**Hama Lakhdar University of Eloued**

**Faculty of Arts and Foreign Languages**

**Department of English**

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**Subject**: Contemporary British Literature

**Level**: Master 01.

**Course 02**

**II- Features of the Postmodernist Literature**

The postmodernist literature displays itself as open to multiple interpretations in all its contradictions and inconsistencies. In addition, because of the doubts about the relation between language and the world, there emerged a new kind of art, i.e, magic realist fiction which creates confusion between facts and fiction. For this, it creates a disturbing skepticism over our sense of reality and over the narrative of history. As a result, new postmodern literary genres emerged like the historiographical metafiction. (Butler, 2016).

According to Ihab Hasan and Susan Sontag, in the 1960s, works of literature become less unified, less masterful, more playful or anarchaic. They are less inclined to hold narratives together, and more resistant to a certain interpretation. In addition, the text is open to all sorts of interpretations. In this context, we see Derrida refusing to interpret a text by a definite theory. (ibid).

Furthermore, the postmodernism resists the rules of master narrative of modernism considering them deceptive and untrue (ibid).

In his part, in addition to irony, playfulness, experimentation, alienation and paradox, Hamdaoui (2011) states the following features:

1. **Intertextuality**: Intertextuality in postmodern literature can be a reference or a parallel to another literary work, an extended discussion of a work or the adoption of another writer’s style.
2. **Pastiche**: It refers to the mixing of genres within the same literary text. It means to combine or paste multiple elements. For example:
* William S Boughs uses science fiction, fairy tales and science fiction.
* Margaret Atwood uses science fiction and fairy tales**.**
1. **Black Humor**: It is concerned with the humorous treatment of the shocking, horific and macabre. Topics and events that are usually regarded as taboos specifically those related to death are treated in an unusually humourous or satirical manner while retaining their seriousness.
2. **Metafiction**: It is specifically fiction about fiction, i.e, it is fiction which self-consciously reflects upon itself. The aim of metafiction is to make the fictionality of fiction apparent to the reader. It undermines the authority of the author and advances the story in a unique way. Among the various devices of metafiction we can mention:
* A story about a writer creating a story.
* A story about a reader reading a book.
* A story which features itself.
* A story containing another work of fiction within itself.
* A book in which the writer seeks interaction with the reader.
* A story where the characters are aware that they are in a story
1. **Hyperreality**: It is seen as a condition in which the bond between what is real and what is fiction is not clear to distinguish. ( Wikipedia, 2016).
2. **Reconsideration of the Context and the Parallel Text**: Postmodern philosophies have reconsidered the writer, the reader, the historical, social, political and economic reference as in Hermeneutics, the aesthetics of reception, cultural materialism and the cultural criticism, and the post-colonial theory and New Historicism.
3. **Breaking the Limits Among the Literary Genres**: Previously, the constructive poetics respects the literary genres as it characterizes each genre by featuring its rules. Whereas postmodernism, does not recognize the limits between the literary genres, it broke all rules of genres, thus, we can talk now of undermined genres.
4. **Rejection of the Standards and Rules**: In literature and literary criticism, postmodernism stays away from the theories and the methodological rules. Michel Foucault sees the discourse or text a world of multi-meanings so he refuses to start from ready made approaches.
5. **Minimalism**: It can be characterized as a focus on a surface description where readers are expected to take an active role in the creation of a story. Characters tend to be unexceptional. It relies on the representation of the basic and necessary pieces, specific by economy with words. There is a tendency to use less adjectives, adverbs or meaningless details. The author provides a general context and then allows the readers’ imagination to shape the story.
6. **Maximalism**: It is the opposite of Minimalism.

**Famous British Postmodern Writers**

* David Lodge.( 1935-).
* William Golding.
* Antony Burgess.( 1913-1991).
* Lawrence Durell. (1912-1990).
* CP. Snow ( 1905-2000).
* Antony Powel (1905-2000)
* Jonathan Coe ( 1961-).
* John Fowles ( 1926- 2005).
* Doris Lessing ( 1919-).
* Margaret Drabble.

**References**

The same references of the previous course.