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## Postmodernism, Philosophy and Literature\*

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### Abstract

*No special definite definition does exist for postmodernism however it has had an inordinate effect on art, architecture, music, film, literature, philosophy, sociology, communications, fashion, and technology. The main body of this work can be seen as an admiration and reverence for the values and ideals associated with postmodern philosophy as well as postmodern literature. , I have argued that postmodern has mainly influenced philosophy and literature and they are recognized and praised for their multiplicity. Postmodernism might seem exclusive in its work, its emphasis on multiplicity and the decentered subject makes very uncomfortable reading for traditional theorists or philosophers. It rejects western values and beliefs as only small part of the human experience and it rejects such ideas, beliefs, culture and norms of the western. Integrity is fragmented apart into unharmonious narratives which lead to a shattering of identity and an overall breakdown of any idea of the self. Relativism and Self- reflexivity have replaced self-confidence due to the postmodern belief that all representation distorts reality. I have also referred that in a sense; postmodernism is a part of modernism we find the instantaneous coexistence of these two methods of expression and thinking, especially in visual arts and literature.*

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*“If modernism proclaimed the death of God, postmodernism proclaims the death of self.”*

Rick Shrader (Proctor, 2012.17)

### **Introduction**

No special definite definition does exist for postmodernism however it has had the inordinate effect on art, architecture, music, film, literature, philosophy, sociology, communications, fashion, and technology. Postmodernism with its multiplicity, multicultural, relativistic agenda carries new prospect and condition of indeterminacies and collapsing dichotomies.

My choice of this title stems from the ground that any designating of philosophy centers on for its strength on the recognition of its self-definition. It derives also from my concern that the interplay between the pre-modern and modern and postmodern philosophy requires a continuing dialogue between the ages. It is really important to explore the subject position of postmodern philosophy and literature as well as outstanding figures within texts produced in the western philosophy.

The main body of this work can be seen as an admiration and reverence for the values and ideals associated with postmodern philosophy as well as postmodern literature. How and when did I become interested in postmodern or postmodernism? I suppose I could try to go back to this impulse, beginning with the reading and teaching of *Miss Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf's articles presenting that nothing is certain and therefore certainty is called a problem or also reading and analyzing a sentence, "How can people suffer unknowingly from the devaluation of their highest values?" and moreover reviewing a statement by Dostoyevsky presenting that "the only thing that keeps humans above the level of cattle is the belief in the immortality of the soul. The name of this problem is nihilism". Therefore, "this problem" and some others created within me a problematic sense or anxiety and I was invited to see the world otherwise and tried to face with it. When I examined the problem I came across the modern and postmodern values and principles or ideals.

The purpose of this paper is to examine how Postmodernism has determined, influenced, and developed philosophy and literature. In this vein, the researcher will make an attempt to display the changes or developments within philosophy and literature as well as introducing prominent thinkers and figures that changed the world.

### **Philosophy and Theory**

A theory is a supposition or a system of thoughts that is proposed to illuminate something. Theories can be applied to clarify and comprehend a

certain phenomenon or visualize outcomes of something. Theoretical knowledge is imperative in understanding different notions and conditions. To examine or to interpret a text or a work of art demands a theory or an approach, no suitable analysis or interpretation of a text can be arrived at reasonably. A theory can provide many philosophical suggestions toward solving a work's thematic and symbolic ambiguities. Though one theory or one approach can seldom account for the beautiful equilibrium of a well-beautified poem or of a fictional masterpiece, the interpretive craftsman must often use other tools for a proper representation of a work of art. Mary Evans observes... thus a practice without theory, therefore headless chickens rushing in mindless circles before they finally collapse in death. . (Bradshaw, 2008:9). Theories in philosophy are different from scientific theories since most of them do not contain empirical data rather they are philosophical ideas.

Philosophy is shaped when the mind turns from practical materials of avoiding danger and hesitation to a form of critical inquiry in which its own resources are represented and subjected to critical analysis. It is chiefly the study of the essential nature of knowledge, reality, and existence. The problem of knowledge epistemology and metaphysics, the problem of ethics and moral philosophy, and the problem of political science and law are included within the philosophical circle. Philosophy examines the most fundamental beliefs, convictions, and values. Critical thoughts, questioning, rational argument and systematic presentations are some philosophical methods used to explore these philosophical questions.

#### **Philosophical Theory or Position and Literary Theory**

A literary theory also identified as literary criticism or critical theory marks challenge on the part of artists and critics alike to delineate the exact nature, status, and social sense and function of the arts whereas philosophical theory or position is a set of beliefs or a principle accepted by supporters to a philosophy.

#### **Pre-modern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy**

##### **History**

Medieval age was the age of faith and superstition. Pre-modern philosophy includes the materials and insights that started with Plato and Aristotle, continued through Augustine and Boethius, and stretched its pinnacle in Aquinas, Scotus, and Suarez. The whole argument was severely judged by Descartes and then criticized by the empiricists of the 18th Century. The most innovative philosophical impulse came during the 1400s with the rise of humanistic and Renaissance movements. The early modern period was one of the most groundbreaking moments in Western philosophy, during

which innovative theories of mind and matter, of the divine, and of civic society were suggested. Although its boundaries are not easily established, the period roughly covered from the late 1400s to the end of the 18th century. "Most historians of philosophy use "modernity" to refer to a direct route from Descartes to the Enlightenment in a movement of thought that rejected religious authority and ended up stressing the political freedom allied with scientific knowledge". (Wit. 2011: 14).

Among its protagonists, six major figures such as Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, and Berkeley published books that would shape our modern understanding of philosophy. In the modern age, everything encountered was mere human make-belief, lacking the originality and uniqueness. It was expressed through a view of the world as representation: "The fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture. The word 'picture' now means the structured image that is the creature of man's producing which represents and sets before." (Bradshaw, 2008:11).

The modern philosophers, unlike contemporaries, regarded earthly and heavenly phenomena as constituted by one and the same kind of matter and governed by a single set of laws. "They believed that all of the visible and invisible events in the world, no matter how wonderful, are ultimately but motions of pieces of matter and alterations in their properties brought about by contact." (Abrahamm, 2007:151).

Modern philosophy presents the ontological concept, free will and human nature, and abandonment of scholasticism, i.e. the system of theological and philosophical teaching predominant in the Middle Ages. It is a period in Western European philosophy spanning the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Modern Philosophy is also made up of a wealth of philosophical perspectives and problem fields. Historically, modern philosophy is philosophy consists of a mix of new approaches from the Renaissance up until our own times and it is marked by the development of science and art in the early modern period. Its principal interests concern the relations between philosophy, science, and society, and the revival of epistemology as one of its central features, as new forms of science brought forth the question of whether empirical data is a suitable source of knowledge or not and it is then an attempt at repositioning ourselves to living in a new mental, emotional, and psychological landscape, with everything we had ever known.

Methodologically speaking, modern philosophy for this is how contemporaries often mentioned to it was commonly characterized by a trust on reason and empirical evidence rather than taking into account the religious or ancient authority to determine what is and what is not

philosophically and scientifically acceptable. It may also designate a set of problems with reference to modernity, for instance, modern art, literature and modes of communication, modern living conditions, forms of knowledge, forms of society, and so on.

### **Prominent Thinkers of Modernism that Changed the World**

The six key figures of the modern path breakers or founders or “fathers of modernism” that contributed to the emergence of modernism. Copernicus, presented a sun-centered solar system and reversed the centuries-old view that this Earth was not, after all, the center of the universe, but an unimportant planet turning about a minor star in one of an innumerable of galaxies; Galileo, Italian astronomer whose discoveries with the telescope revolutionized astronomy; Marx, who proposed the split the Hegelian dialectic out of its suitable sphere in the world of transcendent, spiritual ideas and introduced it in a completely material, physical world: dialectical materialism and also he proposed that ideas and value-systems arise as weapons to legitimate or challenge a ruling elite’s view of the world; Darwin, established evolution as a theory who theorized that the first human being was not shaped from the clay of the earth, but evolved, without purpose, from lower life forms; Freud, founder of psychoanalysis inverted the established binary, positing the unconscious mind as the true source or origin of conscious thought. He believed that reason was not humanity’s ultimate possession, but the puppet of blind passion and unconscious drives; and Nietzsche, one of the founders of modernist thought who shattered the old logocentric belief in the availability and even the possibility of meaning. There is no truth apart from what human beings produce. All supernatural, transcendent philosophies and truths, whether those philosophies and truths are theological, philosophical, or aesthetic are dead simply saying our inherited beliefs, truths, and values, all the things we think most valued might hopelessly prove untrue; everything we believed was static, safe, and significant might be void of foundation as he quotes, “...man would sooner have the void for his purpose than be void of purpose.” (Casey, 1997:246).

### **Pre-modern Literature and Modern Literature**

The modern self is influenced by scientific discoveries and lost its uniqueness so everything became data- based and turned into sensation rather than sensibility, as T.S. Eliot referred “We had the experience but we missed the meaning.” (Abraham, 1995:55). So the new modernist styles came into being. Among new modern form, the literary impression was very sounding and significant creating conflict, M. A. Spears wrote:



*“There are two primary impulses in modern literature, both always present but one or the other dominating. The first is the drive toward aestheticism, toward the purification of form, its refinement and exploration, the development to those features that are most distinctive. The illusion becomes more convincing and self-sufficient; there is a tendency for the art-world to become separate and independent from life. This is countered by the opposing impulse, to break through art, destroy any possibility of escape to illusion, to insist that the immediate experience, the heightening of life is the important thing. Both elements co-exist from the beginning: Ulysses is a world of art, but with elements of raw and deliberately unassimilated reality, like the collage material [...] used in so many early modern paintings.”* (Whitworth, 2007:8)

What Spear is conveying indirectly is the fact that conflict or tension creates modernism. “The great works of modernist literature shatter this appearance of subjectivity by setting the individual in his frailty into context, and by grasping that totality in him of which the individual is but a moment and of which he must remain ignorant”. (Ibid, 117). The major premise of the modernist artwork is: “The rejection of all classical systems of representation, the effacement of ‘content’, the erasure of subjectivity and authorial voice, the repudiation of likeness and verisimilitude, the exorcism of any demand for the realism of whatever kind”. (Matthews, 2013:231). According to critics:

*“The first great wave of modernist experimentation, Frankfurt School critics such as Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse discussed the practices of modernism as models of new, progressive ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. For these critics, modernist art and literature offered real-world fragments of as yet unrealized social utopias, thus providing an alternative critical perspective on a social order in which commercial culture and propaganda play increasingly preponderant roles.”* (Ibid, 311).

As per the traditional religion lost its place, literature was the most important and best substitute for religion. Traditional literary works did not meet the tastes of modern readers and it became one of the major challenges of modern readers as well as writers shifting from the conventional books to modern medium and the new experience of reading and writing, the new

form of literature had unfamiliar novel, and uncanny discourses. Literary writers had to borrow some words or discourses from science. Writers like James Joyce, H. D., André Breton, D. H. Lawrence, W. H. Auden, and Samuel Beckett, among others, were also deeply interested in Freud's theories of the unconscious. D. H. Lawrence's literary works are blunt, instant and true to the enigmatic inner force which motivated it. Many of his best-loved poems treat the physical and inner life of plants and animals; others are excessively satiric and present his disgrace at the puritanism and hypocrisy of his society. T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as a modern writing was a very deviation of the traditional norm as David Mura in his article *The Front and Back of the Bus* remarks, "I recalled my first encounter with T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*: the poem made no sense to me. But then I read Eliot's collected poems, his criticism, criticism about his work, and the works referenced in *The Waste Land*. Gradually Eliot's poem and its value became clearer to me." (McCullough, 2015: 258).

Virginia Woolf's work explores the key themes of modernism, including the subconscious, time, perception, the city and the impact of war. Her stream of consciousness technique enabled her to portray the interior lives of her characters. As K. M. Newton remarks,

*... it can be argued that the fictional techniques most associated with novelists such as Joyce and Woolf, notably stream of consciousness and the development of free indirect speech into something very much resembling stream of consciousness – though they may undermine the idea that the mind functions in a logical manner by showing how it moves forwards and backwards in time, is subject to fleeting impressions, makes apparently random connections – allude only indirectly to the existence of the unconscious and the instinctual, and that their prime aim is rather to represent the workings of the conscious mind more persuasively than was achieved by the nineteenth century realist novel. (Newton, 2008:48).*

James Joyce like his contemporaries acted against traditional principals and his technical innovations in the art of the novel contain a widespread use of interior monologue; he used multifaceted collections of symbolic matches drawn from the mythology, history, and literature, and shaped a unique language of invented words, puns, and allusions.

One of the samples of modernism is the strategy of his stream of consciousness, elaborating:

*“Joyce’s strategy for doing is often referred to as ‘stream of consciousness’, a metaphor used originally to describe the way thoughts flow in the mind, but quickly appropriated as a term for the literary technique that attempts to translate them into narrative form. His technical innovations in the narration of the human consciousness were yet nuanced and varied. In terms of style, his novels include a range of modes of internal narrative, from those that do not diverge greatly from the organization and syntax of ordinary to the less formal rendering of thought or sensory impressions. (Parson, 2007:80).*

## **Postmodernism**

### **History**

Since it is a new concept, it is unclear accurately when postmodernism starts. It is said that it has only appeared as an area of academic study since the mid-1980s the term used to designate the era beyond modernity. Everything until the twentieth century will count as the modern period. Modernism has been presented as a focus for the argument of postmodernism.

### **Prominent Figures of Postmodernism**

Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher is as the primary supporter of postmodern thought, chiefly for his notion of deconstructionism. According to Derrida, any work that relies on words to carry meaning can be construed in many contradictory ways. Derrida identifies as his forerunners Nietzsche, Freud, and Martin Heidegger the new concept. Nietzsche did away with such concepts as being and truth, showing them to be arbitrary and in constant play. Also, Jean-François Lyotard who established the concept of “postmodernism” as well as Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, Gilles Deleuze, Fredric Jameson, and Jürgen Habermas can be in the circle of prestigious figures of postmodernism. The postmodern mindset can have a disturbing influence on the human personality.

### **Definition**

No special definite definition does exist for postmodernism however it has had a great effect on art, architecture, music, film, literature, philosophy, sociology, communications, fashion, and technology. Postmodernism is of attention to a broader range of imaginative practice of social science and humanities discipline because it leads our attention to changes taking place in contemporary culture. Postmodernism as an anti-philosophical term is not for the Enlightenment project or any traditional philosophical



alternatives in the most essential way possible, yet any account or action presumes at least an implied conception of reality and principles. It does not accept its essential philosophical themes; therefore it rejects the reason and the individualism which they had once great functions before. Although it rejects some forms of the abstract, the universal, the static, and the certainty, it does have a reliable basis of grounds within which to place our thoughts and actions. Postmodernism also refers to the rational disposition and cultural expressions that are becoming increasingly significant in contemporary society. Postmodernism seems to offer a new global culture in which individual concern is not so effective. These changes focus on thinking of any and all action as necessarily native, inadequate, and partial, however effective. By removal of grand narratives or metanarrative and concentrating on specific local goals, postmodernism treats otherwise. This is obviously stated in Jean- Francois Lyotard's famous statement incredulity towards metanarrative. A metanarrative refers to a unifying story that seeks to explain how the world is, in other words, a metanarrative is a worldview. Lyotard suggests that we should be skeptical of such broad explanations. He defines postmodernism as:

*“Incredulity toward meta-narrative. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the science: but that progress, in turn, presupposes it. To the obsolescence of the meta-narrative, apparatus of legitimation corresponds most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. The narrative function is losing its function, its great hero, is great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal, it is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements- narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive, descriptive, and so on (...) where, after meta-narrative, can legitimacy reside?”.* (Lyotard, 1997: 79).

Gene Veith comments, “For all its talk about culture, postmodernism lacks culture since the traditions, beliefs and morals that define culture are all disabled.” (Luman, 2012:134). Perhaps the most identifying mark of postmodernism is its flat denial of the possibility of truth i.e. postmodernists have genuinely given up on the idea of absolute truth. Cocteau writes and directs from a postmodernist point of view in which “literal truth or falsity is no longer a burning issue”. (Singh, 2008:175).

Postmodernism maintains that truth is determined not per se by an individual but shaped by a social group for its own determinations and then imposed on others in order to exploit and suppress them. “Postmodernism’s

main objective, therefore, is to “deconstruct” this buildup of language and society (i.e. “culture”) and liberate the oppressed from the oppressor.” (Singh P, 2011:11). The postmodernist attack is quite different. David Dockery explains: “Postmodernists would critique Christianity by claiming that Christians think they have the only truth. The claims of Christianity are rejected because of the appeal to absolute truth. Absolute truth claims will be dismissed by...” (Luman, 2012:473).

The subjectivity, conventionality, and incommensurability are the key elements emphasized by postmodernism since they deny reason or its parameters to obtain objective knowledge and truth. In terms of knowing the world, postmodernist does question the nature of truth, reason and even reality. This is as it is known, a relativist position, which accepts that there are relativists rather than absolutes in any area of human knowledge, therefore, any sort of knowledge within the world is socially oriented, in other words, is constructed in the society or nothing is fundamentally right or wrong.

### **Postmodern Philosophy**

Philosophy like all disciplines has been influenced by postmodernism. As a researcher as I have mentioned above, I try to present theoretically just modifications and developments directly or indirectly of philosophy focusing on causality. Postmodern philosophy as it is said or claimed by some theoreticians appeared beginning in the 1950s. Positivism, Social Darwinism, materialism and objective idealism are the principles that are denied by postmodern philosophers. Any sort of insight and truth and their construction are exerted by power relationships, personalization and discourse. As a result, critical theorists declare that postmodernism is a disruption with the creative and philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment, which they illustrate as a search for an identifiable and more widespread arrangement of aesthetics, ethics, and knowledge. Whereas modern theory pursues to reverse binaries and establish new and often canny structures of thought, postmodernism search for to deconstruct all such binaries, rejecting to prioritize one structure or center over another. In the same vein, postmodernism rejects elaborate formal aesthetics in favor of minimalist designs. Postmodernism tends to be both anti-essentialist and relativistic in its orientation:

*“Postmodern relativism is precisely the thought of the irreducible multitude of worlds, each of them sustained by a specific language game, so that each world "is" the narrative its members tell themselves about themselves, with no shared terrain, no common language; and the problem of truth is how*

*to establish something that-to use the terms popular in modal logic-relations the same in all possible worlds". (Zizek, 2012:347)*

It also embraces the movements like poststructuralism, deconstruction, multiculturalism, neo-relativism, neo-Marxism, gender studies and literary theory. Postmodern philosophy applies a number of critical approaches to criticize Western thought, including historicism, and psychoanalytic theory. "Postmodern philosophy is criticized for prizing irony over knowledge and giving the irrational equal footing with the rational". (Khosravishakib, 2012:32-33). As it is mostly said, postmodernism and post-structuralism are used interchangeably quite significantly. This is partly because both modernism and structuralism are specifically dependent on much to the Enlightenment project. Some philosophers, such as Jean- François Lyotard, can be classified into both groups. Postmodernism as a fundamental criticism of Western Philosophy as well as an uprising against any kind of authority and meaning was a continuation of modernism since it discards one of the main themes of postmodern philosophy that is the universal, objective truth. Referring to human nature, postmodernists see it incessantly collectivist, focusing on the fact that individuals' identities are built mostly by the social-linguistic settings i.e. socially constructed that they are a part of those groups changing drastically across the scopes of sex, race, ethnicity, and wealth.

Marxist critics Althusser and Gramsci introduced notions like ideology and hegemony which altered literary studies by positioning the writings within their historical locations. It was against the general assertion that until then literature embodied an essential human nature, what it is clear and meaningful to us is that literature supports to construct what a culture takes reality to be rather than merely reflecting some apparent reality. A human is a construct, a social product of a certain historical period according to materialist thinking. Ideology denotes the specific way people observe things. We do not produce beliefs and practices they are produced out of social interactions and relations. This is not an entirely independent act but rather a sum total of all social relations. As Terry Eagleton explains: "Ideology is not ..... a set of doctrines, it signifies the way men live out their roles in class- society, the values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge of society." (Eagleton, 1976:16-17).

Gramsci influenced by Marx embraced a point of view with later postmodernism and poststructuralism took the notion of hegemony to clarify the power structures as a political power that originates from authority as distinguished from the armed force. A ruling class shapes and

keeps its hegemony in civil society. Gramsci introduces false consciousness clarifying that the choices we make and values that we create are not ours. It is this process which Gramsci refers to when he tries to explain the way in which organization of people, media and information through the creation of dominant ideologies.

Modern theorists such as Foucault, Derrida, and Althusser render, “decentering the subject by focusing especially on ways in which society, discourse, or ideology produce the subjects they want and need.” (Jacob, 1994:16). And also the contradictory parts of Postmodernism’s fundamentals and modernism are: natural reality against anti-realism, experience against reason, linguistic against subjectivism, individual identity and autonomy against numerous race, sex, and class, the achievements of science and technology against suspicion tending toward outright host, human interests as fundamentally harmonious against conflict and oppression, valuing individualism against calls for communalism, solidarity, and egalitarian restraints. Structuralism has got incompatibility with postmodernism in the sense that structuralism has a strong inclination to be scientific in searching for unchanging shapes in experimental phenomena that is an epistemological attitude which is quite well-matched with Enlightenment thinking. “At the same time, results from structuralism investigation carried a slightly anti-Enlightenment note, clarifying that “rationality or reasonability can be found in the minds not people from civilized society but of savage people remaking that wealthier societies convey knowledge, conduct, and reason to less civilized ones”. (Khosravishakib, 2012:4).

Post-structuralism, emerging as a response to the structuralists' scientific orientation, has kept the cultural relativism in structuralism while discarding the scientific orientations. The difference is the nature of the two positions, “While post-structuralism is a position in philosophy, encompassing views on human beings, language, body, society, and many other issues, it is not a name of an era. Postmodernism, on the other hand, is closely associated with "postmodern" era, a period in the history coming after the modern age”. (Ibid, 24).

New developments and progresses in cultural, philosophical and literary studies due to postmodern influences, the interconnectedness of all methods of interpretation are now understood. Self- reflexivity and relativism have replaced self-confidence due to the postmodern belief that all representation distorts reality.

Also in this lieu, the influence of Roland Barthes’s principle of structuralism which separates the author from the text resulting from the act of writing, and new historicism, all depicts a close link between literature, history, and philosophy. Another mindset of postmodernism is the problem

that reveals, "... how much truth a man can bear without falsifying it; on the other hand, the "postmodern" notion that appearance is more valuable than stupid reality, and that, ultimately, there is no final Reality, only the interplay of multiple appearances, so that the very opposition between reality and appearance should be abandoned." (Jacob, 1994:11). Positive assumptions are slowly questioned as an account of the past is only one more story.

### **Postmodern Literature**

Literature by itself does not have any clear-cut and precise definition and the same goes toward the definition of postmodern literature since there is little agreement on the precise characteristics, possibility, and importance of postmodern literature, however, there should be some assumptions taken into account. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Samuel Beckett, Kurt Vonnegut are somewhat forerunners of postmodernism. The postmodern author is not searching for meaning or even possibility of meaning and, therefore, the postmodern novel follows it up: "Postmodern style is often characterized by eclecticism, digression, collage, pastiche, irony, the return of ornament and historical reference, and the appropriation of popular media". (Khosravishakib, 2012:1).

Postmodern authors also tend to celebrate chance over craft and further employ metafiction or fiction about fiction to undermine the writer's authority. Cultural fragmentation, colonial and neo-colonial power structures, cultural degeneration, the materialistic off-shoots of modern civilization, dying of human relationship, blending of facts and fantasy, search for love and security, diasporas, etc. are the major preoccupations in the writing of postmodern authors. They like the crisis of representation, fragmentation, antirealism, intertextuality, metafictionality, and anti-linearity, magic realism, the unreliability of narrators, discontinuity, linguistic playfulness, open-endedness, self-reflexivity and confessional, displacement as a central process, attachments and detachment and symbols in the narrative structure.

In terms of literature, postmodernists are extremely concerned with the language of written works. Deconstruction is the term defining the major literary methodology associated with the work of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. It includes reading a text to search for its indirect and concealed or several meanings. In this way, a reader's explanation of the text becomes more significant than the text itself. Also, what is significant is the subjectivity of the reader in determining what the author intended. For example, a reader may sense that a specific poem or novel really means that an author is feminist, even though the written text makes it clear that the author criticizes feminism. "Another characteristic of postmodern



literature is the questioning of distinctions between high and low culture through the use of pastiche, the combination of subjects and genres not previously deemed fit for literature". (Jacob, 1994: 16).

The term postmodernism first became extensively used in the 1960s to define a new feeling in the literature which either rejected modernist features and methods or modified them. In the following eras postmodernism instigated to see in other academic fields too, such as social theory, cultural and media studies, visual arts, philosophy, and history. Such widespread usage meant that an already argumentative term became overloaded with meaning, chiefly because it was being used to describe characteristics of the social and political landscape as well as art and literature. The bases of conventional narrative structure and characterization are changed and even turned on their head in order to create a work whose internal logic forms its means of expression.

As a final step related to postmodern literature is the central technique of postmodern literature, the use of irony. Self-reference is the literary equivalent of the postmodern ironic attitude, representing that we cannot admit the reality we are presented within a drama or novel without thinking or working on it. Postmodern fiction is full of examples of texts which rewrite or parody or pastiche other texts, yet the implication, as Patricia Waugh makes clear in her book *Metafiction* "is to remind us that the real world is effectively just as constructed, mediated, and discursive as the reality we are presented within the world of fiction". (Bradshaw, 2008:66).

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have argued that postmodern has mainly influenced philosophy and literature and they are recognized and praised for their multiplicity. Postmodernism might seem exclusive in its work, its emphasis on multiplicity and the decentered subject makes very uncomfortable reading for traditional theorists or philosophers. Postmodernism rejects western values and beliefs as only a small part of the human experience and it rejects such ideas, beliefs, culture and norms of the western. Integrity is fragmented apart into unharmonious narratives which lead to a shattering of identity and an overall breakdown of any idea of the self. Relativism and Self-reflexivity have replaced self-confidence due to the postmodern belief that all representation distorts reality. If there are no absolutes, if the truth is relative, then there can be no stability, no meaning in life.

I have also referred that in a sense; postmodernism is a part of modernism we find the instantaneous coexistence of these two methods of expression and thinking, especially in visual arts and literature. Leslie Fiedler has argued that essential to postmodern literature is "a closing of the gap between elite and mass culture" (Singh, 2011:156). Therefore,

being a postmodern makes use of very simple language to give clarity to the readers.

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