

WAS THERE A POSTMODERNISM?

BİR POSTMODERNİZM VAR MIYDI?

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Abstract

Postmodernism as a cultural term has been in use since the mid-twentieth century. While a common use of the term refers to multiple cultural and economic conditions, it also suggests new artistic and literary forms. On the one hand, postmodernism is commonly considered as a reaction towards modernist movement in arts and literature, it is also regarded as an intensified version of modernist narrative techniques in literature. This article analyses and compares the various definitions of postmodernism and its literary forms to question whether or not there was a postmodernism before it began to be talked about. The article also reads the modernist texts of writers and poets such as James Joyce and Allen Ginsberg as the early examples of postmodernist tropes in literature in order to compare them with the narrative styles of postmodernist writers like Salman Rushdie.

Keywords: Modernism, Postmodernism, Joyce, Ginsberg, Rushdie.

Öz

Kültürel bir terim olarak postmodernizm yirminci yüzyılın ortalarından bu yana kullanılmaktadır. Terimin yaygın kullanımı birçok kültürel ve ekonomik koşulu nitelerken, aynı zamanda yeni sanatsal ve yazınsal biçimlere de işaret etmektedir. Bir yandan postmodernizm yaygın bir biçim- de sanat ve edebiyatta modernist akıma bir tepki olarak değerlendirilirken, öte yandan edebiyatta kullanılan modernist anlatı tekniklerinin daha da yoğunlaşmış bir hali olduğu da tartışılmaktadır. Bu makale postmodernizmin çeşitli tanımlarını ve onun yazınsal formlarını analiz ederek karşılaştırmasını yapmayı; ve postmodernizmin yaygın olarak konuşulmaya ve tartışılmaya başlamasından önce de var olup olmadığını sorgulamayı amaçlamaktadır. Makale aynı zamanda James Joyce ve Allen Ginsberg gibi modernist romancı ve şairlerin eserlerini edebiyatta postmodernist özelliklerin erken örnekleri olarak okumakta ve onları Salman Rushdie gibi postmodernist yazarların anlatı teknikleriyle karşılaştırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Modernizm, Postmodernizm, Joyce, Ginsberg, Rushdie.

INTRODUCTION

Answering the question in the title reveals further questions. What is postmodernism? Is it a period? How and when did it begin? Or did it really begin? Is it a moment or condition? What differentiates it from modernism? What is it like? To understand postmodernism, the condition(s) of the world should be reconsidered. Modernism, which began in the last decade of the nineteenth century and lasted through the first two decades of the twentieth century, consisted of innovations, changes, developments and tendencies that were often controversial. It was in literature, art and all fields of science. In the course of the twentieth century, there have been changes in all

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sciences, arts, literature and life styles of the peoples of the world. All the innovations and progresses against the conventions gave rise to globalisation and consumerism. The liberal, free market economy introduced especially in the early 1980s generated a philistine middle class that valued its own benefits. The hegemonic values formed by this globalized economic model began to dominate the cultural and literary world too. These cultural phenomena brought about the end of the Iron Curtain.

The developments in the telecommunication technology shortened the distances. The earth is no longer a big, vast planet. While it is possible to see Western products, values, cultural forms in the Eastern countries, it is not impossible to meet people from Eastern cultures that fully practice their cultural forms, beliefs and lifestyles living in Western Europe. By the same token, Eastern and Western cultures have begun to confront with each other. As it will be seen below in the following pages, this confrontation turns out to be one of the causes of postmodern condition. The main emphasis here will be the reflection of this postmodern condition in literature which may be called postmodernist literature. The literature of postmodernism is a collage, because the postmodern culture is a collage due to the confrontations mentioned above.

While consumerism is at its highest point in the technologically modernised parts of the world where people live a higher standard of living than the people in the other parts of the world, the chain of fast food restaurants reaches the poorest countries. In a poor, totally traditional and ethnic surrounding, a technologically equipped branch of a fast food chain can be seen. The view is a collage. This collage can be observed in the postmodern art, but as far as literature is concerned, what is the literature of postmodernism like? Is it a result of the collage caused by globalisation and consumerism?

Definitions of Postmodernism(s)

Postmodernism is defined as a general term “used to refer to changes, developments and tendencies” appeared in literature, art music, architecture “since the 1940s or 1950s” by J. A. Cuddon (734). It is different from modernism. It is even a reaction against modernism. It is not right “to imply that modernism is over and done with” to talk about postmodernism according to Cuddon who points out that there is not a “demarcation line” (734). In general, the movements in literature were originally modernist. Avant-garde influences continue. Despite the impossibility of giving exact dates and the demarcation so as to consider postmodernism an era like modernism, Cuddon claims that it is possible “to descry certain in postmodernism” (734). For instance, the literature of postmodernism

“tends to be non-traditional and against authority and signification” (Cuddon 734). In fiction, “experimental techniques” may be cited “as displayed in the nouveau roman and the anti-novel”, and there are also other experiments what is called “concrete poetry”, eclectic approach, aleatory writing, parody, pastiche that are “other discernible features of post-modernism” (Cuddon 734).

Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker mention that postmodernism, which has been debated by critics and cultural historians during the last twenty years or more, is seen as “simply the continuation and development of modernist ideas” (200). On the other hand, some see it as “a radical break with classical modernism” (Selden et. al. 200). Some authors and texts of past literature, such as de Sade, Borges, the Ezra Pound of *The Cantos* are considered already postmodern. In the contemporary age, “the ‘grand narratives’ of social and intellectual progress initiated by Enlightenment are discredited” (Selden et. al. 200). Political grounding of the Enlightenment in “‘history’ or ‘reality’ is no longer possible”, because they have become “textualised in the world of images and simulations” characterising the contemporary “age of mass consumption and advanced technologies” Selden et. al. 200).

Selden et al. make the distinction between the terms postmodern, postmodernity and postmodernism, which are often used “inter- changeably”, in order to periodize “post-war developments in advanced media societies and capitalist economies” and to describe “developments within or across the arts” (201). Employing the term postmodern or postmodernity for general developments within the post-war period and reserving “the term ‘postmodernism’ for developments in culture and the arts” appear to be a solution to the problem that lies in the uses of the term postmodernism as both a descriptive and an evaluative term (Selden et. al. 201). However, because postmodernism is perceived as to denote “either a continuation of, or radical break with, dominant features in an earlier modernism or the movements of the avant-garde”, a further problem of definition arises, and thus, Selden et al. draw attention to that there is also much debate “about the identity and boundaries of this earlier movements” (201).

What are the boundaries of those earlier movements? By 1929, modernism was “drawing to a close”, as suggested by Randall Stevenson (*A Reader’s Guide* 50). None the less, certain outstanding modernist novels were published in the thirties. Among them *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce, which “marks a terminus or consummation of modernist energies and initiatives”, helped develop these initiatives to postmodernist writing

(Stevenson, A Reader's Guide 50). If the term modernism is taken to mean the relinquishment of conventions of storytelling during first few decades of the twentieth century, which is called 'the Modernist era', the term postmodernism seems to refer to the period that comes after modernism - which is difficult to claim. The term 'postmodernist' does not make any sense, according to Brian McHale, because if "modern" means "pertaining to the present", then "post-modern" can only mean "pertaining to the future". McHale suggests that "post" here "does not mean what the dictionary tells us it ought to mean" (4). It only intensifies it. Therefore, postmodernism does not refer to a period. Literature of postmodernism carries on extending the innovations brought into literature by modernism. As claimed by Brenda K. Marshall, it is about language; it is about how language "controls, how it determines meaning" (4). It is about "how 'we' are defined within that language, and within specific historical, social, cultural matrices" (Marshall 4). Postmodernism is about "race, class, gender, erotic identity and practice, nationality, and ethnicity", it is "about difference" and "does not refer to a period or a movement", but "more movement in logic than in time" (Marshall 5).

As well as the difficulties of determining a classification and a chronological demarcation for postmodernism, there is much difficulty of defining it too, due to the debates about it today. Even more, it is still difficult to put forward a clear distinction between modernism and postmodernism. Since it is what may be called a condition rather than a movement or an era in a specific period of the literary history, some authors within the literature of modernism are possible to be considered already postmodern. Umberto Eco believes that "postmodernism is not a trend to be chronologically defined, but, rather, an ideal", and it could be claimed that "every period has its own postmodernism" (226). Eco draws attention to Joyce:

The Portrait is the story of an attempt at the modern. *Dubliners*, even if it comes before, is more modern than *Portrait*, *Ulysses* is on the borderline. *Finnegans Wake* is already postmodern, or at least initiates the postmodern discourse: it demands, in order to be understood, not the negation of the already said, but its ironic rethinking. (Eco 227)

As pointed out by Frederic Jameson, "one of the most significant features or practices in postmodernism", which is not "widely accepted or even understood today", is pastiche (1992: 164-5). This assertion evaluates the relevance of Eco's claim, since pastiche is widely accepted to be one of the characteristics of Joyce's fiction, particularly in *Ulysses*

and *Finnegans Wake*, and of modernism in general. From Christopher Nash's point of view, it is true that "post-Modernists acclaim Modernists among their favourite influences, and we can find them objecting to Modernism only in terms of those characteristics which it shares with realism" (33). Modernists have never "participated, at the level of fundamental issues, in the 'struggle against' Realism" (Nash 33). It is possible to come up with the idea of confronting Eco's and Nash's claims. When Eco's assumption is considered, the answer to the question 'was there a "postmodernism"?' is yes, there was a 'postmodernism' even before the invention of the term 'postmodernism', because Joyce's fiction was already 'postmodern'. On the other hand, when Nash's assumption is thought of, another question comes into being: Is postmodernism not realist, or, is it less realist than modernism? Is it because Joyce was 'struggling against' realism that his fiction is considered 'already postmodern'?

How 'Postmodern' was Joyce?

Modernist fiction, according to Randall Stevenson, rarely abandons the story telling. However, "it does resist as far as possible the arrangement of 'events in their time sequence'" (Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction* 87). In the table where the distinctions of modernism and postmodernism are made by Peter Brooker, it is observed that in modernism there is form, creation, totalisation, synthesis, hierarchy, semantics, whereas in postmodernism there is rhetoric instead of semantics, anarchy instead hierarchy, antithesis instead of synthesis, deconstruction and decreation instead of creation and totalisation. Brooker suggests that postmodernism, which "splices high with low culture" and "swamps reality in a culture of recycled images" (1992: 11). It displays "a quite different 'knowledge' from the way modernism is 'known'" and, additionally, "the more usual understanding [of] postmodernism came into being as a reaction to an institutionalised modernism" (Brooker 12). Postmodernism functions "to further 'undefine' its supposed unitary identity," and it often collaborates "in the construction of that very identity as fit only for deconstruction" (Brooker 12). In Joyce's fiction, certain departures from the accepted characteristics of modernism might be observed. If *Ulysses* is considered in terms of deconstruction, it is apparent that almost every chapter of the novel is written differently, "and many of them appropriate and mock some specific style of literature", such as journalism, ordinary speech or officialdom (Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction* 167). In *Ulysses*, "stylistic variation and exaggeration make the nature of language impossible to ignore" (Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction* 193). There is a central significance for "Joyce's mode of representation, as well as for what is represented" (Stevenson,

Modernist Fiction 193). Joyce leaves deliberately “the habits of the novel form,” and particularly in *Finnegans Wake*, “the inaccessibility of ordinary meaning is a necessary condition” which in *Finnegans Wake* goes further than *Ulysses* “in exploiting and celebrating aspects of language other than the semantic” (Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction* 193).

In this respect, if Brenda K. Marshall’s assumption is remembered again, it will be more convenient to claim that Joyce was already postmodern in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*; postmodernism is about language, about how it controls and determines meaning. An autonomy of language is found in *Finnegans Wake*, as suggested by Stevenson (*A Reader’s Guide* 113). This helps make *Finnegans Wake* “not only a kind of grand finale of modernist innovations, but also a redirection of some of their potential for the later twentieth century” (Stevenson, *A Reader’s Guide* 114). It is the prophecy of postmodernity, and this prophecy helps to justify terms such as postmodernity or postmodernism, which extend the innovations of modernism. Stevenson continues to evaluate *Finnegans Wake* as postmodernist, since its language and representation have become “the distinguishing characteristic of postmodernism” (*A Reader’s Guide* 114).

Finnegans Wake, which is the last and most problematic of Joyce’s works, belongs to a genre of mythological anatomies from Frank Kermode and John Hollander’s points of view. Joyce made up new words that might be called “portmanteau” words in *Finnegans Wake* which he himself called “funferal”, a word made up out of funeral and fun for all (Kermode & Hollander 303-4). Joyce’s creation of new words is outstanding:

- I apologise, Shaun began, but I would rather spinooze you one from the gasts of Jacko and Esaup, fable one, feeble too. Let us here consider the casus, my dear little cousis (husstenhasstencaffincoffintussemtosemmd[-] amandamnacosaghcusaghghobixhatouxpeswchbechoscashlcarcarcaract) of the Ondt and the Gracehoper. (Joyce 878)

In the above paragraph, Joyce’s use of language again draws attention to the role of language in postmodernism. Joyce determines meaning beyond the context. He creates new meanings by aiming the limits of storytelling, by extending the limits of word formation. His new words are the description of new concepts. They possess new meanings. He plays with history, philosophy, science by playing with words. In the interpretation of the above paragraph, Kermode and Hollander point out that Shaun is the tight, crafty son who “would indeed ‘guise’ an apology”, hence the verb “apologuise” is created. Spinoza is the first

philosopher of time and space, good and evil. To refer to Spinoza, Joyce forms “spinooze” also to “ooze” a tale. Grimm’s fairy tales, actually called *geste*, become “grimm gests”. And a hundred-letter word, indicating the voice of thunder, marks a “cyclical progression in the vision of phased history” (Kermode & Hollander 304).

Brian McHale sees postmodernist allegory in *Finnegans Wake*. Everything is potentially allegorical in *Finnegans Wake*. It invites the reader to read it allegorically. According to McHale, the allegories in *Finnegans Wake* are overdetermined, because they have too many interpretations. Joyce establishes “the dominant mode of postmodernist allegory” (McHale 141-2). As well as postmodernist allegory, *Finnegans Wake* has other postmodernist characteristics. Since collage and language are what postmodernism is about, it proves to be postmodern due to the fact Joyce “builds up his vertical collage not merely from the registers and discourses of the English language, but from other national languages as well” (McHale 171).

McHale points out the differences between *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. These differences are the distinctions of modernism and postmodernism (233). The text in *Ulysses* is the representation of mind. It has the direct interior monologue technique. The story is told through the “represented consciousness of the character” (McHale 233). The represented world is “stable and reconstructable, forming an ontologically unproblematic backdrop against which the movements of the characters’ minds may be displayed” (McHale 234). This is, in short, modernist fiction. There is an interior discourse of Anna Livia Plurabelle represented in the end of *Finnegans Wake*, too. But her discourse, as McHale suggests, is “not a consciousness like Gabriel Conroy’s or Molly Bloom’s, not ‘an ordinary mind on an ordinary day,’ but more like a collective consciousness” (234). Molly Bloom’s monologue, on the other hand, represents the ‘stream of consciousness’, whereas Anna Livia is the thing itself. She is the personification of the River Liffey, for instance. She ‘literalizes the metaphor “stream of consciousness”’, as claimed by McHale:

There is no stable world behind [her] consciousness, but only a flux of discourse in which fragments of different, incompatible realities flicker into existence and out of existence again, overwhelmed by the competing reality of language.

Postmodernist fiction, in short. (McHale 234)

Joyce was postmodernist if *Finnegans Wake* is taken into consideration. This also proves the impossibility of putting a chronological demarcation line for postmodernism.

Thinking of *Finnegans Wake*, it might easily be said that there was a “postmodernism” in the time of modernism. But as there is more than one modernism according to Brooker, (1) “there are many possible constructions of postmodernism, however, this does not mean that all constructs are equally interesting or valuable”, suggests McHale who acknowledges that “postmodernism is the posterity of modernism” (234). Postmodernism, as the descendant of modernism, has reached today in various forms in various genres.

Is There a Postmodernism?

Is there a postmodernism today? Does postmodernity still continue? Postmodernism is a new avant-garde. It is still happening according to J.A. Cuddon (1991: 734). Contemporary world is postmodern. Eclecticism, which is also one of the certain features of postmodernism, is the degree zero of contemporary general culture, according to Jean-Francois Lyotard:

One listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald’s food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and “retro” clothes in Hong Kong; knowledge is a matter for TV games. It is easy to find a public for eclectic works. (Lyotard 76)

Although the term was used earlier, a general cultural phenomenon crystallised in the 1970s, as suggested by Dennis Brown (1). And the term is used to refer to the changes dating back to 1940s and 1950s. Changes brought into the twentieth century life and society are represented in many literary texts. Many of these changes were brought by the post war developments.

Allen Ginsberg and Salman Rushdie are the two literary characters of the second half of the twentieth century. Although they appeared in different decades in different cultures, what they have common is that they both collide different worlds. They both make use of eclecticism of the twentieth century. Brown finds Ginsberg’s style agglutinative. His “democratic, all-inclusive rhetoric implications of ‘End of History’ thesis” within the “grotesque torsions of the Cold War”, “scenarios of nuclear exchange”, “pollution” of the earth, “repression of sexual and spiritual desire”, his “paratactical, alogical, comprehensive, insistently rhythmic, laid back, dialogical, ironic and passionate” discourse are the assessments of his representation of the postmodern (Brown 30):

America I’ve given you all and now I’m nothing.

America two dollars and twentyseven cents January 17, 1956.

I can't stand my own mind.

America when will we end the human war? Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb.

...

America after all it is you and I who are perfect not the next world. Your machinery is too much for me.

...

I smoke marijuana every chance I get.

I sit in my house for days on end and stare at the roses in the closet.

...

I'm addressing you.

Are you going to let your emotional life be run by Time Magazine? I'm obsessed by Time Magazine.

... (Ginsberg 262-264)

According to Brown, "America" constitutes a "peculiarly postmodern conjunction of textual and oral modes" (31). The oral modes it constitutes are within an "electronic culture" (Brown 31). The design of the poem allows itself to be read aloud. In Brown's interpretation of the poem, it is also suggested that "the mandatory voices of the Jewish Major Prophets" lie behind the poem (Brown 31). It is possible to feel the shimmering "video images of pop electronics and the sonorous tonalities of the electric guitar" and the poem "registers a reemergence into print textuality of the repressed rhythms of oral culture" (Brown 31). Therefore, as it seems, it is impossible to reevaluate the lyrics of Bob Dylan, John Lennon or Van Morrison without the Ginsbergian background.

Ginsberg creates an alternative discourse which might be classified in the alternative literature. Although J.A. Cuddon admits that whether or not an alternative literature really exists is open to doubt, in the 1950s, "it might have referred to the poetry of the Beat generation, much of whose best work has long since been 'mainstream'" (32). Writers of Beat generation were influenced by jazz, Zen Buddhism, and their lifestyle was associated with drugs, free sex (Cuddon 84). In "America", Ginsberg uses "comedic sexual transgression as a way of getting in the last word", and this is long before the "recognised construction of a Gay Rights movement" (Brown 32). According to the definition of Beat generation by Cuddon, this is a typical example of its kind:

I smoke marijuana every chance I get. (Ginsberg 264)

However, Ginsberg's poetry is less important for being Beat than being postmodern. There are a number of relevant qualities to consider Ginsberg's literature postmodern. By "Howl", for instance, he intentionally breaks with "both formal metrics and High Culture anti-formality" and to make it available to the public, he uses "psalmic parataxis" and "hypnotic linear repetition" (Brown 42). His works have the "moral sincerity" or "incisiveness of critique", although they appear to be "depthless" and "non-serious" (Brown 43). Ginsberg's work's "verbal and linear freedom" through fluency, and the "unique combination of self-deprecating comic buffoonery and radically-engaged personal and political passion" constitute his particular significance for postmodern poetry (Brown 43).

After Beat generation in which Ginsberg's poetry is chronologically categorised - chronologically, because his postmodernism has become more important than his 'Beat'-ness -, nineteen eighties were the years when argument of postmodernism was in its peak. While Ginsberg provided his examples of postmodern poetry in the 1950s in the USA, Salman Rushdie is among the writers who are invariably discussed as postmodernist in 1980s, on the other side of the Atlantic (Selden 203). Ian Ousby suggests that Rushdie's interests are "in reshaping the history of his time" and his novels are important examples of magic realism, which is a postmodern quality (Ousby 804). In *Midnight's Children*, he "succeeds in matching a grand subject, the multitudinousness of India itself" and is "concerned with the creative process", rewriting "the history of a country founded in the year of his birth" (Ousby 804).

Postmodern writers used and abused the modernist tradition of the more "open" endings, as suggested by Linda Hutcheon (1988: 59). Postmodern writers have converted the open endings of postmodernism to "self-consciously multiple endings or resolutely arbitrary closure" (Hutcheon 59) which Rushdie uses in *Midnight's Children* where the ending is open:

One empty jar ... how to end? Happily, with Mary in her teak rocking-chair
and a son who has begun to speak? Amid recipes, and thirty jars with
chapter-headings for names?

...

Or with questions: now that I can, I swear, see the cracks on the backs of

my hands, cracks along my hairline and between my toes, why do I not bleed?

...

Or dreams: because last night the ghost of Reverend Mother appeared to me, staring down through the hole in a perforated cloud,

...

No, that won't do, I shall have to write the future as I have written the past, to set it down with the absolute certainty of a prophet.

...

Yes, they will trample me underfoot, the numbers marching one two three, four hundred million five hundred six ... they will trample my son who is not my son ... until a thousand and one children have died, because it is privilege and the curse of midnight's children

... to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in peace. (Rushdie 462-463)

The contradiction of being unable "to live or die", discontinuity, uncertainty, hybridity, heterogeneousness are typical of postmodernism (Hutcheon 59). Edward Said sees *Midnight's Children* as a brilliant work which is "based on the imagination of independence itself" (260). Rushdie's effort is conscious to "enter into the discourse of Europe and the West, to mix it, transform it, to make it acknowledge marginalised or suppressed or forgotten histories" (Said 260). In Rushdie's fiction, periphery is an important aspect. He draws attention to the contradiction of peripheral and the central. In *Shame*, Omar Khayyam, the Shakil sisters' child, is a peripheral man who has no haircut, no circumcision and God's name is not whispered into his ears in a Muslim society. Three of the Shakil sisters claim to be his mother, but neither the mother nor the father is known. The Shakil sisters, who give a magic birth to a child, are leading a life closer to English sahibs. The mysticism and magic realism of the Eastern world are together with the Western life style full of parties, receptions, Christian ayahs and "an iron mortality that was mostly Muslim" (*Shame* 13). This is also a postmodern characteristic which "does not move the marginal to the centre" (Hutcheon 69). Marginal remains marginal, but it is often presented in a collision. In *Shame*, everything happens in the fourteenth century of the Hegiran calendar:

All this happened in the fourteenth century. I'm using the Hegiran calendar, naturally: don't imagine that stories of this type always take place longlong ago. Time cannot be homogenised as easily as milk, and in those parts, until quite recently, the thirteen-hundreds were still in full swing. (Rushdie 13)

There is a numeric contradiction here. The fourteenth century of the Hegiran calendar refers to the twentieth century. So the stories of fourteenth century are "still in full swing" in the twentieth century. Neither the calendar nor the stories are converted. Postmodernism does not "invert the valuing of centres into that of peripheries and borders, as much as use that paradoxical doubled positioning to critique the inside from both the outside and the inside" (Hutcheon 69). The narration in *Midnight's Children* is "excentric", and its male narrator is manipulative foregrounding the process of the production or constraints, which often occurs in postmodern texts (Hutcheon 81).

Midnight's Children is, in many ways, a postmodern text. It is suggested by Brian McHale that, according to *Midnight's Children*, Indian history is "supernaturally linked to the fates of the children born at the same time as the state itself" since independence (McHale 95). Each of the supernatural beings in the novel possess "some miraculous power or talent" which represents the power that enables them "to read minds, to change shape, to pass through looking-glasses", and so on (McHale 96). Through telepathy, Saleem, the novel's narrator, make the midnight's children become aware of each other. According to his secret history of supernatural India, "Indira Gandhi's declaration of the State of Emergency in 1976" was, in fact, "to flush out the midnight children and expunge their powers" (McHale 96). Rushdie's falsification of history in order to imply that "history itself may be a form of fiction", because "postmodernist apocryphal history is often fantastic history" (McHale 96). In discussing history in Hutcheon's terms, Baysar Taniyan asserts that "postmodern theories posit history as a 'discursive construct'" emphasizing that "history and historiography" stage conflicting sites where "multiple discourses compete for power and claim to knowledge" (244). In Rushdie's fiction, history, then, functions as one of the materials of his plot rather than the source of information by being falsified, thus empowering the author to claim to a kind of knowledge relevant in his own fictional universe.

Relationship with cinema is what postmodernist fiction shares with classic modern fiction. however, for modernist fiction cinema is a source of new representational

techniques, whereas for postmodernist fiction cinema is not a repertoire of representational techniques. In postmodernist fiction, movies and television appear as an ontological level. In *Midnight's Children*, a "film vocabulary" is distinctive (McHale 128-9): "in short: my grandfather was holding a pamphlet. It had been inserted into his hand (we cut to a long- shot - nobody from Bombay should be without a basic film vocabulary) as he entered the hotel foyer" (Rushdie 33).

As seen overall, there has been a postmodernism in the twentieth century. James Joyce was postmodern even before the invention of the term postmodern. As it is understood today, postmodernism is a condition. It is a moment. It is crucial to understand that it is not a historical period or an era like modernism. Forming of the word must not be mistaken, since the prefix "post-" does not convert the word into a term referring to a period that follows modernism. Postmodernism is "an awareness of being-within a way of thinking" and "an awareness of being-within, first, a language, and second, a particular historical, social, cultural framework" (Marshall 3-4). Postmodernism cannot exactly be defined because "we begin our definition with "Postmodernism is..." and we are already in trouble. We cannot get very far without "is". Language lays a trap: it says something must be, always be. Thus, by attempting to define post- modernism, it is given primary ontological status" (Marshall 4).

Another danger, according to Brenda K. Marshall, is to use the term synonymously with "contemporary". It is then understood that anything in the contemporary culture is postmodern, but, as Marshall suggests, we are not living in a period "identified 'totally' as postmodern". For instance, Marshall sees nothing postmodern about *Newsweek*. However, she draws attention to difference, race, class, gender, erotic identity and practice, nationality, age, ethnicity which postmodernism is all about (Marshall 2-3). Placing different worlds in confrontation, foregrounding their respective structures and the disparities are underlying principles of ontological poetics in postmodernist fiction from McHale's point of view (60). If today's world is thought to be a ground where different nationalities, ethnic origins, classes, sexual identities are confronted, then it is possible to claim that the world is in a postmodern condition. People from different traditions and ethnic origins may be found leading conventional lives despite being in confrontation with each other. This is the condition of contemporary culture. There may not be anything postmodern about the individuals who are, within their reality, leading conventional lives, although they constitute a postmodern condition. There may be nothing postmodern about Rushdie's Pakistan and its people in *Shame* in the sense that they live in conventions and

do not represent a postmodern society, but they are a part of a postmodern view. Their existence within industrial plan that can produce no “refrigerators” but “atom bombs” is the representation of postmodern condition, for collision of worlds is a postmodern quality.

Will There Be a ‘Postmodernism’?

Today, postmodernism is “recognised as an international phenomenon not only in the sense that its characteristics appear in art world-wide,” but in that many of them are fostered by “increasing pluralism in cultural vision”, as suggested by Randall Stevenson (A Reader’s Guide 135). Contact with other cultures and literatures creates for writers “a sense of the character and limitations of their own” (Stevenson, A Reader’s Guide 135). Awareness of languages and cultures other than their own “encourages the self-conscious questioning, reshaping and coalescence of forms characteristic of postmodernism” for writers anywhere (Stevenson, A Reader’s Guide 135). Awareness of foreign cultures in other words adds to the authors’ vision of form and nature of writing itself. As innovations and technological developments of the contemporary world continue, it will always be possible to be aware of foreign cultures. Globalization as a result of this awareness leads to new nations, new states, new settlements and orders in which further collisions take place.

Peter Brooker asks what is outside or beyond postmodernism? The key affect of a politicised, “worldly”, deconstructive postmodernism, according to Brooker,

has been to disarticulate dominant narratives, traditions and ideologies. In this way it has questioned the universalising assumptions of the male self, the super monoagency of the traditional working class, the power of the United States and the ethnocentrism of Western capitalist nations, intellectual debate and media. Postmodern technologies and theory have helped bring the marginal, the repressed and unvoiced into view and into hearing. (Brooker 25)

Frederic Jameson makes a similar assertion. He believes that “the emergence of postmodernism is closely related to the emergence of this new moment of late, consumer or multinational capitalism” (1992: 164). For one major theme, Jameson shows that “namely the disappearance of a sense of history”, has begun to live “in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions of the kind which all earlier social formations have had in one way or another to preserve (164). Umberto Eco suggests that postmodernism revisits the past ironically, not innocently (227). Although it is not a total

departure from the past, it is not a total preservation of the past, either.

In the course of the history, it seems that mass consumption and multi-national capitalism will expand its limits and literature will have new forms, not to preserve the perpetually changing shape of the world, but to represent it. At least, “the last part of this century and the beginning of the next - like the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” will be a “particularly interesting one for literature” (Stevenson, *A Reader's Guide* 141-2).

Will there be a postmodernism? The question must be left open. However, it has been proved by the debates of postmodern theorists that worlds in collision, difference, rapid switches from high culture to low culture, ethnic origins in confrontation, traditional versus modern or the other way round are the major qualities by which the postmodern moment is created. The fact that the future will probably bring more of these is a matter of concern when rapid changes the world is undergoing are taken into consideration. One hundred years ago there was no television. Today, there is a phenomenon called internet through which people from all parts of the world can meet and even get married. Despite this amazing invention, the world is a small planet where arranged marriages are “still in full swing”.

The difference between opposite cultures to be confronted gets bigger everyday as the postmodern developments get faster, which will lead more collisions. So, the reflection of these collisions in literature will be inevitable. As there is one postmodernism which is too complex to define, there will probably be a more complex literary concept in the future. There will probably be more debates about the possible concepts.

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