

## THE EVOLUTION OF POSTMODERN ENGLISH NOVELS

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the literary evolution of postmodernism in English novel genre. It is anticipated in the research to go through various assumptions in order to accomplish several inferences on postmodern fiction through metanarration, fragmentation and black irony, the means that have empowered postmodern authors to demonstrate the fictionality of fiction in the process of progressive deconstruction.

**Keywords:** postmodernism, postmodern fiction, metanarration, fragmentation, black irony, fictionality, deconstruction

### INTRODUCTION

English novel genre since its first emergence with “Robinson Crusoe” by D. Defoe in the early XVIII century has successfully structured itself in the traditional form of the elements of fiction and has prosperously advanced over periods in a variety of types with the phenomenal contribution of such immanent names like J. Swift, W. Scott, J. Austin, Ch. Dickens, Ch. Bronte, E. Gaskell, G. Eliot, O. Wilde, J. Galsworthy, H. Wells, J. Joyce, V. Wolfe and many others. In every period, whether it is Realism or Aesthetism or Modernism, the novel genre never lost its true English tone, essence, colour and of course readers. However, coming to the late XX century with the beginning of postmodernism, literary scholars have by far begun to worry on those continuation of the novel genre in the hands of postmodernist writers whose inclinations are destined to deconstruction. The most essential point here might be as well by J.F. Lyotard who confirmed “the narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal” under the legitimation of postmodern authors.

### METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

While we sit to elucidate the true meaning of postmodernism, we might be already considering finding ourselves to be able to come up with one decent definition of the term “Postmodernism”. But we would be acting adversely to the overall conception of postmodernism as far as they reject the utmost objectivity. Bran

Nicol, in *“The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction”* states that postmodernism due to its slippery and indefinable quality, literary scholars is doomed to take quite a great deal of effort to define it in some decent terms. The authors of the recent article entitled *“Critical Examination of Postmodernism Based on Religious and Moral Values Education”* support the same conception of the postmodernism and state that postmodernism is not a systematic school of thought whose intellectual framework and educational implications can be precisely and definitively expressed, but as the nature of this movement requires, it constantly changes form and contains different trends. However, Jean Francois Lyotard simply defines postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives. This form of incredulity might be as well seen as the result of science as Lyotard confirmed but also as the authors of *“Postmodern Humanism in Contemporary Literature and Culture”*, Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack contended it’s to draw readers’ attention to textual nature of reality with the help of metafictional techniques. In *“Postmodern Fiction: Theory and Practice”* we are assured that postmodernism as a genre has not come up with any sensational innovations in fiction but point out fiction’s dominance or else to demonstrate how fictionality of fiction dominated throughout the centuries. Ana María Losada Pérez in her recently published (2015) dissertation *“Postmodernism in Angela Carter’s Short Fiction”* claims that postmodernists deny any assertion to absolute knowledge. The rejection of any true knowledge in its utmost form is one of the main tendencies of postmodern novelists. These predispositions have their deep traces in Nietzsche who in his *“Twilight of Idols”* asserted that the “true world” – an idea with no use anymore has become useless. J. Derrida as one of the major contributors of postmodernism and as a pioneer of deconstruction theory asserted that deconstruction discovers hidden assumptions about a text as far as it implies meaning of meanings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the first things that urges us to work on this movement of literature is to understand the English postmodern generation, their culture, and their values and of course their norms through the works they created as postmodern generation. Postmodernism in the works of English postmodernists shouldn’t mean to hold firmly in some type of ideology or creating some new forms or sets of strong beliefs, distinct features and typical characteristics but it intensely emphasizes why or for what individual reasons one is holding this exact form of ideology and requires them full

and absolute understanding of those sets of ideology and stresses the fact only those are responsible for the repercussions of the beliefs they hold.

Everything changes simultaneously when the values change. It might be therefore there are at times misunderstandings between the older and younger generation. Thus, the elderly are unable sometimes to comprehend the youth for their full ignorance of the well-established, well-experienced and well-preserved throughout the time traditional values. Coming to the modern era, the very established traditional form of writing lost its true values with the global and utmost level of dehumanization. Not only artists, writers, philosophers but the ordinary people had no more tendencies towards traditionalism but to change everything from its theory to its practical implementation. For those who emphasized the necessity of human reason over blind religious obedience or pious illiterate submission, progress with rationality was primeval comparing to romanticists who could foresee the progressive dangers of the human reason and therefore fully brought the freedom of human soul into revolutionary positions. Reconsidering that the realists who intended to portray the dead-end of love of money and materialism through the privilege of “all evil” upper class strata accentuated the physical sufferings of the characters to demonstrate as the main motive for unstandardized life whereas modernists were fully eager to contemplate the thoughts of the main characters as the main basis of the literary fiction. As *“the relation of novel and confession techniques is similar, the author jumps into his characters' minds to follow their stream of consciousness, and out again to describe them externally”*. [2, 74] Because they were able to see the human race not only as rational beings, or as spiritual beings, or as physical beings but also as psychological beings through which they were destined to bring literary fiction into a new revolutionary position. While the postmodernists in their world of deconstruction and metanarration created such characters whose beings brought the world into *“a profound anti-humanism”* [5, 3], the deepest dimmest recesses of human imagination are seen as off-limits.

English postmodernism developed in different ways of literary prose, postmodern feminism significantly progressed with the notable works by Angela Carter, postmodern drama came into a new stage with Samuel Beckett's postmodern masterpieces, novel genre found its profundity with the works by Julian Barnes. Reading Angela Carter's works, we slightly come to a precise perception about postmodern feminism that all fairy tales were once written for girls as they were all narrated by women from Medieval ages because they were definitely in the expectations of men: young girls going well with the supremacy of “all beautiful

categorization” and no tendencies towards deep intelligence which might as well turn adversely to men’s expectations because otherwise they would realize what is there beyond the world they are “living”. Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot” was magnificently able to declare to the human race why they all exist and keep existing in despair, disillusion and anger. They simply exist but their existence cannot change them into the full life till their inexistence. People with their self-misunderstood ideologies and self-misinterpreted beliefs of seeing the world out of its true nature and full of miracles to “live” simply left them into vanity. Julian Barnes with his irreplaceable work “A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters” brought the postmodern novel into a new stage of recognition. With the manifestation of fragmentation, metafiction, black irony and deconstruction of traditional construction of literary fiction Julian Barnes was able to display the real hegemony of postmodernism through his astute scepticism in absolutism of any current knowledge the contemporary world possesses. Barnes looks as if he was challenging literature itself, he is masterfully trying to show how fictional is fiction; he looks as if he had set himself a goal – to create a book using all possible styles and techniques of writing, and his method in this case works great for the main idea: to make us, readers, look at the story differently, from an unexpected angle, not as strict, a leather-bound encyclopaedia, where all events are divided into paragraphs and numbered, but as a chaotic set of rumours and speculations or assumptions told by theatre spectators. For Julian Barnes there is no history, neither mystery if you are able to perceive the reality of your own ability to see the things the way they happened if had happened.

## CONCLUSION

While reading a postmodern novel, you always feel the power of the author; it is not the power of the characters, not the power of the event, not even a conflict but the genuine power of the author. The supremacy of the postmodern authors can be inferred through this set of concepts: All the preceding ideologies, beliefs, philosophies emerged to convey what is right and how to mature rightly, but postmodernist writers are affably intended to present what is wrong with all of these preceding values, those who created them and followed. The whole process of these particular types of surging insight into the world and human reason and surely fiction is achieved by the use of various types of postmodern elements that have been encountered above.

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