

University of Ziane Achour-Djelfa
Faculty of Letters Arts and Foreign Languages
Department of Foreign Languages
Literature Course

Topic1: Postmodernism in Literature

Level: Second Year

Group: All groups

Task1: Before reading anything about the lesson below, try to answer the following questions:

- 1 what are the features of modernism as a literary movement?
- 2 In your opinion what are the aspects of modernism that will lead to postmodernism?
- 3 Can you define 'postmodernism'?

After being introduced to some literary movements in the course of literature, and after studying the different features and aspects of each movement, it is worth mentioning that postmodernism is the movement that characterizes our age. Postmodernism as a movement cannot be attached to a certain set of definition(s). It is rather a way of viewing and understanding the world around us; not the world as a whole, but only the postmodern world. It is apparent that people who were born and lived in this world will not notice the difference. However, for anyone who lived in a modern world or a 'premodern' world, the difference is clear. Consequently, the lesson will be introduced in the form of questions and examples in order to both simplify and encourage the students to grasp or get closer to the meaning of postmodernism.

After people discovered the atrocities of the Second World War and after they questioned all aspects of life including history, morals, arts, how would the new movement 'look like'?

Imagine that our group would want to create a new language. We would set the term 'bla' for 'table' and the sign '□' for wall. The agreement on these signs, words and 'things' makes us accept it as a structure or a way to interpret things and give them meaning. A stranger wanderer considers these signs and words as something vague, yet it means something for us. Thus, everything you encounter in the postmodern world signifies something for someone or a group of people.

Is it possible to relate the way poets used language in the past to create their works as a postmodern act?

No, since arts could easily be separated from other fields in the past, which is not possible in postmodernism.

What about postmodern poets?

For postmodern poets it is a natural action to create new signs (Etel Adnan's poetry as an example) or shapes (like shape poetry in general).

What about artists other than poets?

For novelists, short story writers and playwrights, it is either the creation of a realistic world, which is already postmodern since reality is inseparable from other aspects, or the creation of a “hyperreal” world, which is taking people beyond reality like the works of science fiction.

Imagine taking a first grade child who has just learned how to use letters to formulate words to a ninth grade class in which they learn to read poetry. For the child it is weird, vague and simply postmodern, not only because he did not have time, experience and knowledge, but because the letters for him are arranged differently.

Have you ever seen a dream in which you cannot distinguish between the real and the unreal, whether you are sleeping or awake, whether you can truly die or it is fake? The impossibility of setting a SPECIFIC INTERPRETATION makes it postmodern.

A dish with too much salt is salty
a dish with too much sugar is sweet
a dish with both sugar and salt,
with some other flavors that are strange
if it makes understanding it a burden,
it is simply a work that is postmodern

General Notes:

1 answering the questions is a mere introductory exercise that helps the students to warm up about the topic and to test his/her prior knowledge about the lesson. Consequently it takes no part in the evaluation in the students' performance and understanding.

2 further details about the lessons are to be provided during the face to face interaction or chat discussions between the teacher and the students to be held later on.