meanings, often associated with a lack of personal identity.

Materials.

Another important aspect of modernist works is that they were intended to have a stabilizing effect on the colonial movement in Europe. Although modernism's attitude towards colonialism was ambiguous (especially in works such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*), modernism was criticized for not questioning the goals of colonialism. Modernism continued to gain popularity until the end of World War II, when postmodernism began to emerge.

After the Modernist movement of the 20th century, a new era in American literature, Postmodernism, began as a radical, revolutionary movement. It was based on deconstruction and decentration. Deconstruction is the complete rejection of the old, the creation of the new at the expense of the old, decentration is the dispersion of the fixed meanings of any phenomenon. The center of any system is fiction, the power of authority is destroyed, the center is dependent on various factors. Postmodern interpretation is unlikely to lead to the rise of a poetic worldview, as U. Hamdam noted: "Postmodernism came after modernism ("post" - after), and is an extremely complex and multifaceted literary movement. If we talk about a literary movement, then postmodernism, like modernism, is a wide-ranging and extremely contradictory phenomenon that has affected the human worldview. Views on it are also not finished. Because the phenomenon itself continues. Where there is chaos, there is also postmodernism. Chaos is now everywhere in the world."

Research and methods.

Examples of postmodern literature are very diverse and may not resemble each other in terms of plot, country of origin, and genre characteristics. Critics often cannot agree on which works should be considered postmodernist. These works, despite their differences, are often cited as key examples of postmodernism:

David Foster Wallace's "The Untamed"

Joseph Heller's "Catch-22"

Margaret Atwood's "The Blind Assassin"

Kurt Vonnegut's "The Barnyard. The Birdcage"

Italo Calvino's "The Wanderer on a Winter's Night"

Philip K. Dick's "The Man in the High Castle"

Bret Easton Ellis' "American Psyche"

Gabriel García Márquez's "One Hundred Years of Solitude"

Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot"

All of these works, except for "Waiting for Godot," are novels. Theater itself is an important area of postmodernism, although it is not as widely discussed as other literary genres.

Postmodern literature is a form of literature characterized by stylistic and ideological fragmentation, paradox, unreliable narrators, often unrealistic and completely impossible plots, games, parody, paranoia, dark humor, and a reliance on literary conventions such as authorial identity. Postmodern authors tend to reject direct meanings in their novels, stories, and poems, and instead emphasize and celebrate the multiple meanings or lack of meaning in a single literary work.

Postmodern literature also often rejects the boundaries between "high" and "low" forms of art and literature, as well as the distinctions between different genres and forms of writing and storytelling. Some examples of stylistic techniques commonly used in postmodern literature include:

Pastiche: taking different ideas from previous writings and literary styles and pasting them together to create new styles.

Intertextuality: acknowledging previous literary works within the context of another literary work.

Metafiction: the act of writing about writing or informing readers about the fictional nature of the fiction they are reading.

Temporal distortion: the use of non-linear timelines and narrative techniques in a story.

Minimalism: the use of common and non-exceptional characters and events.

Maximalism: writing in disorganized, lengthy, highly detailed form.

Magical realism: the insertion of impossible or unrealistic events into a story that fits into another reality.

Fractionation: mixing real historical events with fictional ones without clearly defining what is factual and what is fictional.

Reader involvement: Often through direct address to the reader and open acknowledgement of the fictional nature of the events depicted.

Many critics and scholars find it appropriate to define postmodern literature in opposition to the popular literary styles that came before it. Postmodern literary styles and ideas in many ways serve to challenge, subvert, ridicule, and reject the tenets of modernist literature.

For example, instead of the standard modernist literary search for meaning in a chaotic world, postmodern literature often seeks to playfully evade the possibility of meaning itself. A postmodern novel, story, or poem is often presented as a parody of the modernist literary search for meaning. Thomas Pynchon's postmodern novel *The Gathering of Lot 49* is a prime example of this. In this novel, the protagonist's quest for knowledge and understanding ultimately leads to confusion and a lack of clarity about what has happened.

Postmodern literature serves as a reaction to the supposed stylistic and ideological limitations of modernist literature and to the fundamental changes that have occurred in the world since the end of World War II. Modernist writers often portrayed the world as fragmented, turbulent, and on the brink of disaster, as is best seen in the stories and novels of Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Albert Camus, Virginia Woolf, and other modernist authors. According to Thomas Mann, postmodern writers tend to portray the world as having already experienced countless disasters and events that cannot be saved or understood.

For many postmodern writers, the various disasters that occurred in the latter half of the 20th century left a deep sense of paranoia in a number of writers. They also made them aware of the possibility of complete catastrophe and apocalypse on the horizon. The notion of finding clear meaning and causes behind any event seemed impossible.

Postmodern writers have also been greatly influenced by various currents and ideas derived from postmodern philosophy. Postmodern philosophy strives for a concept of the world that cannot be defined or understood in a rigid manner.

Postmodern philosophy argues that knowledge and facts are always relative to specific situations, and that it is futile and impossible to attempt to find a definitive meaning for any idea, concept, or event.

Results.

Postmodern philosophy tends to reject the possibility of "grand narratives" and instead argues that all belief systems and ideologies are designed for specific purposes, such as controlling others and maintaining particular political and social systems. The postmodern philosophical perspective is very absurd and does not accept anything that is presented as nominal or legitimate.

Similarly, the underlying belief of many postmodern literary writers is that the world is already fragmented and that it is impossible to find a true, singular meaning (if it can be said to exist at all), and that literature must take its place. It serves to expose the absurdities, the countless paradoxes, and ironies of the world.

The term postmodern literature is used to describe works of literature created after World War II (after 1945). The main goal of postmodern literature is to abandon traditional traditions by experimenting with new literary devices, forms, genres, styles, etc.

Postmodernism in literature is not an organized movement with leaders or central figures; therefore, it is more difficult to say whether or when it ended (compared to, say, declaring the end of modernism with the death of Joyce or Woolf).

Postmodernism stems from a number of variables:

A reaction against modernism: especially against the distinction between "high art" and everyday life. This is why postmodernists turned to mass culture. Thus, cartoons, music, pop art, and television became acceptable forms of postmodernist artistic expression.

Reaction to a completely new world after World War II:

This refers to the reaction to major events after the war: the nuclear bombing and the massacre of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the beginning of the Cold War, the civil rights movement in the United States, postcolonialism and globalization. Also, a reaction against capitalism, technology and information.

Reaction against realism:

Realists believed that reality is objective and can be distinguished from the subjective state of each subject's views. Realism believed that language can express reality, while postmodernists believed in the contingency of human experience. In postmodernist literature, there is a view that literary language is not a means of reflecting reality, but is its own reality.

Discussion.

Reaction against modernism:

Modernist literature sees fragmentation and excessive subjectivity as an existential crisis, a problem to be solved, and often refers to the artist as the solution. However, postmodernists often show that this chaos is insurmountable; the artist is helpless and the only remedy against "destruction" is to play within the chaos. Instead of the modernist search for meaning in a chaotic world, the postmodern author often playfully abandons the possibility of meaning, and the postmodern novel is often a parody of this search. For example, Eliot perceived the world as fragmented and expressed this fragmentation through poetic language, while many also saw art as a potentially integrative restorative force against the chaos that postmodernist works often imitate (or even celebrate) but do not attempt to confront or repair.

Postmodernist themes include:

- Memory
- Loss and death
- Paranoia

- The meaninglessness of human existence
- Alienation of individuals
- Lack of connection
- Anxiety
- The attachment to illusions of security to hide the emptiness in our lives
- Fragmentation and disconnection
- Insecurity

Postmodernist literary developments challenge the conventions of literary coherence and even coherence. Postmodernist literature involves the deconstruction of some already existing literary forms and genres, as well as the invention of new ones.

Point of view:

Postmodernist perspectives become more limited. They move from the omniscient narrator of realism to a limited perspective, more coherent and mysterious. The omniscient narrator is eliminated to include other perspectives.

Fragmentation:

There is no linear narrative. There is no connection between story and time, so the story is divided into parts, there are loops in time. They abandon linear narrative, linear plots.

Intertextuality:

Each text is the result of pre-existing texts, their meanings are reworked and transformed.

Postmodernism represents a decentralized conception of the universe, in which individual works are not separate creations, the main focus in the study of postmodern literature is on intertextuality: the relationship between one text (for example, a novel) and another or between one text and another, or the interplay of literary history. Intertextuality in postmodern literature can be a reference or parallel to another literary work, an extended discussion of the work, or the adoption of a style. For example, Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* takes the form of a detective novel and refers to authors such as Aristotle, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Borges.

Pastiche:

In relation to postmodern intertextuality, pastiche means the combination or "embedding" of multiple elements. In postmodernist literature, it can be a parody of past styles. It can be seen as an expression of the chaotic, pluralistic aspects of postmodern society. It can be a combination of several genres to create a unique story: for example, William S. Burroughs uses science fiction, detective fiction, westerns; Margaret Atwood uses science fiction and fairy tales; Umberto Eco uses detective, fairy tales, and science fiction. Other writers combine elements of songs; pop culture references; real contemporary and historical figures, with well-known, obscure, and fictional history mixed together.

Rewrite:

These are reinterpretations of canonical texts. They involve appropriating and deconstructing the text to create a new version, which may be a prequel, sequel, or parody.

Absurd:

Absurd literature rejects the traditional idea that stories should be told in a logical manner. It is based on the idea that life is absurd - without meaning, purpose, or purpose - and that it is the writer's duty to present the futility of life in the most dramatic way possible.

Example: Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*

Magical realism

This is a genre of fiction popular among Latin American writers (and can also be considered a genre in its own right) in which supernatural elements are given a mundane significance (a famous example is Gabriel García Márquez's practical-minded and ultimately dismissive attitude toward the seemingly angelic figure of "The Very Old Man with the Enormous Wings"). Although the technique has its roots in traditional storytelling, it was central to the Latin American "boom", a movement that was in harmony with postmodernism. Some of the major figures of the "boom" and practitioners of magical realism (Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, and others) are sometimes noted as postmodernists. Some of the characteristics of this genre include: the mixing and merging of the realistic and the fantastic or the bizarre, skillful time shifts, confusing and even labyrinthine narratives and plots, various uses of dreams, expressionist and even surrealist imagery;

Conclusion.

Political protest literature (post-colonial literature)

Literature produced in countries and cultures that were under the control of European colonial powers at some point in their history.

Irony, black humor, and satire.

Sarcasm: Deliberate mockery, usually directed at another person and intended to offend. Sarcasm involves overt, even exaggerated, verbal sarcasm and achieves its effect by expressing the opposite of what is intended (e.g., false praise) to enhance the insult.

Irony: A contradiction or inconsistency between appearance or expectation and reality. Usually used as a "wink" that the reader is expected to perceive so that he or she can "get the point across." It is called the most subtle rhetorical form because the success of the ironic statement depends on the listener's recognition of the inconsistency being discussed. It should not be confused with irony, as irony is more obvious, blunt, and derogatory, and its purpose is to hurt or mock, while irony is usually not malicious.

Black humor: a dark, disturbing, and often morbid or grotesque style of comedy found in some modern and postmodern texts. Such humor often deals with death, suffering, or other troubling themes. Black humor is usually accompanied by a pessimistic outlook or tone; it manages to convey a sense of hopelessness in a humorous, ironic, or sinister way.

Linda Hutcheon argues that postmodern fiction can be characterized by ironic quotations in general, much of which can be cited (characterized by insincerity, irony, or whimsical exaggeration). This irony, dark humor, and the general notion of "play" (related to Derrida's concept or the ideas put forward by Roland Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text*) are some of the most well-known aspects of postmodernism. It is common for postmodernists to approach serious subjects in a playful and humorous manner: for example, Heller, Vonnegut, and Pynchon's treatment of the events of World War II.

Anti-novel:

Postmodern novels are called anti-novels because they attempt to present the reader with an unfiltered experience through metaphor or other means of unfiltered interpretation. Antinovels subvert and subvert novelistic conventions and norms. Confusion is the intended result of this type of narrative, which is characterized by fragmentation and dislocation and requires the reader to piece together and make sense of disparate pieces of information.

In American literature, writers who have worked in the direction of postmodernism and the works they produce have not deviated from the principles and styles of postmodernism, but rather have made

effective use of them. For example, Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Barnyard, Birdhouse* is an autobiographical and science fiction anti-war work that brings the horrors and fears of World War II to life through the author's own experiences and memories of the war. Although the style of the work is based on irony, black humor, compassion, and advice, from a postmodernist perspective, it emphasizes that Vonnegut's depiction of the horrors of war is based on personal experiences, and that the world is a meaningless place where no moral norms are followed, and that the events that occur are random.

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