

## **POST MODERNISM**

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### ***Abstract***

*Post modernism pertains to the deepest aspects of our being and life. Postmodern approaches antagonize methodological conventions. It challenges established structures and belief systems in society and culture from 1960s. It embraces complex and often contradictory layers of appreciation. It introduced a new wave of freedom and a break from established rules and regulations.*

*Key Words: Post Modernism, approaches*

### **Introduction**

Post Modernism is a theory and practice which has become popular in Literature and the Arts in a late 20<sup>th</sup> century characterized by a broad skepticism. Post Modernism, as a Philosophical movement is largely a reaction against the philosophical assumptions and values of the Modernism which started after the end of the First World War. Just like post structuralism followed structuralism, post modernism followed modernism.

### **Post Modernism**

Modernism and Post Modernism are like two opposed moods or attitudes. The modernist is sad and desperate at the state of affairs and possesses a tone of lament while the post-modernist is glad and had fun on it. Postmodern philosophy tends to conceptualize the world as being impossible to strictly define or understand. After the First World War ends, society had lost its morality and religious faith and hope were fading away, the environment was polluted. Modern writers wrote in hope of reforming the society and lamenting the glory of the Country's past .T.S. Eliot in his poem *The Wasteland* opened the lines,

“April is the cruellest month, breeding Lilacs

Out of the dead land, mixing Memory and desire

Stirring Dull roots with spring rain.”

The opening lines shows the contrasted situation of the land with its past when Chaucer begins with a description of April’s “sweetest showers” in his *Prologue to The Canterbury Tales*. While modernist writer T.S. Eliot lamenting the present situations with the consciousness of the past beauty. The modernist generation was often termed as THE LOST GENERATION writers like Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald etc. often wrote about the disillusionment and moral degradation as well as the horror of the aftermath of the war while Post-modernist writers played with the present situations ironically in reactions to the modernism. As post modernism started after the end of the Second World War in the 1950s somehow the problems faced with the new generation were same with the former generation but differs in their perspective.

### **THE CHARACTERISTICS OF POST MODERNISM**

Exploration and understanding the characteristics of Post modernism through the play *Waiting for Godot*

*Waiting for Godot* is a play by Samuel Beckett premiered in 1953 which falls both into the genre of both modernism and postmodernism. The play celebrates the fragmentation in all dimensions. The language, plot, character, setting and themes are presented in a fragmented form. The difference between *The Wasteland* and *Waiting for Godot* is that the former laments the glory of the past which has fallen apart, but the latter never laments for the past, it celebrates the fragmentations.

Secondly, post-modernism holds the view that irrational is real and what is real is irrational. Post modernism rejected logical thinking. The play with its bizarre characteristics turns irrationality in the very rationality, the very unreality into the reality.

Thirdly, in post-modernist era, there is changelessness in the life of the people and they grew bitter towards their monotonous lifestyle. It can also be seen in the play *Look Back in Anger* where the writer portrayed the unchanging life of the characters and Jimmy Porter’s bitterness towards the unchanged. In *Waiting for Godot* also, there is no plot as well as action in the play and nothing happens in the play like there is no order in post modernism and life was hopeless.

Fourthly, in the play, there is no truth, all things are relative. Postmodernism asserts that truth is not mirrored in human understanding of it, but is rather constructed as the mind tries to understand its own personal reality. Thus, facts and falsehood are interchangeable.

Fifthly, Identity crisis .In the play, we do not learn anything about the two major characters Vladimir and Estragon such as their age, status in society, job etc. They do not even tell about their past, their loss of memory is also associated with their identity crisis. In Act 2, Pozzo appears blind and he cannot remember that they had met Estragon and Vladimir the previous day.

Sixthly, Post modernism emphasized the reader than the writer, so most of the themes have multi meanings which can differ according to the reader's interpretation. For instance the name GODOT in the play *Waiting for Godot* can have a multi meaning. For some critics asserts that Godot represents God in life, while some interpreted as change which was eagerly awaited by the postmodern generation and hopes.

Seventhly, the existential crisis, the characters faced an existential crisis as life seems nothing to them; Samuel Beckett asserts that at the root of our being there is nothingness. This frustration is expressed through the repetition of the sentence, "nothing to be done" by Estragon. Almost all modern people after two world wars experienced the same feelings; life appears to them as an absurd thing with full of purposeless, nothingness and meaninglessness.

Other characteristics of post modernism are liberal ethics which is defending the cause of feminist and homosexuals, pro-environmentalism defending 'Mother Earth' they blamed the Western society for its destruction, disillusionment and ownership.

Among the best known post-modernism philosophers are Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Roland Barthes etc. Lyotard is perhaps one of the most identifiable postmodernist and he has described Post modernism as a condition of the present state of culture, social structure and self.

As the aftermath of the Second World War many youngsters grew frustrated at the society and corrupted authorities, birth of the concept of an 'Angry Young Man' to describe frustrated young men of its era who hopefully waited for a change and security but never arrives. During this age of despairing, Ernest Hemingway said that man is not made for defeat in his novella *The Old man And the Sea* As the post modernism emerge out of skepticism, so did the movement of the Beat Generation during its era too in America. The

writers who were called Beat writers questioned the materialism of the society, authority and environment pollutions. The Beat generations hold many similar perspectives with the post-modernist writers and they were quite influential as they influenced many frustrated young people there influence was also one of the many things which stirred the spirit of the youth when the famous 'Counter Culture Movement' evolved in the 1960s in America and spread all over Europe.

### **Works Cited**

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