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KOZHIKODE**

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

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Postfeminism In Literature

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Adithya k

Rollno: 1

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## postfeminism In Literature

Postfeminism is a term used to describe a societal perception that many or all of the goals of feminism have already been achieved, thereby making further iterations and expansions of the movement obsolete. Many feminist critics use the term postfeminist to negatively describe the renewed embrace of activities and positions that current and previous generations of feminists have deemed sexist or oppressive. The wide-ranging circulation of the term and its uncertain definition prompted scholars to study the implications of its usage. postfeminism is described as a media and publishing phenomenon, or as a backlash against feminism, while at other times postfeminism is discussed as a radically new way that young women are engaging in feminist activism and theory. In her 2007 essay "Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility," Rosalind Gill discusses postfeminism as more of a sensibility or an ethos than as a critical movement. Gill notes that the term "postfeminist" can be used as an accusation against feminist scholars whose work is seen as insufficiently feminist (148). Elaine J. Hall and Marnie Salupo Rodriguez note in their 2003 article "The Myth of Postfeminism" that the ethos of postfeminism rests on four pillars. Firstly, support for feminism among women decreased in the 1980s and 1990s. Secondly, at the same time support for feminism decreases, an "anti-feminist" sentiment is increasing among pockets of young women. Thirdly, many young women feel that feminism has obtained its primary ends, like the right to vote, reproductive choice for women, and increased representation of women in positions of power, and as such, "for young women in the current era, the success of the movement means that [feminism] is no longer needed" (879). Fourthly, there is what Hall and Rodriguez call a no, but culture whereby women do not want to be labelled as feminists but still support feminist goals like equal pay for equal work and economic independence. In this view, it is not that women no longer support feminism; rather, it is that they no longer support the connotations that feminism has acquired.

The ideology of postfeminism is recognized by its contrast with prevailing or preceding feminism. Some forms of postfeminism strive towards the next stage in gender-related progress, and as such is often conceived as in favor of a society that is no longer defined by rigid gender roles and expressions. postfeminist is a person who believes in, promotes, or embodies any of various ideologies springing from the feminism of the 1970s, whether supportive of or antagonistic towards classical feminism. Postfeminism can be considered a critical way of understanding the changed relations between feminism, popular culture and femininity. Postfeminism may also present a critique of second-wave feminism or third-wave feminism by questioning their binary thinking and essentialism, their vision of sexuality, and their perception of relationships between femininity and feminism. It may also complicate or even deny entirely the notion that absolute gender equality is necessary, desirable or realistically achievable. In 1919, a journal was launched in which "female literary radicals" stated

we're interested in people now not in men and women that "moral, social, economic, and political standards should not have anything to do with sex", that it would be pro-woman without being anti-man, and that their [called] 'post-feminist'.

The term was used in the 1980s to describe a backlash against second-wave feminism. Postfeminism is now a label for a wide range of theories that take critical approaches to previous feminist discourses and includes challenges to the second wave's ideas. Other postfeminists say that feminism is no longer relevant to today's society.

Post-feministic ideology is a new form of empowerment, individual choice, independence, consumer culture, fashion, hybridism, humour and (sexual) pleasure, and the renewed focus on the female body can be considered important for this contemporary feminism. Post-feminism lies within the world of academic paradigms and can be located on the connection between post-modernism, poststructuralism and post-colonialism. In the present scenario, postfeministic views are applicable for every field a person could possibly think of. Brooks in his book *Post-feminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Form* [5] states that "Post-feminism is not against feminism, it's about feminism today". In early 1980s, the media has begun to classify women in their teens and women in their twenties as "post-feminist generation". After twenty years, the term post-feminist is still used to refer to young women. Post-feminism is a highly debated topic since it implies that "post" refers "dead" or "after" feminism. Postfeminism celebrates sexuality and says that women can also be empowered through working in the sex industry as strippers and adult film stars. Post-feminism is fuelled by advances in abortion, employment and fertility laws and concentrates on furthering the idea of empowerment, celebration of feminists, freedom of choice and liberation. Carol Rumens as a post-feminist supporter, she has applied the concept in the fields of media sector like print and visual media. It has reached earliest in England, Germany, the United States and other countries. The post-feminist 'equality portrayals' of women are visible in cinema, electronic and mass media advertisements and also in literature in the form of avoidance from depicting a young woman as passive, inferior, weaker and subordinate to a man. The impact of 'the girl poser' has been recognized, and women are represented as more assertive. Self-assured and confident women are shown as having equal footing with men. Even if some portrayals appear sexist, women are not shown as 'victims'. The new women proclaim their womanhood in a bold manner. Post-feminism has started in the media field in the year 1982. The feminist critics have explored the concept through media. It has showed those traditional femininities which are not allowable through feminism. These include an unabashed return to men, a spotlight on consumerism, reconsideration of motherhood and attempts at home life. The individualism, domesticity and consumerism are presented through powerful TV shows and films like *Bridget Jones Diary*. One of the modern novels with feminist criticism is *Bridget Jones's Diary* by Helen Fielding which portrays society's views of single women in contemporary societies. The protagonist of the novel is a

strong and independent person and her worries are that she does not want to arrive finely living alone without the support of man when she grows older. Avoiding stereotypes is an important feature of advertisements which carry the hallmark of post-feminism. For instance, in the advertisement 'Wedding Jewellery' by TBZ Garlands, the model Katrina Kaif talks about the concept of the right time for marriage denying the old school thoughts which condition women to stay at home after marriage. The commercial gives awareness to women and makes them catch hold of the post-feminist concept through its strong female character.

The main goal of post-feminism is a woman's individualism. Mc Robbie introduces a new 'female individualism' which dismisses the 'old' feminism. Feminism itself is seen to belong to the past which characterizes the post-feminist woman of popular culture in individualism, sophistication and choice. The advertisement 'Woman of Today' featuring the Bollywood actresses Nimrat Kaur, which was made by the company Titan to sell their wrist watches, tells the audience that a woman has every right to make the choices of her own. It also has the tagline 'Her Life Her Choices'. Mostly, the female actors from the film industry are used in the advertisements to showcase the women's identity in the society, since the target audience of these commercials is women. It portrays every individual woman from different fields of the workplace, for example, IT professionals, students, home makers and so on. An advertisement for ceiling fans from Havells has been launched in the year 2013. The concept of the ad is to avoid patriarchy, and it also shares a socially relevant view on changing one's name after marriage. In the commercial, a couple goes to an office for registration. At that time the husband decides to take his wife's last name after their marriage, and it makes the female registrar surprised and satisfied. The couple from the ad has given a simple and yet never noticed lesson to society. The Indian advertisements of the recent times give a lot of importance to women identity when compared with the old ones. The concept of post-feminism has its both positive and negative aspects since it is a debatable topic. One of the widespread negative aspects of it is that it is suitable only for the Western countries, which is a wrong assumption. For, in the present era, many post-feminist supporters in India support the media for its work just like how a good idea is appreciated all around the world. The present study is a pointer to the fact that postfeminism ideology is available in Indian advertisements, and they tend to change people's mindset with every new advertisement launched in the popular visual media.

#### The myth of postfeminism

According to the mass media, a postfeminist era emerged in the 1990s. The first objective is to develop a definition of the postfeminist perspective. Based on an informal content analysis of popular articles, the authors identify four postfeminist claims:

- overall support for the women's movement has dramatically eroded because some women

- Increasingly antifeminist
- believe the movement is irrelevant
- have adopted a no but version of feminism.

The second objective is to determine the extent of empirical support for these claims. Using existing public opinion data, the authors find little support for the four postfeminist claims. Implications of the unsubstantiated post-feminist argument are discussed. Hall and Rodriguez discuss the shift from feminism to “postfeminism,” which they believe is more of an anti-feminist movement than anything. The authors discuss how support for feminism has eroded since the 1990’s, and try to find possible explanations for this shift unpopular opinions on the women’s equality movement.

### Study of postfeminism

Postfeminism is made here in order to solidify this object of study. Without such an endeavor an attempt to define or contextualize postfeminism would be both impossible and fruitless. The problem with postfeminism, as with feminism, lies in the definition. In fact, it is possibly more difficult to define because unlike the countless feminist writers published over the past four decades, there are no self-proclaimed postfeminist theorists. While postfeminism has been theorized about to be sure, even writers such as Camille Paglia, Katie Roiphe, and Naomi Wolf, who have often been labeled postfeminist writers, have been deemed such by other people. Other writings about postfeminism have been done by feminists angered by the notion of postfeminism and determined to prove its ineffectiveness in order to preserve established feminist ideas<sup>186</sup> or by those intrigued with the possibilities of what postfeminism may add to feminism. Postfeminism is a problematic word in feminist circles partly because there has yet to be a concise or agreed upon definition. It is therefore often seen as nothing more than anti-feminist sentiment cloaked as postfeminism. Further adding to the mystery of postfeminism is the fact that it means something different in academia than it does in popular culture. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines postfeminism as of or relating to the ideas, attitudes, etc, which ignore or reject feminist attitudes of the 1960s and subsequent decades. For many feminists, then, postfeminism is nothing more than the backlash against feminism, part of “The Undeclared War Against Women” as Susan Faludi calls it in the title of her book. To these defenders of feminism, postfeminism is a “knee-jerk” reaction, an attempt to maintain the current condition of unattained equality of women. In the eyes of such feminists, the goal of postfeminism is to haul society back to the days before the 19th Amendment. But women do not yet have a sure enough footing in the political, social, and economic spheres of modern culture for feminism to be dismissed. The end result is the death of feminism. Postfeminism, however, is referenced in both popular culture and academia to an extent that it has become integral to the study of feminism and therefore cannot be dismissed without

examination. If the state of women in America is to be truly understood, the political landscape must be examined in its entirety. Since American feminism is most often described in terms of waves, the natural implication is that each new wave is built on the previous one just as ocean waves build upon one another. This is disturbing for those who view this newest wave of feminism, be it third or post, as an end to the second wave. A description or definition of postfeminism is further troubled by the very prefix "post", often thought to mean a movement beyond the previous caused by a ceasing of the previous. In other words, many feminists claim that there can be no "postfeminism" because male domination still exists, thereby making feminism necessary. However, regardless of whether postfeminism is the third wave or simply part of it, the very idea of postfeminism understandably appears ghastly to the second wave feminist because "post" is in fact a prefix that normally means a break with the past. When in reference to postfeminism, however, others believe it should be interpreted as meaning a "process of ongoing transformation and change". Postfeminism is thought to be feminism's "coming of age" because while it may take a critical position toward some earlier feminist frameworks, it still engages with many of the concerns of feminists. Likewise, "post" does not necessarily mean a return to a previous existence as the fear of pre-19th Amendment days may suggest. Rather, it can also mean a "continuation of the originating term's aims and ideologies albeit on a different level." The relatively few authors who specifically attempt to define postfeminism always start by articulating that it does not signify the end of feminism, but rather a shift. In this view, postfeminism may be read as progression of feminism, a movement out of certain impasse within the women's movement and into new terrains of gender politics.

### Postfeminism and popular culture

Feminist media studies have started examining postfeminism's appearances in cinema and television because although postfeminism is seen by feminists as an inaccurate way to detail the history of feminism, cinema has been "postfeminized". This makes exploration of this trend a necessary focal point of media studies because it now accurately describes how filmmakers, audiences, and the media may conceptualize certain characters and narratives." The recent emergence of postfeminist media studies leans heavily toward dramas and sitcoms that are female-centered, as well as other venues such as romantic comedies that appeal to a mostly female audience. Films are a common medium for postfeminist statements and ideology because postfeminism appears to be largely a popular culture driven concept. Popular culture was the arena that first identified and promoted postfeminist trends. For the most part, films considered to be the beginning of a postfeminist trend are late-1980s to early-1990s projects produced with



well known stars and large budgets. Examples are *Pretty Woman*, *Fatal Attraction*, *Basic Instinct*, *Baby Boom*, and *Ghost*. When postfeminist films are interrogated by feminists it is normally not with a favorable stance. In fact, there is a preset idea about postfeminism and its expression in the cinema that ensures most commentators will “envision postfeminism as a white ‘chick’ backlash that denies class, avoids race, ignores (older) age, and ‘straight’-jackets sexuality. In general, the heroines in postfeminist films have professional careers, often in exciting traditionally male roles, but the focus of the story is on romance more than action. For feminists, there are a number of disturbing tendencies in the postfeminist film, including a pre-packaged and somewhat diluted form of feminism that acknowledges feminist contributions to the advancement of women but displays it in such a way as to effectively stifle any meaningful feminist discussion.

Postfeminism as it is portrayed in films is characterized by a “double address” that positions female success at entering traditionally male dominated fields such as business, law and politics alongside a keen discontent with the residual effects of feminism, particularly second wave feminism. The result of this is that the context in which the disconnection between the personal and professional lives of women is discussed is postfeminist rather than feminist. In other words, rather than such a discussion focusing on inequalities between the genders and possible solutions to these shortcomings, it is centered on discontentment with where feminism has left women. Another common theme in postfeminist films is what feminists call “retreatism” or “downsizing.” In a typical postfeminist scenario a “well-educated white female professional displays her ‘empowerment’ and caring nature by withdrawing from the workforce (and symbolically from the public sphere) to devote herself to husband and family.” In these films, the traditional roles selected through empowered decision making are seen as more desirable alternatives to the feminist counter-options of career building or remaining single. Postfeminism and particularly postfeminist television relies on nostalgia, or the pining for the days of old when women’s lives were easier despite the fact that they had limited choices. The era of postfeminist television is in essence a return to the values of the 1950s where the trend is to show women at the center of family life. The work identity that most female television characters now have is never achieved at the expense of the family role and women are more frequently seen in full time domestic and mothering roles. Even where women have made advances in the world of television by adopting many of the professional roles traditionally reserved for men, there is still an underlying stigma that separates them from the male world. These female characters are always placed in the roles of either sex object or mother in addition to their professional status in order to satisfy society’s requirement that femininity encompass either or both of these features.



The many postfeminist statements made by cinema and television through films and programming are just part of the postfeminist popular culture, or “pop postfeminism” that has an increasing presence in American society. Time Magazine’s now infamous 1998 cover asking “Is Feminism Dead?” declares that much of today’s feminism is not the politically-conscious feminism of the past. Instead, it seems to be driven by “a popular culture insistent on offering images of grown single-women as frazzled, self-absorbed girls. It is in essence, silly and its icons are no less so with Ally McBeal being a prototype of this image. Although the question of whether feminism is dead is never definitively answered it is certain that feminism has taken on a new form of, “glitz and glamour,” “wed to the culture of celebrity and self-obsession. In the postfeminist age presented by popular culture the image of women has taken an interesting turn. As evidenced by television programming, movies and even advertising, women have entered business and entrepreneurial realms only imagined by the earliest feminists and celebrated wholeheartedly by later feminists. But now the cost and ambiguity of this entrance is also being portrayed. That women desire a place in the dueling arenas of work and family is acknowledged and presented although often in glossy Hollywood fashion where the choices appear simpler than reality allows. What popular culture has highlighted is the ambiguity of women’s lives that is a central postfeminist theme. The stifling notions of romance, love and family discarded by feminism are once again being depicted because they still matter to women. The difference is that now these conventional longings are coupled with the desires that were ignored before the days of feminism. That is, the desire to make a meaningful contribution to society, to experience success in a chosen occupation, and to enter the public arena as an equal.

The power of female sexuality and a response against victim identity are the common themes running through the works of these authors. It is these stances that have established them as postfeminist although this small definition of postfeminist thinking is in no way thoroughly descriptive of the concept. In the same way, the theoretical underpinnings of postfeminism are by no means representational of all aspects of the term. In fact, while theory provides a necessary foundation for examining postfeminism and outlines the history by which such a concept entered society, it does relatively little in contribution to an understanding of the idea. Comprehension comes most effectively through discussion of the issues surrounding and constituting postfeminism. These are the very same issues surrounding and constituting feminism, but the varying postfeminist take on each provides distinction to the concept of postfeminism and creates a vital step toward its definition.

Postfeminist issues

Postfeminism in the Camille Paglia, Katie Roiphe, Naomi Wolf genre has been referred to as “power feminism” or “babe feminism” and is an impassioned critique of the “victim feminism” perpetuated by the preceding generation. In fact, postfeminism generally addresses not only the issues of victimization, but also autonomy and responsibility. “Girl Power” as opposed to “Girl Crisis” is a central tenet of postfeminism and is expressed through both fashion and attitude. Victim feminism involves any number of variations on the theme of women as the constant and permanent underdogs of a patriarchal society, the doormats trampled by countless uncaring men. One serious charge in the victimization vein is what some have deemed “date rape hysteria” or inflation of numbers about date rape and sexual harassment in order to foster victim identity. Such identity can often lead to power as currently exemplified in American culture where there is power in “being the most oppressed.” Much of feminism’s energy has been toward a fierce denunciation of patriarchy. The problem with this stance toward patriarchy and thus men is that it has bypassed an entire generation of women who cannot identify with bitter cries against patriarchal chains. The result has been the production of the “victim mentality” and a subsequent postfeminism revolt. Younger women more often than not do not identify with patriarchy in the same way because they have always had the ability to vote, own property, inherit fortunes, keep paychecks, buy cars, lease apartments, order credit cards, and keep jobs through pregnancy, complete with six weeks of maternity leave. This generation of females has been raised believing they could be fighter pilots, stay-at-home moms, doctors, beauticians, businesswoman at their choosing. As such, there appears to be an increasing ambivalence toward feminism as more and more women who innately agree with many “feminist” ideals either reject the label of feminism entirely or claim feminism only to then qualify which portions are acceptable and which are not. The first postfeminism issue, then, is an attempt to forge a path to new and pertinent ground in order to appeal to women whose life circumstances are no longer described by second wave feminism.

Feminists counter the victimhood charge by claiming that victim feminism is not a true representation of feminism but rather a white female middle class attempt to overlook issues of race, class, and other cultural differences. As such, the cries against victim feminism are nothing more than a few white middle class women wanting to “claim victory before the struggle is over. They want to race into the (not quite) top echelon of society, grab the booty, and bask in their newfound power. Other feminists counter that in giving a name to the forces which continue to oppress, the word victim can be an articulation of strength in many instances. What critics call “victim feminism” is actually an activism which refuses victimhood. The struggle for power in feminism, whether expressed through claims of female suppression or supremacy is seen nowhere more clearly than in the workplace and the ensuing effort to balance every other area of life.

## Significance of postfeminism

The implications of an era of postfeminism are numerous and varied. It not only involves a subtle but steady shift in mindset but also in action, the way women operate and live out their lives. This is already being seen clearly in the political arena. Even as postfeminism opens up a range of possibilities and options by incorporating a theme of messiness and contradiction, it has meant a rightward shift in thinking. This subtle shift has been taking place since the early 1980s and the onset of the Reagan era, but it continues today. For instance, it is no longer strange to hear talk of “family values,” and while this is considered by many feminists to be evidence of the severity of a backlash it is nonetheless political jargon that has been adapted by all segments of the political spectrum. Family values are a topic of political conversation because they matter to American constituencies. In keeping with the current postfeminist trend, there is a full circle in motion; a voluntary, self-determined and ultimately arbitrary return to more traditional discussions of family. Also in keeping with postfeminism, and why it differs from pre-feminism, is that these discussions are now carried out in the midst of a political atmosphere that embraces the non-traditional and non-traditionalists as well. It is messy, contradictory, and very postfeminist.

This postfeminist era is likely to foster an increase in women in political roles as current feminist political leaders are joined by women with non-feminist views. This does not indicate a void of female participation on the left end of the political spectrum, but the small number of women on the right and in the middle will likely be increased as a matter of progression into postfeminism. The addition of these women will be a test for postfeminism, because while it claims to embrace all choices as being acceptable when they are advocated by individual women, this will also involve shifting ground in customary and staunchly held feminist rights. The transition will be played out no more dramatically than on the “sacred” ground of abortion. Today some say the epitome of a backlash, antifeminist, patriarchal, misogynistic viewpoint can be found within the ranks of pro-life advocates. It is the ultimate crime against women’s rights to be against abortion. One, in fact, cannot be a feminist without being pro-choice and this is evidenced by virtually all feminist writing and thought. The problem, of course, is that millions of women, even some who embrace other feminist values are not pro-choice. In an era of sisterhood and unquestioned adherence to a scripted code of feminist conduct this fact was secondary and unimportant. However, in an age of postfeminism, where the rule of law is individual expression and multiplicity of experience and behavior, this becomes a paramount division that can no longer be ignored. There must be room for this articulation despite the fact that it’s the opposite is seen as the bedrock of women’s rights. In postfeminism, the foundation is one of varied perspective rather than a dictated stance toward an issue, in this case abortion. While this is certain to be unwelcome in

many circles, it is nonetheless a by-product of postfeminism. The overarching and most profound political implication of post feminism will be increased diversity of viewpoints. This is due in part to the very nature of postfeminism as a reaction to some of feminism's perceived shortcomings, including its puritanical nature. However, it is also directly related to the umbrella effect of this wave of thinking. Postfeminism stretches the boundaries of what is acceptable for women in belief and behavior. It encompasses and legitimizes a greater length of the political spectrum than previous ideologies simply from the fact that the traditional is now accepted along with the non-traditional that has been the hallmark of feminism. While this is a plausible reconciliation for a theoretical undertaking such as postfeminism, it is not likely to be a straightforward, tranquil or even achievable melding of ideologies in any practical sense.

The political landscape at the beginning of the millennium is one of harsh dividing lines, radically opposed groups and increasing demarcations. As the case of abortion highlights, this trend is not only a partial result of an era of postfeminism, but it is one likely to continue and increase.

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**Audit Course**  
**ENG1 A01 Writing Skills**

**EXPRESSIONIST THEATER**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts

AKSHAYA K P

Roll No: 2

**EXPRESSIONIST THEATER**

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

# EXPRESSIONIST THEATER

Expressionism is a modernist movement in drama and theatre that developed in Europe (principally Germany) in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and later in the United States. It forms part of the broader movement of Expressionism in the arts. Expressionism was a dominant influence on early 20<sup>th</sup>-century German theatre, of which Georg Kaiser and Ernst Toller were the most famous playwrights. Other notable Expressionist dramatists included Reinhard Sorge, Walter Hasenclever, Hans Henny Jahnn, and Arnolt Bronnen. Important precursors were the Swedish playwright August Strindberg and German actor and dramatist Frank Wedekind. During the 1920s, Expressionism enjoyed a brief period of popularity in American theatre, including plays by Eugene O'Neill (*The Hairy Ape*, *The Emperor Jones* and *The Great God Brown*), Sophie Treadwell (*Machinal*) and Elmer Rice (*The Adding Machine*). Expressionist plays often dramatize the spiritual awakening and sufferings of their protagonists. Some utilize an episodic dramatic structure and are known as *Stationendramen* (station plays), modeled on the presentation of the suffering and death of Jesus in the Stations of the Cross. August Strindberg had pioneered this form with his autobiographical trilogy *To Damascus*. These plays also often dramatize the struggle against bourgeois values and established authority, frequently personified by the Father. In Sorge's *The Beggar*, (*Der Bettler*), for example, the young hero's mentally ill father raves about the prospect of mining the riches of Mars and is finally poisoned by his son. In Bronnen's *Parricide* (*Vatermord*), the son stabs his tyrannical father to death, only to have to fend off the frenzied sexual overtures of his mother. Expressionism was a dominant influence on early 20<sup>th</sup>-century German theatre, of which Georg Kaiser and Ernst Toller were



the most famous playwrights. Other notable Expressionist dramatists included Reinhard Sorge, Walter Hasenclever, Hans Henny Jahnn, and Arnolt Bronnen. Important precursors were the Swedish playwright August Strindberg and German actor and dramatist Frank Wedekind. During the 1920s, Expressionism enjoyed a brief period of popularity in American theatre, including plays by Eugene O'Neill (*The Hairy Ape*, *The Emperor Jones* and *The Great God Brown*), Sophie Treadwell (*Machinal*) and Elmer Rice (*The Adding Machine*). Expressionism was a movement in drama and theatre that principally developed in Germany in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was then popularized in the United States, Spain, China, the U.K., and all around the world. Similar to the broader movement of Expressionism in the arts, Expressionist theatre utilized theatrical elements and scenery with exaggeration and distortion to deliver strong feelings and ideas to audiences.

Expressionism in the theatre arose out of the same impulse to rebel against the materialist values of the older middle-class generation that gave rise to both the reformist Naturalist theatre and the aesthetics Symbolist theatre. This opposition was clearly expressed through the themes and often the titles of such plays as *Vatermord* ("Patricide"). The forerunners of Expressionism are generally accepted to be the German actor and playwright Frank Wedekind, who criticized the reformist Ibsenite movement for failing to attack the morality of bourgeois society, and Strindberg. Wedekind sought in his plays to expose what lay beneath the surface of gentility and decorum; in the process, he often introduced roles that served more as emblems than as realistic characters. Strindberg's early plays are usually included in the Naturalist repertoire. After a period of personal crisis between 1894 and 1897, the form of Strindberg's plays disintegrated into dream visions or confessional monodramas in which everything is seen through the eyes of the single protagonist. The single focus of these

plays was taken over by the Expressionists, as was the use of stereotyped characters—the Son, the Stranger, etc. The expressionist drama focused on the description of the subjective experiences and experiences of the main character, often an alter ego of the author himself. The remaining figures were the background for his mental states and obsessions, were the products of his dreams and imaginations. The heroes of expressionist art were usually typical figures, symbolizing entire social groups or simply the personifications of these groups. In this way, the arts focused on the psychology of the masses, not individuals. Dialogue was characterized by a rotten style, filled with slogans and exclamations. A crowd (or a choir in its function) often appeared on the stage). The work sought to shape the modern 'morality'. Expressionists expressed higher art through their art, often political (mostly leftist) or religious, sometimes radically doubtful (Hasenclever in the drama *Der Sohn* defended the thesis that freedom of expression of his personality could kill his own parents, and playwright Hans Johst became in the 1930s. supporter of Nazism). Extensive acts, known to the viewer from traditional theater, in expressionistic art were replaced by sequences of short scenes. Realistic scenes were intertwined with fantastic ones. On the other hand, it was completely broken with a realistic set design, stylized cubic decorations appeared (geometrical solids, curtains, stairs, platforms). An important element was the lighting effects that created the mood on the stage eg . bright red or white light as a factor that stimulates the viewer's emotions). The performers experimented with the use of modern techniques on stage, trying, for example, to include film sequences in the show. The acting game was characterized by strong antipsychology. They were striving to achieve emotional transcendence. The actor's movements were violent, the choreography strongly stylized, the dynamic game characterized by muscle tension

and stiffness of the body. The voice was unnaturally modulated until it reached a hoarse staccato or turned into a scream. The major Expressionist theatre was Der Tribune, in Berlin. The Expressionist stage neither simulated reality nor suggested unreality. It existed in its own right as the platform from which direct statements could be made. Settings therefore tended to be abstract or, when specific, highly subjective. Techniques of distortion and incongruous juxtaposition expressed either the ideological position of the director or dramatist or the state of mind of the protagonist, or both. In Expressionist plays the walls of houses might lean at sharp angles, threatening to crush the protagonist; windows might light up like eyes spying on the secret and intimate; trees might take on the shape of the skeleton signifying Death. In this way, instead of simply forming the milieu for the action, the setting became a dramatic force. This aspect of Expressionism has been appropriated to great effect by the cinema, in which camera angles and special lenses can render the ordinary expressive. Leopold Jessner in his stage production of Richard III (1920) placed Richard at the height of his power at the top of a flight of steps. The steps below Richard were crowded with soldiers in red cloaks with white helmets. The effect when they knelt was of Richard sitting on top of a mound of skulls with a river of blood flowing through them. The action of many Expressionist plays was fragmented into a series of small scenes or episodes. This style of theatre was called Stationendrama ("station drama") and was clearly derived from the principles of the medieval mystery plays. This led to a consideration of the scene in the theatre as being self-contained. Significance and meaning derived from the juxtaposition or accumulation of scenes rather than from a continuous narrative progression from scene to scene, and from this it followed that there need be no consistency of setting. In Ernst Toller's *Man and the Masses* (1920) the scenes alternated between reality and dream

throughout the play. The characters in Expressionist drama were often impersonal or nameless. Very often they served to illustrate some aspect of the protagonist's thought or feelings or expressed aspects of the world and society. In Toller's *Transfiguration* (1918) the soldiers on the battlefield had skeletons painted on their costumes. Characters were frequently presented as fragments of a unified consciousness. Crowds were often not differentiated but were used in mass to express or underline the power of the protagonist's position. Expressionist roles often required actors to express aspects of character through the use of isolated parts of the body. The character of Dr. Strangelove in Stanley Kubrick's film of that name, whose right arm must be restrained from giving the Nazi salute of its own volition, makes comic use of an Expressionist technique.

There was a concentrated Expressionist movement in early 20<sup>th</sup> century German theatre of which Georg Kaiser and Ernst Toller were the most famous playwrights. Other notable Expressionist dramatists included Reinhard Sorge, Walter Hasenclever, Hans Henny Jahnn, and Arnolt Bronnen. They looked back to Swedish playwright August Strindberg and German actor and dramatist Frank Wedekind as precursors of their dramaturgical experiments. Oskar Kokoschka's *Murderer, the Hope of Women* was the first fully Expressionist work for the theatre, which opened on 4 July 1909 in Vienna. In it, an unnamed man and woman struggle for dominance. The Man brands the woman; she stabs and imprisons him. He frees himself and she falls dead at his touch. As the play ends, he slaughters all around him (in the words of the text) "like mosquitoes." The extreme simplification of characters to mythic types, choral effects, declamatory dialogue and heightened intensity would become characteristic of later Expressionist plays. The first full-length Expressionist play was *The Son* by Walter Hasenclever, which was published in 1914 and first performed in 1916. In the 1920s,

Expressionism enjoyed a brief period of popularity in the theatre of the United States, including plays by Eugene O'Neill (*The Hairy Ape*, *The Emperor Jones* and *The Great God Brown*), Sophie Treadwell (*Machinal*), Lajos Egri (*Rapid Transit*) and Elmer Rice (*The Adding Machine*). Two further developments can be attributed to the Expressionist movement. The director Leopold Jessner capitalized on the earlier innovations in stage design. His use of steps and multiple levels earned his stage the name *Treppenbühne* ("stepped stage"). He utilized screens in the manner advocated by Craig, and his productions illustrated a plastic concept of stage setting, which allowed the action to flow freely with minimum hindrance. Some of Jessner's productions relied heavily on steps and levels for this plasticity, but in others he used solid three-dimensional setting features standing in three-dimensional space. Jessner reclaimed and utilized the full space of the stage. In his 1921 production of *Othello*, a central rostrum served a variety of spatial functions. Upon his arrival in Cyprus, Othello and the accompanying crowd flooded out of a trapdoor at the rear of the rostrum and poured over the top of it onto the front stage; Othello, moving no further than the top of the rostrum, appeared to rise from a sea of people, towering above them. In a later scene, this same rostrum supported Desdemona's bed, with drapes towering into the flies, surrounded by space. The isolated solid unit within the total stage space has become a distinctive feature of contemporary set design and staging. The second contribution of the Expressionist movement was to bring the mask back into common usage. Initially, the mask signified typical or depersonalized characters; later, it became a device for distancing the audience from the characters altogether, as it was used by Brecht in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1948) and other plays. Expressionism was relatively short-lived, although there was a brief revival of the theatrical mode in the 1960s when casts of actors dressed

in black jeans and sweaters sat on boxes on black-curtained stages and intoned their lines as the ego, id, and libido of someone's psychological crisis. Nevertheless, Expressionism contributed to the modern stage a range of techniques that have become the stock in trade of most directors and designers; though in most contemporary cases the influence of Expressionism has been mediated through Brecht (see below The influence of Brecht).

In the expressionist theater, sexual and psychoanalytic themes predominated, perhaps by the influence of Freud, whose work *The interpretation of dreams* appeared in 1900. However, the protagonists used to be helpless, lonely, tortured, isolated from the world and stripped of all kinds of conventionalism and social appearance. Sex represented violence and frustration, life, suffering and angst. Expressionist plays often dramatize the spiritual awakening and sufferings of their protagonists and are referred to as *Stationendramen* (station dramas), modeled on the episodic presentation of the suffering and death of Jesus in the Stations of the Cross. August Strindberg had pioneered this form with his autobiographical trilogy *To Damascus* (1898-1904). Early expressionism in particular testified to the failure of social values with a predilection for ecstasy and despair and hence a tendency towards the inflated and the grotesque; a mystical, even religious element with frequent apocalyptic overtones; an urgent sense of the here and now. The plays often dramatise the struggle against bourgeois values and established authority, often personified in the figure of the Father. In Reinhard Sorge's *The Beggar* (*Der Bettler*), the young hero's mentally ill father raves about the prospect of mining the riches of Mars and is eventually poisoned by his son. In Arnolt Bronnen's *Parricide* (*Vatermord*), the son stabs his tyrannical father to death, only to have to fend off the frenzied sexual overtures of his mother. In Expressionist drama, the speech is heightened, whether

expansive and rhapsodic, or clipped and telegraphic. Director Leopold Jessner became famous for his Expressionistic productions, often unfolding on stark, steeply raked flights of stairs (an idea originally developed by Edward Gordon Craig), which quickly became his trademark.



# AUDIT COURSE ENG1AO1

## POSTCOLONIALISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts

BY

ALIYA FATHIMMA

ROLL NO: 3

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## POSTCOLONIALISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Postcolonialism is the critical academic study of the cultural, political, and economic legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the impact of human control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands. More specifically, it is a critical theory analysis of (usually European) imperial power. It encompasses a wide variety of approaches, and theoreticians may not always agree on a common set of definitions. On a simple level, through anthropological study, it may seek to build a better understanding of colonial life- based on the assumptions that the colonial rulers are unreliable narrators- from the point of the view of the colonized people. On a deeper level, postcolonialism examines the social and political and cultural narratives surrounding the colonizer and the colonized. This approach may overlap the contemporary history, and may also draw examples from anthropology, historiography, political science, philosophy, sociology and human geography. Sub- disciplines of postcolonial studies examine the effects of colonial rule on the practice of feminism, anarchism, literature and Christian thought.

As an epistemology and political science, the field of postcolonialism addresses the matters that constitute the postcolonial identity of decolonized people, which derives from:

1. The colonizer's generation of cultural knowledge about the colonized people.
2. How the Western cultural knowledge was applied to subjugate a non-European people into a colony of the European mother country, which, after initial invasion, was effected by means of cultural identities of 'colonizer' and 'colonized'.

Postcolonialism is aimed at disempowering such theories (intellectual and linguistic, social and economic) by means of which colonialists "perceive", "know", and "understand" the world. Postcolonial theory thus establishes intellectual spaces for subaltern people to speak for themselves, in their own voices, and thus produce cultural discourses of philosophy, language, society, and economy, balancing the imbalanced us- and- them binary power- relationship between the colonialists and the colonized.

Colonialism was presented as "the extension of civilization" which ideologically justified the self- ascribed racial and cultural superiority of the Western world. This concept was espoused by Joseph Ernest Renan in *Le Reforme Intellectuelle et morale (1871)*, whereby imperial stewardship was thought to affect the intellectual and moral reformation of the coloured peoples of the less cultures of the world. That such a divinely established, natural harmony among the human races of the world would be possible, because everyone has an assigned cultural identity, a social place, and an economic role within an imperial colony. The postcolonial theory holds that decolonized people develop a postcolonial identity that is based on cultural interaction between different identities (cultural, national, and ethnic as well as gender and class based) which are assigned varying degrees of social power by the colonial society. In postcolonial literature, the anti- conquest narrative analyzes the identity politics that are the social and cultural perspectives of the subaltern colonial subjects- their creative resistance to the culture of the colonizer; how such resistance complicated the establishment of a colonial

society; how the colonizers developed their postcolonial identity; and how neoclassicism actively employs the us- and- them binary social relation to view the non Western- world inhabited by 'the other'.

*In the Wretched of the Earth* (1961), psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon analyzes and medically describes the nature of colonialism as essentially destructive. Its social effects- the imposition of a subjugating colonial identity- is harmful to the mental health of the native peoples who were subjugated into colonies. Fanon writes that the ideological essence of colonialism is the systematic denial of "all attributes of humanity" of the colonized people. Such dehumanization is achieved with physical and mental violence, by which the colonists means to inculcate a servile mentality upon the natives.

For Fanon, the natives must violently resist colonial subjugation. Hence, Fanon describes violent resistance to colonialism and imperialism, and the supporting economic theories, were partly derived from the essay "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (1916), wherein Vladimir Lenin described colonial imperialism as an advanced form of capitalism, desperate for growth at all costs, and so require more and more human exploitation to ensure continually consistent profit-for-investment. Another key book that predates postcolonial theories is Fanon's *Black Sins, White Masks*. Here, Fanon discusses the logic of colonial rule from the perspective of the existential experience of racialized subjectivity. Fanon treats colonialism as a total project which rules every aspect of colonized people.

Cultural critic Edward Said is considered by E. San Juan, Jr. as "the originator and inspiring patron- saint of postcolonial theory and discourse" due to his interpretation of the theory of orientalism explained in his book *Orientalism*. To describe the us-and-them "binary social relation" with which Western Europe intellectually divided the world—into the "Occident" and the "Orient"—Said developed the denotations and connotations of the term *orientalism* (an art-history term for Western depictions and the study of the Orient). Said's concept (which he also termed "orientalism") is that the cultural representations generated with the us-and-them binary relation are social constructs, which are mutually constitutive and cannot exist independent of each other, because each exists on account of and for the other. Notably, "the West" created the cultural concept of "the East," which according to Said allowed the Europeans to suppress the peoples of the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, and of Asia in general, from expressing and representing themselves as discrete peoples and cultures. Orientalism thus conflated and reduced the non-Western world into the homogeneous cultural entity known as "the East." Therefore, in service to the colonial type of imperialism, the us-and-them Orientalist paradigm allowed European scholars to represent the Oriental World as inferior and backward, irrational and wild, as opposed to a Western Europe that was superior and progressive, rational and civil—the opposite of the Oriental Other.

In establishing the Postcolonial definition of the term *subaltern*, the philosopher and theoretician Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak cautioned against assigning an over-broad connotation. She argues:

... *subaltern* is not just a classy word for "oppressed", for The Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie... In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern—a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not *subaltern*.... Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a

discriminated-against minority on the university campus; they don't need the word 'subaltern'... They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse, wanting a piece of the pie, and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern.

Spivak also introduced the terms *essentialism* and *strategic essentialism* to describe the social functions of postcolonialism.

Spivak further cautioned against ignoring subaltern peoples as "cultural Others", and said that the West could progress—beyond the colonial perspective—by means of introspective self-criticism of the basic ideas and investigative methods that establish a culturally superior West studying the culturally inferior non-Western peoples. Hence, the integration of the subaltern voice to the intellectual spaces of social studies is problematic, because of the unrealistic opposition to the idea of studying "Others"; Spivak rejected such an anti-intellectual stance by social scientists, and about them said that "to refuse to represent a cultural Other is salving your conscience...allowing you not to do any homework." Moreover, postcolonial studies also reject the colonial cultural depiction of subaltern peoples as hollow mimics of the European colonists and their Western ways; and rejects the depiction of subaltern peoples as the passive recipient-vessels of the imperial and colonial power of the Mother Country. Consequent to Foucault's philosophic model of the binary relationship of power and knowledge, scholars from the Subaltern Studies Collective, proposed that anti-colonial resistance always counters every exercise of colonial power.

To perpetuate and facilitate control of the colonial enterprise, some colonized people, especially from among the subaltern peoples of the British Empire, were sent to attend university in the Imperial Motherland; they were to become the native-born, but Europeanised, ruling class of colonial satraps. Yet, after decolonization, their bicultural educations originated postcolonial criticism of empire and colonialism, and of the representations of the colonist and the colonized. In the late 20th century, after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the constituent Soviet Socialist Republics became the literary subjects of postcolonial criticism, wherein the writers dealt with the legacies (cultural, social, economic) of the Russification of their peoples, countries, and cultures in service to Greater Russia.

Postcolonial literary study is in two categories:

1. the study of postcolonial nations; and
2. the study of the nations who continue forging a postcolonial national identity.

The first category of literature presents and analyses the internal challenges inherent to determining an ethnic identity in a decolonized nation.

The second category of literature presents and analyses the degeneration of civic and nationalist unities consequent to ethnic parochialism, usually manifested as the demagoguery of "protecting the nation," a variant of the us-and-them binary social relation. Civic and national unity degenerate when a patriarchal regime unilaterally defines what is and what is not "the national culture" of the decolonized country: the nation-state collapses, either into communal movements, espousing grand political goals for the postcolonial nation; or into ethnically mixed communal movements, espousing political separatism, as occurred in decolonized Rwanda, the Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; thus the postcolonial extremes against which Frantz Fanon warned in 1961.

Indian Marxist scholar Vivek Chibber has critiqued some foundational logics of postcolonial theory in his book *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*. Drawing on Aijaz Ahmad's

earlier critique of Said's *Orientalism* and Sumit Sarkar's critique of the Subaltern Studies scholars, Chibber focuses on and refutes the principal historical claims made by the Subaltern Studies scholars; claims that are representative of the whole of postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory, he argues, essentializes cultures, painting them as fixed and static categories. Moreover, it presents the difference between East and West as unbridgeable, hence denying people's "universal aspirations" and "universal interests." He also criticized the postcolonial tendency to characterize all of Enlightenment values as Eurocentric. According to him, the theory will be remembered "for its revival of cultural essentialism and its acting as an endorsement of orientalism, rather than being an antidote to it."

Postcolonial feminism emerged as a response to the Eurocentric focus of feminism. It accounts for the way that racism and the long-lasting political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism affect non-white, non-Western women in the postcolonial world. Postcolonial feminism is not simply a subset of postcolonial studies or another variety of feminism. Rather, it seeks to act as an intervention that changes the assumptions of both postcolonial and feminist studies. Audre Lorde's foundational essay, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House", uses the metaphor of the master's tools and master's house to explain that western feminism fails to make positive change for third world women because it uses the same tools as the patriarchy. Postcolonial feminist fiction seeks to decolonize the imagination and society. With global debt, labor, and environmental crises on the rise, the precarious position of women (especially in the global south) has become a prevalent concern of postcolonial feminist novels. Common themes include women's roles in globalized societies and the impact of mass migration to metropolitan urban centers. Pivotal texts, including Nawal El Saadawi's *The Fall of the Iman* about the lynching of women, Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* about two sisters in pre and post war Nigeria, and Giannina Braschi's *United States of Banana* which declares the independence of Puerto Rico. Other major voices include Maryse Condé, Fatou Diome, and Marie Ndiaye.

It should be acknowledged that, however, that whatever developments were that led to the formation of postcolonial studies, it has to be seen more in terms of long process rather than a series of events, with the central impulses of this process coming from a variety of sources, sometimes outside any concern with colonialism. These may be traced in a variety of directions such as in the changing face of global politics with the emergence of newly independent states; in the wide ranging re-evaluation begun in the 1980s of the exclusionary forms of Western reason and in the perception of their complicity with imperial expansion and colonialist rule.

Postcolonial literature represents these conditions and comes from various sources and inspirations. It includes Samuel Beckett's *Murphy*, Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Tayib Salih's *Season of migration to the North*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* among many others. Shakespeare's *Othello*, *The Tempest* and *Antony and Cleopatra* have been taken as key texts for the application of postcolonial modes of analysis. This suggests that postcolonial literature is a broad term that encompasses literature by people from the erstwhile colonial world, as well, as from the various minority diasporas that live in the West. Postcolonialism has also been a term used to reinterpret western canonical literature from a variety of fresh and diverse perspectives.

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AUDIT COURSE ENG1A01  
WRITING SKILLS  
THEATRE OF CRUELTY

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AMRUTHA K K

ROLL NO : 04

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut



**Theatre of Cruelty**, project for an experimental theatre that was proposed by the French poet, actor, and theorist Antonin Artaud and that became a major influence on avant-garde 20th-century theatre.

During the early 1930s, Antonin Artaud put forth a theory for a Surrealist theatre called the Theatre of Cruelty. Based on ritual and dream, this form of theatre launches an attack on the spectators' subconscious in an attempt to release deep-rooted fears and anxieties that are normally suppressed, forcing people to view themselves and their natures without the shield of civilization. Artaud envisioned the breakdown of the barriers between spectator and performer to heighten the theatre going experience. These theories have acted as a catapult for many subsequent avant grade theatre practitioners.

The Theatre of Cruelty is a type of theatre in which the Audience's senses are constantly stressed and engaged by lights, sounds, movements, and more. Text and dialogue are far less important in this genre of experimental theatre than the relationship between the performers and the audience members. The Theatre of Cruelty minimizes the text by emphasizing screams, inarticulate cries, and symbolic gestures Graphically portraying the extremes of human nature on stage in order to shock the audience and thus evoke the necessary response, transcending the performance above simple entertainment. Artaud hoped that his Theatre of Cruelty would leave the audience with some kind of revelation within themselves, disturbing their tranquility of mind, and liberating their subconscious. He intended that "all that is dark buried, buried deep, unrevealed in the mind, should be manifested in a sort of physical projection as real"

. This was to be achieved through the 'cruelty' of the spectacle. However, we should not take cruelty to mean violence, it must be taken in its broadest sense. The cruelty is not exclusively sadistic or bloody .Artaud thought of it as an agent to heighten response by magnification "the spectator will be shaken and set on edge by the internal dynamism of the

spectacle” . He wanted to show humanity in its raw state before it was changed by society. It was this idea of the ‘raw state’ that was central to his vision, to go back to the ‘uncivilized’ roots that the likes of Balinese Theatre came from.

Artaud was the first to search for theatrical forms that were specifically uncivilized and non-European. He anticipated the search for spirituality in theatre that has had such a presence since his time. All evidence of his Theatre of Cruelty has been drawn from his writings; his work on the stage has been almost entirely dismissed. “Artaud’s name elicits a formula: Primitivism – Ritual – Cruelty – Spectacle” ,and although he has been attacked on various grounds his theory is also credited with a total reinvention of theatre. Although a highly influential figure in avant grade theatre Artaud did not gain to recognition until the 1964 Theatre of Cruelty experiment by Peter Brook and Charles Marowitz at London Amateur Dramatic Association (LAMDA).

Artaud's Theory : Artaud saw both the world around him and the theatre, itself, in need of change he was briefly a member of the surrealism movement.His theatre set to awaken the dormant dream images of our minds.Artaud’s theoretical writings included a series of manifestos on the theatre. His theoretical essays were published in 1938: Double. His theories were never realized in an accessible form for future generations to interpret easily. Artaud attempted to appeal to the irrational mind, one not conditioned by society. There was an appeal to the subconscious, freeing the audience from their negativity. His theatre could not communicate using spoken language .His was a return to a theatre of myth and ritual. The Theatre of Cruelty was an enhanced double of real life. Artaud created ‘doubles’ between the theatre and metaphysics, the plague, and cruelty. He claimed if the theatre is the double of life, then life is the double of theatre.His theatre of cruelty was to mirror not that of everyday life, but the reality of the extraordinary. This ‘extraordinary’ was a reality not contaminated by ideas of morality and culture. His art (theatre) should

be a double of a higher form of reality. Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty aimed to appeal to, and release the emotions of, the audience. Mood played an important part in Theatre of Cruelty performances. By bombarding the audience's senses, they underwent an emotional release (catharsis)

**Reduced Emphasis on Text :** Emphasis on the written or spoken text was significantly reduced. The notion of text being exalted was eliminated. Artaud referred to spoken dialogue as 'written poetry' Emphasis on improvisation, not scripts.

**Movement and Gesture :** Artaud was inspired by a performance of Balinese dancers in 1931 (use of gesture and dance). Artaud interpretation of the Balinese dancers was 'one big misreading. Artaud wished to create a new (largely non-verbal) language for the theatre. (Ritualistic) movement was a key element (often replacing traditional text/spoken words). Performers communicated some of their stories through 'signs'. 'Signs' in the Theatre of Cruelty were facial expression and movement. Stylised movement was known as 'visual poetry'. Dance and gesture became just as effective as the spoken word in the Theatre of Cruelty. Movement and gesture replaced more than words, standing for ideas and attitudes of mind. Movement often created violent or disturbing images on stage. Sometimes the violent images were left to occur in the minds of the audience (not on stage)

**Emphasis on light and sound in performances.** Sound was often loud, piercing, and hypnotising for the audience. The audience's senses were assaulted with movement, light and sound (hence 'cruelty'). Music and sound (voice, instrument, recorded) often accompanied stage movement or text. Lighting used a combination of flooded light and pinpointed, more directed light .Using spectacle and sensation, Artaud wanted his Theatre of Cruelty to hypnotise its audience. Colour, light and costume added theatrical effect (opposite to Grotowski and Poor Theatre). Sets were

eliminated from performances, (but musical instruments could form part of a 'set'). The Theatre of Cruelty is 'total theatre' (full of spectacle). Artaud preferred to dismiss modern costumes, employing clothing used for ancient rituals. Some evidence projection and/or film may have been used in Artaud's performances. Artaud likened film editing to the juxtaposition between performers' movements and gestures. Oversized puppets/mannequins/effigies were used to create contrast in size with the actors, Mask was also used on occasions.

Acting and Characterization : The actor was encouraged to openly use emotions (opposite to Brecht and Epic Theatre). No emphasis on individual characters in performance (opposite to Stanislavski and Realism). Characters were less defined by movement, gesture and dance (compared to spoken dialogue). Grotowski warned the Artaudian actor to avoid stereotyped gestures, i.e. one gesture for to express each emotion

## Examples of Plays from the Theatre of Cruelty

### Les Cenci by Antonin Artaud

Les Cenci was, unfortunately, the only play that Artaud put into production based on his theories of the Theatre of Cruelty. It was based around Percy Bysshe Shelley's Les Cenci, a verse drama written in 1819. It was inspired by the House of Cenci and when written, was not considered stageable. It included depictions of parricide and incest. Today, Shelley's Les Cenci is considered an important piece of Western drama.

Artaud's version of the play was performed at the Theater des Folies-Wagram in Paris. It only showed 17 times and did not garner a great

response. Despite this, it did exemplify the tenants of the Theatre of Cruelty that Artaud was interested in.

When speaking about *Les Cenci*, the playwright said that the opening scene was “suggestive of extreme atmospheric turbulence, with wind-blown drapes, waves of suddenly amplified sound, and crowds of figures engaged in ‘furious orgy.’” Artaud’s interest in Oriental theatre is also seen through this production.

The term is associated with famed French playwright Antonin Artaud. A former member of the surrealist movement, he defined the Theatre of Cruelty in *The Theatre and its Double*. This collection of essays outlined his theories in regard to the theatre and contained his manifestos for a Theatre of Cruelty. The aim of the Theatre of Cruelty was to shock audiences and assault their senses in a way that Western theatre was not known for. Gesture, dance, and movement were all more powerful in Artaud’s manifesto of theatre than a language was.

### Influence of the Theatre of Cruelty

Artaud’s definition of the theatre of Cruelty has been highly influential on numerous important playwrights. These include writers like Peter Brooke and Romeo Castellucci. The latter is known for his work as a set designer, artist, and is part of the contemporary European avant-garde movement. His works have been presented around the world and are known for their dramatic lines and complex visuals. Other creators, like Jean Genet, have

also been influenced by the Theatre of Cruelty. Genet was a novelist and playwright who also came to be known as a political activist. His works were often deliberately provocative. He wrote about criminality, homosexuality, and more. It's Genet that most scholars cite as having been influenced most successfully by Artaud's theatre.

The Theatre of Cruelty is important because of the influence Artaud's writings had on 20th-century avant-garde literature and drama. This genre of experimental theatre was willing to push the bounds in a way that other types of theatre were not. Within Artaud's work, audience experience was at the forefront.

The characteristics of the Theatre of Cruelty are Artaud's conception of the Theatre of Cruelty involved the audience's centrality to the performance. There should be interactions between the audience and the performers, lights, movements, dance, piercing sound, and more.

## POSTCOLONIALISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Postcolonialism is the critical academic study of the cultural, political, and economic legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the impact of human control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands. More specifically, it is a critical theory analysis of (usually European) imperial power. It encompasses a wide variety of approaches, and theoreticians may not always agree on a common set of definitions. On a simple level, through anthropological study, it may seek to build a better understanding of colonial life- based on the assumptions that the colonial rulers are unreliable narrators- from the point of the view of the colonized people. On a deeper level, postcolonialism examines the social and political and cultural narratives surrounding the colonizer and the colonized. This approach may overlap the contemporary history, and may also draw examples from anthropology, historiography, political science, philosophy, sociology and human geography. Sub- disciplines of postcolonial studies examine the effects of colonial rule on the practice of feminism, anarchism, literature and Christian thought.

As an epistemology and political science, the field of postcolonialism addresses the matters that constitute the postcolonial identity of decolonized people, which derives from:

1. The colonizer's generation of cultural knowledge about the colonized people.
2. How the Western cultural knowledge was applied to subjugate a non-European people into a colony of the European mother country, which, after initial invasion, was effected by means of cultural identities of 'colonizer' and 'colonized'.

Postcolonialism is aimed at disempowering such theories (intellectual and linguistic, social and economic) by means of which colonialists "perceive", "know", and "understand" the world. Postcolonial theory thus establishes intellectual spaces for subaltern people to speak for themselves, in their own voices, and thus produce cultural discourses of philosophy, language, society, and economy, balancing the imbalanced us- and- them binary power- relationship between the colonialists and the colonized.

Colonialism was presented as "the extension of civilization" which ideologically justified the self- ascribed racial and cultural superiority of the Western world. This concept was espoused by Joseph Ernest Renan in *Le Reforme Intellectuelle et morale (1871)*, whereby imperial stewardship was thought to affect the intellectual and moral reformation of the coloured peoples of the less cultures of the world. That such a divinely established, natural harmony among the human races of the world would be possible, because everyone has an assigned cultural identity, a social place, and an economic role within an imperial colony. The postcolonial theory holds that decolonized people develop a postcolonial identity that is based on cultural interaction between different identities (cultural, national, and ethnic as well as gender and class based) which are assigned varying degrees of social power by the colonial society. In postcolonial literature, the anti- conquest narrative analyzes the identity politics that are the social and cultural perspectives of the subaltern colonial subjects- their creative resistance to the culture of the colonizer; how such resistance complicated the establishment of a colonial



society; how the colonizers developed their postcolonial identity; and how neoclassicism actively employs the us- and- them binary social relation to view the non Western- world inhabited by 'the other'.

*In the Wretched of the Earth* (1961), psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon analyzes and medically describes the nature of colonialism as essentially destructive. Its social effects- the imposition of a subjugating colonial identity- is harmful to the mental health of the native peoples who were subjugated into colonies. Fanon writes that the ideological essence of colonialism is the systematic denial of "all attributes of humanity" of the colonized people. Such dehumanization is achieved with physical and mental violence, by which the colonists means to inculcate a servile mentality upon the natives.

For Fanon, the natives must violently resist colonial subjugation. Hence, Fanon describes violent resistance to colonialism and imperialism, and the supporting economic theories, were partly derived from the essay "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" (1916), wherein Vladimir Lenin described colonial imperialism as an advanced form of capitalism, desperate for growth at all costs, and so require more and more human exploitation to ensure continually consistent profit-for-investment. Another key book that predates postcolonial theories is Fanon's *Black Sins, White Masks*. Here, Fanon discusses the logic of colonial rule from the perspective of the existential experience of racialized subjectivity. Fanon treats colonialism as a total project which rules every aspect of colonized people.

Cultural critic Edward Said is considered by E. San Juan, Jr. as "the originator and inspiring patron- saint of postcolonial theory and discourse" due to his interpretation of the theory of orientalism explained in his book *Orientalism*. To describe the us-and-them "binary social relation" with which Western Europe intellectually divided the world—into the "Occident" and the "Orient"—Said developed the denotations and connotations of the term *orientalism* (an art-history term for Western depictions and the study of the Orient). Said's concept (which he also termed "orientalism") is that the cultural representations generated with the us-and-them binary relation are social constructs, which are mutually constitutive and cannot exist independent of each other, because each exists on account of and for the other. Notably, "the West" created the cultural concept of "the East," which according to Said allowed the Europeans to suppress the peoples of the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, and of Asia in general, from expressing and representing themselves as discrete peoples and cultures. Orientalism thus conflated and reduced the non-Western world into the homogeneous cultural entity known as "the East." Therefore, in service to the colonial type of imperialism, the us-and-them Orientalist paradigm allowed European scholars to represent the Oriental World as inferior and backward, irrational and wild, as opposed to a Western Europe that was superior and progressive, rational and civil—the opposite of the Oriental Other.

In establishing the Postcolonial definition of the term *subaltern*, the philosopher and theoretician Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak cautioned against assigning an over-broad connotation. She argues:

... *subaltern* is not just a classy word for "oppressed", for The Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie... In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern—a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not *subaltern*.... Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a

discriminated-against minority on the university campus; they don't need the word 'subaltern'... They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse, wanting a piece of the pie, and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern.

Spivak also introduced the terms *essentialism* and *strategic essentialism* to describe the social functions of postcolonialism.

Spivak further cautioned against ignoring subaltern peoples as "cultural Others", and said that the West could progress—beyond the colonial perspective—by means of introspective self-criticism of the basic ideas and investigative methods that establish a culturally superior West studying the culturally inferior non-Western peoples. Hence, the integration of the subaltern voice to the intellectual spaces of social studies is problematic, because of the unrealistic opposition to the idea of studying "Others"; Spivak rejected such an anti-intellectual stance by social scientists, and about them said that "to refuse to represent a cultural Other is salving your conscience...allowing you not to do any homework." Moreover, postcolonial studies also reject the colonial cultural depiction of subaltern peoples as hollow mimics of the European colonists and their Western ways; and rejects the depiction of subaltern peoples as the passive recipient-vessels of the imperial and colonial power of the Mother Country. Consequent to Foucault's philosophic model of the binary relationship of power and knowledge, scholars from the Subaltern Studies Collective, proposed that anti-colonial resistance always counters every exercise of colonial power.

To perpetuate and facilitate control of the colonial enterprise, some colonized people, especially from among the subaltern peoples of the British Empire, were sent to attend university in the Imperial Motherland; they were to become the native-born, but Europeanised, ruling class of colonial satraps. Yet, after decolonization, their bicultural educations originated postcolonial criticism of empire and colonialism, and of the representations of the colonist and the colonized. In the late 20th century, after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the constituent Soviet Socialist Republics became the literary subjects of postcolonial criticism, wherein the writers dealt with the legacies (cultural, social, economic) of the Russification of their peoples, countries, and cultures in service to Greater Russia.

Postcolonial literary study is in two categories:

1. the study of postcolonial nations; and
2. the study of the nations who continue forging a postcolonial national identity.

The first category of literature presents and analyses the internal challenges inherent to determining an ethnic identity in a decolonized nation.

The second category of literature presents and analyses the degeneration of civic and nationalist unities consequent to ethnic parochialism, usually manifested as the demagoguery of "protecting the nation," a variant of the us-and-them binary social relation. Civic and national unity degenerate when a patriarchal regime unilaterally defines what is and what is not "the national culture" of the decolonized country: the nation-state collapses, either into communal movements, espousing grand political goals for the postcolonial nation; or into ethnically mixed communal movements, espousing political separatism, as occurred in decolonized Rwanda, the Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; thus the postcolonial extremes against which Frantz Fanon warned in 1961.

Indian Marxist scholar Vivek Chibber has critiqued some foundational logics of postcolonial theory in his book *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*. Drawing on Aijaz Ahmad's

earlier critique of Said's *Orientalism* and Sumit Sarkar's critique of the Subaltern Studies scholars, Chibber focuses on and refutes the principal historical claims made by the Subaltern Studies scholars; claims that are representative of the whole of postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory, he argues, essentializes cultures, painting them as fixed and static categories. Moreover, it presents the difference between East and West as unbridgeable, hence denying people's "universal aspirations" and "universal interests." He also criticized the postcolonial tendency to characterize all of Enlightenment values as Eurocentric. According to him, the theory will be remembered "for its revival of cultural essentialism and its acting as an endorsement of orientalism, rather than being an antidote to it."

Postcolonial feminism emerged as a response to the Eurocentric focus of feminism. It accounts for the way that racism and the long-lasting political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism affect non-white, non-Western women in the postcolonial world. Postcolonial feminism is not simply a subset of postcolonial studies or another variety of feminism. Rather, it seeks to act as an intervention that changes the assumptions of both postcolonial and feminist studies. Audre Lorde's foundational essay, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House", uses the metaphor of the master's tools and master's house to explain that western feminism fails to make positive change for third world women because it uses the same tools as the patriarchy. Postcolonial feminist fiction seeks to decolonize the imagination and society. With global debt, labor, and environmental crises on the rise, the precarious position of women (especially in the global south) has become a prevalent concern of postcolonial feminist novels. Common themes include women's roles in globalized societies and the impact of mass migration to metropolitan urban centers. Pivotal texts, including Nawal El Saadawi's *The Fall of the Iman* about the lynching of women, Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* about two sisters in pre and post war Nigeria, and Giannina Braschi's *United States of Banana* which declares the independence of Puerto Rico. Other major voices include Maryse Condé, Fatou Diome, and Marie Ndiaye.

It should be acknowledged that, however, that whatever developments were that led to the formation of postcolonial studies, it has to be seen more in terms of long process rather than a series of events, with the central impulses of this process coming from a variety of sources, sometimes outside any concern with colonialism. These may be traced in a variety of directions such as in the changing face of global politics with the emergence of newly independent states; in the wide ranging re-evaluation begun in the 1980s of the exclusionary forms of Western reason and in the perception of their complicity with imperial expansion and colonialist rule.

Postcolonial literature represents these conditions and comes from various sources and inspirations. It includes Samuel Beckett's *Murphy*, Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Tayib Salih's *Season of migration to the North*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* among many others. Shakespeare's *Othello*, *The Tempest* and *Antony and Cleopatra* have been taken as key texts for the application of postcolonial modes of analysis. This suggests that postcolonial literature is a broad term that encompasses literature by people from the erstwhile colonial world, as well, as from the various minority diasporas that live in the West. Postcolonialism has also been a term used to reinterpret western canonical literature from a variety of fresh and diverse perspectives.

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# AUDIT COURSE ENG1A01

## TOPIC: DISABILITY STUDIES

Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master  
of Arts

BY

ANISHA JOSE

ROLL NO:05

DISABILITY STUDIES

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

# **DISABILITY STUDIES**

Throughout the history of fiction, writers have been invested with the theme of disability, to serve various purposes in the plot. As representatives of society, authors have tried to create space for stories with disabled characters in their narratives. However, the fictional room granted to such characters does not appear to be similar to the so called normal which the disabled characters are normally depicted antithetically to the non-disabled characters.

According to the basic definition of disability, it is a physical and mental impairment. An impairment can be related to any of the cognitive ability, intellectual capacity, mental development, physical or sensory problem or a combination of these. These disabilities can be present from the birth or may come up at any time during the lifetime of a person due to any disease or accident.

If it is the birth defect, it can be active right from the time a person is born or may increase gradually as he or she grows older. The other reasons for disability can be a disease in which a body part becomes dysfunctional or an accident due to which a body part becomes useless or disabled. These disabilities result in a difficulty in doing daily activities necessary to live a normal life.

In different communities, disability is taken in different meanings and sometimes works as a synecdoche. It is considered as an attribute that can be fixed with medications according to the medical institutions, and so it is called a “Medical model”. On the other hand, when society or the able part of the community implies or forcefully imposes the limitations on the people with disabilities is considered the “Social model”.

The definition of disability gained an attention and started being discussed after the rise of disability activism in the 1970s in the United Kingdom and the United States. The discussion placed the arguments against the way disability concept takes control on how disabilities are seen and described in literature.

Disability writers demonstrate movement towards the positive pursuit of diversity through cultural analysis in art, moving beyond the simple identification of oppressive roles. In spite of the continued use of negative representation of disability in contemporary literature, movement forward has been identified based on the increasing use of transgressive readings and presentations of literature both conscious of and from disabled perspectives. Realistic

representations of characters with disabilities have the ability to deepen understandings and to integrate and to include rather than to scapegoat.

In the 1970s and 1980s, disability studies was dominated by social science perspectives, exemplified by the political and sociological focus of some of its leading organisations and publications such as The Society for Disability Studies, and journals including Disability Studies Quarterly and Disability and Society. It was not until the late 1980s and 1990s that, given a boost by the growth of cultural studies, disability studies was taken up in a sustained way by scholars in the humanities.

Disability studies does not treat disease or disability, hoping to cure or avoid them; it studies the social meanings, symbols, and stigmas attached to disability identity and asks how they relate to enforced systems of exclusion and expression. (Disability Theory 4) This is sometimes referred to as the “cultural model” of disability, or more specifically “literary disability studies”.

In the literary field, authors often stress the normality, regularity and correctness of the able-bodied characters by misrepresenting the disabled ones, thereby minimizing them to a collection of stereotypes instead of normal human beings. Such negative representations of disability and disabled characters in literature remain imprinted the reader’s memory even long after forgetting the storyline. Moreover, disability has not only been represented as the opposite of normalcy, but it is often depicted as a tragedy and misfortune.

According to Michalko, there is a struggle in constructing an acknowledged and worthy social identity out of disability. While debates and discourses, over the years, have been concentrating on race and gender very little attention has been allowed to disability. Nonetheless, Disability Studies emerged as a strong field that combats this social and literary injustice, shedding the light on the issues surrounding the representations and perceptions of disability in fiction and reality.

Disabled people are considered as the nation's largest minority, and the only one that any individual can join at any time. As Irving Zola indicates, disability is practically a global phenomenon; we will be all disabled at certain point of our lives unless we die abruptly. Nonetheless, disability is still not recognized as a normal part of society. It is rather perceived as an abnormality or defect. Such pejorative perception is deeply rooted in the world’s history and fiction.

On a societal context, disability has proved to be a crucial phenomenon. According to the International Disability Foundation there are more than half a billion disabled people in the world and this number is increasing. The concept of disability can be comprehended from different patterns and prospects, with a sharp line between the medical and social model. On the medical or individual level, disability is associated with impairment, physical damage and bodily limitations. The social or collective model on the other hand, deals with it from a functional level, by focusing on the disabling entourage and social barricades. Disability cannot be defined as either biological or societal. Rather, it needs to be perceived as a multi-layered phenomenon that takes place on different platforms with different mediums.

Although the cultural and societal perception of disability has changed over the years, throughout the world, the remnants of past beliefs and traditions are still affecting the world's perception of disability. The social attitude towards disabled people on a cross-cultural level is a display of different elements that echo leniency, antipathy, affection, homage, pity, dread, avoidance, and antagonism. In most societies, individuals with impairments are classified as deviants rather than inmates.

This alienation and isolation of people is due in high part to ignorance, superstition, and mere stereotypes that arose both from dearth of correct knowledge of disability and the transmitted thinking and old beliefs. Even though the incorporation of individuals with disabilities in society has been ameliorated in the last few years, the general public still perceives disabled individuals as unordinary, dependent and pitiful people. For this reason, they are still denied from properly engaging and contributing to society.

The social rejection of disabled citizens causes them, a sense of burdening, loneliness, unworthiness and uselessness. They may even face hindrances in doing the usual things other non-disabled people engage in. In addition, people with disabilities have very little access to information; in media for instance, there is a clear lack of subtitles and sign language in TV programs. People with disabilities are usually faced with avoidance, by other members of society. According to Shirley Cohen "the well-bodied fear handicap germs."

Another cause why people with disabilities are often victims of handicapism is the fact that readers, whether young or adults, are exposed to books in which disabled characters are mostly represented in certain categories; as wicked, evil, wrongdoer, pitiful, and dependent. Such representations foster negative beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies toward disabled people.



From Shakespeare's halting Richard to the sightless citizens of Wells's *The Country of the Blind* (1904), from the mentally disabled Benjy in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), to McCullers's deaf John in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (1940), from Chinua Achebe's faltering Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), to Sinha's bodily distorted narrator in *Animal's People*, disability appears in every time and literary tradition. Whether in epic, classic or modern literature, it is not only represented as the opposite to normality, but it is often seen as a misfortune and life obstacle. Disabled characters are usually given either the villain, pitied, or inspirational roles, in the plot, unless the story is a biography.

Tales and stories of the past represent a harmony between beauty and value. However, they also imply that disabled persons are different, less than normal, and that disabilities are "punishments we bring upon ourselves by our sinful behaviour". This twisted mind in the twisted body conception is a favoured literary mechanism in depicting the malevolent and mischievous characters. In these narratives, physical correctness is equalized to goodness, whereas disability is associated with evil. The clash between normality and deformity is mirrored through the usual conflict between good and evil, where the sinister disabled characters are determined to harm the good ones, till the moment they die or get killed at the end of the story.

There are numerous examples of biased portrayals of disability in literature which enhance the reader's negative attitude towards it. One of the popular examples is Shakespeare's Richard III, who was not disabled in reality, but was made a disabled character to signify his evilness. Shakespeare portrayed Richard as a subtle, false, and treacherous hunchback guilty of ruthless murder even of children to achieve his mean end.

Non-disabled members of society at a large scale, usually view disability with a guilty complex, thereby they tend to avoid interaction with disabled people. Authors use this perception of fear and suspicion in literature to portray characters with disabilities as sinister and evil.

The image of disability in both fiction and reality is usually shrouded with ignorance and misunderstanding, due to the already constructed cultural and societal stereotypes about disability. This mostly negative disability perception only impacts, restricts and limits the literary representations of disabled characters in literature.

The image of disability in both fiction and reality is usually shrouded with ignorance and misunderstanding, due to the already constructed cultural and societal stereotypes about

disability. This mostly negative disability perception only impacts, restricts and limits the literary representations of disabled characters in literature.

From the dawn of humanity, people have furnished a set of standards for the ideal or normal state of being. These constructed norms are deeply rooted in the world's cultures and they play a vital role in deciding the worth of a person in society. Literature is one of the mechanisms that are working furtively on the side of normative oppression. The emphasis in literary portrayals that some characters are more valuable than others indicate an oppression of normalcy that positions disability on the side of the unwanted other. Oppressive portrayals of disabled characters are easy to notice throughout the book industry. In western dramatic and literary canon, disability is usually linked to the character's inner psychological or emotional state.

The normality genre further reinforces the fallacy of normalcy through erasing disability at the ends of narratives either by curing the disabled characters or completely ending their lives. Moreover, the death of these characters is usually romanticized and portrayed as a way of salvation from the unbearable torture of disability, which is highly exaggerated, unauthentic, and oppressive to a whole community of identified disabled people.

Narratives, through history, have used disability and impairment as distinctive twists in the plot; however, such themes have been portrayed outside the ranks of the normal. The alienation, disqualification, dehumanization, and incapacitation of disability are common attitudes in literature. Yet, what is not so common is the possibility of a different conception of normality.

The field of Literary Disability Studies appeared substantially, as a response to the constant erasure and misrepresentation of disability in fiction. In a sense, it is a therapeutic and reformative attempt to redress the falsifications in the perception and understanding of disability in the traditional canon.

There are many problems concerning the portrayals of disability whether in literature or media: they usually individualize disability and promote it as an individual or hardly a familial issue, depicting it as an isolable phenomenon, that relates only to itself and the persons who have specific conditions. Furthermore, disability is usually seen and presented as a problem and an obstacle which clearly interposes with viewing it as an idea or a cultural phenomenon. Another issue is the absence of subjectivity, or in other words; the voice and perspective of disabled people. There is also the objectification of disabled characters; the idea that disabled people are

there only to inspire others, to make them feel better about themselves and their conditions, and it hardly ever exists a story about a disability without the inspiration factor.

When the interest of literary critics and scholars grow towards disability, they discovered it around them, just like gender and race. They started recognizing the manners in which disability is perceived in literary works, society, and culture. Yet, one of the first matters they gave attention to was not primarily disability, but normalcy, being socially constructed and heavily influential.

David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder contend in *Narrative Prosthesis* (2000) that writers usually use the theme of disability to serve certain purposes in the plot and to eventually reassert normalcy in their narratives. They summarized this process into various steps. First of all, they give a story or an explanation to disability. Secondly, they propose the outcomes and struggles of disability, and in the end, they erase disability; either by some medical treatment or the total elimination of the disabled character, to bring back a sense of normative order in the novel.

Although the majority of disabled characters portrayals in contemporary literature are bad, scholars in field of Literary Disability Studies have high hopes in the possibility of change; they are actively working to promote positive representations of disabled characters in fiction. Readers need to acquire the ability to differentiate between literature in which disabled characters signify prejudice and stereotypes and the literature that represents them authentically.

Donna E. Norton, in *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature* (1995), describes how disability should ideally be depicted in literature through three guidelines: Firstly, authors must handle the physical, functional, and emotional status of the disabled character authentically but not didactically. Secondly, non-disabled characters' behaviours with disabled characters should be portrayed realistically, and finally, accurate information about the disabling conditions and the physical capacities of disabled individuals must be included in the texts.

Realistic portrayals of disability do not only depict the characters' physical weaknesses, but, also, their power and stability in adapting to their physical conditions. These characters are not described as evil or vicious human beings; they are rather portrayed as dynamic, energetic and independent individuals. Not necessarily joyous and happy all the time or fully accepted by the non-disabled people, thus an accurate representation of such characters is the one which is free of exaggeration and the usual consumed stereotypes about disability.

The writing of such literature that captures disability in a different and unfamiliar way leads people to reconsider their social perceptions and attitudes towards disabled people, and to conclusively, form new conceptions about them. For this reason, Disability Studies and Disability Activism are constantly operating to deracinate normalcy from its pre-established erroneous social and literary supremacy.

People with disabilities certainly do not need pity or similar negative feelings. What they do really need, is comprehension, respect and appreciation of their distinctive talents and capacities. Every person who interacts and interfaces with disability is automatically involved in forming and producing both its meaning and social identity. For this specific reason, authors need to be more careful when dealing with the theme of disability and portraying disabled character, for any wrong representation can be highly detrimental to a whole community of identified disabled people.

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AUDIT COURSE ENG1A01

**TOPIC: READER RESPONSE CRITICISM**

Submitted in Partial  
fulfilment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts

BY

ANJALI KURIYAN

ROLL NO: MPEG06

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## READER RESPONSE CRITICISM

**Reader-response criticism** is a school of literary theory that focuses on the reader (or “audience”) and their experience of a literary work, in contrast to other schools and theories that focus attention primarily on the author or the content and form of the work. Although literary theory has long paid some attention to the reader’s role in creating the meaning and experience of a literary work, modern reader-response criticism began in the 1960s and ’70s, particularly in the US and Germany, in work by Norman Holland, Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, Hans-Robert Jauss, Roland Barthes, and others. The origins of reader-oriented criticism can be located in the United States with Louise Rosenblatt’s development of theories in the 1930s (*Literature as Exploration*). Rosenblatt further developed her theories in the late seventies (*The Reader, the Text, the Poem*). American critic Stanley Fish has also significantly influenced reader-response theory. Fish conceived of “interpretive communities” that employ interpretive strategies to produce properties and meanings of literary texts.

Reader-response criticism argues that literature should be viewed as a performing art in which each reader creates their own, possibly unique, text-related performance. It stands in total opposition to the theories of formalism and the New Criticism. **According to reader-response theory, meaning in a text is not closed off and pre-determined by the author.** Reader-response suggests that the role of the reader is essential to the meaning of a text, for only in the reading experience does the literary work come alive. The purpose of a reading response is examining, explaining, and defending your personal reaction to a text.

There is no right or wrong answer to a reading response. Nonetheless, it is important that you demonstrate an understanding of the reading and clearly explain and support your reactions. Do not use the standard approach of just writing: *“I liked this text because it is so nice and the ending made me feel happy,”* . In writing a response you may assume the reader has already read the text. Thus, do not summarize the contents of the text at length. Instead, take a systematic, analytical approach to the text.

### TYPES OF READER RESPONSE CRITICISM

- 1) Transactional reader response theory  
**Transactional reader-response theory**, led by Louise Rosenblatt and supported by Wolfgang Iser, involves a transaction between the text's inferred meaning and the

individual interpretation by the reader influenced by their personal emotions and knowledge.

2) Affective stylistics

**Affective stylistics**, established by Fish, believe that a text can only come into existence as it is read; therefore, a text cannot have meaning independent of the reader.

3) Subjective reader response theory

**Subjective reader-response theory**, associated with David Bleich, looks entirely to the reader's response for literary meaning as individual written responses to a text are then compared to other individual interpretations to find continuity of meaning.

4) Psychological reader response theory

**Psychological reader-response theory**, employed by Norman Holland, believes that a reader's motives heavily affect how they read, and subsequently use this reading to analyse the psychological response of the reader.

5) Social reader response theory

**Social reader-response theory** is Stanley Fish's extension of his earlier work, stating that any individual interpretation of a text is created in an interpretive community of minds consisting of participants who share a specific reading and interpretation strategy. In all interpretive communities, readers are predisposed to a particular form of interpretation as a consequence of strategies used at the time of reading.

Fish says that the meaning is created by the reader without the control of the text. But unlike others he argues that the reader should be 'informed' who has linguistic and literary competence and not just any reader.

He uses the term 'interpretive communities' that dictates how a text should be understood. He believes that knowledge is not always objective but conditioned by the social context in which one lives.

Depending on the theorists that developed it and their approach in the analysis, there are three categories of reader response theories; the individualistic, the experimenters and the uniformists.

- 1) The first group of reader response theories focuses on the experience of an individual reader and claims that the reader and the poem always coexist. This



approach was developed in the 1960s by David Bleich in a classroom where he collected statements from individual students and postulated that readers generate their own knowledge. The individualists focus on the diversity of the responses by real readers and how these reader's personality, upbringing, career and training influence their analysis, interpretation and response.

- 2) The second group of reader-response criticism was developed psychological experiments to evaluate and determine the relationship between the poem (work) and the reader.
- 3) The third class of reader-response is what is referred to as uniformists, which was introduced by Wolfgang Iser. This theory presupposes uniform interpretation based on the text because the text informs and limits the interpretation. Uniformists do not therefore; consider the reader as an individual but rather a theoretical reader.

Along with all these information of reader response criticism, it may also have some flaws like,

- 1) Reader response criticism may create a biased outlook on different works of literature.
- 2) The reader creates a narrow connection to the text rather than looking at different perspectives.
- 3) It focuses on the individual response of the reader to the text.
- 4) Construction of author and author's intention is often given less importance or penultimate position.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, reader response criticism gestures at the ways in which our ways of thinking about texts are shaped by the shared ideological and cultural practices which influences us as readers. The reader becomes active and understands the text in his or her own context. So we can conclude that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from the understanding of any literature.

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# Audit Course

ENG1A01 Writing Skills

## The Negritude Movement

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Masters of Arts

Submitted by: Anjana M

Roll No:7

I MA English

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

The Negritude movement was a literary and ideological movement developed by the French speaking intellectuals from the colonies of France in Africa and the Caribbean. The movement was a reaction against the European colonization of Africa and its legacy of cultural racism. The term negritude emerged from the French word *Nègre*, derived from the Latin ‘niger’, meaning “black”, is used in French only in relation to black people as in “art nègre”. The movement is marked for its rejection of European colonization and its role in evoking the sentiment of pride in the ‘blackness’, the traditional and cultural African values among the African diaspora. The continuous oppression and discrimination of the European colonizers fueled the movement and resulted in the creation and spreading of a new black consciousness. The movement was inspired by the Harlem renaissance of the 1920s and 30s. The Harlem renaissance alternatively called the new negro renaissance fostered black artists and leaders who promoted a sense of pride and advocacy among the black community. Harlem Renaissance's writers, including Langston Hughes and Richard Wright, sought to examine and celebrate their experiences and addressed the themes of "noireism" and race relations. Other artistic influences were jazz and earlier *fin-de-siècle* poets such as Rimbaud, Mallarmé and Baudelaire.

The founders of the movement were Afro-Martiniquan French poet and politician Aimé Fernand Césaire, Senegalese poet and politician Léopold Senghor, and Léon Damas of French Guiana. The best-known Negritude works from these poets were Damas' *Pigments* (1937), Senghor's *Hosties noire* and *Chants d'ombre*, and Césaire's *Cahier*. The proclamation of Negritude was done when the three friends founded the journal *L'Étudiant noir*, in 1934–1935. The term Negritude was coined by Aimé Fernand Césaire in his work *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebooks of a Return to the Native Land*) in 1939. According to him the term means, in his words: “the simple recognition of the fact that one is black, the acceptance of this fact and

our destiny as blacks, of our history and culture." He also declared "my negritude is not a stone, its deafness hurled against the clamor of the day" but instead, his negritude "takes root in the ardent flesh of the soil." Césaire's ideology defined the early stages of the negritude movement.

Even in its initial budding stage negritude was undeniably an international movement. It drew inspiration from the birth of African American culture brought about by the Harlem renaissance and found a place in the canon of French literature. Negritude responded to the alienated position of blacks in history. The movement asserted an identity for black people around the world that was their own. Their work told of the frustration and loss of their motherland. In the course of its development over a period of forty years, the movement saw the production of an extensive body of literary works and ideological writings and was animated by a series of manifestations notably through the two major conferences in Paris in 1956 and Rome in 1959 which sought to promote a recognition of Africa as a realm of humanistic values. In ways the assertion of each poet diverges from each other, but the combination of different perspectives is also what fueled and fed the negritude movement.

Poet and first president of Sénégal, Léopold Sédar Senghor used negritude to work toward a universal valuation of African people and their biological contributions. While advocating the expression and celebration of traditional African customs in spirit, he rejected a return to the old ways of doing things. This interpretation of the negritude became the most common interpretation, particularly in later years. Léopold Senghor's works focused more on African traditionalism. Senghor's books, *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache*, included an introduction by existentialist writer, Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre's introduction, 'Orphée Noir' (Black Orpheus), discussed Negritude as the "anti-racist racism." In 1966 Senghor organised the World Festival of Negro arts which provided a platform for many black writers,

artists and musicians to participate and showcase their talent and express themselves to a global audience. It was Senghor's first opportunity to promote the negritude movement. Wilfredo Lam an artist of Cuban origin was one of the prominent and successful negritude artists. His paintings combined African art motifs and references to Afro-Caribbean culture with cubist and surrealist primitivism.

The cultural idea of the movement can be captured in David Diop's *Africa - To My Mother*, where he says;

"Africa, My Africa

Africa of proud warriors in ancestral savannas

Africa my grandmother sings of on distant riverbank

I have never known you

but my face is filled with your blood . . ."

The French Guyanese poet and National Assembly member, Léon-Gontran Damas was the enfant terrible of la Négritude. His militant style of defending Black qualities made it clear that he was not working toward any kind of reconciliation with the West. Another notable writer who was influenced by the movement is Jacques Roumain, a Haitian writer and politician, founder of the Haitian Communist Party, who published the work *La Revue Indigène* in an attempt to rediscover African authenticity in the Antilles.

It is important to note that even though the movement was accepted by the black community wholeheartedly, there were some who opposed the ideals of the movement. Négritude was criticized by some Black writers during the 1960s as insufficiently militant. Keorapetse Kgosisile said that the term Négritude was based too much on Blackness according to a European aesthetic, and was unable to define a new kind of perception of African-ness that

would free Black people and Black art from Caucasian conceptualizations altogether. The Nigerian dramatist, poet, and novelist Wole Soyinka also opposed Négritude. He believed that by deliberately and outspokenly being proud of their ethnicity, Black people were automatically on the defensive and said; *"Un tigre ne proclame pas sa tigritude, il saute sur sa proie"* ( A tiger doesn't proclaim its tigerness; it jumps on its prey). Soyinka wrote in a 1960 essay for the *Horn*, "the duiker will not paint 'duiker' on his beautiful back to proclaim his duikeritude; you'll know him by his elegant leap." Similarly, Frantz Fanon, a student of Césaire, psychiatrist, and revolutionary theoretician, dismissed the Négritude movement as too simplistic. Some critics pointed out that the movement promoted a form of black exoticism and created another kind of racism. Senghor responded to this by stating that negritude "is neither racialism nor self negation. Yet it is not just affirmation; it is rooting oneself in oneself, and self confirmation: confirmation of one's being. It is nothing more or less than what some English speaking Africans have called the African personality."

Négritude has inspired the birth of many movements across the Afro-Diasporic world, including Afro-Surrealism, Creolite in the Caribbean, and black is beautiful in the United States. Hence the negritude movement gave the African diaspora an opportunity to identify themselves with their African roots and traditions and express their love and pride in African culture and values. Négritude has remained an influential movement throughout the twentieth century. There is no clear end date to the movement and some literary critics say that it still continues today, in any artistic expression asserting black identity.



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AUDIT COURSE ENG1A01


THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

SUBMITTED BY:

ANN MARIYA ROLLNO : 8

1<sup>ST</sup>MA ENGLISH

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

# ABSURDISM

Absurdism means the internal conflict between human tendency to find the inherent value and the meaning of life. In other words, absurdism refers to humans struggle to find the region in his life and his inability to find it due to humanly limited constraints. Thus absurdism refers to something which is humanly impossible rather than logically impossible. In this sense, one who tries to find inherent values and meaning in life will ultimately fail because of impossible certain. The absurdism rose during the period of world wars. These world wars had shaken the whole world. The mass killings of millions of people made the writers of the age believe that the world is meaningless.

Everybody has his own way of finding meanings. If we use the concept of Absurdism in terms of War it can be interpreted that nations indulged in the wars in order to achieve something for themselves through the war means, though the brutality is against humanity.

The two important writers Kierkegaard and Camus have tried to give solutions in their works with *The Sickness unto Death* and *The myth of Sisyphus* respectively. According to Camus, there are 3 solutions to absurdism ;

1. Adopting or creating a meaning Framework like religion the exists consider it as philosophical suicide because by submitting to an idea or being which is considered to be beyond the observed limits once freedom.
2. Suicide: it is a solution in which a person considers life meaningless boring or painful and that ends his life according to Camus, death is not observed but once attempt to kill himself is.
3. Acceptance of the Absurd: it is the solution in which a person accepts the absurdity of life he needed submits to any religious or moral constants know as his life and lives at his greatest extent of freedom.

# Characteristics

- Absurd dramas are lyrical, like music: they describe an atmosphere and an experience of archetypal human situations.
- Life is essentially meaningless, hence sorrowful.
- There is no hope because of the inevitable futility of man's efforts.
- Reality cannot be borne unless relieved by illusions and dreams.
- The absurd play includes conventional speech, slogans, technical jargon and clichés in order to make people aware of the possibility of moving beyond common speech conventions and communicating more authentically.
- Objects hold a more significant position than the language.
- Man is fascinated by death which permanently replaces dreams and illusions.
- There is no action or plot. What happens is very little as nothing meaningful can happen.
- The final situation is absurd or comic.
- Absurd drama is not purposeful and specific as it solves no problem. It is like an abstract painting which does not convey a particular meaning.
- It negates rationalism because it feels that rational thought, like language, only deals with the superficial aspects of things.
- It considers language a failure to express the essence of human experience, not being able to penetrate beyond its surface.
- There is no dramatic conflict in the absurd plays.

# THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

The Theatre of the Absurd is a movement made up of many diverse plays, most of which were written between 1940 and 1960. When first performed, these plays shocked their audiences as they were startlingly different than anything that had been previously staged. In fact, many of them were labelled as “anti-plays.” In an attempt to clarify and define this radical movement, Martin Esslin coined the term “The Theatre of the Absurd” in his 1960 book of the same name. He defined it as such, because all of the plays emphasized the absurdity of the human condition. Whereas we tend to use the word “absurd” synonymously with “ridiculous,” Esslin was referring to the original meaning of the word— ‘out of harmony with reason or propriety; illogical’ . Essentially, each play renders man’s existence as illogical, and moreover, meaningless. This idea was a reaction to the “collapse of moral, religious, political, and social structures” following the two World Wars of the Twentieth Century .

Absurdist Theatre was heavily influenced by Existential philosophy. It aligned best with the philosophy in Albert Camus’ essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). In this essay, Camus attempts to present a reasonable answer as to why man should not commit suicide in face of a meaningless, absurd existence. To do so, he uses the Greek mythological figure, Sisyphus, who was condemned to push a boulder up a mountain, only to have it roll back down. He repeats this futile cycle for all of eternity. At the end of the essay, Camus concludes that, “One must imagine Sisyphus happy” . He means that the struggle of life alone should bring one happiness. Essentially, we can find meaning in living even without knowing why we exist.

The absurd dramatists, however, did not resolve the problem of man’s meaningless existence quite as positively as Camus. In fact, they typically offered no solution to the problem whatsoever, thus suggesting that the question is ultimately unanswerable.

While absurdist plays feature a wide variety of subject matter, there are certain themes, or ideas, which reoccur frequently within the movement. These themes are the product of a new attitude that swept post-World War II Europe. It consisted primarily of the acknowledgement that the “certitudes” and “assumptions” of prior generations had “been tested and found

wanting, that they were discredited as cheap and somewhat childish illusions”. Two themes that reoccur frequently throughout absurdist dramas are a meaningless world and the isolation of the individual.

The decline of religious faith in the Twentieth Century is partly responsible for the growing notion that life had no identifiable purpose. Whereas one who believes in the afterlife sees life as a means of getting there, one who does not believe is left to either conclude that there is no purpose or to find an alternative justification for his/her life. Esslin notes that this decline was “masked until the end of the Second World War by the substitute religions of faith in progress, nationalism, and various totalitarian fallacies” . Yet these approaches also appeared flawed, leaving the other option—the assertion that there is no meaning behind human life. In his play, *The Chairs*, Ionesco capitalizes on this meaninglessness. Throughout the play, the two main characters prepare chairs for invisible guests who are all coming to hear the meaning of life as declared by an orator. The main characters kill themselves just before he speaks and then the audience discovers that the orator is a deaf-mute. Ionesco himself described the subject of the play as, “not the message, nor the failures of life, nor the moral disaster of the two old people, but the chairs themselves; that is to say, the absence of people, the absence of the emperor, the absence of God, the absence of matter, the unreality of the world, metaphysical emptiness” . This kind of world view is characteristic of the Theatre of the Absurd.

The playwrights involved with the Theatre of the Absurd were not conscious of belonging to a movement while writing their plays. Ironically, they each thought of himself as “a lone outsider, cut off and isolated in his own private world” . This perspective clearly penetrates their work, as most of the plays emphasize the isolation of the individual, or man’s inability to connect with others. Samuel Beckett’s “*Waiting for Godot*”(1952), the most well-known play from the absurdist movement, features this idea. The two main characters, Vladimir and Estragon, are both tramps who spend the entirety of the play on the outskirts of society. Though they have each other, they are at the same time isolated from one another. One indication of this is that they are never able to adequately communicate; their conversation goes in circles.

The form of a piece of art is often neglected in favor of its subject matter. More specifically, drama is often studied in terms of what it is saying rather than in how it is saying it. Form, however, is arguably the most important aspect of absurdist plays. It is what separates them from other similarly themed movements, mainly existential drama. Esslin claims that “the Theatre of the Absurd goes one step further [than existential drama] in trying to achieve a unity between its basic assumptions and the form in which these are expressed” .Essentially, these playwrights were reacting against realism because it did not align with their objectives. They did not want to show life as it really was, but rather, the inner-life of man—what was going on inside his head. Esslin explains that “the Theatre of the Absurd merely communicates one poet’s most intimate and personal intuition of the human situation, his own sense of being, his individual vision of the world” . In order to portray this “personal intuition” the playwrights had to abandon conventional methods and adopt a more poetic, or lyrical, form.

One characteristic of this poetic form was the devaluation of language. The absurd dramatists felt that conventional language had failed man—it was an inadequate means of communication. As a result, the movement of the characters on stage often contradicts their words or dialogue. For example, both acts of *Waiting for Godot* conclude with the line “Yes, let’s go,” only to be followed by the stage direction, “They do not move” .Essentially, the dramatists are trying to emphasize a disconnect between “word and object, meaning and reality, consciousness and the world” . Moreover, in doing so they expose how unreliable language is; one can easily say one thing and do the opposite.

Another poetic aspect of absurdist plays is that they lack a plot or a clear beginning and end with a purposeful development in between. There is usually a great deal of repetition in both language and action, which suggests that the play isn’t actually “going anywhere.” In *Waiting for Godot*, the stage directions indicate that Vladimir and Estragon are constantly moving. For example, they repeatedly “rummage” through their pockets and “peer” into their hats . These actions are so frequent, however, that the audience begins to feel as if they are watching the same thing over and over again. They could even be called static actions as they contribute nothing to the flow of the play. Yet this lack of purposeful movement in *Waiting for Godot* and most other absurdist dramas is intentional. As discussed above, the plays are

attempting to portray an intuition which by definition should be an instantaneous or immediate insight. It is “only because it is physically impossible to present so complex an image in an instant that it has to be spread over a period of time” . Therefore, if one does not view the play as a story, but rather as a single idea being acted out, this supposed lack of plot becomes irrelevant.

The “Theatre of the Absurd” is a term coined by Hungarian-born critic Martin Esslin, who made it the title of his 1962 book on the subject. The term refers to a particular type of play which first became popular during the 1950s and 1960s and which presented on stage the philosophy articulated by French philosopher Albert Camus in his 1942 essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, in which he defines the human condition as basically meaningless. Camus argued that humanity had to resign itself to recognizing that a fully satisfying rational explanation of the universe was beyond its reach; in that sense, the world must ultimately be seen as absurd.

Esslin regarded the term “Theatre of the Absurd” merely as a "device" by which he meant to bring attention to certain fundamental traits discernible in the works of a range of playwrights. The playwrights loosely grouped under the label of the absurd attempt to convey their sense of bewilderment, anxiety, and wonder in the face of an inexplicable universe. According to Esslin, the five defining playwrights of the movement are Eugène Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, Arthur Adamov, and Harold Pinter, although these writers were not always comfortable with the label and sometimes preferred to use terms such as "Anti-Theater" or "New Theater". Other playwrights associated with this type of theatre include Tom Stoppard, Arthur Kopit, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Fernando Arrabal, Edward Albee, N.F. Simpson, Boris Vian, Peter Weiss, Vaclav Havel, and Jean Tardieu.

Although the Theatre of the Absurd is often traced back to avant-garde experiments of the 1920s and 1930s, its roots, in actuality, date back much further. Absurd elements first made their appearance shortly after the rise of Greek drama, in the wild humor and buffoonery of Old Comedy and the plays of Aristophanes in particular. They were further developed in the late classical period by Lucian, Petronius and Apuleius, in Menippean satire, a tradition of carnivalistic literature, depicting “a world upside down.” The morality plays of the Middle



Ages may be considered a precursor to the Theatre of the Absurd, depicting everyman-type characters dealing with allegorical and sometimes existential problems. This tradition would carry over into the Baroque allegorical drama of Elizabethan times, when dramatists such as John Webster, Cyril Tourneur, Jakob Biederman and Calderon would depict the world in mythological archetypes. During the nineteenth century, absurd elements may be noted in certain plays by Ibsen and, more obviously, Strindberg, but the acknowledged predecessor of what would come to be called the Theatre of the Absurd is Alfred Jarry's "monstrous puppet-play" *Ubu Roi* (1896) which presents a mythical, grotesque figure, set amidst a world of archetypal images. *Ubu Roi* is a caricature, a terrifying image of the animal nature of man and his cruelty. In the 1920s and 1930s, the surrealists expanded on Jarry's experiments, basing much of their artistic theory on the teachings of Freud and his emphasis on the role of the subconscious mind which they acknowledged as a great, positive healing force. Their intention was to do away with art as a mere imitation of surface reality, instead demanding that it should be more real than reality and deal with essences rather than appearances. The Theatre of the Absurd was also anticipated in the dream novels of James Joyce and Franz Kafka who created archetypes by delving into their own subconscious and exploring the universal, collective significance of their own private obsessions. Silent film and comedy, as well as the tradition of verbal nonsense in the early sound films of Laurel and Hardy, W.C. Fields, and the Marx Brothers would also contribute to the development of the Theatre of the Absurd, as did the verbal "nonsense" of François Rabelais, Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, and Christian Morgenstern. But it would take a catastrophic world event to actually bring about the birth of the new movement.

World War II was the catalyst that finally brought the Theatre of the Absurd to life. The global nature of this conflict and the resulting trauma of living under threat of nuclear annihilation put into stark perspective the essential precariousness of human life. Suddenly, one did not need to be an abstract thinker in order to be able to reflect upon absurdity: the experience of absurdity became part of the average person's daily existence. During this period, a "prophet" of the absurd appeared. Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) rejected realism in the theatre, calling for a return to myth and magic and to the exposure of the deepest conflicts within the human mind. He demanded a theatre that would produce collective archetypes and create a modern mythology. It was no longer possible, he insisted, to keep using traditional art forms and standards that had ceased being convincing and lost their validity. Although he

would not live to see its development, The Theatre of the Absurd is precisely the new theatre that Artaud was dreaming of. It openly rebelled against conventional theatre. It was, as Ionesco called it “anti-theatre”. It was surreal, illogical, conflictless and plotless. The dialogue often seemed to be complete gibberish. And, not surprisingly, the public’s first reaction to this new theatre was incomprehension and rejection.

The most famous, and most controversial, absurdist play is probably Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*. The characters of the play are strange caricatures who have difficulty communicating the simplest of concepts to one another as they bide their time awaiting the arrival of Godot. The language they use is often ludicrous, and following the cyclical pattern, the play seems to end in precisely the same condition it began, with no real change having occurred. In fact, it is sometimes referred to as “the play where nothing happens.” Its detractors count this a fatal flaw and often turn red in the face fomenting on its inadequacies. It is mere gibberish, they cry, eyes nearly bulging out of their head--a prank on the audience disguised as a play. The play’s supporters, on the other hand, describe it as an accurate parable on the human condition in which “the more things change, the more they are the same.” Change, they argue, is only an illusion. In 1955, the famous character actor Robert Morley predicted that the success of *Waiting for Godot* meant “the end of theatre as we know it.” His generation may have gloomily accepted this prediction, but the younger generation embraced it. They were ready for something new; something that would move beyond the old stereotypes and reflect their increasingly complex understanding of existence.

Whereas traditional theatre attempts to create a photographic representation of life as we see it, the Theatre of the Absurd aims to create a ritual-like, mythological, archetypal, allegorical vision, closely related to the world of dreams. The focal point of these dreams is often man's fundamental bewilderment and confusion, stemming from the fact that he has no answers to the basic existential questions: why we are alive, why we have to die, why there is injustice and suffering. Ionesco defined the absurdist everyman as “Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots ... lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless.” The Theatre of the Absurd, in a sense, attempts to reestablish man’s communion with the universe. Dr. Jan Culik writes, “Absurd Theatre can be seen as an attempt to restore the importance of myth and ritual to our age, by making man aware of the ultimate realities of

his condition, by instilling in him again the lost sense of cosmic wonder and primeval anguish. The Absurd Theatre hopes to achieve this by shocking man out of an existence that has become trite, mechanical and complacent. It is felt that there is mystical experience in confronting the limits of human condition.”

One of the most important aspects of absurd drama is its distrust of language as a means of communication. Language, it seems to say, has become nothing but a vehicle for conventionalized, stereotyped, meaningless exchanges. Dr. Culik explains, “Words failed to express the essence of human experience, not being able to penetrate beyond its surface. The Theatre of the Absurd constituted first and foremost an onslaught on language, showing it as a very unreliable and insufficient tool of communication. Absurd drama uses conventionalised speech, clichés, slogans and technical jargon, which it distorts, parodies and breaks down. By ridiculing conventionalised and stereotyped speech patterns, the Theatre of the Absurd tries to make people aware of the possibility of going beyond everyday speech conventions and communicating more authentically.”

Absurd drama subverts logic. It relishes the unexpected and the logically impossible. According to Sigmund Freud, there is a feeling of freedom we can enjoy when we are able to abandon the straitjacket of logic. As Dr. Culik points out, “Rationalist thought, like language, only deals with the superficial aspects of things. Nonsense, on the other hand, opens up a glimpse of the infinite.”

What, then, has become of this wonderful new theatre—this movement that produced some of the most exciting and original dramatic works of the twentieth century? Conventional wisdom, perhaps, suggests that the Theatre of the Absurd was a product of a very specific point in time and, because that time has passed, it has gone the way of the dinosaur. In a revised edition of his seminal work, Martin Esslin disagrees: “Every artistic movement or style has at one time or another been the prevailing fashion. It if was no more than that, it disappeared without a trace. If it had a genuine content, if it contributed to an enlargement of human perception, if it created new modes of human expression, if it opened up new areas of experience, however, it was bound to be absorbed into the main stream of development. And

this is what happened with the Theatre of the Absurd which, apart from having been in fashion, undoubtedly was a genuine contribution to the permanent vocabulary of dramatic expression. It is being absorbed into the mainstream of the tradition from which ... it had never been entirely absent ... The playwrights of the post-Absurdist era have at their disposal, then, a uniquely enriched vocabulary of dramatic technique. They can use these devices freely, separately and in infinite variety of combinations with those bequeathed to them by other dramatic conventions of the past." In a New York Times piece entitled "Which Theatre is the Absurd One?", Edward Albee agrees with Esslin's final analysis, writing, "For just as it is true that our response to color and form was forever altered once the impressionist painters put their minds to canvas, it is just as true that the playwrights of The Theatre of the Absurd have forever altered our response to the theatre."

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<https://study.com/learn/lesson/theatre-absurd-playwrights-characterisitcs-examples.html>

<https://www.britannica.com/art/Theatre-of-the-Absurd>

# Audit Course ENG1A01

Writing Skills

## BLACK FEMINISM

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Masters of Arts

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FIRST MA ENGLISH

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## BLACK FEMINISM

Black feminism is a philosophy that centres on the idea that "Black Women" are inherently valuable. Black feminism centres the experiences of Black women, understanding their position in relation to racism, sexism and classism, as well as other social and political identities. African American women's historical encounter with enslavement, emancipation, segregation and patriarchy. Since the beginning of the last century pioneered the black feminism of the 1980s. Black women have been excluded from the mainstream feminism because of their race, it highlights and engages main aspects of identity that women have which was significant because it gave them the opportunity to talk about being black along with gender inequality. Despite the prejudice and discrimination they faced, Black women were still to critical to the black liberation and gender equality movements. In 1892, Anna Julia Cooper, a black woman, published a book titled *A Voice From the South*, which critiqued the white women's movement for elitism, racism and provincialism is considered as one of the original texts of black feminism and also this book initially focused on emphasizing the need to hear and listen to the voices of the black women through which they can bring out a change in the society. Intersectionality is an important concept of Black feminism. It means in which gender, race and other social categories come together and interact such that they can bring change. The presence of the Black feminist movement evolved with the second wave of the American women's movement in the late 1960s, making the 1970s a defining decade for contemporary Black feminism. Although, accounts of the started the Black feminist movement can be traced back to the 1830s and the women who made strides for Black feminism should be highlighted they are; Sojourner Truth, Angela Davis, Akasha Gloria Hull, Bell Hooks and Idea B. Wells.

In *Ain't I a Woman*(1981), Bell Hooks accuses the feminist movement for being a largely middle and upper class affair and from its failure to articulate the needs of poor and non white women, thus reinforcing sexism, racism and classism. Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* (1991) argues that black women possess a unique stand point on, or

perspectives of, their experiences and some common things shared among the black women. Black women used literature as a strong weapon to forward their message to society. They expressed the oppressions the exploitations they faced the horror of slavery were also the theme of their works. The reason behind this movement was to put an end to sexist oppressions both from Black men as well as white people. Many Black writers came forward in support of Black feminism. The most important among them is Alice Walker. Alice Walker's *In Search of Our Mother's Garden* proposed a new facet of black feminism known as *Womanism*, which stressed the collective bonding of all women, irrespective of race, creed and class. While feminism places priority on women, woman incorporates racial, cultural, sexual, national, economic and political considerations. Sojourner Truth is most widely known nineteenth century black feminist foremother. Throughout her life Truth linked the movement to abolish slavery and the movement to secure women's worth and rights, stating that for black women, race and gender could not be separated. Black women preferred to write essays to employ their worries and these can be traced in their journals, essays and diaries. From late twentieth century black feminist critics and writers, like that of white counterparts analysed the present conditions of their times, the social status and their approach to the Black women. A major thematic and structural element of black feminist criticism, was going deep into the era of slavery. The concept of *Double Jeopardy* (1970) by Frances Beale the conjoined effects of racial and gender discrimination to Kimberle Crenshaw's intersectionality. Black feminism critics had fought against all social evils in the society and still fighting.

"Lifting as we climb", the slogan of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), became a well-known motto for black women's activism in the late nineteenth century. By this time, middle class black women organized social and political reform through women's organisations or clubs. Their project of racial uplift focused on combating harmful stereotypes surrounding black women's sexuality and gender identity. The Black feminist identity politics can be described as understanding and knowing one's own identity considering both personal experiences as well as experiences of people in the history to help initiate the formation of a group consisting like-minded people who sought a change in the political framework of the



society. It may alternatively be the rejection of oppressive measures against an individual group. Alice Walker is a poet, writer and activist who has coined the term "Womanist" to give feminists and other women of color a term that recognized their struggles and the next important person is Maya Angelou is a poet, memoirist and civil rights activist she was coordinator of the Southern Christian Leadership conference she wrote about the challenges and joys of being black. Elaine Brown another famous writer and prison activist, as well as a former Black Panther Party chairwoman. She was a critic of misogyny in the Black liberation movement. Bell Hook born in 1952, whose works focuses on how race, class and gender intersect to produce as well as perpetuate systems of oppression, Patricia Hill Collins addressed issues involving feminism and gender in Black communities. She focused on the oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality and nation. These are some of the activists that helped for the upliftment of Black feminist movements. Patricia Hill Collins, Kimberly Crenshaw and Bell Hook were active during the twentieth century.

Black feminism and intersectionality expanded into the academic and professional discourse. There are seven concepts put forward by Black women intellectuals such as Politics of Respectability historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham coined the phrase *Politics of Respectability* to describe these women's strategies in her 1993 book *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church :1880-1920*. Politics of Respectability allowed black women to join their religiosity with their social-political attitudes, controlling images, intersectionality, misogynoir, to describe the specific form of gendered racism experienced by Black women. Misogynoir is an intersectional form of oppression in that the members of this group are subject to it because of their Blackness and womanhood and inseparable facets of their social identity, multiple jeopardy, womanism and someplace. These concepts describe the way that racism and sexism work together to disadvantage women of colour. And also it shows how the women folk challenged all these adversities and oppression around them. People of color experienced all sorts of oppression from the period of slavery and it still continues. But the community always came forward to fight against it. By the end of the twentieth century when the movement became active put forward all the wrongs to the world. As a result of this white

women who neglected the colored people started to acknowledge their mistake and started to work anti-racism and started to give awareness all around. By the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty first century, the black feminist shifted from being grounded in a black heterosexual woman to a more radical black feminism focusing on queer and trans black women, girls and gender non conforming people. The impact of Black feminism has a great impact all over the world. Black women can be seen in the forefront of the other movements. We see today such as the Me Too movement, the Black live matter and as such. 'Me Too', the phrase was first introduced by African American sexual assault survivor and activist Tarana Burke, raising awareness specifically for marginalized victims. Black women have been fighting against all sorts of sexual violence because they are at higher risks than white counter parts. Even though the Black feminism is still relevant and many misogynistic and sexist people are still there. This movement faced many challenges. One of the important challenges was educating the marginalized who were unaware of these political movements, which can bring a difference in these people's lives. When white women struggled for equal wages and the right to vote. The Black women struggled to find a position in the society where the other considered them as human beings. The Black feminist movement is a way to address racism, classroom and sexism. Outside black feminist circles, black feminisms are often described as an out growth of other struggles. Even though society has developed so much that hatred and violence against black is still there. Recently the whites attacked black men and led to death. Feminism put forwards the idea is that to support one another. One woman should the other instead of putting them down in order to achieve true liberation through teamwork is most important instead of color, race and identity we should reach to people in need. This world belongs to everyone, it's not about who is superior to the other. Everyone should be treated equally. To bring out effective change everyone should work hand in hand. The individual struggle of a woman must be connected with the large feminist movements. The relevance of Black feminism will continue until every black women get the rights they needed. They have suffered all sorts of oppression from a long battle and they still fight for their needs.

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**Audit Course ENG1A01**

**WRITING SKILLS**

**STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts

By

ATHULYA K.K

Roll no:10

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## Introduction

In Literary criticism, Stream of consciousness is a narrative mode or method that attempts “to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind” of a narrator. The term was coined by Daniel Oliver in 1840 in *First Lines of Physiology: Designed for the Use of Students of Medicine*. Better known, perhaps, is the 1855 usage by Alexander Bain in the first edition of *The Senses and the Intellect*. But it is commonly credited to William James who used it in 1890 in his *The Principles of Psychology*.

In 1918, the novelist May Sinclair, first applied the term stream of consciousness, in a literary context, when discussing Dorothy Richardson’s novels. *Pointed Roofs* (1915), the first work in Richardson’s series of 13 semi-autobiographical novels titled *Pilgrimage*, is the first complete stream-of-consciousness novel published in English. However, in 1934, Richardson comments that “Proust, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf were all using ‘the new method’, though very differently, simultaneously”. There were, however, many earlier precursors and the technique is still used by contemporary writers.

Stream of consciousness writing is usually regarded as a special form of interior monologue and is characterized by associative leaps in thought and lack of some or all punctuation. Stream of consciousness and interior monologue are distinguished from dramatic monologue and soliloquy, where the speaker is addressing an audience or a third person, which are chiefly used in poetry or drama. In stream of consciousness, the speaker’s thought processes are more often depicted as overheard in the mind; it is primarily a fictional device.

## Stream of Consciousness

Stream of Consciousness is a literary style in which the author follows visual, auditory, tactile, associative, and subliminal impressions and expresses them using “interior monologue” of characters either as a writing technique or as a writing style that mingles thoughts and impressions in an illogical order, and violates grammar norms. The phrase “stream of consciousness” was first used in 1890 by William James in *Principles of Psychology*.

In Literature it records character’s feelings and thoughts through stream of consciousness in attempt to capture all the external and internal forces that influence their psychology at a single moment. Any logical or sequential approach is disregarded. The first example of this style is considered to be a novel by Edouard Dujardin *Les Lauriers sont Coupes*, *We’ll To the Woods No More*, but the technique itself was pioneered by Dorothy Richardson in *Pilgrimage* (1915-35) and by James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922), and further developed by Virginia Woolf in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and William Faulkner in *The Sound and the Fury* (1928).

Stream of consciousness as a narrative technique successfully captures without the author’s intervention, the complete mental process of the character in which sense perception mingles with consciousness and half conscious thoughts, memories, feelings and random associations. In Literature, the phrase refers to the flow of these thoughts, with reference to a particular character’s thinking process. This literary device is usually used in order to provide a narrative in the form of the character’s thoughts instead of using dialogue or description. The thought process in the mind of the characters is never coherent and jumps from one thought to the another. The world wars had changed how people saw the world and as a result literature too changed as it is fundamentally the human experience. There was this post traumatic stress disorder after World war I. Men came from the war disillusioned with what they saw, did and experienced. The technique of stream of consciousness best captures these experiences of people.

In 1918 May Sinclair first applied the term stream of consciousness in the literary context while discussing Dorothy Richardson’s novel. Stream of Consciousness was a phrase used by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890) to describe the unbroken flow of

perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind. It has since been adopted to describe a narrative method in modern fiction. Long passages of introspection, in which the narrator records in detail what passes through a character's awareness, are found in novelists from Samuel Richardson, through William James' brother Henry James, to many novelists of the present era. Stream of Consciousness is the name applied specifically to a mode of narration that undertakes to reproduce, without a narrator's intervention, the full spectrum and continuous flow of a character's mental process, in which sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half-conscious thoughts, memories, expectations, feelings, and random associations. Stream of consciousness has become a new phenomenon in modern literature. This style of writing is marked by the sudden rise of thoughts and lack of punctuations. The use of this narration mode is generally associated with the modern novelist and short story writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Characteristics of Stream of Consciousness:

Stream of consciousness writing is known to record the multiple thoughts that keep occurring in the minds of the individual. It attempts to give the written equivalent of the characters thought process either in a loose interior monologue or in connection to his or her action. In this technique the speakers thoughts are more often depicted as overheard in the mind. The authors of this technique follow visual, auditory, tactile, associative impressions and express them using interior monologue of characters. This narrative mode mingles thoughts and impressions in an illogical order and violates grammatical norms.

It is a style of writing developed by a group of writers at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It aimed at expressing in words the flow of a character's thoughts and feelings in their minds. The technique aspires to give readers the impression of being inside the mind of the character. Therefore, the internal view of the minds of the characters sheds light on plot and motivation in the novel.

When used as a term in literature, stream of consciousness is a narrative form in which the author writes in a way that mimics or parallels a character's internal thoughts. Sometimes this device is also called "internal monologue," and often the style incorporates the natural chaos of thoughts and feelings that occur in any of our minds at any given time. Just as happens in real life,

stream-of-consciousness narratives often lack associative leaps and are characterized by an absence of regular punctuation.

Though this study is confined to the two prominent writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, there are other notable writers who deserve to be mentioned. The other writers who have successfully used this technique are Allen Ginsberg, Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson, Welsh Irvine, William Faulkner and Wilson Robert Anton.

Virginia Woolf was interested in giving voice to the complex inner world of feeling and memory and conceived the human personality as a continuous shift of impressions and emotions. That traditionally made up a story were no longer important for her; what mattered was the impression they made on the characters who experienced them. In her novels the omniscient narrator disappeared and the point of view shifted inside the characters' minds through flashbacks, associations of ideas, momentarily impressions presented as a continuous flux.

*To the lighthouse*, a key example of stream of consciousness technique. This novel includes very little dialogue and almost no action, written as thoughts and observations to the lighthouse, recalls childhood memories and emotions and highlights adult relations. Among book's many tropes and themes are those of loss, subjectivity and the problem of perception. The world of reading Woolf is a world of psyche and abstractions the bringing to the forefront of our unconsciousness thoughts and emotions the ones we all have that affect us heavily, that we are woefully aware of time gets slowed down and the magic of the moment is reached. Life is about perception and nobody seems to get this better than Woolf.

Joyce's *Ulysses* has been famous for his stylistic experimentation and innovation that is a stream of consciousness technique. He has used multiple narratives extensively along with the shifts in each new episode of the novel. To show ironic contrast between the futile and the exhausted modern world and the glorious era of ancient Greece, James Joyce gave a framework of the *Odyssey* of Homer to his masterpiece. Leopold Bloom is Ulysses, Stephen, who is the spiritual son of Bloom is linked to Ulysses's son, Telemachus and Molly represents Ulysses's wife, Penelope. Homer's *Odyssey* has 18 episodes and *Ulysses* maintains the same number of episodes.



Characters in *Ulysses* have their own problems and they have an unbroken flow of perceptions, feelings and thoughts in waking mind. The mental process of character is vividly shown through stream of consciousness technique. The characters talk to themselves in mind and they can't control the continuous flow of ideas and thoughts. Through this technique, a character's personality, his past, his relations, problems and present status and condition are easily exposed to the readers. For example: in "Lestrygonian" episode, Leopold Bloom saunters through Dublin observing and musing. In 'Proteus' episode Joyce leads us to the inner mental thought of Stephen where he vividly defines the sight, sound, taste, smell and touch in relation to the outer world. Various past memories related to his school life, youth, manhood, his ambition to be a writer, sexual passion during youth and inconclusive and uncertain past life start to flow like a stream in his mind. The final monologue of Molly Bloom in the 'Penelope' chapter is one of the salient instances of Joyce's use of stream of consciousness technique. The readers enter into the flowing mind of Molly and Molly's mind travels back on the varieties of subjects such as her girlhood, her courtship with Bloom, Stephen Dedalus as a sentimental lover, Blazes Boylan, and the mysteries and pleasures of sexuality. In this way Joyce uses the stream of consciousness technique as a narrative technique so as to explore the mental and inner truth of all the characters.

The importance of stream of consciousness technique in modern literature:

The role of stream of consciousness in literature is typically as a character study. It is a purposeful innovation in the modern prose style. The modernist writers such as Woolf and her contemporaries wanted their work to reflect life in its complete authenticity mirroring the universal human experience. Hence this study would try to locate how far these novelists have succeeded in achieving it. The character is not speaking to the audience in this literary device, as he or she is in a monologue, but is rather speaking to himself. Though the character may be analyzing events that happened in the story, and moving the plot along in that way, typically the character is examining his or her response to the events. Usually, this is a literary technique that the author will dip into and out of throughout the story, though some writers will produce an entire novel in this stream of consciousness format, with the character acting as the narrator.

## **Conclusion**

Stream of Consciousness is a linguistic premise, which accentuates individualistic thoughts and ideas that traverse the subconscious mind. It brings such thoughts to the fore in a discreet and subtle manner with a view to create stylistic and narrative impressions. Stream of consciousness seeks to recognize the vital role of innate thoughts and ideas with regard to actualization of literary narratives.

Stream of consciousness writing allows authors to provide a more intimate portrayal of their subjects. It prevents them from being confined to physical descriptions or accounts of spoken dialogue, which was a standard issue literary technique prior to the rise of the stream of consciousness approach. Via stream of consciousness writing, readers are able to track characters' thoughts in real time, thus enabling them to understand not only what a character does but why they do it.

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# **AUDIT COURSE ENG1A01**

## **WRITING SKILLS**

### **ANGRY YOUNG MEN MOVEMENT**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Art's

By

**DONA MARIYA THOMAS**

**Roll no: 10**

**1<sup>st</sup> MA English**

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## **The Angry Young Men Movement of the 1950s**

It is generally said to begin with the resentment and bitterness that sprouted from the playwrights and novelists belonging to a group of middle-class young men in the 1950s. Also sometimes known as kitchen sink drama. And some of the very prominent figures in this particular movement were John Osborne, John Braine, Alan Sillitoe, John Wain, Colin Wilson, and Kingsley Amis. The term is created by the Royal Court Theater's press officer, to garner the attention of John Osborne's very famous play "*Look Back in Anger*", where the main character in the play is an excellent example of stating the tone, mood, and general idea of the play that wants to show the anger and resentment of this group of angry university graduates who are disillusioned by the past and are angry at the false promises provided to them by the existing government of Britain and towards the values and standards of the life of the common middle class. They felt anger over the rising hypocritical middle-class people along with mediocrity as well. They felt a common resentment, hate, and anger at the British class systems that crippled them to such a degree, the Royals, elite families that had it all as well anger at the Universities that only catered to the needs and education facilities of the privileged, the unfair treatment even in such places made their frustrations grow tenfold. Their frustration and disdain were often over the promises as per the government after post-war, on how they falsely proclaimed to claim back the lost glory of Great Britain, and give jobs and make everyone economically stable but the failure on their part to fulfill those promises resulting in raw anger projected through their writings and works, expressing their displeasure over the lack of genuine change they so promised. Sometimes even some women playwrights joined into contributing a considerable amount of work to show their side of the story. They use pure raw anger and outburst of aggression in the works along with the use of sometimes vulgar almost abusive language to show their anger. Angry Young Men, various British novelists, and playwrights who emerged in the 1950s and expressed scorn and disaffection with the established sociopolitical order of their country. Their impatience and resentment were especially aroused by what they perceived as the hypocrisy and mediocrity of the upper and middle classes. The Angry Young Men were a new breed of intellectuals who were mostly of working-class or lower-middle-class origin. Some had

been educated at the postwar red-brick universities at the state's expense, though a few were from Oxford. They shared an outspoken irreverence for the British class system, its traditional network of pedigreed families, and the elitist Oxford and Cambridge universities. They showed an equally uninhibited disdain for the drabness of the post-war welfare state, and their writings frequently expressed raw anger and frustration as the postwar reforms failed to meet exalted aspirations for genuine change. The trend that was evident in John Wain's novel, "*Hurry On Down*" (1953) and in "*Lucky Jim*" (1954) by Kingsley Amis was crystallized in 1956 in the play, "*Look Back in Anger*", which became the representative work of the movement. When the Royal Court Theater's press agent described the play's 26-year-old author John Osborne as an "angry young man," the name was extended to all his contemporaries who expressed rage at the persistence of class distinctions, pride in their lower-class mannerisms, and dislike for anything highbrow or "phony." When Sir Laurence Olivier played the leading role in Osborne's second play, "*The Entertainer*" (1957), the Angry Young Men were acknowledged as the dominant literary force of the decade. Their novels and plays typically feature a rootless, lower-middle or working-class male protagonist who views society with scorn and sardonic humor and may have conflicts with authority but who is nevertheless preoccupied with the quest for upward mobility. Among the other writers embraced in the term are the novelist's John Braine ("*Room at the Top*", 1957) and Alan Sillitoe ("*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*", 1958), and the playwright Bernard Kops ("*The Hamlet of Stepney Green*", 1956) and Arnold Wesker ("*Chicken Soup with Barley*", 1958). Like the Beat movement in the United States, the impetus of the Angry Young Men was exhausted in the early 1960s. (Wallenfeldt, Jeff). Their novels and plays typically feature a rootless, lower-middle or working-class male protagonist who views society with scorn and sardonic humor and may have conflicts with authority but who is nevertheless preoccupied with the quest for upward mobility. A major concern in Angry Young Men Movement writings is the dissatisfaction of the lower class towards the established socio-political system that inevitably valued the middle and the upper classes and fiercely criticized their hypocrisy. Another frequent subject in this age is the depiction of the abject position of the youth in society. The writers often portrayed the central hero as being disillusioned with life and dissatisfied with their job and a society where he is unfit and deprived of normal rights. Angry Young Men literature strongly revolted against all the accepted norms and ideals. Typically the

hero is a rootless, lower-middle or working-class male psyche with a university degree. He expresses his dissatisfaction with social ills with excessive anger and sardonic humor. He often indulges in adultery and inebriation to escape from the complexities of life. In fine, he is the very epitome of a frustrated post-World War II generation. John Osborne (1929–1994), is an English playwright and motion picture screenwriter, whose plays enact sharp criticism of post-World War II British life through outbursts of abusive language. It was Osborn's debut play *Look Back in Anger* (1957) that made the The Angry Young Men Movement was authoritatively established. In this sense, John Osborne was the most fortunate literary artist to have an age started based on a single literary work. This literary Movement brought a fresh concept that was compiled with the socio political context. Though it lasted only for a short period, it exerted a profound impact on the field of British literature. (Angry Young Men). Taking the example of the play "*Look Back in Anger*", to better explain this movement, the characters in this play portray what a true character feels in the context of the plays belonging to the genre of the Angry Young Man movement and theater. Where the main character Jimmy Porter is a loud and obnoxious character who is aggressive, always angry, toxic, and verbally abusive to his wife Allison, who belongs to an elite upper-class family that Jimmy hates and he always made sure to belittle, berate her for her family's status. The circumstances surrounding the writing and staging of the play are dramatic and interesting as the plot of the play itself. John Osborne wrote *Look Back in Anger* pretty quickly, in just 17 days, while sitting in a deckchair on Morecambe Pier. At this stage of his life, Osborne was living in a tiny flat in Derby with his wife, the actress Pamela Lane. The marriage was not especially happy by this point, and the home life of Jimmy and Alison Porter in *Look Back in Anger* sprang from Osborne's own wedded misery. (Pamela was also having an affair with a dentist, getting more than her teeth seen, one suspects. Ironically, Osborne, who was an actor as well as a playwright, had recently played a dentist in a production of a George Bernard Shaw play.) Osborne and Lane would later divorce, with Osborne starting a relationship with the actress who played Alison Porter in the original production of *Look Back in Anger*. We are presented with an everyday domestic scene: Jimmy Porter is at home on Sunday in his tiny one-bedroom flat, reading newspapers and chatting with his friend Cliff. Jimmy's wife Alison is doing the ironing.

Jimmy is from a working-class background (he owns a stall selling sweets), while Alison is from an upper-class family – and Jimmy hates her for this. Jimmy and Cliff play-fight and knock over

the ironing board, leading Alison's arm to get burnt by the iron. We are presented with an everyday domestic scene: Jimmy Porter is at home on Sunday in his tiny one-bedroom flat, reading newspapers and chatting with his friend Cliff. Jimmy's wife Alison is doing the ironing, and knocks over the ironing board, leading Alison's arm to get burnt by the iron. Jimmy goes out and Cliff stays to comfort Alison. Alison confides that she is pregnant but is scared to tell the mercurial Jimmy. Jimmy comes home and he and Alison make up, playing a game they call 'bears and squirrels'.

A friend of Alison's named Helena rings, and Alison invites Helena to come and stay with them, which angers Jimmy so much that he says he longs for something to wrench his wife out of her 'beauty sleep' – even the death of her child (remember that he's unaware at this stage that she is pregnant). When Helena comes to stay, Jimmy is rude to both her and his wife (again). Jimmy receives news that his friend's mother is dying, so he asks Alison to go with him to London to visit her. Alison says no. Jimmy goes to London on his own, and when he gets back his wife is away. Helena is still there, and the two of them have a row before Helena seduces Jimmy. Helena hands Jimmy a note from Alison informing him that she is pregnant with his child. We then move forward several months. Once more, it's a Sunday. The scene is much the same as it was at the beginning of the play, except this time it's Helena doing the ironing. Alison turns up, and while Jimmy is out of the room, she reveals that she lost the baby.

Helena breaks up with Jimmy, and Jimmy and Alison are reconciled once more. The play ends with them playing another round of 'bears and squirrels'.

Look Back in Anger is as likely to remind us of the other side of the 1950s if anything – reminding us that post-war life was pretty wretched for many women in the years before the arrival of the permissive society in the late 1960s and that the 'kitchen sink' and the ironing board were seen as their rightful place by many men (and many women, too, we daresay). (Tearle, Oliver). It also showcased a lot of abuse of the women during that time in both the real and literary world which was clear through the writings of that time. Their strong anger, resentment, disdain, and hatred can be felt by the readers when reading or critically analyzing their works. But a common criticism raised against this is mostly its usage of abusive language, its treatment of women characters, and its wretched state of utter anger leading to unreasonable actions.



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# Audit Course ENGA01

## WRITING SKILLS

### HYBRIDITY AND MULTICULTURALISM

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of  
Master of Arts

Submitted by – KAVYA MS

Roll no. 12

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## **HYBRIDITY**

The rejection of the “master narrative” of Western imperialism in which the colonial other is not only subordinated and marginalized but in effect deleted as of a cultural agency and its replacement by a counter-narrative in which the colonial cultures fight their way back into a world history written by Europeans. One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in postcolonial theory, hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, ‘hybrid’ species. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc. Linguistic examples include pidgin and creole languages, and these echo the foundational use of the term by the linguist and cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who used it to suggest the disruptive and transfiguring power of multivocal language situations and, by extension, of multivocal narratives. The idea of a polyphony of voices in society is implied also in Bakhtin’s idea of the carnivalesque, which emerged in the Middle Ages when ‘a boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture’.

The term ‘hybridity’ has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities (see mimicry and ambivalence). Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the ‘Third Space of enunciation’. Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which for Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical ‘purity’ of cultures untenable. For him, the recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favor of the recognition of empowering hybridity within

which cultural differences may operate. It is the 'in-between' space that carries the burden and meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important. Hybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural 'exchange'. This use of the term has been widely criticized, since it usually implies negating and neglecting the imbalance and inequality of the power relations it references. By stressing the transformative cultural, linguistic and political impacts on both the colonized and the colonizer, it has been regarded as replicating assimilationist policies by masking or 'whitewashing' cultural differences.

Hybridity demonstrates how cultures come to be represented by processes of iteration and translation through which their meanings are vicariously addressed to—through—an Other. This contrasts any "essentialist claims for the inherent authenticity or purity of cultures which, when inscribed in the naturalistic sign of symbolic consciousness frequently become political arguments for the hierarchy and ascendancy of powerful cultures". This also means that the colonial subject takes place, its subaltern position inscribed in that space of iteration. The colonial subject is located in a place of hybridity, its identity formed in a space of iteration and translation by the colonizer. Bhabha emphasizes that "the discriminatory effects of the discourse of cultural colonialism, for instance, do not simply or singly refer to a 'person'... or to a discrimination between mother culture and alien culture...the reference of discrimination is always to a process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different—a mutation". Like mimicry, hybridity is a metonymy of presence. Hybridity opens up a space, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the colonizer nor the Other, properly defies our political expectations. However, like Bhabha's concept of mimicry, hybridity is

a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once. This turn in the effect of hybridity makes the presence of colonist authority no longer immediately visible.

Although the original, theoretic development of hybridity addressed the narratives of cultural imperialism, Bhabha's work also comprehends the cultural politics of the condition of being "a migrant" in the contemporary metropolis. Yet hybridity no longer is solely associated with migrant populations and with border towns, it also applies contextually to the flow of cultures and their interactions.

## **MULTICULTURALISM**

The term multiculturalism refers to the cohabitation of different ethnic, racial, religious and language groups. In any culture, there are always differences in social backgrounds, religious affiliations, ethnicities, and socioeconomic factors. These differences are what make a culture unique.

The term multiculturalism has shifted in meaning over time. It was first used to describe the coexistence of different cultures within a society. Now it is used to describe government policies that support diversity among different ethnic and social groups. The idea of multiculturalism in the U.S. is not one that was established in recent times, but rather has roots in the founding of America when immigrants arrived to the U.S. from all over the world, speaking different languages and bringing with them different customs and traditions. Similarly, India is also a multicultural nation that celebrates holidays and festivals of various religions. This can be attributed to the country's long and eventful history.

The general meaning refers to literature which embraces many cultures and where culture itself is an integral part of the story. Such a definition has implications beyond its dictionary-type appearance.

For example, if we use “multicultural” as a shorthand for works about people of color, then we continue, even if only unconsciously, to place this community into the category of “other.” Thus, we continue with the old paradigm of “literature” (white/European) and “multicultural literature.” Such usage assumes that white/European is the universal culture, because it is simply “literature,” while all other literature comes with a special cultural designation. Multicultural literature should embrace all literature—the Greek epic, *The Iliad*, as well as *Sundiata*, the great epic from ancient Mali. At the elementary level, multicultural literature includes both *Cinderella* and Mufaro’s *Beautiful Daughters*.

. Multicultural literature describes how people live in different parts of the world. In other words, we can learn about their culture and beliefs. It also presents an accurate representation of the culture it portrays and must be free from stereotypes, or beliefs about a particular group that is oversimplified or based upon generalizations. Through these accurate representations, we can build a clear understanding of the culture's heritage as it is portrayed in the text. One novel that presents this well is *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. Events such as kite running are deeply rooted in Afghan culture. In the story, set in Afghanistan and the United States, we follow the journey of our protagonist, Amir, as he struggles to gain the approval of his father, Baba. Told through a series of flashbacks mixed with events in the present, we accompany Amir on his quest for his approval and a way to make peace with the internal conflict he faces. Much of this conflict comes from the relationship with his father and his close friend, Hassan. Amir and Hassan are friends even though they are from different social classes, and throughout the novel, we see the cultural importance of friendship, family, and the division of classes in society.

This type of relationship is also expressed in *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, which explores the culture of the Igbo people of

Nigeria. In his work, Achebe exposes us to the life of Okonkwo, leader of the fictional tribe of Umuofia. They are representative of the Igbo culture. Like Amir, Okonkwo experiences internal conflict that stems from his relationship to his father. He is ashamed of his father's laziness and lack of productivity.

As a result of this, Okonkwo struggles to build a reputation worthy of respect. However, Okonkwo sees much of his father in his son, Nwoye. Okonkwo sees Nwoye's lack of masculinity to blame for his interest in the Christian missionaries who have established themselves near to his village. Much of the novel focuses on the struggle between Okonkwo and his son and the culture clash between the Umuofia/Igbo people and the missionaries.

Gabriel García Márquez craftily blends culture with fantasy in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The novel tells the story of José Arcadio Buendía and his wife, Ursula, as they leave their home to found the city of Macondo. Throughout the novel, Marquez takes the reader on a journey through time and frequently shifts between the past, present, and future. On our journey, we meet José and Ursula's descendants as we watch the citizens of Macondo struggle hold onto traditions as the world changes around them.

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# AUDIT COURSE

2022

## THE QUEER THEORY ASSIGNMENT



Department of English  
Providence Women's College

SUBMITTED BY,  
**KAVYA RAJESH.T**  
REGISTER NO – 14  
ROLLNO- 13

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender being a complex phenomena is socially constructed and culturally determined. The gender categories are never neutral nor are they equal. The construction of gender perpetuates the system of dominance across the society. There are expectations on how men and women are suppose to portray themselves through expectations regarding their personalities and appearances. Those gender related stereotypes have been created and developed throughout history and give us guidelines on appropriate behaviors connected to our gender.

Gender, the everyown term is being is splashed out from different parts of the world ,in different context to human minds and hearts. The gender is not by any means a term having an easy definition, so one of the starting point to read the term can be done first of all through the statement by Simone De Beauvoir in the second sex ,”*one is not born a woman ,but rather becomes ,a woman*”, the similar can be taken for men too. As we know when one is born, they have a blank state of mind, doesn’t know who they are ,what they are, where they are ,it’s just nothingness all over their mind .The moment when they open the eyes the light of world hits them, they see, hear, feel and grasp what’s around them. And it is a proven fact. The one who can’t move, who can’t speak, are dressed up by the ones around them .It’s not the one born who asks them to it in a so called ways ,its always the ones around them, thus the chapters are “taught” and learned not naturally inclined in them. Thus, the ones who have a biosex of man/woman maynot be necessarily be a man or woman itself.The term women are implied to the so called “weaker” sections of the society and man are implied to the strong ones and they are forced to behave according to the identity attributed to them.Different society as kept different qualities,behaviors etc in a particular group as something which will be shown by the people who belongs to that certain gender or something the ones who belong to that gender must do. And identity is given to an individual on the basis of traits shown by them.Thus the evaluation of gender identity is done by the society and the individual itself. Thus,the gender identity depends on the mindset of an individual and the society which are developed and are not naturally inclined in them

The rule of the patriarchy and gender roles lead to the suppression, depressions and injustice to different genders. Gender by no means has a clear boundary and a perfect definition. Everyone is born with a blank state of mind, without the knowledge of who they are, what they are, or what gender they are. It is the environment around them sprinkles these seeds of knowledge and makes it grow. It also depends on the individual to accept and follow the knowledge given to them. The so-called “weak” actions and behaviours are considered as a trait of a particular gender and something which that gender alone follows and they are forced to follow too, which is attributed to one by the society. Initially the concept was attributed to one according to their biological sex, when the actions and behaviours which are said to be only shown by a man or woman respectively, started to be shown by both of them, then the question arise if biological sex is not the one which determines a particular identity and the so-called behaviours can be shown by different genders then who made this system, what is man and women if it is not something inborn. Here the social construction of gender identity started playing its role. The social construction of gender is a theory in feminism and sociology about the manifestation of cultural origins, mechanisms, and corollaries of gender perception and expression in the context of interpersonal and group social interaction.

The paper would present a brief note on the topic queer theory. As being being one of the burning topic in our world eventhough these ideas where faced before too.

## THE QUEER THEORY

The word "queer" in queer theory has some of these connotations, particularly its alignment with ideas about homosexuality. Queer theory is a brand-new branch of study or theoretical speculation; it has only been named as an area since about 1991. It grew out of gay/lesbian studies, a discipline which itself is very new, existing in any kind of organized form only since about the mid-1980s. Gay/lesbian studies, in turn, grew out of feminist studies and feminist theory. Let me tell you a little about this history. (It's interesting in its own right, because it is literally happening under our noses, in our classrooms, at this moment; it's also interesting as a way of seeing how theoretical movements or schools grow out of other schools, as we've already seen with the bricolage that emerges from Saussure to Derrida to Lacan to Cixous and Irigaray). Gay/lesbian studies, as a political form of academics, also challenges the notion of normative sexualities. As Rubin's article suggests, once you set up a category labeled "normal," you automatically set up its opposite, a category labeled "deviant," and the specific acts or identities which fill those categories then get linked to other forms of social practices and methods of social control. When you do something your culture labels deviant, you are liable to be punished for it: by being arrested, by being shamed, made to feel dirty, by losing your job, your license, your loved ones, your self-respect, your health insurance. Gay/lesbian studies, like feminist studies, works to understand how these categories of normal and deviant are constructed, how they operate, how they are enforced, in order to intervene into changing or ending them. Which brings me--finally--to queer theory. Queer theory emerges from gay/lesbian studies' attention to the social construction of categories of normative and deviant sexual behavior. But while gay/lesbian studies, as the name implies, focused largely on questions of homosexuality, queer theory expands its realm of investigation. Queer theory looks at, and studies, and has a political critique of, anything that falls into normative and deviant categories, particularly sexual activities and identities. The word "queer", as it appears in the dictionary, has a primary meaning of "odd," "peculiar," "out of the ordinary." Queer theory concerns itself with any and all forms of sexuality that are "queer" in this sense--and then, by extension, with the normative behaviors and identities which define what is "queer" (by being their binary opposites). Thus queer theory expands the scope of its analysis to all kinds of behaviors, including those which are gender-bending as well as those which involve "queer" non-

normative forms of sexuality. Queer theory insists that all sexual behaviors, all concepts linking sexual behaviors to sexual identities, and all categories of normative and deviant sexualities, are social constructs, sets of signifiers which create certain types of social meaning. Queer theory follows feminist theory and gay/lesbian studies in rejecting the idea that sexuality is an essentialist category, something determined by biology or judged by eternal standards of morality and truth. For queer theorists, sexuality is a complex array of social codes and forces, forms of individual activity and institutional power, which interact to shape the ideas of what is normative and what is deviant at any particular moment, and which then operate under the rubric of what is "natural," "essential," "biological," or "god-given."

Queer theory emphasises the fluid and humanly performed nature of sexuality – or better, sexualities. It questions socially established norms and dualistic categories with a special focus on challenging sexual (heterosexual/homosexual), gender (male/female), class (rich/poor), racial (white/non-white) classifications.

Queer theory's origin is hard to clearly define, since it came from multiple critical and cultural contexts, including feminism, post-structuralist theory, radical movements of people of color, the gay and lesbian movements, AIDS activism, many sexual subcultural practices such as sadomasochism, and postcolonialism.

Although queer theory had its beginnings in the educational sphere, the cultural events surrounding its origin also had a huge impact. Activist groups pushed back in the 1980's against the lack of government intervention after the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic. Gay activist groups like ACT-UP and Queer Nation took the lead to force attention to both the AIDS epidemic and the gay and lesbian community as a whole. These groups helped define the field with the work they did by highlighting a non-normative option to the more traditional identity politics and marginal group creations.

Queer theory as an academic tool came about in part from gender and sexuality studies that in turn had their origins from lesbians and gay studies and feminist theory. It is a much newer theory, in that it was established in the 1990s, and contests many of the set ideas of the more established fields it comes from by challenging the notion of defined and finite identity categories, as well as the norms that create a binary of good versus bad sexualities. Queer theorists contention is that there is no set normal, only changing norms that people may or

may not fit into, making queer theorists' main challenge to disrupt binaries in hopes that this will destroy difference as well as inequality.

The term "queer theory" itself came from Teresa de Lauretis' 1991 work in the feminist cultural studies journal *differences* titled "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities." She explains her term to signify that there are at least three interrelated projects at play within this theory: refusing heterosexuality as the benchmark for sexual formations, a challenge to the belief that lesbian and gay studies is one single entity, and a strong focus on the multiple ways that race shapes sexual bias. De Lauretis proposes that queer theory could represent all of these critiques together and make it possible to rethink everything about sexuality.

One of the key concepts in queer theory is the idea of "heteronormativity," which pertains to "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged" (Berlant). Heteronormativity is a worldview that promotes heterosexuality as the normal and/or preferred sexual orientation, and is reinforced in society through the institutions of marriage, taxes, employment, and adoption rights, among many others. Heteronormativity is a form of power and control that applies pressure to both straight and gay individuals, through institutional arrangements and accepted social norms.

Some of the core theorists in the development of queer theory include Michael Foucault, Gayle Rubin, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Judith Butler. Michael Foucault's work on sexuality said that it was a discursive production rather than an essential part of a human, which came from his larger idea of power not being repressive and negative as productive and generative. In other words, power acts to make sexuality seem like a hidden truth that must be dug out and be made specific. Foucault refuses to accept that sexuality can be clearly defined, and instead focuses on the expansive production of sexuality within governments of power and knowledge.

### **Gayle Rubin**

Gayle Rubin's essay "Thinking Sex" is often identified as one of the fundamental texts, and it continues Foucault's rejection of biological explanations of sexuality by thinking about the way that sexual identities as well as behaviors are hierarchically organized through systems

of sexual classifications. She demonstrates in her essay the way that certain sexual expressions are made more valuable than others, and by doing that, allowing those who are outside of these parameters to be oppressed. Rubin also argued against the feminist belief that through gender, sexuality was obtained or the belief that gender and sexuality are the same.

### **Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick**

Rubin laying the groundwork to start discussion about making a distinction between gender and sexuality led the way for Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's pioneering book *Epistemology of the Closet*. In this book, she argues that the homo-hetero difference in the modern sexual definition is vitally disjointed for two reasons: that homosexuality is thought to be part of a minority group, and how homosexuality is gendered to be either masculine or feminine. She points out that the definitions of sexuality depend a lot on the gender of the romantic partner one makes, making the assumption that the gender one has and the gender of the person one is attracted to make up the most important element of sexuality. Sedgwick's examples of sexual variations that cannot be put into the discrete locations created by the binary set between heterosexuality and homosexuality give room to further analyze the way sex-gender identities are shaped and thought about.

### **Judith Butler**

The theorist most commonly identified with studying the prevailing understandings of gender and sex is Judith Butler, who draws much from Foucault's ideas but with a focus on gender. She argues in her book *Gender Trouble* that gender, like sexuality, is not an essential truth obtained from one's body but something that is acted out and portrayed as "reality". She argues that the strict belief that there is a "truth" of sex makes heterosexuality as the only proper outcome because of the coherent binary created of "feminine" and "masculine" and thus creating the only logical outcome of either being a "male" or "female." Butler makes the case that genderperformativity could be a strategy of resistance with examples such as drag, cross-dressing, and the sexual nonrealistic depiction of butch and femme identities that poke fun at the laid out gender norms in society. In her later book, *Undoing Gender*, Butler makes it clear that performativity is not the same as performance. She explains that gender performativity is a repeated process that ultimately creates the subject as a subject. Butler's work brings to light the creation of gender contesting the rigidity of the hierarchical binaries that exist and is what makes her work invaluable in queer theory.



Analyzing with a queer perspective has the potential to undermine the base structure on which any identity relies on (although it does this without completely destroying or forsaking categories of identity), the theory has been understood to be just about questions of sexuality. This perception that queer theory is solely about sexuality has been opposed by having an intersectional approach that starts off with the hypothesis that sexuality cannot be disconnected from the other categories of social status and identity. This allows queer theory to become interdisciplinary and thus create new ways of thinking in how sexuality shapes and is shaped by other factors.

Ten years ago 'queer' was a term of abuse; now it is routinely, although controversially, used as self-description. Queer Theory traces the intriguing history of same-sex sex over the last century through the mid-century homophile movements, gay liberation, the women's movement and lesbian feminism to the new concept of queer. Annamarie Jagose investigates the arguments of the supporters and opponents of queer theory, finding that its strength lies in its potential to question the very idea of sexual identities. By blending insights from contemporary intellectual theories like post-structuralism and from the work of theorists like Judith Butler, Jagose argues that queer theory's challenge is to create new ways of thinking about not just heterosexuality and homosexuality but also such seemingly given fixed notions as 'sexuality' and 'gender', even 'man' and 'woman'. Queer Theory demonstrates a radical, exciting new way of analysing human identity itself.

#### Future of Queer Theory:

As a whole, queer theorists disagree about many things, but the one thing they do not disagree on is that if queer theory is to be understood as a way to test the established and stable categories of identity, then it should not be defined too early (or at all) because of the possibility of it becoming too limited.

## CONCLUSION

Historically, the word queer was - and still can be - used as a pejorative term against members of the LGBT community. However, beginning in the 1960s in the wake of the LGBT rights movement, people in the community sought to reclaim the word queer as an umbrella term for all non-heterosexual, non-cisgender identities. That's what the Q stands for in the acronym LGBTQ! Despite today's wide acceptance of the word queer, it is still important to recognize that not all members of the LGBTQ community identify as queer, and may still find the term offensive.

Offensive term or not, today's world should welcome the people as humans. Identity should be a barrier or not? There is a clear answer to this, it's of course in the hands of us to decide and give acceptance to a world which does not restrict one or the other on the basis of mere identification marks that one chooses to be or applied on or attached by the society.

In order to bring change of course first we should address the matter with a name or a term or symbol, but as the movement goes on, to attain its full achievement, it should be made seen as no different one, not separate one, but as normal, as it is.

Gender identity is not necessary to distinguish people, rather one should be treated as humans, identified as humans, rather than stitching the so-called different – abnormal as queer.

With a sky shining with clouds of hopes above us, a world where gender identity is not necessary, where the ones are free, just the sound of we are humans be loud and get more louder.

Thus, the paper presented a brief note and ideas on the topic queer theory.

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Audit Course ENG1A01

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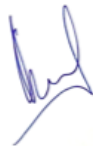
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts

BY

KEERTHANA R

ROLL NO: MPEG15

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies designate a cross-disciplinary enterprise for analysing the conditions that affect the production, reception, and cultural significance of all types of institutions, practices, and products. Among these, literature is accounted as merely one of many forms of cultural “signifying practices”. A chief concern is to specify the functioning of the social, economic, and political forces and power structures that are set to produce the diverse forms of cultural phenomena and endow them with their social “meanings” their acceptance as “truth”, the modes of discourse in which they are discussed and their relative value and status. The cultures according to cultural studies is constantly interacting and changing sets of practices and processes. The field of cultural studies encompasses a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives and practices. Although distinct from the discipline of cultural anthropology and the interdisciplinary field of ethnic studies, cultural studies draws upon and has contributed to each of these fields.

Cultural Studies developed in Britain as a reaction against Liberal humanism and orthodox Marxism. A critical moment at the beginning of cultural studies as a field was when Richard Hoggart used the term in 1964 in founding the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham. The centre would become home to the development of the intellectual orientation that has become known internationally as the "Birmingham School" of cultural studies, thus becoming the world's first institutional home of cultural studies. Hoggart appointed as his assistant Stuart Hall, who would effectively be directing CCCS by 1968. Hall formally assumed the directorship of CCCS in 1971, when Hoggart left Birmingham to become Assistant Director-General of UNESCO. Thereafter, the field of cultural studies became closely associated with Hall's work. In 1979, Hall left Birmingham to accept a prestigious chair in sociology at the Open University, and Richard Johnson took over the directorship of the centre. In the late 1990s, "restructuring" at the University of Birmingham led to the elimination of CCCS and the creation of a new Department of Cultural Studies and Sociology (CSS) in 1999. Then, in 2002, the University's senior administration abruptly announced the disestablishment of CSS, provoking a substantial international outcry.

One of the precursors of modern cultural studies was Roland Barthes, who in *Mythologies*(1957) analysed the social conventions and “codes” that confer meanings in such

diverse social practices as woman's fashions and professional wrestling. Another was the British school of Neo-Marxist studies of literature and art- especially in their popular and working-class modes – as an integral part of the general culture. This movement was inaugurated by Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* (1958) and by Richard Hoggarts' *The Uses Of Literacy* (1958), and it became institutionalised in the influential Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. In the United States, the vogue of cultural studies had its roots mainly in the mode of literary and cultural criticism known as the “ New Historicism”, with its antecedents both in post-structural theorists such as Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault and in the treatment of culture as a set of signifying systems by Clifford Geertz and other cultural anthropologists.

A prominent endeavor in cultural studies is to subvert the distinction in the traditional criticism between “high literature” and “high art” and what was considered the lower forms that appeal to a much larger body of consumers. Typically, cultural studies pay less attention to works in the established literary canon than to popular fiction best selling romances (love stories), journalism, and advertising, together with other arts that have mass appeals such as cartoon comics, film, television “soap operas”, and rock and rap music. And within the area of literature and the more traditional arts a frequent undertaking is to move to the center of cultural study those works that, it is claimed, have been marginalized or excluded by the aesthetic ideology of white European and American males, and particularly the works of women, minority ethnic groups and colonial and postcolonial writers. Radical exponents of cultural studies subordinate literary studies and criticism to political activism; they orient their writings and teaching toward the explicit end of reforming existing power structures and relations, which they consider to be dominated by a privileged gender, race, or class. Cultural studies specify what ideology is operative in a given cultural artefact by lending itself to a multiculturalist programme. It makes people sensitive toward relations of power and domination as encoded in cultural texts and shows how much media culture manipulates and indoctrinates, thus empowering individuals to resist the dominant meaning.

Cultural studies contain a three-fold project of analyzing; the production and political economy of culture, analysis of cultural text, audience reception of texts, and their efforts. Cultural studies emphasize focus on representation which refers to how the world is socially constructed and represented in meaningful ways. Representation is that which connects meaning and language to culture. the representations are produced by profit-motivated corporations. It is in this context, that, cultural studies have developed a form of cultural materialism concerned

with understanding how and why specific meanings are inscribed at the time of production. A central characteristic of cultural studies is its non-reductionism. In this, each culture is viewed as having its particular meanings, rules, and practices, which cannot be reduced to or explained only in terms of some other category or level of social formation. Articulation links cultural or social phenomena. This has been deployed by cultural studies for theorizing the relationships among various components of a social formation. It points towards the formation of temporary unity among elements that do not necessarily have to go together. Articulation refers to expressing/representing as well as 'putting together'. Power, which is a key concept act as a coercive force subordinating one group of people to another and the glue holding the social groups together. Cultural studies is specifically concerned with subordinated groups, mainly class, and then race, gender, age group, nations, etc. Identity is the sense of self and the process of definition of that sense. It is commonly argued that media plays a significant role in this process. One of the processes by which we are formed as persons is marked by the moment of consumption.

Some of the major culture theorists are Richard Hoggart, Mathew Arnold, Stuart Hall, E P Thompson, FR Leavis, Raymond Williams, and Ziauddin Sardar. Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* is an important work for Cultural Studies. It is divided into two parts: 'An "older" order' describing the working-class culture of Hoggart's childhood in the 1930s; and 'Yielding place to new', describing a traditional working-class culture under threat from the new forms of mass entertainment of the 1950s. Objecting to the 'corrupt brightness, of improper appeals and moral evasions' of the mass entertainments of the fifties by using the Lawrencian phrase 'anti life'. The working-class culture of the 1930s is praised, with much nostalgia, for its 'rich full life', for expressing a community feeling, and for self madness. In other words, it was an authentic and organic culture, produced and consumed by the same set of people. The candy floss world of mass culture, for Hoggart, lacks the 'moral tone' by not telling the people what to think, unlike the art of the classical era. This may remind one of the Leavisism that cultural studies tries to replace. The Jamaican-born Stuart Hall, who succeeded Hoggart as the chairman of CCSS is seen as the icon of contemporary cultural studies. In *The Popular Arts* (1963), jointly written with Paddy Whannel, the general thesis of the day, inherited from Matthew Arnold and the American critics of mass culture, that high culture is all good, and the popular culture is all bad is contested. Hall argues, on the contrary, that while most of the high culture is good, some popular culture is also good. The term 'popular arts' is indicative of the strong 'rapport' and jazz music. Accordingly, Hall deconstructs the popular by rejecting the common

denominations of the term as that which sells and that which emerges from people. Hall endeavors to legitimize not only new methods for defining and studying culture but also whole new domains of cultural production. Especially influential are his works on the critical race theory, ethnicity, immigration, and “diasporic identities”, which points to a new direction in British Cultural Studies towards postcolonialism.

E P Thompson is yet another theorist, important to cultural studies in *The Making of the English Working Class*, published in 1967, he argues that the rise of the English working class is a historical phenomenon of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Against the classical Marxist, he argues that class is not a ‘structure or a category’, but the coming together of several disparities and seemingly unconnected events, both in that raw material experience and consciousness. According to him, “ class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs”. He underscores human agency as a major factor that fashions, history, Thompson sees it erroneous to claim that class is a category that exists as a structural determinant. For him, popular culture is a sight of resistance that includes ordinary men and women, their experiences, their values, their ideas, their actions, and their desires. In short, Thompson proposes the authentic working class as a self-made, organic reality by describing the formation of the working class between 1790 and 1830 as the most distinguished popular culture England has known.

Matthew Arnold is the starting point of any discussion of culture, though he is the antithesis that the culture theorist of the twentieth century attempts to refute. He emerges as a culture critic due to *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), his collection of essays on the idea of culture, which dominated the academies till the 1950s. For Arnold, culture is primarily a body of knowledge: ‘ the best that has been thought and said in the world’. The ‘ disinterested and active use of reading, reflection, and observation is the path to understand, to know the best that can be known’. He sees popular culture as a form of anarchy, the opposite of the best that has been thought and said. He sees education as the agent that promotes culture, especially among the working classes, who are to be cultured or civilised, though he uses neutral terms Barbarians (aristocracy), Philistines (middle class), and Populace (working class) to designate all. Arnold hopes that education would bring to the working-class a ‘ culture’ against the temptations of trade unionism, political agitation, and cheap entertainment- the popular culture (which designates social and cultural disorder and decline). In short, culture is a powerful tool to police



the anarchic, mass, working-class elements of any society. The flagbearer of the Arnoldian idea of culture as an elitist form in the twentieth century was F R Leavis. In the context of the 'cultural crisis of the 1930s, Leavis notices an increasing cultural decline in the twentieth century. Again the process of 'standardization and leveling down' in the early phase of the twentieth century in the domain of the mass culture, he urges citizens to be trained to discriminate and to resist. Leavisites, a group consisting of people like F R Leavis, Q D Leavis, and Denys Thompson consider culture as a minority affair: Upon the minority depends our power of profiting from the finest human experience of the past; they keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of the tradition.

Raymond Williams, with his working-class background, confronts this elitist version of culture, in the post-world war era. He develops a Marxist project known as Cultural Materialism. In 'The Analysis of Culture' ( a Chapter in *The Long Revolution*), Williams delineates the three general categories of culture: first, there is the 'ideal', in which culture 'is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values '. Second, there is the ' documentary record: the surviving texts and practices of a culture. Accordingly, in the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded. Third, is the social definition of culture, in which 'culture is a description of a particular way of life. Williams offers the possibility of a democratic definition of culture as the 'lived experience' of ordinary men and women, made in their daily interaction with the texts and practices of everyday life. This is democratic in the sense that it subverts the hierarchical structures of culture that Leavis proposes. *Key Words* published in 1976 and its revision in 1983 is an important work that charts the evolution of the central concepts in culturalism. *The Country and The City* (1973), with chapters about literature that alternate with chapters of social history, deconstructs the binary; that, the countryside is harmonious, the city is evil. *The Marxism and Literature* (1977) Williams sets out his approach to cultural studies, which he calls Cultural Materialism. In short, he insists that culture is ordinary, Williams attempts a historical revolution of the very concept itself of the truly democratic way.

Ziauddin Sardar, a British-Pakistani scholar, award-winning writer, and cultural critic describes the main characteristics of cultural studies in *Introducing Cultural Studies* (2005). Cultural studies aims to examine its subject matter in terms of cultural practices and their relations to power. Its constant goal is to expose power relationships and examine how these relationships influence and shape cultural practices. Culture in cultural studies always performs

two functions: it is both the object of study and the location of political criticism. It aims to be both an intellectual and a pragmatic enterprise. Cultural studies is committed to a moral evaluation of modern society and a radical line of political action. The tradition of cultural studies is not one of the value-free scholarships, but one committed to social reconstruction through critical political involvement. Thus cultural studies aims to understand and change the structures of dominance everywhere, but in industrial capitalist societies in particular.

There are significant differences between British and US Cultural Studies. The British form emerges out of the sociological and materialist studies of people like Williams and Hoggart, who were associated with the Birmingham Centre. By the early 1980s, with Hall at the head of the Centre, new emphases on multiculturalism and the problems of immigration, exile and Diaspora brought Cultural Studies into the post-colonial orbit. Many cultural studies are devoted to the analysis and interpretation of objects and social practices outside the realm of literature and the other arts. These phenomena are viewed as endowed with meanings that are the product of social forces and conventions and may either express or oppose the dominant structure of power in culture. In theory, there are no limits to the kinds of things and patterns of behaviour to which such an analysis of cultural texts may be applied.

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**AUDIT COURSE ENG1 A01**

**Writing Skills**

**Topic: POSTHUMANISM**

**Submitted by : Mini. N. P**

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Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## **POSTHUMANISM / pəʊst'hju:mənɪz(ə)m/**

Posthumanism is a philosophical perspective of how change is enacted in the world. As a conceptualization and historicization of both agency and the “human,” it is different from those conceived through humanism. Whereas a humanist perspective frequently assumes the human is autonomous, conscious, intentional, and exceptional in acts of change, a posthumanist perspective assumes agency is distributed through dynamic forces of which the human participates but does not completely intend or control. Posthumanist philosophy constitutes the human as: (a) physically, chemically, and biologically enmeshed and dependent on the environment; (b) moved to action through interactions that generate affects, habits, and reason; and (c) possessing no attribute that is uniquely human but is instead made up of a larger evolving ecosystem. There is little consensus in posthumanist scholarship about the degree to which a conscious human subject can actively create change, but the human does participate in change.

Posthumanism or post-humanism (meaning "after humanism" or "beyond humanism") is a term with at least seven definitions according to philosopher Francesca Ferrando.

1. Antihumanism: any theory that is critical of traditional humanism and traditional ideas about humanity and the human condition.
2. Cultural posthumanism: a branch of cultural theory critical of the foundational assumptions of humanism and its legacy that examines and questions the historical notions of "human" and "human nature", often challenging typical notions of human subjectivity and embodiment and strives to move beyond archaic concepts of "human nature" to develop ones which constantly adapt to contemporary technoscientific knowledge.
3. Philosophical posthumanism: a philosophical direction that draws on cultural posthumanism, the philosophical strand examines the ethical implications of expanding the circle of moral concern and extending subjectivities beyond the human species.
4. Posthuman condition: the deconstruction of the human condition by critical theorists.
5. Posthuman transhumanism: a transhuman ideology and movement which seeks to develop and make available technologies that eliminate aging, enable immortality and greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities, in order to achieve a "posthuman future".
6. AI takeover: A variant of transhumanism in which humans will not be enhanced, but rather eventually replaced by artificial intelligences. Some philosophers, including Nick Land, promote the view that humans should embrace and accept their eventual demise. This is related to the view of "cosmism", which supports the building of strong artificial intelligence even if it may entail the end of humanity, as in their view it "would be a cosmic tragedy if humanity freezes evolution at the puny human level".
7. Voluntary Human Extinction, which seeks a "posthuman future" that in this case is a future without humans.

### Philosophical posthumanism

Philosopher Ted Schatzki suggests there are two varieties of posthumanism of the philosophical kind: One, which he calls 'objectivism', tries to counter the overemphasis of the subjective or intersubjective that pervades humanism, and emphasises the role of the nonhuman agents, whether they be animals and plants, or computers or other things. A second prioritizes practices, especially social practices, over individuals (or individual subjects) which, they say, constitute the individual.

There may be a third kind of posthumanism, propounded by the philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd. Though he did not label it as 'posthumanism', he made an extensive and penetrating immanent critique of Humanism, and then constructed a philosophy that presupposed neither Humanist, nor Scholastic, nor Greek thought but started with a different religious ground motive. Dooyeweerd prioritized law and meaningfulness as that which enables humanity and all else to exist, behave, live, occur, etc. "Meaning is the being of all that has been created," Dooyeweerd wrote, "and the nature even of our selfhood." Both human and nonhuman alike function subject to a common 'law-side', which is diverse, composed of a number of distinct law-spheres or aspects. The temporal being of both human and non-human is multi-aspectual; for example, both plants and humans are bodies, functioning in the biotic aspect, and both computers and humans function in the formative and lingual aspect, but humans function in the aesthetic, juridical, ethical and faith aspects too. The Dooyeweerdian version is able to incorporate and integrate both the objectivist version and the practices version, because it allows nonhuman agents their own subject-functioning in various aspects and places emphasis on aspectual functioning.

### Emergence of philosophical posthumanism

Among the theorists are philosophers, such as Robert Pepperell, who have written about a "posthuman condition", which is often substituted for the term "posthumanism". Posthumanism differs from classical humanism by relegating humanity back to one of many natural species, thereby rejecting any claims founded on anthropocentric dominance. According to this claim, humans have no inherent rights to destroy nature or set themselves above it in ethical considerations a priori. Human knowledge is also reduced to a less controlling position, previously seen as the defining aspect of the world. Human rights exist on a spectrum with animal rights and posthuman rights. The limitations and fallibility of human intelligence are confessed, even though it does not imply abandoning the rational tradition of humanism. Proponents of a posthuman discourse, suggest that innovative advancements and emerging technologies have transcended the traditional model of the human, as proposed by Descartes among others associated with philosophy of the Enlightenment period. In contrast to humanism, the discourse of posthumanism seeks to redefine the boundaries surrounding modern philosophical understanding of the human. Posthumanism represents an evolution of thought beyond that of the contemporary social boundaries and is predicated on the seeking of truth within a postmodern context. In so doing, it rejects previous attempts to establish 'anthropological universals' that are imbued with anthropocentric assumptions. Recently, critics have sought to describe the emergence of posthumanism as a critical moment in modernity, arguing for the origins of key posthuman ideas in modern fiction, in Nietzsche, or in a modernist response to the crisis of historicity.

### Contemporary posthuman Discourse

Posthumanistic discourse aims to open up spaces to examine what it means to be human and critically question the concept of "the human" in light of current cultural and historical contexts. In her book *How We Became Posthuman*, N. Katherine Hayles, writes about the struggle between different versions of the posthuman as it continually co-evolves alongside intelligent machines. Such coevolution, according to some strands of the posthuman discourse, allows one to extend their subjective understandings of real experiences beyond the boundaries of embodied existence. According to Hayles's view of posthuman, often referred to as technological posthumanism, visual perception and digital representations thus paradoxically become ever more salient. Even as one seeks to extend knowledge by deconstructing perceived boundaries, it is these same boundaries that make knowledge acquisition possible. The use of technology in a contemporary society is thought to complicate this relationship.

Hayles discusses the translation of human bodies into information (as suggested by Hans Moravec) in order to illuminate how the boundaries of our embodied reality have been compromised in the current age and how narrow definitions of humanness no longer apply. Because of this, according to Hayles, posthumanism is characterized by a loss of subjectivity based on bodily boundaries. This strand of posthumanism, including the changing notion of subjectivity and the disruption of ideas concerning what it means to be human, is often associated with Donna Haraway's concept of the cyborg. However, Haraway has distanced herself from posthumanistic discourse due to other theorists' use of the term to promote utopian views of technological innovation to extend the human biological capacity (even though these notions would more correctly fall into the realm of transhumanism). While posthumanism is a broad and complex ideology, it has relevant implications today and for the future. It attempts to redefine social structures without inherently humanly or even biological origins, but rather in terms of social and psychological systems where consciousness and communication could potentially exist as unique disembodied entities. Questions subsequently emerge with respect to the current use and the future of technology in shaping human existence, as do new concerns with regards to language, symbolism, subjectivity, phenomenology, ethics, justice and creativity.

### Relationship with transhumanism

Sociologist James Hughes comments that there is considerable confusion between the two terms. In the introduction to their book on post- and transhumanism, Robert Ranisch and Stefan Sorgner address the source of this confusion, stating that posthumanism is often used as an umbrella term that includes both transhumanism and critical posthumanism. Although both subjects relate to the future of humanity, they differ in their view of anthropocentrism. Pramod Nayar, author of *Posthumanism*, states that posthumanism has two main branches: ontological and critical. Ontological posthumanism is synonymous with transhumanism. The subject is regarded as "an intensification of humanism." Transhumanist thought suggests that humans are not post human yet, but that human enhancement, often through technological advancement and application, is the passage of becoming post human. Transhumanism retains humanism's focus on the *Homo sapiens* as the center of the world but also considers technology to be an integral aid to human progression. Critical posthumanism, however, is opposed to these views. Critical posthumanism "rejects both human exceptionalism (the idea that humans are unique creatures) and human

instrumentalism (that humans have a right to control the natural world).” These contrasting views on the importance of human beings are the main distinctions between the two subjects. Transhumanism is also more ingrained in popular culture than critical posthumanism, especially in science fiction. The term is referred to by Pramod Nayar as "the pop posthumanism of cinema and pop culture."

## Criticism

Some critics have argued that all forms of posthumanism, including transhumanism, have more in common than their respective proponents realize. Linking these different approaches, Paul James suggests that 'the key political problem is that, in effect, the position allows the human as a category of being to flow down the plughole of history': This is ontologically critical. Unlike the naming of 'postmodernism' where the 'post' does not infer the end of what it previously meant to be human (just the passing of the dominance of the modern) the posthumanists are playing a serious game where the human, in all its ontological variability, disappears in the name of saving something unspecified about us as merely a motley co-location of individuals and communities. However, some posthumanists in the humanities and the arts are critical of transhumanism (the brunt of Paul James's criticism), in part, because they argue that it incorporates and extends many of the values of Enlightenment humanism and classical liberalism, namely scientism, according to performance philosopher Shannon Bell. While many modern leaders of thought are accepting of nature of ideologies described by posthumanism, some are more skeptical of the term. Donna Haraway, the author of *A Cyborg Manifesto*, has outspokenly rejected the term, though acknowledges a philosophical alignment with posthumanism. Haraway opts instead for the term of companion species, referring to nonhuman entities with which humans coexist.

## Fukuyama's Non-Posthuman Future

Fukuyama's (2002) apocalyptic tone – which began as a re-working of his End of History argument – is later reinforced by his article in *Foreign Policy* (2004), where he announces that transhumanism is the 'world's most dangerous idea'. This intervention accentuates the rich confusion over how the concepts of post- and trans- humanism differ, which reinforces my claim that Fukuyama is actually interested in neither of them. Rather, he is concerned about medical enhancements generally and, specifically, the politics of those (groups) who would argue on their behalf. It is evident that he considers the ethics of biotechnology as inextricable from the broader political economy of scientific research. Indeed, Fukuyama is concerned that a commercial model of biotechnology will overwhelm an ethics based on humanitarian concerns and that this will, in turn, corrupt his Factor X, ushering in a posthuman future. For Fukuyama, this prospect of biopolitical transcendence is alarming – and relevant to his more established expertise – because it signals the destabilisation of established political boundaries and processes. Thus, Fukuyama's thesis on posthumanism begins with an analysis of political history and a projection of its future within a permissive, biotechnological world. Further evidence of this is found manifest in *Fukuyama and Furger* (2007), which begins by drawing attention the political context of the subject where the aforementioned polarisation of moral perspectives has shaped the political terms by which the



debate about a posthuman future has developed. The authors note that: ‘there are several deeply held alternative views on this issue, over which it is not likely that there will be consensus any time in the near future’ (p.45) and their provocative title *Beyond Bioethics*, is further evidence of the perceived limits of ethics within this debate about the future. In sum, Fukuyama (2002) argues that a fixed, if inarticulate, conceptualisation of the human is crucial to the organisation of society. Yet, his argument is only ever a thesis on the commercial character of emerging biotechnology, rather than the morality of posthumanism (as human enhancement). At most, it re-asserts the fundamental values of humanism, rather than establish why it is that this prospect should be considered a posthumanism future. Characterising posthumanism as the absence of Factor X will simply not suffice. Thus, for Fukuyama, the concept of posthumanism is invoked and imagined rather than characterised by his analysis. His use of the word posthumanism is expected to do the work of establishing what is immoral about human enhancement.

Yet, this plausible notion of posthumanism as ‘the end of...that long-held belief in the infallibility of human power and the arrogant belief in our superiority and uniqueness’ is later diminished when Pepperell (2005) appears comfortable to discuss posthumanism as if it were a temporal, progressive concept – ie. humanity moves from transhumanism to posthumanism – and largely about using technology to achieve even greater productivity or functionality. This move towards something more like transhumanism betrays the particular history of posthumanism. These two examples of how posthumanism has been positioned within the literature and the public gaze are indicative of the multiple meanings and expectations that are inscribed onto the concept. Fukuyama (2002) uses posthumanism to constitute what people should consider as the immorality of human enhancement. He achieves this by invoking the idea that the posthuman future will imply the redundancy of humanity. In contrast, Pepperell invites a view of posthumanism that involves embracing human enhancement albeit in a way that rejects traditional technological determinism. Other recent visions of posthumanity – such as Stock (2002) – can more easily be characterised as transhuman and much of what I argue here claims that there is both common and distinct ground between these concepts. Crucially, the history of posthumanism should not be seen as the same as the history of transhumanism (Bostrom, 2005) and the reason for this is revealed when examining their conceptual trajectory within the literature. While one might identify that their common emphasis on technology is indicative of their sameness, theorists from each tradition have made quite different value claims associated with the relationship between technology and humanity. Moreover, authors from each tradition arrive at a concern over medical ethics from quite different points of origin. To elaborate further on this, the next section of this chapter examines other visions of posthumanism, which have emerged within critical theory and cultural studies, rather than philosophy or bioethics. Indeed, the literature that has appeared to speak more explicitly to theorising posthumanism has come from studies in English literature, cultural studies, and communications

## Posthumanism in Cultural Theory

### *Posthuman Bodies:*

The origins of what might be termed a cultural posthumanism are revealed within Halberstam & Livingstone’s *Posthuman Bodies* (1995). In this text, one foresees the integration of

various cultural studies' discourses within a posthuman movement. The various essays of this book look to a range of cultural texts such as film to advance an understanding of posthumanism. Halberstam and Livingstone (1995) outline that their objective is to address challenges to 'the coherence of the human body'. Moreover, the posthuman discussed within the book refers not to 'some subsequent development state' to humanity, but its 'collapses into sub-, inter-, trans-, pre-, anti-'. In their view 'posthuman bodies are the causes and effects of postmodern relations of power and pleasure, virtuality and reality, sex and its consequences'. Moreover, they emphasise that, The posthuman does not necessitate the obsolescence of the human; it does not represent an evolution or devolution of the human. Rather it participates in re-distributions of difference and identity. Their approach to posthumanism provides some explanation for why it is necessary to tell the combined histories of philosophical and cultural posthumanism, in order to offer a comprehensive analysis of its past. For, it would appear that there are quite different expectations and imaginations about this imminent condition.

### The Biopolitics of Posthumanism

The history of posthumanism first requires distinguishing the concept from a range of related concepts with which its history is intertwined. Thus, one must first recognise that an historical analysis of posthumanism is not synonymous with the history of medical enhancements. Indeed, claims pertaining to posthumanism are not even wholly consistent with or connected to discussions about enhancements at all. To this extent, there is no precise posthumanist claim that can be made about the value of medical enhancements, though the philosophical work of posthumanism does raise questions about the legitimacy of limiting medical interventions to merely therapeutic applications. By extension, the history of posthumanism is neither synonymous with the history of technology, nor is it found exclusively within philosophical inquiries into technology. Certainly, technological change has become a core component of contemporary imaginations about posthumanity. However, I will argue that imaginations about how humanity is transformed by technology are specific, historically contingent manifestations of posthuman ideas. Moreover, these ideas are more deeply rooted in claims about such concepts as becoming, alterity, transgressions of boundaries and the position of humanity in relation to these concepts. From this interpretation of posthumanism, one can more fully appreciate its growing prominence as a supportive frame for discussions about medical enhancements and, more generally, its appeal as a concept through which a number of contemporary ideas about ethics can be framed. For instance, posthumanism is consistent with perspectives in animal ethics that seek to diminish the meaning and value of claims that species boundaries should have any bearing on our moral commitment to other life forms. This broad understanding also offers insights into how contemporary visions of posthumanism are informed by conversations on cyborgs or automata, which have often involved a reflective stance on humanity's distinct and special place in the world. In this fashion, a crucial premise of posthumanism is its critical stance towards the prominence afforded to humanity in the natural order. In this sense, the 'post' of posthumanism need not imply the absence of humanity or moving beyond it in some biological or evolutionary manner. Rather, the starting point should be an attempt to understand what has been omitted from an anthropocentric worldview, which includes coming to terms with how the Enlightenment centring of humanity has been revealed as inadequate.

## Posthumanism in Education

Critical posthumanism in education proposes a response to the looming ecological disaster by developing an ethical subjectivity of relatedness. It points to the devastating and unsustainable effects of human-centered domination of “lesser” humans, the nonhuman living, and the environment resulting in the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene is a posthumanist boundary condition that exploits powers from multiple heterogenous entities and that approaches the limit of sustainable living. Critical posthumanism is a timely and positive intervention that criticizes the forms of domination originating from humanism and from other posthumanisms. These dominating powers result in the dehumanizing and environmentally devastating effects of techno- and bio-capitalism. Posthumanist critique is an affirmative ethical process that asserts the vibrancy of matter and life. It is based on an ethics of assembling, the principle of becoming sustainable of the more-than-human world. While critical posthumanism acknowledges that the analysis of the effects of power is important, it realizes that a difference can only be made when the entanglement of humans with all the living and non living others is fully recognized. Critical posthumanist education consists of experiments that explore how subjectivities could be opened to the affects of multiple others in the joyful processes of mutual becoming. The enhancement of affective relations “queery” humanity as such, identities, divisions such as “gender” and “race”, binaries such as human-animal, human-nature and human-technology. To promote mutual becoming, education produces subjectivities that are vigilant to the new ways the Capitalocene (“society of control”) both appropriates and suppresses the vitality of assemblages and the creativity of becomings.

We stand today at the threshold of a crisis and a reimagination of ourselves. We find ourselves in the thick of a global climate crisis that scrambles and disrupts our geological foundations, unleashing frequent mass-scale life-threatening events.

The tight co-dependence of global psychosystems and ecosystems are forcing a transversal splicing of life-elements leading to unprecedented hybridities, such as our present protracted pandemic. These conditions force us to rethink our future. Such a rethinking cannot be a set of surface patches to help us return to our comfortable human business as usual, it needs to address the unprecedented nature of our historical location, and our philosophical, psychological, political, cultural and technological norms of human existence. Posthumanism promises new possibilities and directions in this context. It constitutes a revised understanding of the planetary situation helping us to re-envision our imminent future.

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# Audit course ENG1A01


## Writing Skills

Submitted in partial fulfillment of  
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Minu Farisha

Roll no 17

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**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## Introduction

### Feminism and emergence of feminism

In its broadest sense, feminism seeks to achieve women's equality in a world where historically men have held power in the economic, political, personal, and social spheres. The term "feminism" originated from the French word "feminisme," coined by the utopian socialist Charles Fourier, and was first used in English in the 1890s, in association with the movement for equal political and legal rights for women. Feminism takes a number of forms in a variety of disciplines such as feminist geography, feminist history and feminist literary criticism. Feminism has changed aspects of Western society. Feminist political activists have been concerned with issues such as individual autonomy, political rights, social freedom, economic independence, abortion and reproductive rights, divorce, workplace rights (including maternity leave and equal pay), and education; and putting an end to domestic violence, gender stereotypes, discrimination, sexism, objectification, and prostitution.

The feminist movement is generally broken down into three waves, beginning in the 19th century. These early efforts are known as first wave feminism. This period of the feminist movement focused primarily on legal rights, such as women's right to vote and to own property. Second wave feminism took hold in the early 1960s. This stage focused on inequalities in daily life, such as sexuality, family, reproductive rights, and women's rights in the workplace. Feminist theatre developed during the era of second wave feminism. In the 1990s, third wave feminism developed and was largely based on intersectionality, or the idea that race, gender, class, and ability all intersect.

Theater has long been a vehicle for social change around the world. Feminist theatre intervenes in social identity assumptions, dissolves the binary and creates equality as an alternative to the male, but also to the normative gaze. Here, the production and writing are characterized by women's consciousness of themselves as women. Transformation is employed in both script and staging as a structural and ideological alternative to recognizing and constructing female characters in the subject position. It is the dramaturgy in which art is inextricably linked to the position of woman as a woman; Performances (both written and performed) that deconstruct sexual disparities and thereby challenge patriarchal power.

## Feminist Theatre Background

Women were given strong female leads in the works of history (including Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth!), but women weren't actually allowed to play that role, it was given to men. When women finally began performing on stage in the 16th century, they faced physical abuse and public ridicule. The great rise of women in the theater began to make a tangible difference. Women playwrights began to write their own stories about complex female characters, their relationships with each other and their relationships with men, and their abuses at the hands of men. Second wave feminism brought even greater advances in the female role in the theatre. Methuen Drama created a series entitled "Women's Plays" in 1982, which featured only plays written by women and highlighted them to illuminate the work.

Some of the major circumstances that lead to the feminist theatre can be pointed out as :-

- An Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Dramatists published in 1977 featured 324 playwrights; only 34 of whom were women.
- At the Royal Court , supposedly the leading Radical Theatre, between 1956 and 1975 only 17 of 250 plays produced were written or directed by women .
- Before January 1981 the National Theatre had never in its 17 years of existence, had a play directed by woman.
- Of 40 playwrights being published by Eyre Mathuen, the leading publisher of plays, only one was woman - Churchill.

## **Feminist Theatre**

Several women's theaters began in the 1970s and 1980s, as a result of the political and social activism of the time. Early leaders included Michelene Wandor, Martha Boesing, Caryl Churchill and The Women's Theater Group (renamed the Sphinx Theater Company in 1999) in London. Feminist or women's theater was a specific and new type of theater in the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, the theater genre itself has been open to the gaze of women. Some felt that having a separate sex was no longer necessary due to greater parity. Many groups withdrew. Yet even with this greater parity, male roles continue to outweigh female roles in mainstream theater, and the situations and challenges women face remain murky. There are currently a large number of theaters that are explicitly feminist, explicitly women's theater or explicitly define themselves as inclusive women's perspectives. In order to overcome this male perspective, feminist theater has questioned both the content and the form of plays.

In terms of content, feminist theater has focused on the following areas:

- Examining sexual and gender roles, often inversion or ridicule .
- Telling stories of influential but often ignored historical figures.
- Telling the unjust stories of women who have been oppressed .
- Criticizing the systems of power that keep women oppressed.

In terms of form, feminist theatre challenges all aspects of the production process, from plot structures to casting and rehearsal processes.

A few features of feminist theatre include the following:

- Inclusive -feminist theater seeks to include many different intersectional voices in the stories being told and throughout the rehearsal process.
- Collaboration -rejects hierarchical authority; Theater directors try to empower their actors by asking their opinion and letting them choose the production.
- Alternative narrative structures -tend to reject linear narratives, often opting for open-ended, circular, or episodic plots.
- Women-centered - it places female characters at the center of the action, often in ensemble casts rather than casts where there is one single clear protagonist.

Caryl Churchill has been a part of the movement since it began in the 1970s. One of her notable productions, *Top Girls*, is a non-linear plot that follows the story of a career-driven woman, Marlene, in the 1980s. Marlene hosts a magical dinner party of important women from history. By talking with these women, Marlene attempts to find out what it means to her to be successful and how to navigate the struggle between individual success and collective progress for women as a whole.



## Janet Browns definition of Feminist Theatre

Janet Brown, Director of Theater in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Hartford, has published the first textbook on contemporary feminist drama. Although the second wave of the feminist movement has been building in the United States for almost two decades, feminist works have not exactly dominated the American scene. Rather than examining the works of playwrights who identify themselves as feminists, Brown offers a definition of feminist drama drawn from the writings of feminist literary theorists and critics. Using a rather narrow critical method, she applies her theory to five feminist theatre groups to determine the extent to which theater is, was, and can be a rhetorical device of feminism.

According to Brown, the central rhetorical motif of the feminist drama is "a woman's struggle for autonomy in the face of a sexist and oppressive society". Brown uses Kenneth Burke's theory that "a rhetorical or persuasive motive inspires the symbolic act that is literature" as described in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*. Following Burke, Brown looks for "associative clusters" in both ostensibly feminist and those she considers feminist that reveal a pattern of symbolic action and thus the rhetorical motif of the work. Brown credits the work of other feminist critics such as Kate Millett, Ellen Moers, and Suzanne Juhasz, as well as theorists on the nature of women's oppression such as Simone de Beauvoir and Mary Daly. Brown draws from theorists the notion that woman's powerlessness is reflected in "the portrayal of the unjust sociosexual hierarchy" and that women are not portrayed as autonomous because they are perceived as objects and only in relation to men.

## Caryl Churchill

Caryl Lesley Churchill (born 3 September 1938) is a British playwright known for dramatising the abuses of power, for her use of non-naturalistic techniques, and for her exploration of sexual politics and feminist themes. Celebrated for works such as *Cloud 9* (1979), *Top Girls* (1982), *Serious Money* (1987), *Blue Heart* (1997), *Far Away* (2000), and *A Number* (2002), she has been described as "one of Britain's greatest poets and innovators for the contemporary stage". In a 2011 dramatists' poll by *The Village Voice*, five out of the 20 polled writers listed Churchill as the greatest living playwright.

Through the overt theatrics she brings to the conventions of role-playing, Churchill creates movement in an area of theatrical production hitherto dominated by the fixed relationship between actor and role. In most traditional theatre, and particularly in the social realist conventions adopted by Ibsen and Shaw, the actor/role relationship has been defined as a binary and hierarchical opposition. Hierarchical opposition, as Hélène Cixous pointed out in , constitutes one of the most important thought patterns in the patriarchal society . This separation of various phenomena into unequal opposite pairs, such as sun and moon, culture and nature, mind and body, separates everything in the universe into two categories, male and female. Feminist psychologists such as Nancy Chodorow have theorized the function of such opposition, explaining that the attainment of subjectivity in patriarchy depends on the denial and repression of anything defined as non-male. The player/role opposition fleshes out this pattern: its true male/false human duality replicates and affirms the essential division of patriarchy between human and non-human.

## Some of Feminist Theatre works :

1. The Vagina Monologues by Eve Ensler
2. Top Girls by Caryl Churchill
3. Dusa, Fish, Stas and Vi by Pam Gems
4. Rapture, Blister, Burn by Gina Gionfriddo
5. The How and the Why by Sarah Treem
6. Trifles by Susan Glaspell
7. The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton
- 8.. A Raisin in the Sun By Lorraine Hansberry
9. Tea By Velina Hasu Houston
- 10.Lights Out By Manjula Padmanabhan
11. Fefu and Her Friends By Maria Irene Fornés
12. In the Next Room (or the Vibrator Play) By Sarah Ruhl

One of the earliest feminist theatre in England was the Sphinx Theatre Company (originally called the Women's Theatre Group). Another theater in Adelaide that started in the 1970s also called itself the Women's Theatre Group.

## **Conclusion**

Today, feminist theater is officially recognized as a distinct form of theater whose history and theory are published in scholarly journals. Women's narratives have been preserved through the publication of books and anthologies, which have been translated into various languages to reach a wider audience. The growth of female-centric storytelling not only offered a different perspective on women's issues than male voices on the same issues, but also a more authentic portrayal of women, their everyday lives, their sexuality and desires, and their interactions with other women.

As a result, a new type of audience emerged, one that was interested in women's issues and were often themselves women. Besides expressing women's issues, the feminist theatre movement is also about encouraging more women to enter the field of theatre as creators, writers, and artists.

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# Audit Course

**Topic: Postmodern fiction**

Submitted by: Nashva Femin Roll no : 17

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

Postmodern literature is a form of literature that is characterized by the use of metafiction, unreliable narration, self-reflexivity, intertextuality, and which often thematizes both historical and political issues. This style of experimental literature emerged strongly in the United States in the 1960s through the writings of authors such as Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon, William Gaddis, Philip K. Dick, Kathy Acker, and John Barth. Postmodernists often challenge authorities, which has been seen as a symptom of the fact that this style of literature first emerged in the context of political tendencies in the 1960s. This inspiration is, among other things, seen through how postmodern literature is highly self-reflexive about the political issues it speaks to. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, modernist literature was the central literary movement. However, after World War II, a new school of literary theory, deemed postmodernism, began to rise.

Postmodern literature is a literary movement that eschews absolute meaning and instead emphasizes play,

fragmentation, metafiction, and intertextuality. The literary movement rose to prominence in the late 1950s and early 1960s as a reaction to modernist literature's quest for meaning in light of the significant human rights violations of World War II. Common examples of postmodern literature include *Gravity's Rainbow* by Thomas Pynchon, *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, and *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller. Literary theorists that crystalized postmodernity in literature include Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Jorge Luis Borges, Fredric Jameson, Michel Foucault, and Jean-François Lyotard.

Postmodern authors tend to reject outright meanings in their novels, stories and poems, and, instead, highlight and celebrate the possibility of multiple meanings, or a complete lack of meaning, within 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.



Here are some examples of stylistic techniques that are often used in postmodern literature:

- Pastiche: The taking of various ideas from previous writings and literary styles and pasting them together to make new styles.
- : The acknowledgment of previous literary works within another literary work.
- Metafiction: The act of writing about writing or making readers aware of the fictional nature of the very fiction they're reading.
- Temporal Distortion: The use of non-linear timelines and narrative techniques in a story.
- Minimalism: The use of characters and events which are decidedly common and non-exceptional characters.
- Maximalism: Disorganized, lengthy, highly detailed writing.
- Magical Realism: The introduction of impossible or unrealistic events into a narrative that is otherwise realistic.

- Faction: The mixing of actual historical events with fictional events without clearly defining what is factual and what is fictional.
- Reader Involvement: Often through direct address to the reader and the open acknowledgment of the fictional nature of the events being described.

Many critics and scholars find it best to define postmodern literature against the popular literary style that came before it: modernism. In many ways, postmodern literary styles and ideas serve to dispute, reverse, mock and reject the principles of modernist literature. Postmodern literature's precursor, modernist (or modern) literature, emphasized a quest for meaning, suggesting the author as an enlightenment-style creator of order and mourning the chaotic world—examples include James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf.

## **5 Characteristics of Postmodern Literature**

Postmodern literature builds on the following core ideas:

### **Embrace of randomness:**

Postmodern works reject the idea of absolute meaning and instead embrace randomness and disorder. Postmodern novels often employ unreliable narrators to further muddy the waters with extreme subjectivity and prevent readers from finding meaning during the story.

### **Playfulness:**

While modernist writers mourned the loss of order, postmodern writers revel in it, often using tools like black humor, wordplay, irony, and other techniques of playfulness to dizzy readers and muddle the story.

### **Fragmentation:**

Postmodernist literature took modernism's fragmentation and expanded on it, moving literary works more toward collage-style forms, temporal distortion, and significant jumps in character and place.

### **Metafiction:**

Postmodern literature emphasized meaninglessness and play. Postmodern writers began to experiment with more meta elements in their novels and short stories, drawing attention to their work's artifice and reminding readers that the author isn't an authority figure.

### **Intertextuality:**

As a form of collage-style writing, many postmodern authors wrote their work overtly in dialogue with other texts. The techniques they employed included pastiche (or imitating other authors' styles) and the combination of high and low culture (writing that tackles subjects that were previously considered inappropriate for literature).

Many different authors have been labeled postmodernist. These writers include Thomas Berger, Richard Brautigan, Don DeLillo, William Gaddis, Vladimir Nabokov, and Thomas Pynchon, Peter Ackroyd, Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie, and Umberto Eco. Most critical discussion, however, focuses on American writers publishing since the late 1950's.

**Audit Course ENG1A01**  
**WRITING SKILLS**  
**BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of The requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

**BY**  
**NEHLA .P**  
**ROLL NO: 19**

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## INTRODUCTION

The Black Arts Movement was a Black Nationalism movement that focused on music, literature, drama, and the visual arts made up of Black artists and intellectuals. This was the cultural section of the Black Power Movement, in that its participants shared many of the ideologies of Black self-determination, political beliefs, and African American culture. The Black Art Movement started in 1965 when poet Amiri Baraka established the Black Arts Repertory Theater in Harlem, New York, as a place for artistic expression. Artists associated with this movement include Audre Lorde, Ntozake Shange, James Baldwin, Gil Scott-Heron, and Thelonious Monk. Records at the National Archives related to the Black Arts Movement primarily focus on individual artists and their interaction with various Federal agencies. The poet Imamu Amiri Baraka is widely considered the father of the Black Arts Movement, which began in 1965 and ended in 1975. After Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965, those who embraced the Black Power movement often fell into one of two camps: the Revolutionary Nationalists, who were best represented by the Black Panther Party, and the Cultural Nationalists. The latter group called for the creation of poetry, novels, visual arts, and theater to reflect pride in black history and culture. This new emphasis was an affirmation of the autonomy of black artists to create black art for black people as a means to awaken black consciousness and achieve liberation.

The movement had its greatest impact in theater and poetry. Although it began in the New York/Newark area, it soon spread to Chicago, Illinois, Detroit, Michigan, and San Francisco, California. In Chicago, Hoyt Fuller and John Johnson edited and published *Negro Digest* (later *Black World*), which promoted the work of new black literary artists. Also in Chicago, Third World Press published black writers and poets. In Detroit, Lotus Press and Broadside Press republished older works of black poetry. These Midwestern-publishing houses brought recognition to edgy, experimental poets. New black theater groups were also established. In 1969, Robert Chrisman and Nathan Hare established *The Black Scholar*, which was the first scholarly journal to promote black studies within academia.

Amiri Baraka was born Everett LeRoi Jones in Newark, New Jersey on October 7, 1934. In 1954, he earned a bachelor's degree in English at Howard University. Following graduation, Jones joined the military and served three years in the Air Force. After receiving an honorable discharge, he settled in Greenwich Village in New York and began to interact with various musicians and artists. While living in New York, Jones became a well-respected novelist and poet for his writings on Black liberation and white racism. He also met Hettie Cohen, a Jewish writer. Later on, the two married and co-edited the literary magazine *Yugen*. They also founded Totem Press, which focused on publishing the works of political activists. Jones taught at several colleges and universities before changing his name to Amiri Baraka. Baraka continued to publish literary works for over 50 years until his death in 2014. Records at the National Archives pertaining to Amiri Baraka include a sound recording of Baraka reciting a poem that was considered an un-American activity. African Americans had always made valuable artistic contributions to American culture. However, due to brutalities of slavery and the systemic racism of Jim Crow, these contributions often went unrecognized. Despite continued oppression, African-American artists continued to create literature and art that would reflect their experiences. A high point for these artists was the Harlem Renaissance—a literary era that spotlighted black people.

Marguerite “Maya” Johnson was born in St. Louis, Missouri. She was a writer, poet, activist, and actor. Angelou was exposed to the Civil Rights Movement and African culture during the 1960s. In the 1970s, she began her writing career, focusing on stories and anecdotes based on her life, Blackness, and feminism. James Arthur Baldwin was born August 2, 1924 in Harlem, New York. After graduating from high school in 1942, Baldwin began writing. In 1953, he published his first novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. During the height of the struggle for Black equality, Baldwin was widely known for his militant essays that illustrated the social and economic plight of Black Americans. His writings addressed the issues of race but also mentioned the complexity of homosexuality and sexual orientation among the Black experience in the U.S. After the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, Baldwin returned to France and continued writing until his death in 1987. Records at the National Archives pertaining to James Baldwin include moving images from the Peace Corps, the Agency for International Development and an interview with Pulitzer Prize winner Gwendolyn Brooks.

## BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT

The Black Arts movement was a controversial literary faction that emerged in the mid-1960s as the artistic and aesthetic arm of the Black Power movement, a militant political operation that rejected the integrationist purposes and practices of the Civil Rights movement that preceded it. The Black Arts movement was one of the only American literary movements to merge art with a political agenda. Because poems were short and could be recited at rallies and other political activities to incite and move a crowd, poetry was the most popular literary genre of the Black Arts movement, followed closely by drama. Poet, playwright, activist, and major figure of the Black Arts movement, Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones) coined the term Black Arts when he established his Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School in New York City's Harlem. Although the Black Arts movement began its decline during the mid-1970s, at the same time as the Black Power movement began its descent, it introduced a new breed of black poets and a new brand of black poetry. It also inspired and energized already established poets like Gwendolyn Brooks and Robert Hayden. The Black Arts movement created many poetic innovations in form, language, and style that have influenced the work of many of today's spoken word artists and socially conscious rap lyricists.

The poets most often associated with the Black Arts movement include Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Etheridge Knight, Nikki Giovanni, Larry Neal, Mari Evans, Don L. Lee (now known as Haki Madhubuti), Carolyn Rodgers, Marvin X, Jayne Cortez, Askia Toure, and June Jordan. A number of important African-American playwrights, fiction writers, and scholars also made significant contributions to the Black Arts movement, creatively as well as philosophically and theoretically, by defining and outlining the objectives and criteria of the movement and its "black aesthetic." Several publishing houses and workshops were founded during the period of the movement, and several magazines and journals emerged, all of which provided a vehicle for the literary work of Black Arts poets. Literary publications, such as *Freedom ways*, *Negro Digest* (later renamed *Black World*), the *Black Scholar*, the *Journal of Black Poetry*, and *Liberator*, brought Black Arts movement poets to a larger audience when more established publications rejected their work. Two important publishing houses—Dudley Randall's Broadside Press in Detroit and Madhubuti's Third World Press in Chicago—were also instrumental in helping to introduce new poets and to disseminate their work. Umbra Workshop



(1962–65), composed of a group of black writers, produced *Umbra Magazine* and gained significance as a literary group that created a distinct voice and often challenged mainstream standards concerning literature. Lastly, Baraka's Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School, founded in 1965, brought free plays, poetry readings, and musical performances to the people of Harlem, thereby carrying out the idea of art as a communal experience.

The Black Power movement, from which the Black Arts movement derived, sought to empower African- American communities economically and politically by relying solely on resources within the black community. It also sought to celebrate blackness and restore positive images of black people from the negative stereotyping that took place in the larger society. Thus slogans, such as "Black Is Beautiful," were prominent during the time. Members of organizations, such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), under the leadership of Stokely Carmichael, and the Black Panther Party, founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, demanded racial equality, not through the methods of passive resistance associated with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but "by any means necessary" (a slogan of the party), including "violent revolution," as stated by Malcolm X. Moreover, "black cultural nationalism," the belief that blacks and whites had two separate worldviews and outlooks on life, was a prominent idea in both the Black Power and the Black Arts movements.

As a result, Black Arts movement writers experimented with methods of artistic expression that were characteristic of African-American culture and experience. First, all of the poetry was infused with a certain level of black consciousness, meaning that its subjects and themes reflected the quality and character of black experience. In form, Black Arts movement poets often rejected Standard English in favor of Black English, a more colloquial and vernacular language and syntax. They peppered it with street slang and idiomatic phrases that were simple, direct, explicit, and often irreverent. In addition the poetry borrowed greatly from black music, using rhythmical effects from jazz and blues, as well as from other forms of black oral speech, such as sermons, folktales, signifying (an intricate, humorous language style that uses indirection, innuendo, puns, metaphors, and other wordplay to persuade, argue, send a message, or insult), and the dozens (a form of signifying that involves trading insults, primarily about a person's relatives). Other common features of the poetry include free verse, short line lengths, call-and-response patterns, chanting, and free rhyming.

The Black Arts movement had much in common with another period of increased artistic production among African-American writers—the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. During both periods, there was an increased interest in establishing a more assertive black collective identity than had previously existed (during the Harlem Renaissance, it was called “the New Negro”) and in searching for ethnic identity and heritage in folk and African culture. Thus, poets from both periods experimented with folk elements, such as blues, spirituals, and vernacular idioms in their poetry, and venerated Africa. However, despite these similarities, many Black Arts movement writers were critical of the objectives of the Harlem Renaissance, believing it had failed to link itself concretely to the struggle of the black masses. Adherents of the Black Arts movement were also critical of Harlem Renaissance writers’ reliance on white patronage, as well as their tendency to esteem Western art, to desire mainstream recognition, and to write with a white audience in mind. They felt that this compromised black writers’ ability to be completely honest in their depiction and expression of black life and struggle.

The Black Arts Movement was formally established in 1965 when Baraka opened the Black Arts Repertory Theater in Harlem. The movement had its greatest impact in theater and poetry. Although it began in the New York/Newark area, it soon spread to Chicago, Illinois, Detroit, Michigan, and San Francisco, California. In Chicago, Hoyt Fuller and John Johnson edited and published *Negro Digest* (later *Black World*), which promoted the work of new black literary artists. Also in Chicago, Third World Press published black writers and poets. In Detroit, Lotus Press and Broadside Press republished older works of black poetry. These Midwestern publishing houses brought recognition to edgy, experimental poets. New black theater groups were also established. In 1969, Robert Chrisman and Nathan Hare established *The Black Scholar*, which was the first scholarly journal to promote black studies within academia. There was also collaboration between the cultural nationalists of the Black Arts Movement and mainstream black musicians, particularly celebrated jazz musicians including John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, Archie Shepp, and others. Cultural nationalists saw jazz as a distinctly black art form that was more politically appealing than soul, gospel, rhythm and blues, and other genres of black music.

The Black Arts movement established a number of objectives and criteria for its creative artists to follow. Primary among them was to persuade African Americans to reject the

mainstream culture and the process of Americanization and assimilation, instead encouraging them to embrace a “black aesthetic,” whereby black people would look to their own culture and aesthetic values to create and evaluate African-American literature. The three major criteria of the Black Arts movement, established by Ron Karenga, were that all black arts must be “functional, collective, and committed”

The functional nature of black art meant that the literary work must serve a purpose larger than merely the creation of art. It had to be connected to the social and political struggles in which African-American people were engaged. The second criterion, that black art must be “collective,” meant that it must serve the people; it must educate, inspire, and uplift them. Reciprocally, the artist must learn from and be inspired and uplifted by the people. The artist must be prepared to sacrifice her or his own individuality and, instead, always write with the good of the people in mind. Third and lastly, black art must be committed to political and social reform and supportive of the revolution that will bring this about. In essence the Black Arts movement’s objectives were to reach the masses of black people, to make them understand their message of self-sufficiency and dignity, and to inspire them to act upon it.

## CONCLUSION

The Black Arts Movement was the name given to a group of politically motivated black poets, artists, dramatists, musicians, and writers who emerged in the wake of the Black Power Movement. The poet Imamu Amiri Baraka is widely considered to be the father of the Black Arts Movement, which began in 1965 and ended in 1975. Based on the cultural politics of black nationalism, which were developed into a set of theories referred to as the Black Aesthetic, the movement sought to create a populist art form to promote the idea of black separatism. The movement began to fade when Baraka and other leading members shifted from Black Nationalism to Marxism in the mid-1970s, a shift that alienated many who had previously identified with the movement. Additionally, Baraka, Nikki Giovanni, Gil Scott-Heron, Maya Angelou, and James Baldwin achieved cultural recognition and economic success as their works began to be celebrated by the white mainstream.

The Black Arts Movement left behind many timeless and stirring pieces of literature, poetry, and theater. Ironically despite the male-dominated nature of the movement, several black female writers rose to lasting fame including Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Ntozake Shange, Audre Lorde, June Jordan, among others. Additionally, the Black Arts Movement helped lay the foundation for modern-day spoken word and hip-hop. Leading theorists of the Black Arts movement included Houston A. Baker, Jr.; Carolyn M. Rodgers; Addison Gayle, Jr., editor of the anthology *The Black Aesthetic* (1971); Hoyt W. Fuller, editor of the journal *Negro Digest* (which became *Black World* in 1970); and LeRoi Jones and Larry Neal, editors of *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* (1968). Jones, later known as Amiri Baraka, wrote the critically acclaimed play *Dutchman* (1964) and founded the Black Arts Repertory Theatre in Harlem (1965).

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Audit course ENG1A01

WRITING SKILLS

MODERNISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

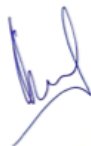
Masters of Arts

BY

FATHIMATHUL SAADA FARHATH

ROLL NO:11

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## MODERNISM IN LITERATURE

Modernism is, in its broadest definition, modern thought, character, or practice. More specifically, the term describes the modernist movement, its set of cultural tendencies and array of associated cultural movements, originally arising from wide-scale and far-reaching changes to Western society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Modernism was a revolt against the conservative values of realism. Arguably the most paradigmatic motive of modernism is its rejection of the tradition. Modernism rejected the lingering certainty of Enlightenment thinking and also rejected the existence of a compassionate, all-powerful Creator God. Modernism was initiated around the turn of the century by rapidly changing technology and industry, then it was affected by the horrific consequences of World War I on the cultural psyche of artists.

In general, the term modernism encompasses the activities and output of those who felt the "traditional" forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organisation and daily life were becoming outdated in the new economic, social, and political conditions of a fully-industrialised world. The poet Ezra Pound's 1934 injunction to "Make it new!" was paradigmatic of the movement's approach towards the obsolete (not in use any more, having been replaced by something newer and better or more fashionable). Another paradigmatic exhortation was articulated by philosopher and composer Theodor Adorno, who, in the 1940s, challenged conventional surface coherence and appearance of harmony typical of the rationality of Enlightenment thinking. A salient characteristic of modernism is self-consciousness. This self-consciousness often led to experiments with form and work that draws attention to the processes and materials used (and to the further tendency of abstraction).

The modernist movement, at the beginning of the 20th century, marked, for the first time, the term "avant-garde", with which the movement was labeled until the word "modernism" prevailed, was used for the arts (rather than in its original military and political context). Surrealism gained fame among the public as being the most extreme form of modernism, or "the avant-garde of modernism". "Avant-garde" (adjective) describes creative ideas, styles and methods that are very original or modern in comparison to the period in which they happen. "The avant-garde" (noun): the work of painters, writers, musicians and other artists, whose ideas, styles and methods are very original or modern in comparison to the period in which they live. Modernist literature is a sub-genre of Modernism, a predominantly European movement beginning in the early 20th century that was characterised by a self-conscious break with traditional aesthetic forms. Representing the radical shift in cultural sensibilities surrounding World War I, modernist literature struggled with the new realm of subject matter brought about by an increasingly industrialised and globalised world.

In its earliest incarnations, modernism fostered a utopian spirit, stimulated by innovations happening in the fields of anthropology, psychology, philosophy, political theory, and psychoanalysis. Writers such as Ezra Pound and other poets of the Imagist movement characterised this exuberant spirit, rejecting the sentiment and discursiveness typical of Romanticism and Victorian literature for poetry that instead favoured precision of imagery and clear, sharp language. This new idealism ended, however, with the outbreak of war, when writers began to generate more cynical postwar works that reflected a prevailing sense of disillusionment and fragmented thought. Many modernist writers shared a mistrust of institutions of power such as government and religion, and rejected the notion of absolute truths. Like T.S. Eliot's masterpiece, *The Waste Land*,



later modernist works were increasingly self-aware, introspective, and often embraced the unconscious fears of a darker humanity.

## **OVERVIEW**

Many scholars mark the beginning of the modernist literary movement with the publication of James Joyce's 1922 novel *Ulysses*. Joyce's strategies for depicting the events in the life of his fictional protagonist, Leopold Bloom, have come to epitomise modernism's artistic assault on modes of more conventional fiction. The poet T.S. Eliot described these qualities in the American Transcendentalist magazine *The Dial* in 1923, noting that Joyce's technique is "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.... Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe, a step toward making the modern world possible for art."<sup>[2]</sup>

Modernist literature addressed aesthetic problems similar to those examined in non-literary forms of contemporaneous Modernist art, such as Modernist painting. Gertrude Stein's abstract writings, for example, have often been compared to the fragmentary and multi-perspective Cubism of her friend Pablo Picasso.

The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve and protect the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life.

The Modernist emphasis on a radical individualism can be seen in the many literary manifestos issued by various groups within the movement. The concerns expressed by Simmel above are echoed in Richard Huelsenbeck's "First German Dada Manifesto" of 1918:

Art in its execution and direction is dependent on the time in which it lives, and artists are creatures of their epoch. The highest art will be that which, in its conscious

content, presents the thousand-fold problems of the day, the art which has been visibly shattered by the explosions of the last week.

The cultural history of humanity creates a unique common history that connects previous generations with the current generation of humans. The Modernist re-contextualisation of the individual within the fabric of this received social heritage can be seen in the "mythic method" which T.S. Eliot expounded in his discussion of James Joyce's *Ulysses*:

In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Joyce pursued a method which others must pursue after him. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.

Modernist literature attempted to move from the bonds of Realist literature and to introduce concepts such as disjointed timelines. In the wake of Modernism, and post-enlightenment, meta-narrative tended to be a consistent characteristic.

Modernist literature can be viewed largely in terms of its formal, stylistic and semantic movement away from Romanticism. Modernist literature often features a marked pessimism, a clear rejection of optimism. But the questioning spirit of modernism could also be seen, less elegiac, as part of a necessary search for ways to make sense of a broken world, in his modernist expression the artist as "hero" seeks to embrace complexity and locate new meanings. However, many Modernist works like Eliot's *The Waste Land* are marked by the absence of a central, unifying figure. Modernists rejected the solipsism of Romantics like Shelley and Byron.

Modernist literature often moves beyond the limitations of the Realist novel with a concern for larger factors such as social or historical change. These themes are prominent in "stream of consciousness" writing. James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf's *Kew Gardens* and *Mrs Dalloway*, Katherine Anne Porter's *Flowering Judas*, Jean Toomer's

Cane, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* can be given as examples to the stream of consciousness novel. Modernism as a literary movement is largely seen as a reaction to the emergence of city life as a central force in society. Furthermore, an early attention to the object as freestanding became in later Modernism a preoccupation with form. The dyadic collapse of the distance between subject and object represented a movement from means to is. Where Romanticism stressed the subjectivity of experience, Modernist writers were more acutely conscious of the objectivity of their surroundings. In Modernism the object is; the language doesn't mean it is. This is a shift from an epistemological aesthetic to an ontological aesthetic or, in simpler terms, a shift from a knowledge-based aesthetic to a being-based aesthetic. This shift is central to modernism.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERNISM**

### **FORMAL/ STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTIC**

Juxtaposition, irony, comparisons, symbols and images and satire are elements found in modernist writing. The most obvious stylistic tool of the modernist writer is that it is often written in first person. Rather than a traditional story having a beginning, middle and end, modernist writing typically reads as a long stream of consciousness similar to a rant. This can leave the reader slightly confused as to what they are supposed to take away from the work. Juxtaposition could be used for example in a way to represent something that would be oftentimes unseen, for example, a cat and a mouse as best friends. Irony and satire are important tools for the modernist writer in aiding them to make fun of and point out faults in what they are writing about, normally problems within their society, whether it is governmental, political or social ideas.

### **THEMATIC CHARACTERISTICS**

For the first-time reader, modernist writing can seem frustrating to understand because of the fragmentation and lack of conciseness of the writing. The plot, characters and themes of the text are not always linear. The goal of modernist literature is not heavily focused on catering to one particular audience in a formal way. Modernist writing is more interested in getting the writer's ideas, opinions, and thoughts out into the public at as high a volume as possible. Modernist literature often forcefully opposes or gives an opinion on a social concept. The breaking down of social norms, rejection of standard social ideas and traditional thoughts and expectations, objection to religion and anger towards the effects of the world wars, and the rejection of the truth are topics widely seen in this literary era. A rejection of history, social systems, and a sense of loneliness are also common themes. In the interest of elitist exclusivity, the past modernist writers have also been known to create their texts in a stylistic and artistic way, using different fonts, sizes, symbols and colours in the production of their writing

## **FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERNIST LITERATURE**

- 1. Experimentation:** Modernist literature employed a number of different experimental writing techniques that broke the conventional rules of storytelling. Some of those techniques include blended imagery and themes, absurdism, nonlinear narratives, and stream of consciousness—which is a free flowing inner monologue.
- 2. Individualism:** Modernist literature typically focuses on the individual, rather than society as a whole. Stories follow characters as they adapt to a changing world, often dealing with difficult circumstances and challenges.
- 3. Multiple perspectives:** Many modernist writers wrote in the first person perspective with multiple characters to emphasise the subjectivity of each character, and add depth to the story by presenting a variety of viewpoints.

4. **Free verse:** Many modernist poets rejected the traditional structure of poetry and opted for free verse, which lacks a consistent rhyme scheme, metrical pattern, or musical form.
5. **Literary devices:** Many modernist writers rely on literary devices like symbolism and imagery to help the reader understand the writing, and to create a stronger connection between the text and the reader.

## **NOTABLE MODERNIST WRITERS**

1. D.H Lawrence
2. Franz Kafka
3. Gertrude Stein
4. T.S Eliot
5. Ezra Pound
6. Virginia Woolf
7. James Joyce
8. William Faulkner
9. E.E Cummings
10. Ernest Hemingway
11. Katherine Mansfield
12. Marianne Moore

**AUDIT COURSE**  
**ENG1A01 WRITING SKILLS**

**GYNOCRITICISM**

Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

By

**SREELAKSHMI M**

**Roll no: 21**

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF FEMINISM AND FEMINIST CRITICISM

History of feminism can be roughly divided as three waves. The first wave began in 1830. The Suffragette movement was the main focus of this wave. It formally began when people rallied for the equality for women at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 at US. Improvements in women's property rights, rights in employment and education were some gains in this phase. Generally it aimed at bringing women from the domestic sphere to public. Virginia Woolf was an important theorist of this wave and her work *A Room of One's Own* is a major work which questioned the patriarchal fantasies about a woman.

A more radical approach(second-wave feminism) was launched in France with the publication of *The Second Sex* (1949) by Simone de Beauvoir. Through this work she draws a history of gender discriminations, and worked on biology, psychoanalysis and historical materialism to prove that the subordination of women is not justifiable and claims that the eternal feminine is a fiction that is reinforced. The second wave of feminism was a reaction against the domesticity of women after second world war. It began in the 1960s. Betty Freidan is often considered as the beginning of the second wave. Her work *The Feminine Mystique*, written in 1963, argues for 'equality feminism'. The title itself is a metaphor for the idea that women feels fulfilment in their life by being a mother and housewife. This work identifies the dissatisfaction and unhappiness of women in the 1950s and 60s. Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*(1970), Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970), and *Mad Woman in the Attic*(1979) by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar are some of the major works of this phase. Second wave thus focused on the personal experience and connects it the wider political and social structures.

The third wave emerged in the mid 1990s. The core ideal of this wave is the rejection of any theory of homogenization because women are of different identity regarding culture, religion, race and ethnicity. This is a widened approach and emerged as a reaction against the generalisation of second wave. They embraced the individualism and diversity in women.

Feminist criticism as a distinctive approach to literature was not prevalent until 1960s. But there were struggles for women's recognition and for their rights. In history we could see many feminist concerns. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft written in 1792 is an example. This work demanded for equality of the sexes, right to education for women and to consider femininity as a social construct than biological one. Along with it there are works like *The Subjection of Women* (1869) by John Stuart Mill and *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) by Margaret Fuller. Virginia Woolf can be considered a precursor in feminist criticism. Her work *A Room of One's Own* (1929), problematizes role of women as 'the angels of the house' by being obedient, beautiful and domesticated. *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir, which examines the treatment of women throughout history, also enriched the field of feminist literary criticism. Elaine Showalter proposed a gynocritical model and rejected the imitation and protest, the two phases of dependence. Poststructuralist and psychoanalytic tradition was included in creating a branch of feminism by the French critics like Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Monique Wittig and Helene Cixous. Helene Cixous brought the idea of 'écriture féminine'(women's writing) in her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa", which is a "uniquely feminine style of writing characterised by disruptions in the text, such as gaps, silences, puns, new images and so on. It is eccentric, incomprehensible and inconsistent, and the difficulty to understand it is attributed to centuries of suppression of the female voice, which now speaks in a borrowed language."



## GYNOCRITICISM

Gynocriticism or gynocritics is the term coined by Elaine Showalter in her essay "Toward a Feminist Poetics" (1979). Gynocriticism is "...a criticism which concerns itself with developing a specifically female frame work for dealing with works written by women, in all aspects of their production, motivation, analysis, and interpretation and in all literary forms, including journals and letters."(Glossary,126). Three major concerns of gynocritics are: to identify distinctive feminine subjects, to find out the female tradition in literary history and to show there is a "distinctive mode of feminine experience, or subjectivity, in thinking, feeling, valuing and perceiving oneself and the outer world"(Glossary,127).

Through "Towards a Feminist Poetics", Showalter opens a genre of feminist criticism with new ways of reading and a new language. She says there are two distinct varieties of feminist criticism and they are women as a reader and women as a writer. Women as a reader is women being a mere consumer of male-produced literature and she calls it as feminist critique. Women as writer is women as the producer of text and she calls it as gynocritics. She adapted it from a French term *la gynocritique*.

Gynocriticism emerged in the context of the second feminist wave focuses on interrogation of female authorship, feminine experiences and ideology, history and development of the female literary tradition. It is a radical move thus centred on female culture. It differentiates writings of women from that of men and studies women writers as a distinct literary tradition. This contrasts to the earlier tendencies of considering them as exceptions. According to Showalter the aim of gynocritics is "to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories"(Showalter, 28).Some of the gynocritical texts include Patricia Meyer Spacks' *The Female Imagination*, Ellen Moers' *Literary Women*, Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of their Own* and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*.

These gynocritical texts provide analyses and interpretations of specific writers and works. The uniqueness of women's writing, with a focus on imagery, themes, and genres,

recurring patterns and distinguishing structures, issues hindering or enabling female creativity, and the challenge of a female-specific language.

In *A Literature of Their Own* Elaine Showalter observes patterns in female literary tradition. She sees three different phases in its evolution. They are the Feminine, Feminist and Female stages. The Feminine phase from about 1840 to 1880 is when women wrote with an aim of gaining equal achievements like men and wrote under male pseudonym. It was a phase of imitation. The next phase, Feminist, from about 1880 to 1920 was a phase of protest. The third and ongoing phase is the Feminine phase which is a rejection of both forms of dependencies—imitation and protest.

*The Female Imagination* by Patricia Meyer Spacks is a survey on female writers to identify how a woman's creative voice differs from a man's. Spacks investigates how women strike a balance between power and passivity, how they exercise agency in their domestic caregiving roles, and how they use writing to compensate for a lack of control in other areas of their lives.

Ellen Moers too examines the female writers; their lives and works, and argues that when female awareness and claims became part of modern literature, new genres and insights arose. She shows how women writers have benefited from each other's strengths: Jane Austen from George Eliot, Emily Dickinson from Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Gertrude Stein from George Eliot, and Willa Cather from George Sand.

*Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar is a critical study of British and American nineteenth-century women's literature. It is an attempt to define a "distinctively female literary tradition." The work also aims at try to uncover major women's literature and unnoticed history of women. The title refers to the character Bertha Mason in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, who is kept secretly locked in an attic apartment by her husband.

## CONCLUSION

Gynocriticism was a feminist approach introduced by Elaine Showalter, which focuses on female writings and tradition and aims at constructing a “female frame work” for the study of writings by women. Emerged during the second wave of feminism also looks at women’s struggles for identity and the gender social construct. Gynocritics, according to Elaine Showalter, is the study of not just the female as a gender status but also the female’s “internalised consciousness.” The goal of gynocriticism is to expose a female model while uncovering a female subculture. It also includes the recognition of a distinct female canon in which a female identity is sought free of masculine definitions and oppositions. It attacks the mainstream male literary canon for not addressing the gender related issues and raises concerns for a female canon. To find lost texts, bringing women to the forefront as the creators of literature as opposed to women as a passive consumer of male traditions.

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AUDIT COURSE ENG1A01


WRITING SKILLS

The Movement Poets

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Masters of Arts

SRUTHILAKSHMI KRISHNA, Roll no: 22

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

The Movement was a term coined in 1954 by J D Scott, literary editor of The Spectator, to describe a group of writers including Philip Larkin, Kingsley Amis, Donald Davie, D J Enright, John wain, Elizabeth Jennings, Thom Gunn, and Robert Conquest.

The Movement was essentially English in character; poets from other parts of the United Kingdom were not involved.

Although considered a literary group, members of The Movement saw themselves more as an actual Movement, with each writer sharing a common purpose.

To these poets, good poetry meant to be simple, sensuous content and traditional, conventional and dignified form.

The Movement's importance includes it's world view, which took into account Britain's reduced dominance in world politics. The group's objective was to prove the importance of English poetry over the new modernist poetry. The members of the Movement were not anti – modernists ; they were opposed to modernism, which was reflected in the Englishness of their poetry.

The Movement sparked the divisions among different types of British poetry. Their poems were nostalgic for the earlier Britain and filled with pastoral images of the decaying way of life as Britain moved farther from the rural and more towards the Urban.

Recently, the notion of the Movement has come in for criticism. Some see it as a fraud, an artificial construct created by the press to counter the arguments that English Literature was in decline and over shadowed by American popular culture. Even the poets grouped under The Movement such as Philip Larkin and Kingsley Amis refused to be identified as Movement writers. However, the term caught on, and by rejecting the complexities of modernism the group helped return poetry to a wide readership.

Main features of the Movement verse as follows ;

- It is ironical, down to earth, un sentimental and rooted in a nostalgic idea of English identity.
- European sympathies were regarded as unmistakable signs of intellectual pretentiousness and moral turpitude.

For some critics and readers, the poet's approach understandably evokes a narrow minded Little Englandism.

The Movement were Oxbridge – educated, white, predominantly male ( Jennings was the only woman in the group, and she was a late arrival), middle class, Europhobic and for the most part heterosexual. Even so, they caught the mood of their time, and Larkin and Amis in particular are undeniably major figures in English Literature.

The Movement produced two Anthologies, Poets of the 1950's ( edited by D J Enright, published in Japan, 1955 ) and New Lines ( edited by Robert Conquest, 1956 ).

Conquest, who edited the New Lines Anthology described the connection between the poet as “little more than a negative determination to avoid bad principles “. These bad principles are usually described as “ excess “, both in terms of theme and stylistic devices. Poets in New Lines included Enright, Conquest, Kingsley Amis, Donald Davie, Thom Gunn, John Holloway, Elizabeth Jennings, Philip Larkin and John Wain.

In 1963, a sequel to the original New Lines anthology, titled New Lines 2, was published. It included many of the authors from the original anthology, as well as younger English poets like Thomas Blackburn, Edwin Brock, Hilary Corke, John Fuller, Ted Hughes, Edward Lucie – Smith, Anthony Thwaite and Hugo Williams.

Actually, The so called “ Movement “ was a loosely defined and even more loosely organised group of English poets who, in the aftermath of World War II, sought to turn away from the kind of modernism championed by T S Eliot and Ezra Pound as well as from the kind of neo – romanticism represented by Dylan Thomas and by the early W B Yeats.

The Movement poets wanted a poetry that was clearer, simpler, more obviously structured, and more modest in its style and subject matter. Larkin was early identified as a figure associated with The Movement, and rightly so.

“ The poetic reaction “ of the “ Movement poets “ took the form of formal verse, tightly patterned, as against the free – verse style represented by Thomas. Often they returned to 18<sup>th</sup> century patterns, with the ironic tone that accompanied that verse. The irony was subversive, mocking, often self deprecating. It was very aware of elitism inflated language and attitudes. Poetic utterance came as understatement, often tentatively expressed.

For example, we may consider Philip Larkin’s very brief poem “ At Grass” ;

- The poem deals with a common, mundane experience
- It is written in very plain and straight forward language
- It has a clear stanzas and structure
- It deals with the ironies of relations between people and between people and nature
- And it ends with a stanza that is both understated and ironic.

➤ Philip Larkin : besides being a poet of Movement he is also called a realistic poet. Poetry of Movement is much closer to reality, hence some common themes of Philip Larkin poetry are death, religion, fear, dread and isolation. Larkin's poetry is universal in nature, which is one of the major characteristics of modern poetry.

➤ Kingsley Amis : as a poet, Amis was a representative member of a group sometimes called “ The Movement “ , whose poems began appearing in 1956 in the anthology New Lines. Poets belonging to this school wrote understated and disciplined verse that avoided experimentation and grandiose themes.

➤ Donald Davie : he was a principal figure in The Movement, a group of British poets in the 1950’s who expressed anti romantic ideals and purposely avoided experimentation in their verse. His earliest critical works, Purity of



Diction in English Verse ( 1952 ) and Articulate Energy ( 1955 ), explored the moral dimensions of poetic style.

- D J Enright : as a poet, he was identified with The Movement. His 1955 anthology, poets of the 1950s , served to delineate – albeit somewhat remotely and retrospectively, since he was abroad and it was not as prominent as the Robert Conquest collection New Lines of the following year.
  
- John Wain : he was also one of the poets in Movement, a group of post – war poets.
  
- Elizabeth Jennings : the only woman to join The Movement, an English group of poets dedicated to an anti – romantic aesthetic.
  
  
- Thomas Gunn : who was an English poet, praised for his early verses in England, where he was associated with The Movement.
  
  
- Robert Conquest : major figure in the prominent British literary circle known as “ The Movement “. In 1956 and 1962, Conquest edited the influential New Lines Anthologies.

The “ Angry Young Men “ Movement occurred in 1956 during the turning point of The Movement. David Lodge attributed the Movement’s decline to the publication of the New Lines Anthology. After these events, The Movement became less exclusive. Members were no longer required to fight and defend on other's work, for they had become accepted members of the literary world.

“ The Group “ members included Philip Hobsbaum, Alan Brownjohn, Adrian Mitchell, Peter Porter, Edward Lucie – Smith and George Macbeth, Ian Hamilton's Review school and Micheal Horovitz's Children of Albion. The group was similar to the Movement, as they shared similar ideas about the form and seriousness of modernist poetry.

Audit Course ENG1 A01 WRITING SKILLS

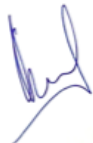
POSTMODERNISM

Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the  
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Masters of Arts

SWATHI T M

ROLL NO : 23

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## **INTRODUCTION**

Postmodernism is the name given to the period of literary criticism that developed toward the end of the twentieth century. Just as the name implies, it is the period that comes after the modern period. But there are not easily separated into discrete units with specific dates as centuries or presidential terms are limited. Postmodernism came about as a reaction to the established modernist era, which itself was a reaction to the established tenets of the nineteenth century and before. What sets Postmodernism apart from its predecessor is the reaction of its practitioners aspects of the modern age.

Postmodernism is philosophy of the late twentieth century, applicable to important disciplines like literature, art, architecture, cinema and so on. Claims to objective fact are dismissed as naive realism. Postmodernism is characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism and a general suspicion of reason. Different definitions of postmodernism agree upon the celebration of the fragmentation of reality, incredulity towards metanarratives and a carnival of the marginal voices. It rejects the universal validity of binary opposition, stable identity, hierarchy and categorization.

## POST MODERNISM

Postmodernism has appeared in a complex political circumstances, after the end of world war11, especially in the context of the Cold war and the spread of nuclear weapons, and the declaration of the birth of human rights, and the emergence of theatre of absurd, and the emergence of philosophies irrationality such as surrealism, existentialism and absurdism, and nihilism, moreover, the deconstruction was expressing president to move from the stage of Modernism to Postmodernism.

The Postmodern (Postmodernism and Postmodernity are terms often used interchangeably) is the rejection of Enlightenment, which has been viewed as the foundation of Modernism. Often seen as a movement that emerges in the wake of poststructuralism, the postmodernists attack and demolish the dominant assumptions of Western philosophy since Rene Descartes. The central aspects of postmodernist philosophy can be seen against the backdrop of these changing attitudes. Postmodernist are skeptical of explanations which claim to be valid for all groups, cultures, traditions or races and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person. It considers “reality” to be a mental construct. Postmodernism rejects the possibility of unmediated reality or objectivity- rational knowledge, asserting that all interpretation are contingent on the perspective from which they are made; claims to objective fact are dismissed as naive realism.

Postmodern thinkers frequently describe knowledge claims and value systems as contingent or socially conditioned, describing them as products of political, historical or cultural discourses and hierarchies. Accordingly, Postmodern thoughts is broadly characterized by tendencies to self- referentially, epistemological and moral relativism, pluralism and irreverence. Postmodernism is often associated with schools of thought such as Deconstruction and Post Structuralism. Postmodernism relies on critical theory, which considers the effects of ideology, society and history on culture. Postmodernism and critical theory commonly criticize universalist ideas of objective reality, morality, truth, human nature, reason, language and

social progress. It employs concepts such as hyperreality, Simulacrum, trace, and difference and rejects abstract principles in favour of direct experience.

The term 'Postmodern' was first used in 1870. John Watkins Chapman suggested "a postmodern style of painting" as a way to depart from French impressionism. In 1942, H.R. Hays described " postmodernism as a new literary form". In 1926, Bernard Iddings Bell, published *Postmodernism and Other Essays*, marking the first use of the term to describe the historical period following modernity. The essay criticizes the lingering socio- cultural norms, attitudes, and practices of the Age of Enlightenment. It also forecasts the major cultural shifts toward Postmodernity and suggests orthodox religion as a solution. However, the term Postmodernity was first used as a general theory for a historical movement in 1939 by Arnold J. Toynbee.

Modernism projects the fragmentation and decentredness of contemporary world as tragic. It laments over the fragmentation of reality. But in Postmodernism, fragmentation and disorientation is no longer and tragic. Postmodernism, on the other hand celebrates fragmentation. It considers fragmentation and decentredness as the only possible way of existence, and does not try to escape from these conditions. Postmodernist question the operational tools of the Enlightenment- logic and reason, by claiming that they would benefit only for the establishment of a hegemonic world order of the already powerful. Most of the postmodernists contest the idea of an essentially unchanging notion of selfhood; instead they proposes that the very human nature is socially constructed and therefore changeable. So fictitious and imagined are the hegemonic privileging of a category in the discourses of class, race and gender. Instead, based on the theories of Saussure and Derrida, the postmodern philosophers define meaning as 'difference' and ' differance'. It also rejects any possibility of empirical scientific knowledge built upon the coherent Cartesian ego. Postmodernism questions the notion of a singular centre.

Most of the post modern thoughts have mainly been originated from the non sociologist like Jacques Derrida, Lyotard, Jameson and others. Apart from them, some other prominent writers

were Foucault and Baudrillard. Derrida who followed a deconstructive approach. He used the term 'discourses'. Derrida emphasized on the hermeneutical method in analyzing the work of Foucault. Foucault give importance on discourse. He said that the truth is a relative concept and we can understand truth through a social process called discourse.

The major theorist of postmodernism have included the Jean Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. Lyotard was deeply embroiled in the debates concerning postmodernism in the last decades of the twentieth century, especially opposing Jurgen Habermas' sanction of the project of Enlightenment, universal reason and modernity. Lyotard is perhaps best known for his work *'The Postmodern Condition'* (1979). But this work is primarily concerned with assessing the status of contemporary scientific knowledge. It is in the famous Preface to the book and other articles that he defines most clearly his understanding of the postmodern. In the Introduction of the book, Lyotard defines postmodern as " incredulity toward metanarratives". Postmodernism questions and deconstructs metanarratives. Postmodernism understands that grand narratives hide, silence and negate contradictions, instabilities and differences inherent in any social system. Postmodernism favours mini- narratives, stories that explain small practices and local events, without pretending universality and finality. Postmodernism realizes that history, politics and culture are grand narratives of the power wielders, which comprise falsehoods and incomplete truths. Having deconstructed the possibility of a stable, permanent reality, postmodernism has revolutionized the concept of language. In *Just Gaming* (1979), Lyotard suggests 'Paganism' as an alternative in the postmodern universe without any absolute reference points.

Jean Baudrillard is yet another important theorist of postmodern philosophy. He describes the postmodern world as a world of Simulacra. A Simulacrum is a virtual or fake reality stimulated or induced by the media or the other ideological apparatuses. A Simulacrum is not merely an imitation. It is the substitution of the original by a stimulated, fake image. Contemporary world is a Simulacrum, where reality has been this replaced by false image. Baudrillard argues that the Gulf war did not take place. In other words, in the postmodern world, there are no originals, only copies; no reality, only simulations. Postmodern experience is constituted by inevitable exposure to 'hyperreality'. Baudrillard links simulation to the idea of the hyperreal. This

hyperrealism, an absence of the distinctions between the real and the imaginary, is an essential characteristic of postmodernity. Frederic Jameson gives a Marxist critique of the postmodern. Jameson equated postmodernism with late capitalism. In late capitalism, consumerism and mass media govern the culture. In all the aspects of our lives, whether it is socialization, education or leisure, we get influenced by mass media. He also believes that in case of consumerism production, the issues of 'aesthetics' became more important in this postmodern era. In outlining the features of postmodernism in Western capitalist economies, Jameson laments over the loss of historical reality in art and literature. What emerges in such a context is pastiche, not parody. Referring to pastiche as 'blank parody' or 'empty copy', Jameson emphasizes the absence of a norm or convention to rest upon.

The various philosophical assumptions of postmodernism have become the defining features of literature, cinema, arts and architecture. The postmodern in literature is often seen as a continuation of modernism, though the latter apparently cancels out the differences between 'high' art and 'low' art. Besides, there is a blending of various narratives styles, genres and tones in Postmodernism. In *Postmodernist Fiction*, Brian McHale gives the central division between modernism and postmodernism. He argues that dominant of modernist fiction is epistemological and postmodernism is ontological. Postmodern literature as expressed in the writings of Samuel Beckett, Alain Robbe Griller, Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Naguib Mahfouz and Angela Carter rests on a recognition of the complex nature of reality and experience, the role of time and memory in human perception, of the self and the world as historical constructions, and the problematic nature of language. Borges and Marquez, employ magical realism- labyrinthine plots, surreal images and myths- in their fictions, to distort the straightforward realistic version of unique truth. Postmodernists novels are mostly metafictional- self reflexive as fictions, writings about writing, foregrounding the novelistic apparatus- in nature. Postmodernism has attracted the positive and negative criticism both.

To conclude, in spite of the rather stretched cynical arguments of postmodernism, the theory has exerted a fundamental influence on the late twentieth century thoughts. It has indeed revolutionized all realms of intellectual inquiry in varying degrees.



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**WRITING SKILLS**

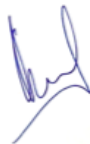
**MODERNISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Masters of Arts**

**THEERTHA DEVADAS**

**ROLL NO: 24**

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

# INTRODUCTION

Ecofeminism first emerged in North American and European academic circles in the 1970s as an offshoot of the feminist movement, and specifically linked the subjugation of women to humanity's oppressive relationship with nature. It was employed as a theoretical framework to better understand how hierarchical and dualist definitions of gender could explain humanity's dominating role in its relationship with the environment.

Beginning in the 1980s, ecofeminism began to inform feminist and environmental activist and artistic movements. Heroes of the ecofeminist movement include several major intellectual and political figures. Francoise, a French author considered a leader in her country's feminist movement, coined the name "ecofeminism" in 1974. Petra Kelly was a German politician who co-founded the German Green Party, the first political party with a predominately environmental platform to achieve national prominence.

By the end of the 1990s, ecofeminism began to come under fire from critics, who dismissed the framework as essentialist, in that it could not fully address either feminist or environmentalist concerns. Ecofeminism's exclusive focus on the relationship between gender and nature left no room for considerations of other crucial factors, such as race or class. Janet Biehl, an American social ecologist, notably criticised the ecofeminist framework as an oversimplification of complex hierarchical structures and forms of domination.

Ecofeminism is an ideology and movement that sees climate change, gender equality, and social injustice more broadly as intrinsically related issues, all tied to masculine dominance in society. Specifically, ecofeminism holds that most environmental issues can be traced back to the global prioritization of qualities deemed masculine and those in power who embody those attributes.

Ecofeminism seeks to re-examine both the feminist and environmentalist movements and augment each of their arguments. The framework examines how gender and nature intersect, specifically how binary definitions falsely categorise opposing groups, assigning disproportionate value to one grouping and encouraging hierarchical thinking.

# ECOFEMINISM

Ecofeminism is an interdisciplinary critical theory which claims that environmental and women's issues are interconnected because of the objectification of women and nature in a male-dominant society. According to this theory, the system forms a male-centred hierarchy and dualities, creating inequality in society and providing the superiority for men. On the other hand, the hierarchy and dualities are used to exert pressure on non-male beings and marginalize them. Thus, in the male-dominant hierarchical order dualities such as male/female, culture/nature, human/nature, white/black occur, and former dominates the latter. That is, in this order, man is superior to woman, culture is superior to nature, and logic is to emotion. Also, since the man is considered superior to the woman, all the superior features are attributed to the male and the inferior features are associated with the female. In this way, while man symbolizes culture, consciousness, logic and spirit, woman represents nature, unconsciousness, emotion and body. In this case, women and nature become close to each other in a male-dominant society and are similarly conceptualized.

Ecofeminism is the meeting between feminism and ecology. However, the terms “women” and “ecology” are not synonyms. Being ecofeminist does not imply that women are innately more linked to nature and life than men. There are men who devote themselves to defending the environment and/or animals and women who are indifferent or hostile to these new forms of awareness. However, it is true that, statistically, at an international level, women are the majority in the environmental movements and in the defence of animals. From a constructivist perspective of gender subjectivity, we can consider that women’s interest in caring for nature is not an automatic mechanism related to gender. Reality presents us with a wide range of individuals but also trends linked to the socialisation of determined tasks and attitudes. In general, women have not historically had access to weapons and have traditionally been responsible for taking care of the most vulnerable and maintaining the domestic material infrastructure, developing, in statistical terms, a “relational” subjectivity, attentive to others and expressing greater affection. When these characteristics are complemented with appropriate information and a critical approach to hegemonic discourses, the conditions emerge to awaken their interest in the defence of nature and other living beings.

Ecofeminism is an ideology and movement that sees climate change, gender equality, and social injustice more broadly as intrinsically related issues, all tied to masculine dominance in society. Specifically, ecofeminism holds that most environmental issues can be traced back to the global prioritization of qualities deemed masculine and those in power who embody those attributes.

Early work on ecofeminism consisted largely of first documenting historical connections between women and the environment and then looking for ways to sever those connections. One founder of ecofeminism, theologian Rosemary Ruether, insisted that all women must acknowledge and work to end the domination of nature if they were to work

toward their own liberation. She urged women and environmentalists to work together to end patriarchal systems that privilege hierarchies, control, and unequal socioeconomic relations. Ruether's challenge was taken up by feminist scholars and activists, who began critiquing not only ecological theories that overlooked the effect of patriarchal systems but also feminist theories that did not interrogate the relationship between women and nature as well.

By the late 1980s ecofeminism had begun to branch out into two distinct schools of thought: radical ecofeminism and cultural ecofeminism. Radical ecofeminists contend that the dominant patriarchal society equates nature and women in order to degrade both. To that end, radical ecofeminism builds on the assertion of early ecofeminists that one must study patriarchal domination with an eye toward ending the associations between women and nature. Of particular interest to those theorists is the ways in which both women and nature have been associated with negative or commodifiable attributes while men have been seen as capable of establishing order. That division of characteristics encourages the exploitation of women and nature for cheap labour and resources.

Cultural ecofeminists, on the other hand, encourage an association between women and the environment. They contend that women have a more intimate relationship with nature because of their gender roles and their biology. As a result, cultural ecofeminists believe that such associations allow women to be more sensitive to the sanctity and degradation of the environment. They suggest that this sensitivity ought to be prized by society insofar as it establishes a more direct connection to the natural world with which humans must coexist. Cultural ecofeminism also has roots in nature-based religions and goddess and nature worship as a way of redeeming both the spirituality of nature and women's instrumental role in that spirituality.

Many ecofeminists were also concerned with what they saw as a heterosexual bias in the movement insofar as ecofeminism appeared to privilege the experience of heterosexual women over homosexual women. To correct that problem, an emerging school of ecofeminism emphasized the need to incorporate the tenets of queer theory into the precepts of ecofeminism. They contended that if ecofeminism is indeed committed to fighting against systems of oppression and domination, then the movement must also acknowledge the ways in which sexuality—and, more specifically, responses to that sexuality—also figure as oppressive mechanisms. Thus, the redemption of women's roles and opportunities must also include a valuing of sexual differences as well as differences in race, class, and gender.

The basic principles of ecofeminism require the addressing of the key national and global economics' concerns including the ones created by the simplistic economics formula of inputs required for production being capital, land, and labour to produce outputs. This limited consideration of inputs, according to Henderson (1984) needs to be replaced by the new conceptualization of minimal entropy society with revised key inputs that are required and that cannot be excluded from the equation including capital, resources and knowledge.

One interpretation of ecofeminist theory is that capitalism reflects only paternalistic and patriarchal values. This notion implies that the effects of capitalism have not also benefited women and have led to a harmful split between nature and culture. In the 1970s, early ecofeminists discussed that the split can only be healed by the feminine instinct for nurture and holistic knowledge of nature's processes. Several feminists make the distinction that it is not because women are female or "feminine" that they relate to nature, but because of their similar states of oppression by the same male-dominant forces. The marginalization is evident in the gendered language used to describe nature and the animalized language used to describe women. Some discourses link women specifically to the environment because of their traditional social role as a nurturer and caregiver. Eco feminists following in this line of thought believe that these connections are illustrated through the coherence of socially labelled values associated with 'femininity' such as nurturing, which are present both among women and in nature. Vandana Shiva says that women have a special connection to the environment through their daily interactions and this connection has been ignored. According to Shiva, women in subsistence economies who produce "wealth in partnership with nature, have been experts in their own right of holistic and ecological knowledge of nature's processes". She makes the point that "these alternative modes of knowing, which are oriented to the social benefits and sustenance needs are not recognized by the capitalist reductionist paradigm, because it fails to perceive the inter connection of nature, or the connection of women's lives, work and knowledge with the creation of wealth". Shiva blames this failure on the Western patriarchal perceptions of development and progress. According to Shiva, patriarchy has labelled women, nature, and other groups not growing the economy as "unproductive".

Ecofeminist literature portrays the historical exploitation and domination of women and nature as going hand in hand, and both are seen as victims of development. It is taken as self-evident that any harm to nature harms women equally, since women are seen as closer to nature than men. None of the ecofeminist literature attempts to establish this linkage through concrete evidence or strong argument. It is very anecdotal and takes its position as self-evident. It locates the domination of women and nature mainly in ideology, thereby neglecting the interrelated material sources of dominance based on economic advantage and political power as well as the gender division of labour and distribution of opportunity.

Ever since its origins, ecofeminism has advocated for the dismantling of all the interweaved forms of oppression that encapsulate women, nonhuman animals, marginal humans, and whatever subject has been marked as other by dominant systems of power, including the earth. Merging with literary studies, these emancipatory stances have found their narratives and new critical landscapes.

## CONCLUSION

The central tenet of ecofeminism is that social and environmental issues are not separate, that the causes for the mistreatment of women, people of colour and the environment stem from the same place. Therefore, from an ecofeminist perspective, it is best to view all of these issues collectively. Eco feminism puts forth the idea that life in nature is maintained through cooperation, mutual care and love. It is an activist and academic movement, and its primary aim is to address and eliminate all forms of domination while recognizing and embracing the interdependence and connection humans have with the earth. Eco feminists understand human beings as not being separate from or above nature. They are one small part of a whole, rather than the pinnacle of nature. In separating nature from persons, humanity creates a concept of nature which is made up of dead, unintelligent matter.

Currently, ecofeminism has had only budding effects on the sciences or in the realm of conservation; largely, ecofeminism is most easily detected through academia and more theoretical frameworks. It is still in the development stage. However, there have been significant contributions on behalf of ecofeminist thinkers and writers who have paved the way for grassroots activism and helped spread the word about this young discipline.

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Audit course ENG1A01

WRITING SKILLS

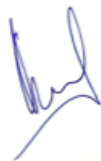
KITCHEN SINK DRAMA

Submitted in Partial fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

VISMAYA M

ROLL NO : 24

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

## INTRODUCTION

The World War II has caused severe atrocities around the world. No country was an exception to it. Even after Britain emerged victoriously after the war, it suffered the loss of lakhs of militants and thousands of civilians. The glory of the British Empire was eventually declined when the colonisation came to an end and it lost hold over other countries. The condition inside the country was also not very pleasant. The national debt had risen. Economic recovery was slow, housing was short in supply, many necessities were in short supply along with bread. People suffered from post traumatic stress disorder and were scared to resume their normal life.

This whole condition was captured in the Kitchen Sink drama, that emerged in the 1950s. The problems of the working class people in the post war Britain is the central theme of these dramas. It as a genre emerged with the production of the John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*.

## KITCHEN SINK DRAMA AND ANGRY YOUNG MEN

Kitchen Sink Drama was a term applied to a particular kind of drama that focuses on the realistic portrayal of the life and experiences of the urban working class. Also known as Kitchen Sink Realism, it is a British cultural movement that developed in the late 1950s and 1960s in the field of arts, theatre, novel, films and television plays. It stems from the wider 'Kitchen Sink' movement of social realism in art. Even though it was famous in the 60s and underwent some revival in the 80s and the 90s, it still had inspired the writers and artists of the later decades. The term was first used by art critic, David Sylvester as Kitchen Sink School to describe the painters who depicted social scenes of domestic life using dark sombre colours.

The major plays of this genre includes *Look Back in Anger* (1956) by John Osborne; *The Taste of Honey* (1958) by Shelagh Delaney; *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1958), *Roots* (1959), and *I'm Talking about Jerusalem* (1960) by Arnold Wesker.

In such dramas, the dramatist aims to portray the living surroundings, language issues and the way of thinking of the working class and the lower middle class. It depicts their daily struggles and deals with the social issues like unemployment, poverty, turbulent relationships and the poor living conditions and used the regional dialects rather than the unrealistic polished language. It revolved primarily around the lives of the working class areas of the Northern England such as Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and Newcastle, although it commonly represented the working class areas of Southern England also.

The setting of Kitchen Sink Dramas are ordinary domestic settings like a single roomed apartments and most part of the play develops in that room. Turbulent relationships in the family like that between the husband and wife, between the siblings and between other relatives comes in the forefront of these plays. Also one can observe the family, inspite of this friction existing between them pulls together in unity against the external forces like the landlords and rival families.

These dramas actually portrayed the myseries of post war Britain. Ironically, the movement came into existance due to the post war reforms of the British society like the education

system that created opportunities for those who previously were excluded from it. This gave rise to the working class writers and actors. In fact many of these writers themselves grew up in the working class environment and they started to write plays that included the struggles, ideas and problems they themselves concerned with. One of such writers is John Osborne who wrote *Look Back in Anger* (1956), the play that inaugurated this movement in British drama, contained strong autobiographical elements like his unhappy marriage and his life in a cramped apartment and his anti-conventional attitude towards family, religion and so on.

The play also gave rise to the term 'angry young man' from its protagonist Jimmy Porter. It was coined by the Royal Court Theatre to promote the play. As the term suggests, Jimmy is a young person who is angry about his joblessness being a graduate, he is angry about the society and its passivity, he is angry about his monotonous life and the privileged upper class. This phenomenon of angry young man has also found expression in the Indian Cinema in the 1970s where the actor Amitabh Bachan portrayed different versions of this character in many films like *Zanjeer*, *Deewar*, *Thrishul*, *Kaala Patthar*, *Laawaris*, *Shakti*, among few others.

Also 'angry young men' were the group of playwrights who were mostly working and middle class British playwrights who were prominent in the 1950s. This name was given to the writers who expressed the dissatisfaction with the sociopolitical order of the country, after the success of *Look Back in Anger*. They include John Osborne, Kingsley Amis, John Braine, Alan Sillitoe and John Wain.

## HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT

After the World War II, the British Empire lost its reputation and gradually came to an end. With the Suez Crisis and the failure in supporting the Hungarian uprising, weakened its power. The process of decolonisation and withdrawal from Palestine, Egypt, Burma and India in 1947 dismantled British Empire completely.

In the meantime, the British people were disillusioned by the false promises given to them by the first labour government after the war. A large part of the promised reforms and opportunities failed to be executed. This in turn led to the protest of the people. The young felt cheated as their promised future became a mere dream. They felt trapped in the class system as the upper class had a lot of options in front of them but the lower class were closed off. The trauma and other social issues that came after the war also frustrated them.

In the mid 50s, the drawing room dramas were still in prominence. It depicted the luxurious life of the upper class men. Portraying the colourful life of the upperclass, these drawing room dramas aimed at upper class audience. It turned a blind eye towards the miseries of the post war England. The chief representative of these dramas Terence Rattigan himself admitted that he did not aim at the working class audience. It never concerned itself to capture the problems and realities of the working class. Until the appearance of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* in 1956, drawing room dramas dominated English Theatre, leading it to a stagnant state. Plays like *Look Back in Anger* came in as a part of social and economical revolution after World War II. The inability of the well made plays of the previous century and of the drawing room drama to portray the actualities of the ordinary working class paved way for the emergence of writers like Osborne, Cresswell and Wesker. Such plays were what the English society waited for, as many of them could empathize with the characters and situations and find their own mundane realities on stage, easing their anger a bit. This also gave life to the British drama that had entered a phase of stillness.

The establishment of two theatre companies – English Stage Company by Cresswell at the Royal Court Theatre in London and the Theatre Workshop by John Littlewood at the Theatre

Royal in Stratford East has immensely contributed to the birth of Kitchen Sink Drama. These theatres attracted young playwrights who could capture the contemporary concerns of the marginalised working class and touch their lives through their plays. And thereby, energizing the British Theatre after its long years of standstill. In fact *Look Back in Anger* also came into lights through these theatres. As they successfully managed to make the plays more authentic and realistic, their role in the movement is quite commendable.

These dramas also managed to fight the censorship of sensitive political and sexual themes and the censorship of bare flesh and other taboos, which led to the stagnation of the British theatre. *A Taste of Honey* (1959) was the first novel to portray homosexuality with honesty and directness. It also discussed the problems of interracial couples, gender and sexual identity, contributing to the liberation of British drama from censorship.

## ANALYSING *LOOK BACK IN ANGER* AND *A TASTE OF HONEY*

We can observe the common characteristics of Kitchen Sink Drama in *Look Back in Anger* and *A Taste of Honey* as well. However, on analysing both individually we could understand it more clearly. These dramas give up the formal polite language of the drawing room dramas and embrace the language of local class' everyday speech. They used local vernacular and regional dialects in the plays. Some vernacular usages in *Look Back in Anger* are 'bellyache, fiver, randy, beefcake' etc. 'Pansy, come a cropper, tatty, hanky' etc. are the regional usage found in *A Taste of Honey*.

Kitchen Sink Drama exhibited unfamiliar characterisation. In the earlier plays, which focus on the upper class and the upper middle class, the main characters obviously were the upper class people. The lower middle class people were either not represented or were secondary characters. But with Kitchen Sink Dramas, a new and unconventional characterisation came into existence. The main characters of these plays were the working class people, who were angry about their situation but were helpless. Another important characteristic is the focus on youth. In most of these dramas, youth are the protagonists. This can be because many writers were young and they wanted to represent their generation in their plays.

In *Look Back in Anger*, Jimmy Porter is a young man with in his twenties, he holds a university degree but runs a sweet shop with his friend. This clearly shows that he is not professionally successful. For this reason, he is angry and disappointed. He seems to have a strong personality but is vulnerable at heart. His anger is directed towards many characters and is angry about many other things than his profession. He is frustrated about the passivity of the society and that of his wife. He makes effort to get a reaction from her through different means but is only faced with her silence. Other than this, his anger towards her has another reason – she belonged to upper class. This makes him angry because he loathed upper class people and believed them to be privileged. He is also angry at her upper class friend and her mother too, since she objected her

daughter's marriage with him, due to his financial and social condition. He is also dissatisfied with the status quo – fed up with the weariness of the tasks he repeats in his life.

We can also explore the themes of nostalgia within the characters of Jimmy and Colonel Redfern. Even though they belonged to different classes, they are unified in lamenting about the old status of Britain, when it was glorious and prosperous. But after the World Wars the Empire fell down and lost its glory and has turned into a chaotic country.

Analysing *A Taste of Honey*, it can be found that the centre of attraction of the play is the portrayal of working class woman as protagonist. Jo a teenager student, as her family was poor, had to work to be independent of her mother. She goes into a relationship with a black boy and is left as a single mother. She, a feisty girl outside is vulnerable and fragile inside. The play highlights many social and domestic issues. And these were tackled on stage for the first time in the British drama on stage through this play.

Poverty is an important theme in the play. The driving force of most of the incidents in *A Taste of Honey* is poverty. Helen and Jo moves to different apartments because they cannot afford the rent. Similarly, Geof, also decided to live with Jo because of his poverty. Jo had to work for a living for the same reason. Helen's marriage with Peter was only for his money.

An unusual motherhood and mother – daughter relationship can be observed in the play. Helen is not a typical mother, who is emotionally attached to her daughter. She has no domestic abilities and neglected her daughter to go in search of her own pleasure. Even she was pregnant with Jo because of a one night stand. She had no intention of being a mother. Jo on the other hand takes the role of the 'caretaker' in her family, unlike usual daughters. Their unusual relationship can be further understood from their conversations. They insult each other and Jo is sometimes jealous of her mother's popularity among young men. Geof, Jo's homosexual friend has no conventional male attributes, he becomes a surrogate mother to Jo and provide her with the warmth she yearns from her mother. When Jo is pregnant, she admits that she hates motherhood. Her own mother being an irresponsible and selfish has created a carbon copy of her in Jo and becomes the cause of



the fear of motherhood in her daughter. However, in the end her mother comes to live with her and they both share the usual mother – daughter relationship.

Also sex becomes a destroying force in the play. Helen's one night stand is the cause for Jo's birth. Pregnancy was not her plan but she ended up being a bad and poor mother. Jo's relationship with the black boy had made her a poor single mother, where she also hates children and hates being a mother. Both of their life were destroyed because of sex. And as the relationship between Jo and Geof did not involve sex, their relationship was possible and it was healthy.

A novel approach to sexuality is visible in the play. Helen, even though a mother and old, pursues her pleasure and has multiple relations with men, especially young men. Sililarly Jo, being young and impulsive is daring enough to live as a single mother without a man. Also, Geof, the homosexual character is the first in British drama. It was the first attempt to talk about homosexuality honestly and directly.

## CONCLUSION

Kitchen Sink Drama is a landmark in the history of British literature. It was so influential that the 'angry young man' has found expression in many other literature and art forms as well. It can be considered a breakthrough in the British drama as it defied all the conventional practices and rules of the existing drama and gained popularity. It differs from the earlier dramas in its themes, language, setting and characterisation. John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* has inaugurated this movement in 1956 and contributed the 'angry young man' into literature. Also Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* discussed taboos and social and domestic matters like homosexuality, sex, gender, racism etc. for the first time in the British drama.

These dramas rebel against the superficial drawing room dramas and focus on the life of working class people, their language and realities. It walks us through the post war condition in Britain. Also they contributed to abolish the censorship on drama completely. Therefore, it can be concluded that Kitchen Sink Drama, is the renaissance of British theatre.

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Audit course ENG1A02 Writing Skills

NEW HISTORICISM

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Masters of Arts

VYSHNA VIBHAS CK ROLL NO:26

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**  
Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

# New Historicism

New historicism, a form of literary theory which aims to understand intellectual history through literature and literature through its cultural context, follows the 1950s field of history of ideas and refers to itself as a form of cultural poetics. It first developed in the 1980s, primarily through the work of the critic Stephen Greenblatt, and gained widespread influence in the 1990s. Greenblatt coined the term new historicism when he “collected a bunch of essays and then, out of a kind of desperation to get the introduction done, he wrote that the essays represented something called a ‘new historicism’.

New Historicism is an approach to literary criticism and literary theory based on the premise that a literary work should be considered a product of the time, place, and historical circumstances of its composition rather than as an isolated work of art or text. It has its roots in a reaction to the “New Criticism” of formal analysis of works of literature, which was seen by a new generation of professional critics as ignoring the greater social and political consequences of the production of literary texts. New Historicism developed in the 1980s, primarily through the work of the critic Stephen Greenblatt, gaining widespread influence in the 1990s and beyond.

New Historicists aim simultaneously to understand the work through its historical context and to understand cultural as well as to investigate the intellectual history and cultural history through literature. The approach owes much of its impetus to the work of Michel Foucault, who based his approach both on his theory of the limits of collective cultural knowledge and on his technique of examining a broad array of documents in order to understand the episteme of a particular time. Using Foucault’s work as a starting point, New Historicism aims at interpreting a literary text as an expression of or reaction to the power-structures of the surrounding society. New Historicism attempted to reintroduce the concept of history into literary studies, in part as a corrective to the ahistorical and

apolitical nature of much of Post-structuralism. However, in adopting the Foucauldian notion of epistemic rupture between ages and civilizations, which makes understanding the text in the terms in which it was produced impossible, New Historicism has been criticized for reducing the importance of literature as a work of art and turning it into just another historical artifact.

## **Historicism**

Historicism is an approach to explaining the existence of phenomena, especially social and cultural practices (including ideas and beliefs), by studying their history, that is, by studying the process by which they came about. The term is widely used in philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. This historical approach to explanation differs from and complements the approach known as functionalism, which seeks to explain a phenomenon, such as for example a social form, by providing reasoned arguments about how that social form fulfills some function in the structure of a society. In contrast, rather than taking the phenomenon as a given and then seeking to provide a justification for it from reasoned principles, the historical approach asks “Where did this come from?” and “What factors led up to its creation?”; that is, historical explanations often place a greater emphasis on the role of process and contingency.

Historicism is often used to help contextualize theories and narratives, and is a useful tool to help understand how social and cultural phenomena came to be. Historicism holds that all knowledge and cognition are historically conditioned. It is also widely used in diverse disciplines to designate an approach from a historical perspective. Historicism appeared in Europe, primarily in Germany; it challenged the progressive view of history that interpreted history as a linear, uniform process that operated according to universal laws, a view widely held by thinkers from the Enlightenment era forward. Historicism stressed the unique diversity of historical contexts and stressed the importance of developing specific methods and theories appropriate to each unique historical context.

Historicism also often challenged the concept of truth and the notion of rationality in modernity. Modern thinkers held that reason was a universal faculty of the mind that is free of interpretation, that can grasp universal and unchanging truth. Historicism questioned this notion of rationality and truth, and argued for the historical context of knowledge and reason; historicism is an explicit formulation of the historicity of knowledge. The term historicism (Historismus) was coined by German philosopher Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel. Over time, what historicism is and how it is practiced have developed different and divergent meanings.

## **Old Historicism and New Historicism**

New Historicism envisages and practises a mode of study where the literary text and the non-literary context are given “equal weighting”, whereas old historicism considers history as a “background” of facts to the “foreground” of literature. While Old historicism follows a hierarchical approach by creating a historical framework and placing the literary text within it, New Historicism, upholding the Derridean view that there is nothing outside the text, or that everything is available to us in “textual” or narrative form, breaks such hierarchies, and follows a parallel reading of literature and history, and looks at history as represented and recorded in literary texts. In short, while Old Historicism is concerned with the “world” of the past, New Historicism deals with the “word” of the past.

This radical difference can be attributed to the remarkable influence of a who Foucault, who thought his “historical” works *Madness and Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, and *The Order of Things* examined the discursive powers that influenced the development of psychiatry, medicine and the human sciences, respectively. Introducing the archaeological concept of history as archive, Foucault maintained that history is an intersection of multiple discourses with

gaps and discontinuities, and suggested an approach of historical analysis to discover/uncover discontinuities in the conditions of human knowledge.

Foucault argues that old historians aimed at reconstituting the past by referring to documents about the past, and, appropriating facts and details such that the incoherent elements are concealed, and create a seemingly unified narrative of history, that complies with the discourse of the time and age. On the contrary, new historicists, work on reference documents from within to understand the inherent fissures. This new approach serves the purpose of proliferation of discontinuities in the history of ideas, in the place of a continuous chronology of reason. This idea is corollary to Foucault's understanding of knowledge as a manifestation of power. Thus, in a typical poststructuralist manner, new historicists foreground and take pride in discontinuities.

New Historicism differs from the old Historicism in large measure not based on the approach but rather on changes in historical methodology, the rise of the so-called New history. The term new history was indebted to the French term *nouvelle histoire*, itself associated particularly with the historian Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora, members of the third generation of the *Annales* School, which appeared in the 1970s. The movement can be associated with cultural history, history of representations, and *histoire des mentalities*. While there may be no precise definition, the new history is best understood in contrast with prior methods of writing history, resisting their focus on politics and "great men;" their insistence on composing historical narrative; their emphasis on administrative documents as key source materials; their concern with individuals' motivations and intentions as explanatory factors for historical events; and their willingness to accept the possibility of historians' objectivity.

## **Characteristics of New Historicism**

- **Political and social situation:** New historicists focus heavily on the political and social situations of the time. They do not just focus on the



predominant social views, however. They focus on underlying structures and less dominant structures as well and study how they interact.

- **Author's background:** They also are concerned with the author's background and how that influences the text and what it can tell the reader about the time.
- **Power structures:** New historicism came out of Marxist criticism. Marxist criticism focuses on ideas of the oppressed and the oppressor. In a similar vein, new historicism is concerned with power structures.
- **Circulation:** In regards to power, new historicists do not believe that power just resides at the top of society. Rather it is circulated, and everyone plays a role in maintaining current power structures.
- **What really happened:** New historicism is interested in finding out what really happened during the time when the text was produced. It is not just interested in hearing the predominant views of the day.
- **Political function:** The critics are concerned with the political function of the work itself.
- **Rejection of closed reading:** New historicists reject the formalist notion of the closed reading, a reading in which the text is taken as itself with no attention paid to the context in which it was produced.

# Semester I Audit Course

**Topic:** The Harlem Renaissance

**Submitted by:** Rifa Gafoor T.U.  
Roll no: 19

Verified by Course Coordinator Bindu Amat, Tutor and Associate Professor of English



**BINDU AMAT**

Associate Professor of English  
Providence Women's College  
Calicut

# The Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance was an African American cultural movement that flourished in the 1920s and had Harlem in New York city as its symbolic capital. It was a time of great creativity in musical, theatrical, and visual arts but was perhaps most associated with literature; it is considered the most influential period in African American literary History. The Harlem Renaissance was an artistic flowering of the “New Negro” movement as its participants celebrated their African heritage and embraced self-expression, rejecting long-standing—and often degrading—stereotypes.

The Harlem Renaissance, a blossoming (c. 1918–37) of African American culture, particularly in the creative arts, and the most influential movement in African American literary history. Embracing literary, musical, theatrical, and visual arts, participants sought to re conceptualize “the Negro” apart from the white stereotypes that had influenced Black peoples’ relationship to their heritage and to each other. They also sought to break free of Victorian moral values and bourgeois shame about aspects of their lives that might, as seen by whites, reinforce racist beliefs. Never dominated by a particular school of thought but rather characterized by intense debate, the movement laid the groundwork for all later African American Literature and had an enormous impact on subsequent Black literature and consciousness worldwide. While the renaissance was not confined to the Harlem district of New York city, Harlem attracted a remarkable concentration of intellect and talent and served as the symbolic capital of this cultural awakening.

The Harlem Renaissance was a phase of a larger New Negro movement that had emerged in the early 20th century and in some ways ushered in the civil rights movements of the late 1940s and early 1950s. The social foundations of this movement included the great migration of African Americans from rural to urban spaces and from South to North; dramatically rising levels of literacy; the creation of national organizations dedicated to pressing African American civil rights, “uplifting” the race, and opening socioeconomic opportunities; and developing race pride, including pan-African sensibilities and programs. Black exiles and expatriates from the Caribbean and Africa crossed paths in metro poles such as New York city and Paris after world war 1 and had an invigorating influence on each other that gave the broader “Negro renaissance” (as it was then known) a profoundly important international cast.

The Harlem Renaissance is unusual among literary and artistic movements for its close relationship to civil rights and reform organizations. Crucial to the movement were magazines such as *The Crisis*, published by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); *Opportunity*, published by the National Urban League; and *The Messenger*, a socialist journal eventually connected with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, a Black labour union. *Negro World*, the newspaper of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, also played a role, but few of the major authors or artists identified with Garvey’s “Back to Africa” movement, even if they contributed to the paper.

The renaissance had many sources in Black culture, primarily of the United States and the Caribbean, and manifested itself well beyond Harlem. As its symbolic capital, Harlem was a catalyst for artistic experimentation and a highly popular nightlife destination. Its location in the communications capital of North America helped give the “New Negroes” visibility and opportunities for publication not evident elsewhere. Located just north of Central Park, Harlem was a formerly white residential district that by the early 1920s was becoming virtually a Black city within the borough of Manhattan. Other boroughs of New York City were also home to people now identified with the renaissance, but they often crossed paths in Harlem or went to special events at the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library. Black intellectuals from Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and other cities (where they had their own intellectual circles, theatres, and reading groups) also met in Harlem or settled there. New York City had an extraordinarily diverse and decentred Black social world in which no one group could monopolize cultural authority. As a result, it was a particularly fertile place for cultural experimentation.

While the renaissance built on earlier traditions of African American culture, it was profoundly affected by trends—such as primitivism—in European and white American artistic circles. Modernist primitivism was inspired partly by Freudian psychology, but it tended to extol “primitive” peoples as enjoying a more direct relationship to the natural world and to elemental human desires than “overcivilized” whites. The keys to artistic revolution and authentic expression, some intellectuals felt, would be found in the cultures of “primitive races,” and preeminent among these, in the stereotypical thinking of the day, were the cultures of sub-Saharan Africans and their descendants. Early in the 20th century, European avant-garde artists had drawn inspiration from African masks as they broke from realistic representational styles toward abstraction in painting and sculpture. The prestige of such experiments caused African American intellectuals to look on their African heritage with new eyes and in many cases with a desire to reconnect with a heritage long despised or misunderstood by both whites and Blacks.

Key figures included educator, writer, and philosopher Alain Locke, who was considered the movement’s leader; sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois, who helped found the NAACP; and Black nationalist Marcus Garvey. Among the notable writers were Claude McKay, author of *Home to Harlem* (1928); Langston Hughes, known as “the poet laureate of Harlem”; and Zora Neale Hurston, who celebrated Black culture of the rural South. Actor Paul Robeson, jazz musician Duke Ellington, and dancer and singer Josephine Baker were leading entertainers. Perhaps most prominent in the visual arts was painter Aaron Douglas, who was called the father of African American art.

The movement is considered to have begun about 1918 and continued to 1937. Its most productive period was in the 1920s, as the movement’s vitality suffered during the Great Depression (1929–39). Although the spirit of the Harlem Renaissance survived into the 1930s, Arna Bontemps’s debut novel, *God Sends Sunday* (1931), is generally considered the last book of the movement.

The Harlem Renaissance was a turning point in Black cultural history. It helped African American writers and artists gain more control over the representation of Black culture and experience, and it provided them a place in Western high culture.

The Harlem Renaissance also laid the groundwork for all later African American literature, and it had an enormous impact on Black consciousness worldwide.

Countee Cullen, an early protégé of Locke's, came to resist any suggestion that his racial background should determine his notion of poetic inheritance. Devoted to the examples of John Keats and Edna St. Vincent Millay, Cullen considered the Anglo-American poetic heritage to belong as much to him as to any white American of his age. In contrast, Langston Hughes famously announced in his manifesto "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926) that Black poets should create a distinctive "Negro" art, combating the "urge within the race toward whiteness."

Hughes's position reveals how, in addition to primitivism, the tendency to press for "authentic" American art forms—and to find them in Black America—led Black writers to "the folk." Their focus on the folk also came at a time when American anthropologists influenced by Franz Boas were revolutionizing their discipline with arguments against the racist paradigms of the past. The folk—people of the rural South particularly, but also the new migrants to Northern cities—were presumed to carry the seeds of Black artistic development with relative autonomy from "white" traditions. Thus, James Weldon Johnson, beginning with his poem "The Creation" (1920) and then in the book *God's Trombones* (1927), set traditional African American sermons in free-verse poetic forms modeled on the techniques of Black preachers.

Inspired by Southern folk songs and jazz, Jean Toomer experimented with lyrical modifications of prose form in his dense and multigeneric book *Cane* (1923), which to many seemed a radical new departure in writing about Black life. *Cane* refrained from moralizing or explicit protest while the symbols, phrases, tones, and rhythms of Black folk music and jazz infused its structure. Weaving together poems, sketches, short stories, and dramatic narratives, the book seamlessly melded high Modernist literary techniques with African American style and subject matter that alternated between the rural South and the urban North. Though it exposed the brutal effects of white supremacy, it did so without seeming to preach or moralize, and it dealt with sexuality more overtly than any preceding Black-authored text in American literary history. For many young Black writers, *Cane* therefore marked the literary future. Ironically, however, even as Toomer completed *Cane*, he thought of himself not as a Negro but as the first member of a "new race" resulting from a uniquely American mixture of Old World peoples. Denying identification with the "Negro renaissance," he regarded the label Negro as inappropriate and limiting for his work.

Fiction of the Harlem Renaissance is notable for its concentration on contemporary life and its cultural instability—in other words, for its modernity. Anticipated by earlier novelists such as James Weldon Johnson in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (published anonymously in 1912; republished under his name in 1927) and Du Bois in *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911), the novelists of the renaissance explored the diversity of Black experience across boundaries of class, colour, and gender while implicitly or explicitly protesting anti-Black racism. In *There Is Confusion* (1924) Jessie Redmon Fauset considered the transformation of

mainstream culture effected by the new Black middle class and by the Black creative arts. Using the conventions of the novel of manners, Fauset advanced themes of racial uplift, patriotism, optimism for the future, and Black solidarity. Walter White's *The Fire in the Flint* (1924) focused on the career and then the lynching of a Black physician and veteran of World War I. Protesting racial oppression and exposing its most barbaric expressions, White's novel also brought attention to a distinguished Black professional class whose progress was being blocked by prejudice.

Drama of the Harlem Renaissance sought to overcome the decades-long hold on the popular imagination exerted by blackface minstrelsy, which had created a powerful range of damaging stereotypes that constrained theatrical presentation of Black life. Critics, playwrights, and actors debated the function of drama, as well as its subject matter and the style of presentation of "Negro experience." A number of white-authored plays about Black life gained great critical and box-office success from the late 1910s through the mid-1930s, giving valuable experience to Black performers and inspiring Black dramatists. Most notable were Ridgely Torrence's *Plays for a Negro Theater* (1917), Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* (1921), Green's *In Abraham's Bosom* (1927), and Marc Connelly's *The Green Pastures* (1929). These plays also moved some Black playwrights to present more authentic examples of what were called "Negro plays." New all-Black theatre groups arose in several cities.

Visual artists of the Harlem Renaissance, like the dramatists, attempted to win control over representation of their people from white caricature and denigration while developing a new repertoire of images. Prior to World War I, Black painters and sculptors had rarely concerned themselves with African American subject matter. By the end of the 1920s, however, Black artists had begun developing styles related to Black aesthetic traditions of Africa or to folk art. Meta Warrick Fuller anticipated this development with her sculpture *Ethiopia Awakening* (1914). Appearing from a distance like a piece of Egyptian funerary sculpture, it depicts a Black woman wrapped like a mummy from the waist down. But her upper torso aspires upward, suggesting rebirth from a long sleep. In the 1920s, as African art became better known in Western art circles, West African cultural models gained importance for Black American artists.

Beginning about 1916, a large number of African Americans moved from the rural American South and settled in the urban North and West. One of the communities where African Americans settled during this Great Migration was Harlem, in New York, New York. After World War I Harlem became a thriving center of African American culture. The Harlem Renaissance (c. 1918–37) was the most influential movement in African American literary history. The movement also included musical, theatrical, and visual arts. The Harlem Renaissance was unusual among literary and artistic movements for its close relationship to civil rights and reform organizations. During this time Black artists began to take control of how Black culture was being represented.

Sociologist, activist, editor, and author W.E.B. Du Bois's book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) had a profound effect on an entire generation that formed the core of the Harlem Renaissance. Booker T. Washington had urged Blacks to accept discrimination for the time being and elevate themselves through hard work and economic gain, thus winning the respect of whites. Du Bois argued that Washington's strategy, rather than freeing Blacks from oppression, would serve only to perpetuate it.

The Harlem Renaissance was also greatly inspired by African American journals that published short pieces by promising writers. These journals included the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's *The Crisis* and the National Urban League's *Opportunity*. Claude McKay is generally considered the first major poet of the Harlem Renaissance. His militant poem "If We Must Die" (1919) is one of the most-quoted works of African American literature of this time period. The movement was popularized by African American philosopher Alain Locke in *The New Negro* (1925), an anthology of fiction, poetry, drama, and essays. Principal contributors to the Harlem Renaissance included not only well-established literary figures, such as Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson, but also new young writers, such as Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes. The Harlem Renaissance continued into the 1930s. Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) is widely regarded as one of the signal achievements of the Harlem Renaissance. Other writers, such as Arna Bontemps, also produced important work

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