



THEMES AND TECHNIQUES OF POSTMODERN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Postmodern literature is used to describe certain characteristics of post-world war II literature and a reaction against Enlightenment ideas implicit in modernist literature.

This paper focuses on various themes and techniques which are discussed below in the writings of postmodern writers.

KEYWORDS : Postmodern, Enlightenment.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Postmodern describes certain characteristics of post-World War II literature. It heavily relies on fragmentation, paradox, questionable narrators, etc. Irony, black humor, and the general concept of “play” are the most recognizable characteristics of postmodern literature.

1. FABULATION:

Fabulation is one of the techniques of postmodern literature in which it is similar to magic realism and postmodernism it is sometimes used with metafiction and relates to pastiche and magic realism.

The example of fabulation in contemporary literature are found in Giannina Braschi's “ *united states of Banana*” and Salman Rushdie's ‘*Haroun and the sea of stories*’.

2. FRAGMENTATION:

Fragmentation is another technique of postmodern literature., This is achieved by the use of different stereotypes and key iconography from separate genres. These elements are then spliced together creating Genre Hybrids.

3. HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION:

The originator of the term Historiographic Metafiction is Linda Hutcheon. It is used to refer to novels that fictionalize actual historical events and characters.

Rabin Alameddine's *Koolaid* The art of war which makes reference to the Lebanese Civil war and various real life political figures, Thomas Pynchon's *Mason and Dixon*, for example, features a scene in which George Washington smokes pot.

4. INTERTEXTUALITY:

Intertextuality is the important element of postmodernism is its acknowledgement of previous literary works it is the idea that a given text is a response to what has already been written, be it explicit or implicit or it is the reference to another separate and distinct text within a text.

IRONY, PLAYFULNESS, BLACK HUMOR:

Irony, playfulness and black humor are very important techniques of postmodern literature, these techniques sometimes used separately or combinely. These techniques became very much famous in the writings of postmodern writers.

Postmodern writers treat very serious subjects like world war II, the cold war, conspiracy in the way of humorously and ironically.

Joseph Heller, William Gaddis, Kurt Vonnegut, these postmodern authors popularly known as the black humorists. These writers always treat serious subjects in a comic playful and humorous way. Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying Of Lot 49* is the example of playfulness, irony, and black humor as this novel has a serious subject and complex structure.

5. MAGIC REALISM:

Magic realism is one of the important techniques in postmodern literature. Magic Realism is a literary style or genre which combines or mixes the naturalistic details and narrative with surreal of dreamlike elements.

The roots of Magic Realism are seen in the works of Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez and also in sulman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children*.

6. MAXIMALISM:

Villified by its critics for being in turns disorganized, sprawling, overly long, and emotionally disconnected, maximalism exists in the tradition of long works like *The Odyssey*. Authors that use this technique will sometimes defend their wok as being as long as it needs to be, depending on the subject material that is covered.

7. METAFICTION:

It is the important technique of postmodern literature. Metafiction is writing about writing. It is a form of self-referential literature concerned with the art and devices of fiction itself.

8. MINIMALISM:

Minimalism is a style of writing in which the author deliberately presents characters that are unexceptional and events that are taken from everyday life. It is not an exclusively postmodern technique, as many writers, most notably Ernest Hemingway, wrote in a similar style, but some critics claim that Samuel Beckett, one of the most important postmodern authors, perfected minimalism.

9. PARANOIA:

Many postmodern authors write under the assumption that modern society cannot be explained or understood from that point of view, any apparent connections or controlling influences on the chaos of society would be very frightening, and this lends a sense of Paranoia to many postmodern works.

10. PARTICIPATION:

Many postmodern authors, as a response to modernism, which frequently set its authors apart from their readers, attempt to involve the reader as much as possible over the course of a novel. This can take the form of asking the reader questions, including unwritten narratives that must be constructed by the reader, or allowing the reader to make decisions regarding the course of the narrative.

11. PASTICHE:

Pastiche is important technique of postmodern literature which means to mix or to combine or to paste it is a work of art that imitates the work of a previous artist.

Thomas Pynchon, one of the most important postmodern authors, uses elements from detective fiction, science fiction and war fiction, Margaret Atwood uses science fiction and fairy tales.

12. POIIOUMENA:

Poioumena is one of the important techniques of postmodern literature first time this term used by Alastair Fowler.

The examples of this technique are Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor resartus* and Laurence Sterne's *TristramShandy*, which is about the narrator's frustrated attempt to tell his own story vladimir Nabokov's *pale fire*, in which the narrator, Kinbote claims he is writing an analysis of John Shade's long poem "pale fire", but the narrative of the relationship between shade and Kinbote is presented in what is presented in what is ostensibly the footnotes to the poem, the self conscious narrator in Sulman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* parallels the creation of his book to the creation of Chutney and the creation of independent India.

13. TECHNOCULTURE AND HYPERREALITY:

It is an important technique of postmodern literature according to Frederid Jameson postmodernism is the cultural logic of late capitalism, society has moved beyond capitalism into the information age in which the people in this society constantly bombarded with advertisements, videos and product placement.

14. TEMPORAL DISTORTION:

It is one of the techniques of postmodern literature. Temporal distortion in postmodern fiction is used in a variety of ways, often for the sake of irony. Distortions in time are central features in many of Kurt Vonneegurt's non-linear novels, the most famous of which is perhaps Billy Pilgrim in *Slaughterhouse-five* becoming "unstuck in time."

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