

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
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**Courses in Contemporary British and American Literature
For Master 01 Level
Speciality : Literature and Civilization**

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General Introduction

This work presents a series of literature courses designed for Master 1 students in the Department of English Language, Faculty of Arts and Foreign Languages.

These courses build on the literature modules studied during the undergraduate program. The Master 1 curriculum focuses on British and American Postmodern literature. Students will be introduced to the historical context that gave rise to postmodernism, the defining features of postmodern literature, and its key figures in both Britain and the United States.

Through the study of a variety of literary texts, particularly a short story, plays, and poems, students will acquire the analytical tools necessary for interpreting complex works. The aim is to expose them to more challenging texts and enable them to engage with literature critically and thoughtfully.

In the process, students will further strengthen their command of English while developing deeper critical thinking skills. This will allow them to approach both literary and non-literary texts with greater insight and sophistication.

Additionally, dedicated time will be allocated for reviewing and discussing student assignments. During these sessions, the instructor will provide constructive feedback and guidance to support more effective literary analysis and enhanced academic performance.

Courses in British and American Contemporary Literature

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COURSE 01

Postmodernism in British Literature

Introduction

1. Definition of Postmodernism

We think that postmodernism is not only a reaction against modernist enlightenment ideas but also a continuation to the modern intellectual thought but with new looks to life, literature and human condition in general.

This new framework of ideas started by the late 1960s and early 1970s from France spreading to England, Germany and the United States. (Butler, 2016).

Hamdaoui (2011) suggests a comprehensive definition to postmodernism: “ The postmodernism refers to the theories, the trends, and the philosophical , intellectual, literary criticism and artistic schools which appeared to reject and destroy some concepts as language, identity, origin, voice and mind,...and for that, it uses the mechanisms of scepticism, difference and alienation. The philosophy of postmodernism is linked with chaos, nihilism, disemby, non-sense and non-order” (p: 12-13).

Postmodernism appeared in complex political conditions, after the second world war within the context of the cold war, the spread of nuclear weapons, the declaration of human rights, and the appearance of the irrational theatre (demonstrated through Samuel Beckett, Adamov Unisco, Arabel,...), and the appearance of irrational philosophies like syrialism, nihilism, and deconstruction. (ibid).

Indeed, the world was an uncertain place by the 1960s due to:

- Both USA and USSR engaged in a Cold War, a period of intense ideological and geopolitical rivalry after World War II marked by proxy wars, espionage, and arms buildup, rather than direct combat between the two nations.
- In the USA, there was a fear from nuclear attack from USSR.
- The Cuban Missil Crisis in 1962: The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was a 13-day confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, bringing the world to the brink of nuclear war after the Soviets secretly deployed nuclear missiles in

Cuba. U.S. President John F. Kennedy responded by implementing a naval "quarantine" around Cuba to prevent further missile deliveries, while Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev initially refused to remove them. The crisis ended with a peaceful resolution, including the Soviets' dismantling of the Cuban missile sites and the U.S.'s secret agreement to remove its own missiles from Turkey, leading to a crucial period of reduced nuclear tension.

- The Birmingham riot in 1963: The "Birmingham riot of 1963" refers to civil unrest that occurred on the night of May 11, 1963, following a bombing targeting African-American leaders during the larger Civil Rights Movement's Birmingham Campaign. In response to the attack, and in the context of widespread frustration with racial segregation and the preceding police brutality against peaceful protesters (notably the Children's Crusade, local African-Americans retaliated by setting fire to businesses and clashing with police in the city's downtown area. The riots continued in the wake of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964.
- The Kennedy assassination on November 22nd, 1963.
- France detonated its first atomic bomb in 1960, code-named Gerboise Bleue (Blue Jerboa), on February 13th, 1960, in the Algerian Sahara desert. The test, which occurred during the Algerian War of Independence, had a yield of 60-70 kilotons, almost four times that of the Hiroshima bomb, and marked France's entry into the club of nuclear powers.
- Che Guevara attempts to foment revolution in Congo in the 1960s, but his efforts were unsuccessful.
- The decolonization of many African countries.(Butler, 2016), most from France and Britain. (Butler, 2016).

2.Features of Postmodernism as an Intellectual Movement

Among the features that are discussed by Butler (2016), we mention the following:

- A change of thought from ethical and individualist existentialism towards more sceptical and anti-humanist attitudes.
- Postmodernist philosophers took side with the subordinated and the marginalized against those with power. They have the tendency to ally with the 'other'. The ' other ' refers to the subordinates in the society. In fact, they adopt Foucault's argument to show the way in which discourses of power are used in all societies to marginalize and subordinate groups.

- Universal truths is impossible and relativism is our fate. In fact, relativism comes at the heart of Derrida's deconstruction, that is the truth is relative to the differing standpoints. In other words, the collapse of the dominant ideology and the dominance of the politics of difference.
- A change from humanist towards more sceptical and anti-humanist attitudes: Humanism places human beings at the center of thought and value. It assumes that humans possess a stable nature defined by reason, freedom, and dignity. From this perspective, individuals are seen as autonomous subjects capable of progress, creativity, and moral responsibility. Historically, this view emerged during the Renaissance, which celebrated human potential and classical learning, and was further developed in the Enlightenment, where it emphasized rationality, science, and universal rights. Humanism continues to influence liberal ideals such as democracy, ethics, and education, all grounded in the belief in human agency and inherent worth.
- While Anti-humanism, in contrast, challenges the idea of a stable and central human subject. It argues that what we call "human nature" is not timeless but socially and historically constructed through language, culture, ideology, and power structures. From this perspective, the autonomous self of humanism is an illusion, masking the ways individuals are shaped by institutions, discourse, and historical forces. Thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, and Jacques Derrida emphasized that identities are contingent and relational, not fixed. Anti-humanism also critiques humanism for presenting itself as universal while actually reflecting the values of dominant groups, and it often overlaps with posthumanism, which questions human exceptionalism in relation to animals, technology, and the environment.
- Related to anti-humanism, Derrida's skepticism allowed his followers to attack philosophy, science, the novel and history, because they argued that they cannot be true.
- The attack of the patriarchal discourse in society: postmodern thought actively critiques and destabilizes the male-dominated structures of meaning and power in society, showing that patriarchy is not natural or inevitable but constructed, and therefore open to change. Therefore, the idea that men's experiences, knowledge, and authority are the default is questioned; an exposing of how power operates through language, laws, education, religion, and media to marginalize women and other genders; a deconstruction of texts, institutions,

and cultural norms to show how they reinforce gender hierarchies; and finally, opening space for multiple voices, perspectives, and identities instead of one “universal” male-centered truth.

- The collapse of the grand narratives whether in literature or history: French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard (in *The Postmodern Condition*, 1979) described *grand narratives* (or *metanarratives*) as large, overarching stories or explanations that claim to give universal meaning to history, culture, and human experience. Examples include: the Enlightenment belief in reason and progress; Marxism’s story of history as class; Christianity’s narrative of salvation; the idea of literature as a steady march toward greater truth or beauty. So these narratives provided coherence, authority, and a sense of direction.
- Collapse in History : In postmodern thought, historians challenge the idea that history has a single, unified direction or meaning. Instead of “History with a capital H,” we get many *histories*, shaped by perspective, culture, and power. The collapse of grand narratives in history means: Skepticism toward “objective” accounts of the past ; Recognition that historical writing is selective, often privileging dominant groups ; Emphasis on marginalized voices, local histories, and multiple interpretations ; Awareness that history is a narrative construction, not a neutral mirror of reality.
- Collapse in Literature: In literature, the fall of grand narratives disrupts the idea of one authoritative tradition or a universal meaning in texts. Instead, literature becomes plural, fragmented, and open-ended. This collapse means: Rejecting the notion that literature evolves toward a single purpose (truth, beauty, morality) ; Mixing genres, styles, and voices instead of following fixed rules ; Embracing irony, parody, pastiche, and self-reflexivity ; Allowing multiple interpretations rather than one “correct” reading. In Short, the collapse of grand narratives in both history and literature reflects the postmodern suspicion of universal truths and singular meanings. Instead of one big story that explains everything, we get many small stories, diverse, partial, and situated in specific contexts.
- The disappearance of the sense of history in culture: In postmodernism, the traditional way of understanding history as a coherent story with direction, progress, and meaning collapses. Instead history becomes fragmented, seen as a set of competing perspectives rather than one unified truth. The past is no longer experienced as something “real and continuous,” but as

something mediated by culture, images, and simulations. This creates a sense that history has lost depth, becoming a surface of styles and representation.

- In Literature, postmodern novels often play with history rather than represent it seriously (e.g., mixing fact and fiction, parodying historical events).
- In culture, Movies and media recycle historical aesthetics (e.g., “retro” films or vintage ads) without concern for historical accuracy. Popular culture gives us “the past as spectacle”, i.e., history consumed as style, not as lived memory.

In Short, in postmodernism there is a disappearance or collapse of the sense of history. Instead of seeing history as a linear, meaningful process, postmodernism treats it as fragmented, simulated, and endlessly recycled in culture.

- There is a deep irrationalism at the heart of postmodernism because it rejects the supremacy of reason, suggesting that experience, emotion, instinct, creativity, and chaos are just as central to human life; in addition to the following reasons:
 - **Challenges reason as universal:** Postmodernism questions the Enlightenment idea that rationality provides objective, universal truth.
 - **Embraces plurality:** Instead of one “rational” order, postmodernism values diversity, ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox.
 - **Opens space for art, play, and the absurd:** Postmodern literature, philosophy, and culture often celebrate irony, nonsense, fragmentation, and unpredictability.
 - **Critiques power hidden in rationality:** Thinkers like Foucault showed how “reason” has been used historically to control and exclude (e.g., defining madness, normality, civilization).
- Universal truth is impossible and relativism is our fate: Postmodernism rejects the idea that there is a single, objective, universal truth that applies to all people, in all places, at all times for the following causes:
 - **Truth is socially constructed:** What counts as “truth” depends on language, culture, and historical context.

- **Knowledge is tied to power:** As Foucault argued, systems of knowledge always serve particular power structures, so no truth can claim to be neutral.
- **Metanarratives collapse:** Lyotard showed that “grand narratives” (science, religion, progress) that claim to hold universal truth have lost credibility.

Therefore, if there is no universal truth, then truth becomes *relative* where each group, culture, or individual may have its own perspective on reality; No single perspective can dominate or claim ultimate authority; Instead of “the truth,” postmodernism speaks of “truths”, plural, contingent, and context-bound.

This situation implies that in philosophy, postmodernists resist foundations, preferring multiplicity, uncertainty, and open-endedness ; in literature: texts allow many interpretations; no single reading is “correct.” ; In history: there is no one story of the past, but many competing histories ; In ethics/politics, moral values are not fixed universally, but negotiated within cultural or social frameworks.

In Short, for postmodernism, universal truth is an illusion because all truth-claims are shaped by context and power. Therefore, relativism, the acceptance of multiple, sometimes conflicting perspectives is not just an option, but our inevitable condition in a fragmented, plural world.

In his part, Hamdaoui (2011) adds the following principles:

- **The Philosophy of Nihilism:** The postmodern philosophies are chaotic and nihilistic based on the absence of the meaning, attacking the mind and logic, order and harmony. In addition, they are against the idea of wholeness, and in return, they call for variety, difference, disorder and deconstruct all what is ordered and agreed on.
- **Dominance of the Image:** The development in mass media continues to appear from modernism to postmodernism. Thus, the language is no longer the only means by which man’s life is ordered, but the image becomes the basic total to knowledge accumulation and truth.
- **Destruction of the Central Big Ideologies:** Through questioning and criticism of some concepts as essence, truth, existence, identity, ...through anatomy, deconstruction and delay.
- **Power of Emancipation:** The postmodern philosophies aim to free man from the oppression of the institutions which own discourse,

knowledge and power, and also to free him from the illusions of ideologies, and the philosophy of the centre. They work on enlightening man about the philosophies of the margin.

- **Undermining Meanings/Connotations:** Obscurity and ambiguity are the most characteristics of the postmodern discourse; it has no definite, or singular meaning/reference. In fact, there are only different and paradoxical connotations as is clearly seen in the writings and the deconstructive perspective of Derrida.
- **Beyond the Truth:** Postmodern philosophies deny the existence of a constant unchangeable truth. As with Jean Braudillard who denies the truth and considers it as illusion. He connects the truth with the media which uses the language of deception and dilution and exaggeration.

3. Leading Figures of the Postmodernist Thought

- Jean Braudillard.
- Jacques Derrida.
- Jean Francois Lyotard.
- Michel Foucault.
- Gilles De Leuzes.

4. Prominent Postmodern Theories

- Deconstruction.
- Interpretive Semiotics.
- Cultural Criticism.
- Feminist Criticism.
- Dialogic Criticism.
- Post- colonial theory.
- New Criticism.
- New Aesthetics.
- Reception Theory.
- Racial Theory.
- Racial Theory.
- Genital Criticism.
- Thematic Criticism.
- Pragmatic Criticism.

❖ Jean Francois Lyotard (1924- 1998)

A French post-structuralist philosopher best known for his highly formulation of postmodernism, namely, *The Postmodern Condition*. He contributed in the making of the image of postmodernity. Among his postmodernist ideas:

- The rejection of the totalizing theory.
- Questioning the powers of reason.
- He asserts the powers of irrational as sensations and emotions.
- He rejects humanism.
- He rejects the idea that human being is the central subject of knowledge.
- He champions heterogeneity and difference.

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- Djamil Hamdaoui (2011). *Theories of literary criticism in postmodern Era*. Aluka.
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COURSE 02

2. Features of the Postmodernist Literature

The new postmodern thought had its impacts on the way literature is written and interpreted. Thus, new techniques and theories emerge.

- **Magic Realism:** Magical realism literature, is grounded in the real world, but with fantastical elements. Like fairy tales, magical realism novels and short stories blur the line between fantasy and reality¹. It creates confusion between facts and fiction. For this, it creates a disturbing skepticism over our sense of reality and over the narrative of history. (Butler, 2016).

❖ Features of Magical Realist Literature

- **Realistic Setting:** All magical realism works take place in a setting in this world that's familiar to the reader.
- **Magical Elements:** from talking objects to dead characters to telepathy. They are presented as normal within the literary work.
- **Criticism:** Authors use magical realism to offer an implicit critique of society, most notably politics.
- **Unique Plot Structure:** Magical Realism does not follow a typical narrative arc with a clear beginning, middle and end, as the reader does not know when the plot will advance or when the conflict will take place.

Examples of Magical Realism Literature: *The House of the Spirits* (1982) by Isabel Allende and *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison. (ibid).

- Related to Ihab Hasan and Susan Sontag, in the 1960s, works of literature become less unified, less masterful, more playful or anarchaic. They are more resistant to certain interpretations. In this context, we see Derrida refusing to interpret a text by a definite theory. (ibid).
- Works of literature are open to all sorts of interpretations: The postmodernist literature displays itself as open to multiple interpretations in all its contradictions and inconsistencies. (Butler, 2016).
- **Death of the Author:** the critic should act independently of any intention of the author and the meaning becomes the property of the reader.

1. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-magical-realism>

- Parody: It is a humorous or mocking imitation of something, or a piece of writing using the same form as the original.
- Postmodernist literature pays attention to marginalized forms of identity and behavior displayed in pastiche, parody and irony.

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

- **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.
- **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.
- **Black Humour:** It is the humorous treatment of the shocking, horrific and macabre. Additionally, topics and events that are usually regarded as taboos specifically those related to death are treated in an unusually humorous or satirical manner while retaining their seriousness.
- **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
- **Hyperreality:** It is a condition in which the bond between what is real and what is fiction is not clear to distinguish. (Wikipedia, 2016).
- **Reconsideration of the Context:** 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.
- **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 breaks all rules of genres, thus, we can talk now of undermined genres.

- **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.
- **Minimalism:** It can be characterized by a focus on limited description where readers are expected to take an active role in the creation of a story. 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 in order to allow the readers' imagination to shape the story.
- **Maximalism:** It is the opposite of Minimalism.

2. Famous British Postmodern Writers

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

3. The Contemporary British Literature

One of the most important themes in postmodern British literature is fragmentation and multiplicity. Writers often reject linear storytelling, favoring fractured plots, shifting perspectives, and narrative gaps. This reflects a broader skepticism about whether there can be a single “truth” or stable meaning. Works like B.S. Johnson’s *The Unfortunates* and Graham Swift’s *Waterland* exemplify this tendency.

Another central theme is playfulness and irony. Postmodern texts often blur the line between parody and seriousness, using humor, satire, and pastiche to critique social and cultural realities. Martin Amis’s *Money*

and Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* are strong examples of novels that employ irony as a key narrative strategy.

Metafiction and self-reflexivity are also defining traits. Many postmodern works draw attention to their own artificiality, breaking the fourth wall, directly addressing the reader, or exposing the mechanics of storytelling. John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* demonstrate this narrative self-awareness.

A particularly significant strand of postmodern British writing is history and historiographic metafiction. These works revisit history but highlight its subjectivity, blending fact and fiction to stress that history is not neutral but a kind of storytelling. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* are key examples of this theme.

The theme of identity, hybridity, and postcolonialism also shapes postmodern literature in Britain. Authors explore race, migration, and cultural mixing, reflecting the legacy of empire and the realities of multicultural Britain. Novels such as Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* show how Britishness is continually redefined in diverse contexts.

Another important theme is consumerism and media saturation. Fiction critiques the rise of advertising, celebrity culture, and the commodification of everyday life, often portraying characters who struggle with authenticity in a media-saturated world. Writers like Martin Amis and Jeanette Winterson *Sexing the Cherry* highlight these concerns.

Gender, sexuality, and body politics are also central to postmodern British fiction. Authors challenge traditional gender roles and explore fluid sexual identities, often using myth, pastiche, or magical realism to unsettle norms. Angela Carter's radical rewritings of fairy tales and Jeanette Winterson's experimental novels illustrate this theme.

Finally, there is the overarching theme of uncertainty, relativism, and skepticism. Postmodern British literature challenges grand narratives of progress, religion, or scientific certainty, instead emphasizing ambiguity and multiple interpretations. This outlook aligns closely with postmodern philosophy, especially the ideas of thinkers like Lyotard and Derrida.

Elizabeth Angel–Perez (2013) classifies the British postmodern novel according to theme into separate categories:

1- **La Saga:** La Saga is:

- a. A long story about Scandinavian history, written in the Old Norse language in the Middle Ages, mainly in Iceland:
- b. A long story about past events over a long period of time²
Represented by :
 - Antony Powell (1905-2000); *A Question of Upbringing*.
 - C.P.Snow (1905- 1980); *Strangers and Brothers*(1970).
 - Lawrence Durrell (1912- 1990); *Justine*(1957), *Cléa* (1960).
 - Angus Wilson (1913- 1991); *No Laughing Matter* (1967), *The Old Man at the Zoo* (1961), *Such Darling Dodos* (1950).

This Saga is extended into another category, namely, “de Campus”. It is represented by Malcolm Bradbury (1932-2000), and David Lodge (1935-).

c. **Le Roman Psychologique:** It is represented through:

- Elizabeth Bowen (1899-1980); *The Hotel* (1927).
- Barbara Pym (1913-1980); *Excellent Women* (1952), *A Few Green Leaves* (1980).
- Margaret Drabble (1939-); She explores the universe of young women confronted to the conventions of the society; *The Waterfall* (1969), *The Radiant Way* (1987).

d. **The Vice and the Moral:** Represented through:

- William Golding (1911-1993); *Lord of the Flies* (1954), *Pincher Martin* (1959), *The Spire* (1965), *Rites of Passages* (1980).
- Anthony Burgess (1917-1993); *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), *The Kingdom of the Wicked* (1985).
- Malcolm Lawry (1909- 1957); *Under the Volcano* (1949).
- Will Self (1961-); He explores the universe of drugs, and madness.; *Dorian* (2002), *Umbrella* (2012).

e. **Satirical Novels:** Represented through:

- Jonathan Coe (1961-); with his social and political satires of Contemporary Great Britain; *The Cotler’s Club*(2001), *The Closed Circle* (2004).

f. **The Experimental Novel:** Displayed through:

- John Fowles (1926- 2005); *The Collector* (1958), *The French Lieutenant Woman* (1969).

² <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/saga>

- g. Writings of Traumatism:** The field of horror is exploited by some writers as:
- Pat Barker (1943); *Regeneration Tritogy* (1991), *The Eye on the Poor* (1993), *The Ghoast Road* (1995).
 - D.M. Thomas (1995); He analyses the psychology of individuals when exposed to extreme situations; *The White Hotel* (1981), *The Flute Player* (1979).
- h. Autobiographic Novels:** They are represented by the Irish Edna O' Brian (1932-); *The Country Girl*.

4. William Golding (1911- 1993) as a Representative Figure

William Golding was born in Cornwall in 1911 and studied first at Marlborough Grammar School before continuing his education at Brasenose College, Oxford. Over the course of his life, he held many roles besides writing, including teacher, lecturer, actor, sailor, and musician. His father worked as a schoolmaster and his mother was active as a suffragette. Although he was originally expected to pursue science, he eventually turned away from it. After two years at Oxford, he switched to studying English literature, developing a particular interest in Anglo-Saxon. He remained at Oxford for five years in total and brought out his first book, a collection of poems, in 1935. Golding later taught at Bishop Wordsworth's School in Salisbury.

In 1940, he joined the Royal Navy, serving for six years. His time at sea was broken only by seven months in New York and another six months assisting Lord Cherwell at the Naval Research Establishment. During his naval career, he was involved in operations against battleships, submarines, and aircraft, eventually achieving the rank of Lieutenant in command of a rocket ship. When the war ended, he returned to teaching and also resumed writing. His debut novel, *Lord of the Flies*, was published in 1953³.

Other works include:

- **Poetry:** Poems (1935).
- **Drama:** The Brass Butterflies (1958).
- **Novels:**
- The Inheritors (1955).
- Pincher Martin(1956).
- Free Fall (1959).

³ www.nobleprize.org. (2017)

- The Spire(1964).
 - The Pyramid (1967).
 - The Scorpion God (1971).
 - Darkness Visible (1979).
 - The Paper Men (1984).
 - To the Ends of the Earth (Trilogy, 1980, 1987, 1989).
 - The Double Tongue (1995).
- a- **Short Stories:** Envoy Extraordinary (1956), The Scorpion God (1971), Clonk Clonk (1971).
- b- Non-fiction**
- The Hot Gates (1965)
 - A Moving Target (1982).
 - An Egyptian Journal (1985).

A major theme in Golding’s fiction is that man is savage at heart, always reverting back to an evil and primitive nature (mural.uv.es).

Golding was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1983. (www.nobelprize.org,2017).

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COURSE 03

The Short Story

1. Definition : The short story is a work of fiction that is usually written in prose. It is shorter than the novel. It is characterized by its concision, central theme and the limit in scope and number of characters.

2. Characteristics of the Short Story

- It has a beginning, a middle and end.
- It is less complex than the novel.
- It focuses mainly on one incident, has a single plot, a single setting, a small number of characters and covers a short period of time.
- It makes its point quickly, economically and effectively.
- It does not allow the extended treatment of character and incident.
- It contains certain core elements of dramatic structure : exposition (introduction of setting, situation and main character) ; complication (the event that introduces the conflict) ; rising action, crisis (the decisive moment for the protagonist and his commitment to a course of action) ; climax (the point of highest interest in terms of conflict and the point with the most action) ; and moral..
- When the short story intends to convey a specific ethical or moral perspective, it falls into the sub-category called parables.
- As for style, the words and images should all lead to create a unity of effect and impression.
- The short story has two levels of meaning. On one level, it is about about specific characters and circumstances, on the other level, it is concerned with universal meanings.

3. The Historical Development of the Short Story

The short narratives have always existed as an informal oral tradition for many centuries ago. Think, for example, of Scheherazade, Boccaccio's Decameron (1351-1353), often cited as the precursor of the short story form, Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales, the Bible, subplots within plays and novels, satires, pamphlets, narrative poems, essays,

journalism.

With the emergence of the 19th century Middle class, the magazine and periodical market was invented to service the new reading public's desires and preferences. And it was this medium that revealed to writers their capacity to write short fiction. Readers wanted short stories, and writers suddenly discovered they had a new literary form within their hands.

There were no steps, no slow centuries of evolution.

It has been argued that Sir Walter Scott's story *The Two Drovers* published in chronicles of the Canongate in 1827, made a convenient starting point for a modern short fiction. At home he influenced George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. In France, Balzac, in Russia Pushkin and Turgenev and in America, Fenimore Cooper and Nathaniel Hawthorn. These writers had influence in turn on Flaubert and Maupassant, Chechov, Poe and Melville.

In Britain, after Scott's start, the short story hardly existed in the mid 19th century, such was the dominance of the novel. Writers in France, Russia and America seemed to take more immediately to the form and it is not until Robert Louis Stevenson in the 1880's that we can see the modern short story beginning to emerge and flourish in Britain once more, with the line extending on from Stevenson through Wells, Bennett, James and Kipling.

The true beginnings of the modern short story are to be found in America with Nathaniel Hawthorn's *Twice Told Tales* (1837), as a starting point followed by Edgar Allan Poe. The effect of reading a short story is different from that of reading a novel. The great modern short story possesses a quality of mystery and resonance.

With Herman Melville, who followed Poe, the modern short story comes of age, with remarkable suddenness. His short stories are characterized by that strange power.

Turgenev was also publishing short stories in the 1850's. He can be put with Melville as the first originator of the modern form. His great contribution was to start something that Chekhov finished.

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) is considered as the greatest short story writer ever. He made his stories lifelike. He represents the first phase of the modern short story. He has massive influence. In the 20th century, the short story becomes almost exclusively Chekhovian. Joyce and Katherine Mansfield are Chekhovians. With Chekhov and by the advent of the 20th century the short story enters its golden age.

In America, magazines proliferated, readers were eager, circulation rose, fees went up and up. Also, the short story's popularity grew and was subjected to the influence of modernism. Its form began to metamorphose somewhat.

Fundamentally, up until the beginning of the 20th century, there are the two great traditions; the event plot story and the Chekhovian story. Chekhov's revolution lies in creating a type of short story in which narrative changed. For him, randomness and inexplicability became the actual form of the short story.

In the modern short story, the essence is to portray the individual moment, scene or person in isolation from the outside world. It focuses on the inward, personal and subjective experience of individuals. The language employed creates a totality of effect and impression, patterning of symbols, multiplicity of voices, indirect language, stream of consciousness which are all techniques used by modern writers.

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COURSE 04

The Formalist Approach

1. The Focus of the Formalist Approach

Formalism focuses on form. It looks how the work's structure is unified, how do various elements of the work reinforce its meaning. It analyses the text's inherent features as grammar and syntax, its literary devices as metre, tropes, simile, metaphor, symbol, irony, tone,..it's fictional elements as point of view, character, setting, theme,..and how one part of the work relates to other parts and to the whole. In addition, formalism disregards any outside influence as notions of culture, societal influence or authorship. It aims to understand a text through its formal elements only.

The critic can show how the various parts of a work are welded together to make an organic whole. It examines the text as a self-contained object. He demonstrates how its various elements work together to give meaning to the text.

2. Major Principles in Formalism

- A literary text exists independent of any particular reader and in a sense has a fixed meaning.
- The greatest literary texts are 'timeless' and 'universal'.

3. General Questions in Formalism

- How do various elements of the work: point of view, character, symbol,..reinforce its meaning?
- How are the elements related to the whole?
- What is the work's major organizing principle? How is its structure unified?
- What issues does the work raise? How does the work's structure resolve these issues?

3.1. Point of View: Consider the following questions

- How does the author's choice of point of view affect the reader's understanding and feelings about the story?
- Does the point of view in the novel have a particular use?
- What advantages does the author gain by using this point of view?
- What changes in the novel would have to be made if the point of view were to be changed?.
- Does the author's choice of point of view reveal or illuminate his/her theme?

3.2. Setting

A novel may have different times and places, however, each time and place selected by the author may have a particular reason.

Consider the following questions

- Does the setting play an important role in revealing any element of the novel?
- What influences does the setting have on the characters or their actions?
- Does the setting contribute to the novel's theme?

3.3. Characters

- Protagonist
- Antagonist
- Foil: a minor character who is offered features that are opposite those in the main characters as a contrast to emphasize the distinctive characteristics of the protagonist.

Consider the following questions:

- Are the characters physically described? How detailed are these descriptions and who gives them to you? (i.e, a narrator, a character, reliability of the narration,..).
- What is the character's motivation for the decisions and actions he/she/it makes?.
- Are the character's actions believable, given the setting and situations in the novel?
- How do the characters, their actions and motivations contribute to the novel's theme?

3.4. Style of Language: It is the writer's use of language: word choice, sentence structure, figurative language, literary devices and their function in establishing mood, images and meaning.

- What patterns exist in the author's choice of words?
- What patterns exist in the author's sentence structure?
- Is the author's approach to central idea objective or subjective?
- How does the author's use of language convey meaning?

3.4.1.Example of a literary Device: Symbol

- Most often, symbols reveal characters to us or strongly allude to the theme of a novel..Readers of a novel may not always agree on a particular symbol's interpretation or even if a particular item is a symbol, so you have to offer plenty of supporting evidence and reasoning to back up your selection and interpretation of any symbol.

Points to consider:

- To what extent does symbol convey meaning and support the theme of the literary work?.

3.5. Theme: Theme must be logical coming from the text.

- What lesson does the author want me to learn from his work?
- What lesson does the author want me to learn about life?

4. Assignment for the Next Course :

Read the short story *The Landlady* and answer the following questions :

- When is the story published ?
- What is the socio-historical context of the story ?
- Discuss point of view.
- Discuss characterization.

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COURSE 05

Analysis of Roald Dahl's Short Story *The Landlady* (1959)

1. The Writer Roald Dahl (1916- 1990)

Roald Dahl is a British novelist, short story writer, poet, screensaver and fighter pilot. Born in Wales to Norwegian parents, Roald was three years old when his sister died of appendicitis only a few weeks later his father died of pneumonia.

Dahl's short stories are known for their unexpected endings and his children's books for their unsentimentality, macabre and dark comic mood.

His adult works include : *Tales of the unexpected, Pig, Man from the South, The way up to Heaven, Lamb to the Slaughter, Someone Like You.*

His fiction for children include : *James and the Giant Peach, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Matilda, The Witches, Fantastic Mr. Fox, The Twists, Boy : Tales of Childhood.*

3. Identification of the Main Characters in *The Landlady*

The Landlady, Billy Weaver, Mr. Greenslade, Christopher Molholland and Gregory Temple.

3. Point of View : The third person limited narrator.

Why : The narrator provides information about every thing through the perspective of Billy : the description of the boarding house, the description of the Landlady and his internal thought.

Function

- To contrast between the two characters, Billy Weaver's innocence and the Landlady's deceitful character.
- To achieve the element of shock.

- It relates to the main theme of the story , i.e, appearance versus reality.

4.Characters : Billy Weaver and the Landlady are the main characters.

5.Guiding Questions : Answer the following questions :

1. How is the Landlady described ?
2. How does she receive Billy ?
3. When does Billy recognize the fake animals ?
4. When is the last entry in the guest book ?
5. Why is Billy trying to remember about Mr. Mulholland and Mr. Temple ?
6. How is the taste of the tea ? What does it suggest ?

Characters

Both Billy and the Landlady are static characters.

The Landlady :

- She is the owner of the boarding house.
- She seems in her 45s or 50s.
- Her appearance shows to be a very nice, generous and affectinate person from the perspective of Billy. She is always smiling.
- The writer depicts Billy's thought about her : « She seemed terribly nice. She looked exactly like the mother of one's best school-friend welcoming one into the house to stay for the Christmas holidays » (p. 13).
- She puts warm water bottle between the sheets.
- Wittily, she escapes Billy's questions about the two last guests.
- No clear motives for the Landlady, only at the end of the story we discover her dark motives to add Billy to her collection.

7. Assignment for the Next course

- Discuss the point of view in a short paragraph.
- Discuss the characterization of the Landlady in a short paragraph ?
- How is Bed and Breakfast described from the point of view of Billy Weaver ?
- What themes are conveyed in this this story ?

COURSE 06

The Landlady : Follow up

7.Place : Bed and Breakfast

How is Bed and Breakfast described from the point of view Billy Weaver ?

Appearance	Reality
Bed and Breakfast <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Cosy and warm hotel (tempting).➤ Beautiful animals.➤ Very low price.➤ Green curtain.➤ Pleasant furniture.➤ Very comfortable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Empty.➤ Fake animals.➤ The two guests have not yet left the house.➤ The tea tasted of bitter almonds.

8. Style of Language

8.1. Literary Devices

8.1.1. Tone : It is the author's attitude toward a subject. The tone can be identified by looking at words and phrases used by the writer.

Dahl's Tone in the Story : Generally, it is an ironic tone. Starting from the title of the story, i.e, The Landlady, to the name of the hotel Bed and Breakfast which both suggest care and warmth. They are features totally away from the reality.

8.1.2.Mood : It is the feeling you get while reading a story. It can be happiness, sadness, darkness, anger, suspicion, loneliness, fear,...

Mood in The Landlady :

- The reader feels mystery and fear through the cues provided by the writer : the extreme affectionate and caring lady, the fake

animals, the empty hotel, the missing two last guests, the Landlady's speech, eg : « Oh, It's the perfect age ! Mr. Mulholland was also seventeen » (p. 17).

8.1.3. Irony : It is a literary device, it has three types :

- Verbal Irony : It is the use of words to mean something different than what they appear. The speaker means something very different from what he/she saying.
- Situational Irony : It lies in the disparity between what is expected to occur and what actually unfolds, often playing a crucial role in building tension within a narrative.
- Dramatic Irony : Also known as tragic irony. It is when the writer lets his reader know more about the situation of the character than the character himself.

8.1.3. Irony In The Landlady

- Verbal Irony : eg. When the Landlady says : « It is the perfect age ! »
- **Dramatic Irony** : It is very powerful in creating the atmosphere of insecurity to the reader due to the deceiving appearance, we see, we know and feel the mystery and the danger before the main character himself. Many elements in the story create this dramatic irony : The Landlady's speech, empty hotel, last entry of the two guests, fake animals and toxic tea.

9. Themes in The Landlady

- Discrepancy between appearance and reality, i.e, the deceiving appearance.
- Insecurity. (a postmodern feature).

10. Assignement

1. Disucuss one of the themes in a coherent paragraph.
2. Write about irony in *The Landlady*.
3. Write about the mood in this short story.

COURSE 07

History of British Drama

1. The Middle Ages Drama

British drama rooted in the Middle Ages. It started in the form of dialogue in the 6th Century between the two sides of choir who alternately responded to each other. Along with the dialogue, the dramatic action was developed as a means of learning the principles of Christian truth.

From the 10th Century, there were alternating songs combined with some kind of theoretical staging, the German and the French contributed to the rise of the Christian drama. For example, '*The Regularis Concordia*' was composed during the reign of Edgar (959-975). It contained rules for divine service in English monasteries⁴.

1.1. The Miracle Plays

From the 12th Century to the 15th Century miracle plays were performed in the church. Based on real religious history, they were simple plays based on the Bible stories including the creation of the world, Noah and the flood, the birth of Christ⁵. They dramatized the lives, miracles, and martyrdoms of saints, or stories from the Bible (esp. from the Old and New Testaments) to teach biblical stories and the power of Christian faith and honour saints and inspire devotion. They were usually performed in the feast days such as Christmas, Easter, and Corpus Christian Days ; The language was always Latin⁶ .

1.2. The Morality Plays

Out of the miracle play, the morality play emerged in the 14th century. It is intended to include some useful lessons of religion, morality

⁴ Benjamin Brawlet (1921). A Short history of the English Drama. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Germany.

⁵ Wenni.com.

⁶ Benjamin Brawlet (1921). A Short history of the English Drama. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Germany.

or science. Morality plays were allegorical dramas that taught moral or religious lessons, often about salvation and the Christian life.

So instead of the Bible characters such as Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham...etc, the writers of moralities gave such names to their characters as: mercy, mischief, conscience, folly, strength, knowledge, good deeds, '*Everyman*' is the finest of the moralities⁷.

Everyman (the central character, representing all of humanity) is visited by Death, sent by God to summon him to judgment. Everyman tries to bring companions, Fellowship, Kindred, Goods (wealth) , but they all abandon him when death approaches. Only Good Deeds agrees to accompany him, though she is initially too weak. With the help of Knowledge, Confession, and Strength, Everyman strengthens Good Deeds through repentance. In the end, only Good Deeds goes with him into the grave, emphasizing the play's moral: when you die, only your good works remain with you.

In moving from the Miracle plays to morality plays, it is important to mention that it took England more than two hundred years (or until 1250) for the changes to be made from the little dialogue that was simply a part of the liturgy to Bible scenes which were regularly presented for the public instruction as an entertainment. Also, the performance location was changed from the inside church to the churchyard, then to the street and the market places or convenient spaces. Furthermore, the control of the plays passed from the church to the municipal authorities. These organizations were associations of men engaged in the same craft, or they were able to assist financially in the production of performances⁸.

The spirit of the Middle Ages had its effect on the English drama. Ideals of courtesy, loyalty and faith were spread and prevailed, and the religious men like St. Augustine, Bernard and Thomas Aquinas spread the teachings of a world that is not seen. In addition, there was the appearance of debates which were popular in topics like: the body and the soul, Christian and Jew, good man and the devil...etc (ibid).

Both forms decline in the 16th century under pressure from the Reformation and the rise of secular/humanist drama (eg, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, *Ralph Roister Doister*).

1.3.The Interlude:

⁷ (B. Brawlet (2021) and (wenni.com).

⁸ Benjamin Brawlet (1921). A Short history of the English Drama. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Germany.

It was performed in England in the late 15th and 16th centuries. It was a short performance slipped into a play to enlighten the audience after a solemn scene. The word comes from Latin *interludium* = “between the play/games.” Originally meant a brief performance between other entertainments (banquets, tournaments, religious feasts). It was much shorter than Miracle or Morality plays. Light, witty, often humorous. Their topics could be religious, moral, or purely entertaining. They were often satirical, poking fun at social types or current events, not as heavy as morality plays and mixed instruction with amusement. Characters are few and could be allegorical (Virtue, Vice) or realistic figures (a farmer, a merchant,...). They were portable, needing little staging, could be done in a hall, inn-yard, or even outdoors. Interludes often blurred into early comedy and paved the way for more developed plays.

John Heywood (c. 1497–1580) was the master of the form. His works include: *The Four P's* (a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Potheary, and a Pedlar compete in storytelling). And *The Play of the Weather* (allegory with social satire).

The play of the Weather is set in Jupiter's court (The Roman God) who appears as a ruler, symbolizing authority. He invites various characters to present their preferences for the kind of weather they want.

Characters include: A Merchant (wants fair weather for trade); A Gentlewoman (prefers mild weather for comfort); A Ranger (needs hunting weather); A Water Miller (depends on rain for his mill); A Wind Miller (needs wind for his mill); A Boy (represents the common people's voice, cheeky and comic).

In the end, Jupiter decides that no single kind of weather can satisfy everyone, so the weather will remain mixed: sometimes fair, sometimes foul. The play shows that diverse needs must be balanced in society.

2. Elizabethan Drama (Renaissance): The 16th Century

Renaissance drama took its name from the era which was called the renaissance era. It is important to note that renaissance basically means rebirth or revival. It refers to the flowering of the arts starting in Italy and spreading throughout Europe in the late 14th Century. It reached England around 1500, and lasted about 100 years. It was facilitated by two factors: the printing press, and England's stable political and social climate⁹.

⁹ Benjamin Brawlet (1921). *A Short history of the English Drama*. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Germany.

The Elizabethan era refers to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I from 1558 to 1603. Historians often describe it as the golden age of English history, marked by a flourishing of poetry, music, and literature. It was also a time of exploration and overseas expansion. In contrast to the reigns before and after, this period experienced relative internal peace. A renewed interest in classical works shaped the age, as English playwrights studied Greek and Latin drama, gaining insights into style and structure. The era also witnessed improvements in social customs and manners¹⁰⁻¹¹.

2.1. Three Elements featured the Elizabethan drama¹²:

- First, the humanistic or classical impulse, which was foreign, and plays were performed in universities and schools, these plays were written in Latin and English.
- Second, the romantic impulse which was derived from Italian sources.
- Third, the impulse towards realism.

Of course, such tendencies can not be always clearly delimited.

This period witnessed the appearance of tragedy, and came particularly in the middle of the 16th Century. ‘*Grammar Gurton’s Needle*’ (1575) was the first English comedy drama, a surviving drama, often considered one of the earliest plays written in English. The story centers on Gammer Gurton, an old woman who loses her only sewing needle while trying to mend her servant Hodge’s torn breeches. This seemingly small mishap causes uproar in the village, leading to quarrels, suspicions, and plenty of comic confusion. Eventually, the needle is discovered stuck in Hodge’s pants, bringing the farcical dispute to a humorous conclusion while capturing the everyday life and humor of the time.

Additionally, ‘*Gorboduc*’(1562) was the first English tragedy written in blank verse, authored by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, and first performed in 1561. The play tells the story of King Gorboduc of Britain, who divides his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. This

¹⁰ www.study.com/academy/lesson/introduction-to-renaissance-literature-characterizing-author-and-works.html (2022).

¹¹ Wenni.com(2022).

¹² ¹² Benjamin Brawlet (1921). *A Short history of the English Drama*. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Germany.

decision leads to rivalry and ultimately the downfall of both the royal family and the state. Beyond its bloody tale, the play carries a political message, warning against the dangers of civil discord and poor governance¹³.

2.2. The Renaissance Drama (Late of the 14th Century- Early 15th Century)

2.2.1. Prominent Figures¹⁴:

Christopher Marlow

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) was one of the most influential dramatists of the Elizabethan era and a key figure in shaping English Renaissance drama. Born the same year as Shakespeare, Marlowe studied at Cambridge and soon gained fame for his powerful use of blank verse, which gave English drama a new richness and flexibility.

His most famous works include *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *Edward II*. These plays are notable for their ambitious protagonists, figures who strive for power, knowledge, or dominance, often defying moral or divine limits.

Despite his short life, his innovations in dramatic structure, language, and characterization paved the way for Shakespeare and later playwrights.

Blank verse is unrhymed poetry written in iambic pentameter. *Iambic pentameter* means each line usually has 10 syllables, with the stress falling on every second syllable (da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM). Unlike rhymed verse, blank verse does not end with rhyming words, that's why it's called "*blank*."

It became the standard form for English drama in the Renaissance, first mastered by Christopher Marlowe, then perfected by William Shakespeare. Blank verse gave playwrights a natural, flexible rhythm that sounded closer to everyday speech while still elevated and poetic.

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was an English poet, playwright, and actor and regarded as the greatest writer in the English

¹³ Wenni.com.

¹⁴ Wenni.com (2022).

language. He wrote 39 plays, 154 sonnets, and several narrative poems. His plays are usually divided into three categories: comedies (like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), tragedies (like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*), and histories (like *Richard III*).

Shakespeare's works are celebrated for their rich language, memorable characters, and universal themes such as love, ambition, power, jealousy, and betrayal. His influence on English literature and theatre is immense, and his works are still performed and studied worldwide today.

Other renaissance dramatists include: Ben Jonson, George Chapman, Thomas Decker, Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher, Thomas Heywood, John Webster, Thomas Middleton, John Ford...

2.3. The Closing of the Theatres

From almost 1596 to 1642 theatres were closed because drama exhibited marks of decadence. Incest was a dominant theme or motive. This paved the ground for the sober puritans to oppose them which led to the official closing of play houses. The theatres were closed for 18 years¹⁵.

3. The Restoration Drama (The 17th Century)

3.1. A Brief Historical Background

Between 1642 and 1649, political unrest in England split politicians between supporters of King Charles I and those who opposed his rule. Dissatisfaction with his governance led to his trial and execution for treason in January 1649. Soon after, his eldest son was proclaimed Charles II, King of Scotland (1649–1651). However, he was defeated by Oliver Cromwell at the Battle of Worcester in 1651 and fled into exile in France.

In December 1653, Cromwell became Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland, ruling until his death in 1658. His son, Richard Cromwell, briefly succeeded him as Lord Protector (1658–1659), but lacked authority. In 1660, Parliament invited Charles II back to the throne, marking the Restoration of the monarchy.

¹⁵ Benjamin Brawlet (1921). *A Short history of the English Drama*. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Germany.

Charles II reigned until his death in 1685, when his brother James II became king. Like his father, James sought absolute authority and upheld the idea of the divine right of kings, leading to political and religious instability. He was deposed in the Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689, which replaced him with William III and Mary II¹⁶.

3.2. Restoration Drama (King Charles II: 1660-1685)

Restoration drama emerged after the reopening of the theatres in 1660. The theatres in England were reopened in 1660 by King Charles II, after the Restoration of the monarchy.

Restoration drama is distinguished by several notable features. One of its dominant forms was the comedy of manners, which satirized the manners, fashions, and intrigues of aristocratic society through witty dialogue and sharp social commentary. In contrast, heroic tragedy, often written in rhymed couplets, focused on themes of love, honor, and political conflict, drawing influence from French neoclassical drama. The period also introduced significant innovations in theatre practice: for the first time in England, women appeared on stage as actresses, replacing the earlier convention of boys playing female roles. Additionally, staging became increasingly elaborate, employing movable scenery, perspective backdrops, and special effects to enhance realism and spectacle. Thematically, Restoration plays often dealt with issues of love, sexual intrigue, and morality, sometimes with considerable boldness. Together, these features reflect both the cultural vitality and the social preoccupations of Restoration England¹⁷.

3.3. Prominent Figures of the Restoration Drama

William D’Avenant (1606- 1665)

He is regarded as a representative of the heroic play, and his play ‘*The Siege of Rhodes*’ was his first heroic play.

In addition to other figures as John Dryden (1631–1700), he was one of the most prominent literary figures of the Restoration period, often referred to as the “father of English criticism.” He excelled as a poet, playwright, and critic, and served as England’s first official Poet Laureate in 1668. Dryden wrote heroic tragedies such as *All for Love* and *Aureng-*

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ ¹⁷ Benjamin Brawlet (1921). *A Short history of the English Drama*. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Germany.

Zebe, comedies, as well as influential critical essays like *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. His mastery of heroic couplets (rhymed iambic pentameter) set a new standard in English poetry. He also played a key role in shaping Restoration drama with his heroic plays that combined grandeur of style with themes of love, honor, and power.

Along with Dryden, other dramatists celebrated the heroic drama who acknowledged their indebtedness to William D'Avenant (*ibid*).

In addition, a new form of comedy appeared, it was called 'Society Comedy', its founder was Sir George Etherege (1634- 1691). This new form was developed by William Congreve and later carried by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (*ibid*). Other representatives of Society Comedy: William Wycherley (1640- 1715), Thomas Shadwell (1642-1692), Sir Samuel Tuke, Edward Ravenscroft (1645- 1707), Nathaniel Lee in tragedy (1653- 1692) with John Banks and Thomas Otway.

In the period (1690- 1700), Charles II was dead, James II in exile and William of Orange came to the throne. Some taste for heroic plays or society comedy might still prevail, but another form of drama came into existence: a drama with democratic tendencies (*ibid*).

3.4.The Democratic Drama

There also emerged a tendency toward what can be called democratic drama, plays that reflected the concerns, values, and everyday experiences of the broader public rather than just the nobility. This shift was visible in Restoration comedy, which satirized not only the manners of the elite but also depicted middle-class characters, their social aspirations, and moral failings. Playwrights such as Aphra Behn, one of the first professional female dramatists, broadened the scope of drama by addressing issues of class, gender, and power. In this sense, democratic drama during the Restoration marked the beginning of a more inclusive theatre that appealed to audiences beyond the royal court, laying the groundwork for the middle-class drama of the 18th century.

The calls for reforming drama began to grow towards the end of the Restoration period and into the early 18th century. During the 1670s–1690s, many audiences and critics felt that Restoration plays, especially the comedies of manners had become too immoral, indecent, and frivolous, filled with sexual intrigue and witty but corrupt characters. Religious groups and moralists strongly criticized this “loose” drama, arguing that theatre should instruct and improve morals rather than corrupt them.

By the early 1700s, this criticism led to reforms. Playwrights such as Jeremy Collier, with his famous pamphlet *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698), attacked Restoration comedy for its profanity and lack of moral purpose. This marked a turning point, as drama gradually shifted towards more moral, sentimental, and middle-class concerns, paving the way for the sentimental comedy and domestic tragedy of the 18th century.

The government took side with him, also Dryden admitted his conventions. Therefore, censorship began to be exercised, actors were prosecuted of using profane language.

When Charles II reopened the theatres in 1660, he allowed (and even encouraged) women to perform on stage for the first time in England. Before this, all female roles had been played by boys or young men.

3.5. Representatives of Moralism Drama

Mrs. Centlivre (1667-1723), William Congreve (1670-1729), John Vanbrugh (1664-1729), George Farquhar (1678-1707), Richard Steele (1672-1729), Colley Cibber (1671-1757), Joseph Addison (1672-1719), Nicholas Rowe (1647-1718 in tragedy).

All these were before the first half of the 18th Century. (ibid).

4. Eighteenth Century British Drama

The mid eighteenth century was featured by sentimentalism, though many forces existed in the British drama like Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Surrealism, ideas of democracy and liberalism.....etc, which had their effect on British drama.. (ibid)

As it was also the age of criticism and theorizing, there was the study of the Elizabethans, Rowe's editing of Shakespeare and Dennis' criticism who set standards for the coming dramatists, and Robert Dodsley's *Collection of Old Plays* (1744).

At this age, Voltaire was an eminent critic important to the English plays/ stage. He was the man who brought to England a new emphasis on classical dramatic theory or practice. Two other known English men were influenced by the French tragedy Edward Young and James Thomson (ibid).

4.1. Major Forms of 18th century Drama

Sentimental Comedy became the dominant form of drama in the early eighteenth century. It moved away from the witty but often immoral tone of Restoration comedy, instead presenting virtuous middle-class characters who faced trials of love, morality, and honor. The aim was to inspire tears, sympathy, and moral reflection rather than laughter. A well-known example is Richard Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), which emphasizes the triumph of virtue over vice and appealed strongly to the rising middle-class audience.(ibid).

Domestic or Bourgeois Tragedy also gained prominence in the eighteenth century. Unlike earlier tragedies that dealt with kings and noble figures, this form focused on ordinary middle-class families and their moral struggles. Its central theme was the idea that even common lives could possess dignity and tragic depth, reflecting the growing influence of middle-class values in literature. George Lillo's *The London Merchant* (1731) is a classic example, portraying the downfall of an apprentice who strays from the path of virtue.(ibid).

Heroic Drama, a carryover from the Restoration, continued into the early part of the eighteenth century but soon declined in popularity. Written often in rhymed couplets, these plays revolved around grand conflicts of love, honor, and duty, borrowing heavily from French neoclassical models. However, as audiences began to demand more realism and moral instruction, the artificial grandeur of heroic drama seemed outdated and was gradually abandoned.(ibid)

Ballad Opera emerged as a fresh and satirical form of theatre in the eighteenth century. Combining spoken dialogue with songs set to popular or folk tunes, it mocked both Italian opera and contemporary politics. John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) is the most famous example, offering sharp social critique while entertaining audiences with familiar music. This genre not only appealed to a broad public but also reflected the age's spirit of satire and reform.(ibid)

Finally, the later part of the century saw a revival of Comedy of Manners, which challenged the dominance of sentimental drama. Playwrights like Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan reintroduced wit, satire, and lively character interactions, rejecting the heavy moralizing of earlier sentimental plays. Works such as Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) and Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (1777) restored genuine comedy to the stage, emphasizing humor and social observation over tearful virtue (ibid).

Pantomime became a popular form of theatrical entertainment in the 18th century, credited largely to John Rich, who helped establish it on the English stage. Pantomime was a kind of semi-silent performance that combined music, dance, gesture, and spectacle, often drawing on classical myths or fairy tales. While lighter and less literary than other dramatic forms, it attracted wide audiences and played an important role in expanding theatre beyond elite tastes.

Burlesque emerged as another vibrant form, with Henry Fielding remembered for his satirical burlesques, particularly *The Tragedy of Tragedies* (1731). Through parody and exaggerated style, Fielding not only mocked the conventions of tragic drama but also criticized contemporary politics. His works gave comedy a renewed vitality on the stage while offering sharp social and political commentary.

Adaptation was a widespread practice in the 18th century, with figures such as David Garrick and William Whitehead adapting older works and foreign plays for new audiences. Garrick in particular reworked Shakespearean plays, shaping them to fit contemporary tastes and theatrical conventions, and thereby influencing how the classics were received by his age.

Romanticism began to appear in the later 18th century, anticipating trends that would dominate the 19th century. John Home's tragedy *Douglas* (1756) is often cited as an early example, bringing heightened emotion, natural settings, and heroic themes that moved away from strict neoclassical restraint.

Pure Comedy retained a place on the stage through playwrights such as Samuel Foote and George Colman. Their works avoided the heavy moralizing of sentimental comedy, offering lively entertainment that emphasized humor, satire, and observation of human folly.

In 1737, the Licensing Act was passed during Fielding's career and this brought limits on the metropolitan theatres, and brought plays, prologues and epilogues under direct legal authority.

The sentimentalism drama was strongly represented by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (*ibid*).

5.Nineteenth Century Drama

The drama of 19th-century Britain was shaped by profound social, political, and cultural changes, including the Industrial Revolution, the

rise of the middle class, and the influence of Romanticism and later Realism. Unlike the Restoration and 18th century, this period saw fewer “great” original playwrights, but it laid the groundwork for the modern theatre.

Early 19th-century drama was dominated by melodrama, the most popular theatrical form of the time. Melodramas featured sensational plots, clear distinctions between good and evil, exaggerated emotions, and spectacular stage effects. They catered to growing urban audiences and reflected middle-class moral values. Alongside melodrama, romantic drama influenced by Byron, Shelley, and other Romantic poets sought to revive verse drama with themes of passion, rebellion, and individualism, though such works often found more life in print than on stage.

Comedy in the 19th century included farces and light-hearted plays, but also comedy of manners revivals that poked fun at social conventions. Writers such as Dion Boucicault produced popular comedies and melodramas, often combining spectacle with humor.

As the century progressed, realism and social problem plays began to gain ground. Playwrights such as T.W. Robertson introduced more naturalistic dialogue and domestic settings, moving away from the artificiality of earlier melodrama. By the late 19th century, the influence of European dramatists like Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen inspired British playwrights to tackle social issues, class, gender, morality, and hypocrisy in more serious ways.

The most important figure of late 19th-century British drama was George Bernard Shaw, whose plays combined wit, realism, and social critique. Shaw’s works, such as *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* and *Arms and the Man*, challenged conventions and gave British theatre a new intellectual seriousness (ibid).

5.1. Closet Drama:

The writing of drama was low in the first quarter of the 19th century because of the Licensing Act of 1737.

A closet drama is a play written in the form of a script but intended to be read rather than performed. This form became particularly significant in the Romantic period and early 19th century, when many writers who were poets or essayists turned to drama but distrusted the commercial stage, which was dominated by melodrama and spectacle.

Romantic poets like Lord Byron (*Manfred, Cain*), Percy Bysshe Shelley (*Prometheus Unbound, The Cenci*), and even Wordsworth and Keats experimented with verse dramas. Their works were often filled with philosophical reflections, lyrical language, and grand themes, but they were rarely suited to theatrical performance.

Closet drama allowed authors to explore political, social, or spiritual themes more freely than was possible on the commercial stage, which faced censorship and audience demand for entertainment.

This trend continued into the Victorian age, though by the late 19th century realism and the influence of Ibsen and Shaw brought drama back to the stage as a serious literary form.

Other poetic plays which belonged to closet drama were plays by Richard Henry Horne (*ibid*).

Other Closet Dramatists include: James Sheridan Knowles, Edward Bulwer, Robert Browning, Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

By the mid 19th century, romanticism was passing. Also the social impulse featured British drama due to the influence by French writers as Victor Hugo.

5.2. The Decadent Principle in 19th-Century Drama

The Decadent movement emerged in the late 19th century, linked with aestheticism and the motto “art for art’s sake.” It emphasized beauty, style, and artistic expression over morality or social utility. In drama, this principle appeared most strongly in the works of Oscar Wilde, whose plays like *Lady Windermere’s Fan* (1892) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) combined wit, satire, and aesthetic sophistication. Wilde’s drama embodied Decadence by rejecting moral didacticism, mocking Victorian hypocrisy, and celebrating artifice and elegance. This strand of drama stood in contrast to the more serious and reformist “problem plays” of the same period, offering a stylish critique of bourgeois respectability.

5.3. Realism and Its Rise

Realism in drama sought to depict life as it was, with believable characters, everyday settings, and natural dialogue. It rejected the exaggerated emotions and spectacle of melodrama. In Britain, T.W. Robertson pioneered stage realism with plays like *Caste* (1867), where middle-class life and domestic issues were presented in a straightforward and convincing manner. Realism became the foundation for later dramatists like Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Wing Pinero, who explored social and moral issues more seriously.

5.4. From Realism to Naturalism

Naturalism took realism a step further, influenced by the ideas of French novelist Émile Zola. It applied scientific and deterministic principles to drama, portraying humans as products of heredity, environment, and social conditions. On stage, naturalistic drama used meticulous detail in setting and characterization, often dealing with taboo subjects such as poverty, sexuality, and social corruption. In Britain, George Bernard Shaw adapted these principles into his “problem plays”, such as *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (1893), which exposed social injustices while also retaining wit and intellectual debate. Though British drama never became as strictly naturalistic as French or Russian theatre, the influence of naturalism helped push it toward greater seriousness and social engagement.

5.5. Distinguished 19th Century Dramatists

Oscar Wilde, Arthur Wing Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, James Matthew Barrie, John Galsworthy, Stephen Phillips, Harley Granville Barker, William Bulter Yeats, John Millington Synge. (ibid).

6. Twentieth Century British Drama

Twentieth century drama started in Ireland with W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and J.M. Synge who introduced it to Britain.

The 20th century was a period of experimentation, diversity, and social engagement in British drama. In the early part of the century, playwrights like George Bernard Shaw continued the tradition of the “problem play,” using wit and argument to challenge social, political, and

moral issues. Alongside him, John Galsworthy and others wrote realistic plays that exposed class injustice and social inequality.

Twentieth-century British drama reflected the profound political, philosophical, revolutionary, and social changes of the modern age. Politically, drama often engaged with the unrest of workers against the state, as in the plays of John Osborne, whose *Look Back in Anger* (1956) gave voice to working-class frustration and social disillusionment.

Philosophically, playwrights such as Samuel Beckett, though Irish, had a strong influence on British stages with works like *Waiting for Godot* (1955), which questioned the meaning and purpose of human existence in a fragmented world.

A revolutionary spirit also shaped the century, with dramatists like Harold Pinter challenging conventions of power, domination, and loss, while his “comedy of menace” reflected the anxieties of the Cold War and the decline of empire. Social change equally left its mark: the women’s movement and the pressures of industrial and materialist society were powerfully dramatized by Caryl Churchill, whose plays such as *Top Girls* (1982) explored feminism, alienation, and the costs of capitalist ambition. Together, these dramatists illustrate how 20th century British theatre became a dynamic space for confronting political oppression, philosophical uncertainty, revolutionary shifts, and social inequality.

Twentieth-century British drama was deeply influenced by a range of experimental movements that reshaped the stage and challenged traditional forms. Avant-Garde theatre drew on symbols, images, myths, fantasies, and dreams to break away from realism and create new imaginative possibilities. Closely related was symbolism, or aestheticism in England, which favored stylized plots built around dreams and fantasies, emphasizing beauty and artifice over naturalistic representation. Absurdist drama, written largely between the 1940s and 1960s, highlighted the futility and absurdity of the human condition, with playwrights like Samuel Beckett pushing this further through elements of surrealism, where unexpected imagery, mystical undertones, and action often carried more weight than words. Expressionism also left its mark with its unconventional techniques: anonymous characters, fragmented dialogue that ranged from terse to lyrical, episodic structures, and themes of spiritual awakening, often lamenting the present while warning of the future. Finally, epic theatre, most powerfully shaped by Bertolt Brecht, rejected realism in favor of techniques that constantly reminded audiences they were watching a play, using harsh lighting, bare stages,

placards, onstage musicians, and deliberate pauses to provoke critical reflection rather than passive emotional involvement. Together, these movements illustrate how 20th-century drama became a laboratory for experimentation, seeking not only to entertain but also to unsettle, provoke, and awaken new ways of thinking.

6.1. Eminent Figures

-George Bernard Shaw.

-Harley Granville Barker.

-W. Somerset Maugham.

-John Galsworthy.

7. Postmodern Drama

Postmodernism emerged as a reaction to modernist theatre in the mid 20th Century. Most postmodern productions centred on highlighting the fallibility of definite truth, instead encouraging the audience to reach their own individual understanding.

After World War II, British theatre saw the rise of the “Angry Young Men” movement, with writers such as John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* (1956) giving voice to working-class frustration and social discontent. This marked a shift away from genteel drawing-room drama toward raw, realistic portrayals of ordinary life.

Later in the century, dramatists like Harold Pinter introduced the “comedy of menace,” blending realism with ambiguity, silence, and psychological tension. Tom Stoppard experimented with language, intertextuality, and philosophical themes, while Caryl Churchill and others brought feminist perspectives and innovative stage techniques. By the end of the century, British drama had become a space for exploring identity, power, gender, class, and politics, combining realism with bold experimentation.

7.1. Edward Bond as Representative of Postmodern Drama

Edward Bond is one of the most important modern British playwrights. He emerged in the 1960s as a provocative and politically engaged playwright. His most famous early work, *Saved* (1965), shocked audiences with its depiction of violence, poverty, and social breakdown. Bond used stark, brutal images not for sensationalism, but to force audiences to confront the injustices and cruelties of modern society. Over his career, he wrote many plays: *Lear*, *Bingo*, *The Sea*, that tackled themes of violence, power, capitalism, and the dehumanizing effects of modern life.

7.1.1. Shaw's Influence on Bond

Like George Bernard Shaw, Edward Bond believed that theatre should confront audiences with urgent social and political issues rather than serve merely as entertainment. Shaw's "problem plays" were designed to provoke thought and encourage reform, and Bond adopted a similar didactic impulse, though he expressed it in a harsher, more violent register. Both dramatists engaged deeply with questions of morality and society, treating the stage as a platform to expose hypocrisy, injustice, and the failures of social systems. While Shaw broke Victorian conventions through witty debate and satire, Bond challenged postwar conventions by employing shocking violence to awaken social consciousness (ibid). Essentially, postmodern theatre raises questions rather than attempting to answer them¹⁸.

7.2. Features of Postmodern Drama

- There is a rejection of 'High' and 'Low' art.
- A challenge of the accepted norms of seeing and representing the world.
- The Pastiche.
- The narrative needs to be complete but can not be spoken, paradoxical and imagistic. A movement away from linearity.
- Characters are fragmented.
- The audience is included in meaning-making in the play.
- **Fragmentation and Nonlinear Narratives:** Postmodern plays often break away from chronological plots, using fragmented or episodic structures that reflect the uncertainty and instability of modern life.

¹⁸ En.wikipedia.org/wiki/postmodern_theatre. (2022).

- **Intertextuality and Pastiche:** Playwrights borrow from earlier literary works, history, or popular culture, blending high and low art forms. For example, Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* reimagines Shakespeare's *Hamlet* through parody and philosophical comedy.
- **Metatheatre and Self-Reflexivity:** The plays frequently draw attention to themselves as theatre, breaking the "fourth wall" and reminding audiences of the artificiality of performance.
- **Playfulness and Irony:** Postmodern drama often mixes comedy with serious issues, treating even weighty themes with wit, parody, or absurd humor.
- **Mixing of Styles and Genres:** A single play may combine realism, absurdism, farce, and symbolism, rejecting the idea of a unified style.
- **Focus on Identity and Power:** Issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality are central. Dramatists like Caryl Churchill explore feminism and power structures in works such as *Top Girls* and *Cloud Nine*.
- **Open Endings and Ambiguity:** Instead of neat resolutions, postmodern plays often leave questions unanswered, reflecting the complexity and uncertainty of contemporary experience.

7.3. Representative Dramatists

Tom Stoppard, Caryl Churchill, Nina Raine, Debbie Tucker Green, Bola Agbaje, Lucy Prebble, Roy Williams, TerryLynn Johnson, Joe Penhall, John Osborne...

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COURSE 08

Features of Drama as a Literary Genre

1.Introduction

The word 'drama' refers to any work that is intended for performance by actors on stage. It is a type of writing or genre that is very different from poetry or fiction because the written text, what we call the play, is only one component of the work. Other elements are needed to bring a dramatic text to life. When reading a play, we should always try to imagine how it could be presented on stage.(Kolozsvári et al. 2021).

Knowing the elements of drama helps in the appreciation and discussion of plays that we see and read.

2.Elements of Drama

2.1.Characters: Most plays have round major characters and flat minor characters.

Protagonist: The main character, usually the one who sets the action in motion. Example, Hamlet is the protagonist in Shakespeare's play '*Hamlet*'.

Antagonist: The character that stands as rival to the protagonist is called the antagonist. He is the villain. It can be a person as it can be any opposing force to the protagonist whether natural or social.

Foil: A character whose traits contrast with those of another character. He is used to emphasize differences between two characters. By using foil, authors call attention to the strengths or weaknesses of a main character. For example, a handsome but dull character might be a foil for one who is unattractive but dynamic.

Confident: He is the character that lends an ear and gives his input to usually the protagonist. He is the closest friend or trusted servant of the main character. He also has the function to reveal the mind and the intentions of the main character. The confident's inputs are revealed only to the audience and not to the other characters in the play.

Stock Characters: A stereotypical character who is not developed as an individual but as a collection of traits supposedly shared by all members of a group. These characters are easily recognized by audience due to their recurrent appearance and familial roles. Example: A comic, a servant,...

2.2. Dialogue

The dialogue is the words that are uttered by the characters to each other. It reveals the plot and characters of the play. Dialogue may take various forms:

- a- An exchange between two or more characters.
- b- Soliloquy and Monologue: Both soliloquy and monologue have one thing in common: they each involve a solitary speaker. The difference between the two doesn't have to do with who's talking but with who's listening:

A Monologue: It is a speech given by a single person. The audience may be people within the play, or it may be delivered directly to the people sitting in the theatre and watching the play. For example, Marc Antony monologue to the people of Rome in Shakespeare's play Julius Ceasar:

*Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ear;
I come to bury Ceasar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;...*

A Soliloquy: It is a speech that one delivers to oneself. He/ she talks to himself/herself- thinking out loud- so that the audience better understands what is happening to the character internally. For example, the soliloquy of *Hamlet* in Act III, scene 1:

*To be or not to be- that is the question
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?...*

- c- Aside: This dialogue is spoken by a character to another character or to the audience but is not heard by the other characters on stage. Aside reveals what a character is thinking or feeling.

2.3. Plot

The plot is the events that occur in a story sequentially and their logic developments. The plot provides the audience with the reasons why characters behave the way they do. Plot in drama follows the same pattern as in other literary genres as the novel or the short story.

2.4. Setting

The setting and time in the play inform us where the story happened and the time it occurred. The setting is very influential and impacts the events of the play. Shifts in time and space are often indicated by the actors through their speech, costumes, movements and change in the setting.

2.5. The lighting: It is very important for it can express the mood of the play, its time and stress the importance of an event or focus on a character's action.

2.6. Costumes: They are used to portray a character's profession, status, ethnicity, age and so on.

2.7. Props: They are items used by actors on stage to create a particular atmosphere of the play and convey a particular information. These can be simple writing materials, or, chairs and tables, flowers, sofa, trees,...

2.8. Stage Directions: The stage directions serve to inform the reader or the director about the movements or positions or costumes of the actors as well the props, sound effects, lighting effects or the characters' body language and facial expressions and even the tone of the voice. In addition to comments about the surroundings and when a character enters or exits. This is done through short phrases usually printed in Italics and enclosed in parentheses or brackets. They help us understand the feelings of the characters and the mood of the story.

2.9. Theme: The theme actually tells what the play conveys and means. It deals with the main idea within the story.

2.10. Language: The choice of language in drama can be crucial as it is a major means of communication. Language can be verbal or non-verbal (body language) as it can be chanted.

2.11. Sound effect: In general, sound has the function to create atmosphere or mood in the play. It is also a kind of language.

2.12.Symbol: Symbol implies a greater meaning than the literal suggestion. Symbol can be found in props, or the use of colours (eg, purple symbolizes royalty,..) etc. Also gestures performed by characters can be repeated later in different circumstances to signify different meanings.

2.13. Conflict: It is considered as an essential ingredient in drama. Without it, the play is dull and uninspiring. Conflict can be between two or more characters as it can be internal like in soliloquies.

2.14. Rhythm: It refers to the timing and pace of the play. It is its beat. Generally, it is never the same throughout the drama. Rhythm can follow the emotional state of one or more characters or the atmosphere of the performance at particular moments. To explain, rhythm follows the pace of the events in the play. With accelerated events, the rhythm is quick

while in other situations it is heavy. So it is never the same throughout the play.

2.15. Mood: It is the feeling or tone of a performance. The mood of a performance is closely linked with everyday feelings such as pity, anger, happiness or frustration. It can be created via sound, lighting, movement, setting, rhythm, contrast, conflict and more. (English.tutorvista.com, 2017).

3. Different Types of Literary Drama

3.1. Comedy

In comedy, the characters entertain and amuse the audience. This theatrical genre traces its origins back to ancient Greece, where rituals honoring the gods often involved drunkenness, singing vulgar songs, and making crude remarks. The Greek term for these activities was "komos," which gave rise to the word "comedy."

Humor is the key element of comedy, and it can generally be classified into three types:

Verbal humor: when the dialogue is funny;

Behavioral humor: when the characters' actions are amusing;

Situational humor: when the circumstances the characters are in are humorous.

In most comedies, the humor comes from a combination of all three types. The comic storyline typically revolves around mistaken identities, misunderstandings, and unlikely scenarios. As the plot unfolds, tension builds until it reaches a climax, where the comic misunderstandings are resolved, and balance is restored among the characters. (Koložsvári et al. 2021). For example, William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

Comedies are usually humorous plays. But being funny is not the only way to define a comedy. The elements of a comedy include:

- Light-hearted tone
- Clever wordplay or turns of phrase
- Serious topics addressed in a humorous way
- Comical misunderstandings
- Happy ending
- Silly, offbeat characters
- Often ends with a wedding, especially in romantic comedies (Koložsvári et al. 2021).

3.2. Comedy of Manners

The Comedy of Manners focuses on the interactions and intrigues of upper-class men and women. Its humor mainly comes from witty and lively dialogue where characters engage in sharp, clever exchanges. The plot typically features two character types: the gallant and the fop.

The gallant, often the play's hero, is clever, stylish, and cultured, though often a cynical lover. In contrast, the fop is a comedic figure, mocked for his foolishness and self-importance. Additionally, the prominent female characters are typically portrayed as indifferent to emotions or morals, concerned only with fashion and infidelity. (Kolozsvári et al. 2021).

Early examples of this genre include Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. The genre reached its peak during the Restoration period (1660-1702) with Congreve's *The Way of the World*. It experienced a revival from the late 19th to early 20th century, particularly in the works of Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw. (Kolozsvári et al. 2021).

3.3. Farce

A farce is a type of broad comedy. It depends less on a narrative storyline and more on physical humour and silly jokes. Here are the parts of a farcical comedy:

- Exaggerated humour
- Nonsensical storyline
- Improbable events
- One or two settings
- Humour is often crude and inappropriate.

Although elements of farce appeared in English theatre during the Middle Ages, the term "farce" was only applied after the Restoration period. Farce became particularly popular with audiences in the 18th and 19th centuries, though critics often disapproved of it until Oscar Wilde introduced a more refined and artistic approach to the form in the late 19th century. Modern playwrights such as Tom Stoppard and Samuel Beckett have also incorporated elements of farce in their work. (Kolozsvári et al. 2021).

3.4. Opera

Operas are theatrical dramas where characters sing every line instead of speaking, with the entire performance set to a musical score. You can recognize an opera by the following features:

- Musical soliloquies called arias;

- Plot-driven sections that may not be melodic;
- A libretto (text) paired with music;
- Subject matter that can range from tragic to comic or melodramatic;
- While sometimes featuring dance, it primarily focuses on vocal performances;
- Lavish sets, costumes, and production design.

One of the most famous operas is Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*, which tells the tragic love story of Rodolfo and Mimi set against the backdrop of French Bohemia. Its unforgettable score unfolds over the course of a year. (Koložsvári et al. 2021).

3.5. Melodrama

Melodramas tell a serious story in serious ways. It is featured by :

- Character tropes such as heroes, heroines, villains, mentors, etc.
- Stories of romance or serious topics;
- Larger-than-life plots and circumstances (or very small stories told in big ways);
- Exaggerated character reactions;
- Clear literary themes;
- Flawed characters who must overcome their faults in order to reach their resolution;
- Ending that is sometimes happy, sometimes unhappy.
- Periods of standard storyline interrupted by songs.
- Characters often singing in union to express feelings
- Songs as plot-changing devices.
- Dramatic or comedic storyline.
- Catchy distinctive musical score.
- Often lot of singing or dancing.

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* can be seen as fitting element of melodrama, particularly through Nora's exaggerated emotional responses, which align with the heightened emotions typical of the genre. Her dramatic reactions and decisions throughout the play reflect the over-the-top characterizations found in melodramatic works. The conclusion of the play also embodies the mix of emotions often seen in melodrama, with Nora finding hope and independence, while Torvald is left in sadness and despair. This emotional contrast highlights the dramatic intensity and personal conflicts central to the story. (Koložsvári et al. 2021).

3.5.1. Features of Melodrama

Many musicals, like *Les Misérables* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, are adaptations of longer literary works. These musical dramas convey their themes directly through song, advancing the plot with musical numbers. In adapting the original material, they distill the story by focusing on the most essential characters and plot points, allowing the key elements of the narrative to unfold on stage. This simplification helps maintain the emotional depth while fitting the storyline into a more concise format. (Koložsvári et al. 2021).

3.6.Tragedy

The origins of tragedy trace back to ancient Greece, where festivals in honor of the god Dionysius, in their culture, included ritualistic practices such as human sacrifice. Dionysius was often symbolized as a goat, and the word "tragedy" translates to "goat song." Over time, the term "tragedy" came to describe any serious drama in which the central character, or tragic hero, experiences a series of misfortunes that lead to their eventual downfall. The hero is typically a noble figure, like a king or leader, whose downfall evokes feelings of pity and fear in the audience.

Broadly, tragedy refers to five stages:

1. Exposition: the playwright provides the audience with the information necessary to follow what is happening when the play opens. Who are the characters? What situation do they find themselves in?
2. Development: When the tragic hero usually commits the act that will lead to his downfall.
3. Climax: The point at which the protagonist realizes his terrible mistake.
4. Decline: The loss of order and the moral destruction of the protagonist.
5. Dénouement or resolution: The death of the hero and the re-establishment of order.

A tragedy usually has the following features:

- A protagonist with a tragic flaw.
- Circumstances that quickly get out of control and not in a funny way.
- Darker themes than a melodrama, such as human suffering, hatred, or poverty.
- Features the downfall of a previously heroic or well-liked character.
- An irredeemable ending that results in one or more

characters' deaths.

- Reaches a tragic catharsis.

Example : Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. (Koložsvári et al. 2021)

3.7. Tragicomedy

When you combine the elements of a comedy and a tragedy, you get a tragicomedy. Tragicomedies are more complex than a drama with a few jokes, or a comedy with a serious scene. Its features:

- A serious storyline told in a humorous, sardonic, or snide way;
- Tragically flawed characters whose actions do not result in death;
- An ambiguous theme;
- Broad characters who act in classically comical ways;
- Neither a happy nor a comic ending.

Classic dramas typically adhered to distinct genres such as comedy, tragedy, or melodrama. In contrast, many modern dramas are seen as complex enough to be classified as tragicomedies. Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* incorporates enough comic elements to distinguish it from traditional tragedy, yet Blanche DuBois is undeniably a tragically flawed character. This play exemplifies the essence of modern tragicomedy. (Koložsvári et al. 2021).

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COURSE 09

Analysis of Edward Bond's *Lear* (1971)

1. Preparatory Task: Answer the following questions:

1. When is the play published?
2. What is the socio-historical context of the story?
3. Discuss the main characters?

2. Introduction to Edward Bond (1934-)

During the 1960s, a new generation of playwrights was beginning to revolutionize British drama. These playwrights include: John Osborne, Arnold Wesker, Harold Pinter and Edward Bond, among others. These playwrights introduced the political theatre.

3. Important Plays by Edward Bond

The Pope's Wedding (1962), *Saved* (1965), *Early Morning* (1968), *Bingo* (1971), *Restoration* (1981), two volumes of poetry and a number of screenplays.

4. The Rational Theatre of Edward Bond

Edward Bond calls his theatre 'rational theatre', in the sense that it gives meaning to history, and explanation of human problems. He is against the theatre of the absurd as it is pessimistic and cynical. According to him, life is not absurd, but he is concerned with the problems of irrationality within society. For Bond, the theater is a public institution in which problems are made clear, and at the same time we are given hope and confidence in order to change the situation in which we find ourselves. Therefore, his plays are not meant mainly to entertain but to help bring about change in society.

5. Summary of *Lear*

King Lear, convinced he's surrounded by enemies, begins constructing a massive wall to defend his kingdom. Yet the real threat lies not outside, but within his two power-hungry daughters, Goneril and Regan. They marry Duke of North and Duke of Cornwall without the approval of their father. After being betrayed by them, Lear flees to the countryside, where he experiences a peaceful, simpler way of life thanks to a kind young man called The Gravedigger's Boy and his wife Cordelia. But Goneril's brutal soldiers, in search of their father Lear, kill the young man, and rape his wife, Cordelia. The latter, with the help of the peasants, takes control as a new authoritarian leader and executes a ruthless

revenge on Lear's daughters and on Lear himself by blinding him. Going through difficult challenges, Lear becomes a prophet, and makes a gesture toward dismantling the wall which he once began which leads to being shot by Cordelia soldier.

6.The Socio-Historical Context

For the British people, the brutality of the second war was a harsh and undeniable experience. As the war came to an end, Britain's influence on the world stage began to fade. The once-powerful British Empire started to crumble as nations such as India and several African territories gained independence. At the same time, hopes placed in socialist ideals were shaken by the Soviet Union's military interventions in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), revealing that socialism could be just as oppressive, authoritarian, and violent as other forms of governance.

In postwar England, the development of the Welfare State marked a shift toward greater government involvement in supporting the disadvantaged. Key legislation included the National Insurance Act and the National Health Service Act in 1946, followed by the National Assistance Act in 1948, which aimed to offer state aid to those in poverty. Although many initially believed these reforms would eliminate poverty and joblessness, that optimism proved misguided. Still, the belief in the importance of government support for the needy endured into the late 1960s and early 1970s. This era also witnessed increasingly progressive policies: homosexuality was decriminalized, the National Health Service began providing contraception and abortion services for low-income individuals, and movements for women's and minority rights gained momentum. Additionally, the Lord Chamberlain's power to censor theater productions was officially removed. (<https://www.enotes.com/topics/lear/in-depth>, 2025)

British authors from Bond's era were deeply impacted by World War II and its aftermath. In the late 1970s, the British theatrical community was interested in the failure of the postwar socialist promise.

7.Analysis of the Play

Main Character Lear: The story of Lear in the play is a journey towards enlightenment. Though he starts blinded by the illusion of power and enemies and domination, he ends illuminated preaching the truth, politics and wisdom.

Interpretation of the Character of Lear

- As a king, he is morally blind. He is blinded by the illusion of power, domination and enemies.
- Torture and hardships are catalysts in Lear's change into a wise man.
- Much of Lear's change comes from his relationships with other people outside his castle. As he sees the world through their eyes, he develops compassion and is finally willing to give his own life because of the good it might do to others.
- His final attempt to destroy the wall he built shows the extent of his transformation.
- In the play, successive conflicts bring different leaders into power, but that power crushes their humanity and compassion. It threatens freedom in the name of law and order. For the mass of people nothing really changes.
- Lear's attempt to destroy the wall demonstrates a way out of the present predicament, i.e, a method of change.

7.2. Bodice and Fontanelle

They both share the same qualities: They are cruel toward their father, when they are in power, they marry without the approval of their father, they torture Warrington, they hate their husbands, they do not trust each other. In the end, they are killed by Cordelia.

7.2.1. Interpretation of the Character of Bodice and Fontanelle

Bond shows both Bodice and Fontanelle similarly moving from decorous involvement in the performance of public duties to the explicit opposition to Lear which leads to their ruin. He shows their revolt as a result of their upbringing. They have grown to fear their father not to love him. Since their mother is dead, no one teaches them that. They have been brought up in a system of privilege and violence which have taught them to act in brutal selfishness.

Nonetheless, Lear harks back with nostalgia to their childhood, to an image of them as vulnerable and affectionate, needing his care and protection.

7.3. The Gravedigger's Boy

The gravedigger's Boy appears when Lear is displaced, outcasted and threatened. He shows pity to the old man, seeming to provide an alternative to the father-child bond. After his murder by the soldiers of Bodice and Fontanelle, he later appears, as a ghost, in prison to Lear. The Gravedigger's Boy teaches Lear to feel pity and understand his personal

responsibility for the suffering of others and his need to try to make amends. The boy and his ghost are essential parts of Lear's journey from political and moral blindness towards awareness and action.

7.4. Style of the Language

7.4.1. Symbols

1. **The Wall:** King Lear orders the construction of the wall in order to protect his kingdom from his illusionary enemies. People are forced to work and if they refuse, they are killed. After the reign of Lear, the construction of the wall has continued with his two daughters and later with Cordelia. The wall deprives people from freedom, and causes their death. The wall suggests a symbol of tyranny, violence and death. Therefore, the message of Bond is that freedom and equality are what protects nations and not oppression.
2. **Blindness of Lear:** When Lear was king, he was mentally blind, he could not see the sufferings he was causing to his people. Later, his physical blindness contributes to his enlightenment. It is the strongest catalyst for his change. Now he can see the truth about power, freedom and pity.

7.5. Magic Realism

1. **The Ghosts:** The ghosts of the Gravedigger's Boy and the two daughters comes to dramatise and heighten Lear's inner turmoil.
 - a. **The Gravedigger's Boy:** it suggests the inner light of Lear.
 - b. **The Two Daughters:** It conveys nostalgia to the good young girls of the past as opposed to the brutals of the present.

7.6. Dialect: used by soldiers to reflect class differences.

7.7. Soliloquy: eg. Bodice on page 33, where she reveals her inner thoughts about power. She feels that it traps and enslaves her.

7.8. Intertextuality: Edward Bond's work is influenced by Shakespeare's *King Lear*, it is a reimaginig of it. Through his adaptation, he confronts contemporary societal problems and presents them via the framework of Shakespeare's narrative.

7.9. Themes

1. Oppression and tyranny gives rise to further tyranny. Eg, the character of Cordelia.
2. Violence and Power: When power is uncontrollable, the outcomes are scandalous.

3. Disintegrated family relationships: Lear and his daughters; daughters and their husbands.
4. The play is a message against violence.

8. Assignment

- Write a paragraph about one of the characters.
- Write a paragraph about one of the symbols.
- Write a paragraph about one of the themes.

Course 10

Analysis of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

1. Plot Summary

A group of British schoolboys are stranded on a remote tropical island after their plane crashes during an evacuation in wartime. With no adults surviving, the boys attempt to govern themselves. Ralph is elected leader with the help of Piggy, an intelligent but physically weak boy, he tries to establish rules, build shelters, and maintain a signal fire for rescue. Jack, however, becomes obsessed with hunting pigs, and his choir boys gradually form a rival group that values hunting, feasting, and display of power over cooperation. As fear of a mythical “beast” grows among the boys, Jack exploits it to strengthen his tribe’s control. The descent into savagery accelerates: Simon, who discovers that the “beast” is actually the darkness within themselves, is mistaken for the creature and brutally killed in a frenzied dance. Piggy later dies when Roger, Jack’s sadistic follower, deliberately crushes him with a boulder, shattering the conch and symbolizing the collapse of order. Finally, Jack’s tribe hunts Ralph with the intent to kill him, setting the island ablaze in the process. Ralph is saved at the last moment when a naval officer arrives, drawn by the smoke of the fire. The officer expects disciplined young gentlemen but instead finds bloodied, savage children, and Ralph weeps for the loss of innocence and the darkness of human nature.

2. Point of View

The novel is written in third-person omniscient. The narrator is not a character, but an external observer with access to multiple boys’ thoughts and feelings. Sometimes the perspective zooms in on one boy (e.g., Ralph’s doubts, Piggy’s logic, Simon’s spirituality), while other times it pulls back to give a wide, almost detached view of the group. This point of view allows the narrator to shift in focus from one character to another, highlighting each character’s thoughts and personality. To illustrate:

- **Ralph’s perspective:** Often highlights responsibility, leadership struggles, and the tension between civilization and chaos.
- **Piggy’s perspective:** Gives rational, intellectual observations, though his inner thoughts are less frequently central (mirroring how he is sidelined).

- **Jack's perspective:** Shows his growing obsession with power and hunting.
- **Simon's perspective:** Presented in more mystical, symbolic language, especially in the forest scenes and his encounter with the "Lord of the Flies."
- **Group perspective:** In key scenes (like Simon's death), the narration describes the boys collectively, a "mob mentality", blurring individuality into one violent force.

2.1. Function of Point of View

- **Objectivity:** The narrator rarely "judges" the boys directly, but the detached descriptions of brutality force the reader to do the moral reckoning.
- **Creates Dramatic Irony:** Readers often know more than the boys (e.g., the "beast" is just a parachutist). This makes their fear and their violence both tragic and inevitable.
- **Mirrors Descent into Savagery:** Early chapters use clearer, more orderly narration (focused on rules, meetings, and plans). Later chapters use fragmented, chaotic, and intense imagery (especially in hunting and killing scenes). The style itself reflects the breakdown of civilization.
- **Universalizes the Theme:** By not locking the story into a single character's perspective, Golding shows that the darkness is not limited to one boy, it's collective and universal.

2.2. Key Examples

- **Simon's death (Chapter 9):**
The narration describes the mob's violence poetically, with imagery of the sea carrying Simon's body away. This creates distance, irony, and a sense of tragic inevitability.
- **Lord of the Flies scene (Chapter 8):**
The narrator blurs Simon's hallucination with reality, showing how his spiritual insight emerges through internal vision.

3. Characters

Ralph: Starts strong as leader → loses influence → hunted → survives but traumatized. He represents Leadership, order, moral responsibility.

Jack: Gradually shifts from choir leader → hunter → tyrant → embodiment of savagery. He represents Savagery, lust for power, instinctual violence.

Piggy: Voice of logic → sidelined → murdered → rationality destroyed. He represents intellect, logic, scientific thought, but physically vulnerable.

Simon: Spiritual insight → misunderstood → killed → martyr/Christ figure. He represents spirituality, morality, Christ-like figure; sees truth about the “beast.”

Roger: From silent outsider → cruel experimenter → executioner → symbol of sadism. Pure sadism, cruelty unchecked by society’s rules.

4. Symbols

- **The Conch Shell:** Order, democracy, structured society. Its destruction marks the end of civilization on the island.
- **Piggy’s Glasses:** Reason, science, technology, the ability to harness fire.
- **The Lord of the Flies (pig’s head on a stick):** Chaos, evil, the “id” of human nature.
- **The Beast:** The primal fear and inherent savagery within humans.
- **The Signal Fire:** Hope, connection to civilization, and rescue.
- **The Naval Officer:** Ironic savior who represents civilization but also war and destruction.

5. Irony in *Lord of the Flies*

5.1. Situational Irony

- **Rescue by fire:** Ralph insists on keeping the signal fire going as a symbol of hope and rescue. The boys neglect it, and Ralph despairs. Ironically, in the end, they are rescued *because* of a fire, but not the orderly signal fire. Instead, it’s Jack’s destructive blaze meant to kill Ralph that brings the naval officer.
- **Arrival of the naval officer:** The boys are saved from savagery by an adult authority figure. But the officer

represents a world engulfed in war, the same destructive instincts at a larger scale. This shows that there is no true escape from savagery; it's universal.

5.2.Dramatic Irony

- **Simon's discovery:** Readers recognize that the "beast" is just a parachutist, but the boys don't. Their ignorance fuels their fear and leads to Simon's death.
- **Beast on the island:** The boys fear an external monster, but the real beast is their own inner capacity for violence. Simon understands this, but his revelation is ignored, and he is killed. The boys create the very monster they fear.
- **Simon's death:** To the boys, Simon is the beast in the storm. To the reader, he is the one character who truly understood the truth, a Christ-like figure slain by those he tried to save.
- **The conch and rules:** The boys believe the conch holds power because everyone respects it. Readers see its influence is fragile, once the boys choose not to honor it, it becomes meaningless.

5.3.Verbal Irony

- Naval officer's comments: He calls the boys' behavior a "jolly good show" and seems amused at their savagery, as though it were child's play. In reality, it's been murder, tyranny, and destruction. The officer assumes British boys should have behaved better, unaware of the depth of their collapse.
- Jack's claim of order: Jack insists his tribe has rules and order, but they are based on fear, violence, and punishment.

6.Themes

- **Civilization vs. Savagery:** Ralph (order) vs. Jack (primal instinct).
- **Innate Evil in Humanity:** The beast is internal, not external.
- **Loss of Innocence:** The boys' descent from schoolchildren to killers.
- **Fear as a Tool of Control:** Jack manipulates fear to dominate.
- **The Fragility of Order:** Rules, symbols, and structures collapse.

7.Assignment

- In coherent separate paragraphs, discuss the characterization of: Ralph, Jack, Piggy, Simon and Roger.
- In a coherent paragraph, discuss Golding's use of symbols in this novel.
- Choose one theme and write about it in a coherent paragraph.

COURSE 11

Postmodernism in American Literature

1. Historical Background

After the world war II, USA has become an economic and political superpower of the world competing for the spheres of influence with the USSR which finally led to the so-called 'Cold war' between the former so called East block represented East European countries influenced and controlled by the USSR and the so called 'West block' led by the USA¹⁹. While most of the European countries including the East block suffered of the war destruction after the world war II and had to rebuild their industries, economies and infrastructure, the USA could easily convert its military large scale production into civic industrial production and develop its economy continuously (ibid).

The USA political regime could easily develop its traditional principle of democracy and democratic government. The USA became highly economically and technically advanced society with high standard of living, consumerism and the possibility of the so called American dream. (ibid).

The USA became a mass society which advanced technology (cars, airplanes, information and communication technologies) and media (television and radio) have fostered a further development of democracy and has enabled a massive dissemination of popular culture as popular music (blues, Jazz, rock), film, TV, soap opera,...(ibid).

¹⁹ <http://www.publib.sh> (2022)

In addition, women and African Americans began developing a voice and identity distinct in American culture. Although by mid 1950s, the American Supreme Court acknowledged that racial segregation was unconstitutional, the USA still supported racism at schools and in public life. In 1955, Rosa Parks, a black woman refused to move to the place allotted for the black people in the bus in Montgomery, and the following conflict with the white authorities dominated mostly by white people stimulated the Civil Rights movement led by Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. However, Luther King was assassinated in 1968 like the young president John Kennedy who was assassinated in 1963. The African American identity started becoming recognized by society. But not everyone supported this, racism become another important theme of the contemporary era (ibid).

It can be said that the Civil Rights movements were successful which in practice meant that the social, ethnic and sexual inequality started to be considered by the official authorities and finally reduced. Minorities and different ethnic groups such as the African, Native, Asian and other Americans started to have more working and educational opportunities, women could get equal jobs as men, as they started to be protected from harassment by law. There was a control and reduction of ecological pollution in addition to a growing awareness of the nuclear, ecological disaster threat.

The 1970s can be said to be a period of political and economic consolidation, economic stability which resulted in the conformist atmosphere. The 1980s was marked by strict conservative policy with president Ronald Reagan's space exploration and armaments programs in addition to the collapse of the totalitarian regimes in East European countries in the late 1980s.

2.Socio-Cultural Aspects that Contributed to the Formation of American Postmodern Literature

Like modernist literature, postmodern literature is part of socio-cultural and historical development and can be seen as a way of depicting the postmodern life and culture. It shows a crisis of identity of human being (ethnic, sexual, social and cultural) and its struggle for legitimization in a hypocritical society, and it started to be treated much more systematically after the Civil Right Movement in the USA in the 1960's, the Vietnam and student protests in Europe and the USA²⁰.

²⁰ <https://web.thisisbeast.com> (2022).

1. The formation of the mass society has created a suitable ground for uniformity and consumerism often related to popular culture. An individual becomes not only a consumer of everyday goods, but also of culture and artistic products through their availability in shops and on media).
2. The growing impact of new media, technology and popular culture stimulating different perceptions of reality at individuals (not only Television, film, video but especially DVDs, CD-ROMs, personal computers, internet, electronic mail and celular phones).
3. Eradication of difference between the high and low culture (i.e, the use of popular culture in literary and artistic works).
4. Different understanding of identity and difference: The individual is not seen as a coherent, but rather a fragmented and irrational subject. His ethnicity, sexuality and gender is socially and ideologically constructed rather than naturally. This started to be intensively discussed during the Civil Rights and after as can be seen above.
5. The emergence of formerly tabooed themes and subjects as drug addiction and sexuality.

2. Features of the American Postmodern Literature

In the early 1950s, not all American writers were able to reflect this new condition either at the level of form or theme. Most of them were influenced by the Naturalist modernism or more experimental absurd and existentialist writing influenced by French authors Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. They were especially black American authors as Richard Wright, with Willard Motley. Most writers had the theme of war and the experience of the Americans in Europe or the pacific Like: John Hersey, Irwin Shaw, Norman Mailer, Herman Wouk, James Jones (ibid).

Flannery O'Connor wrote *Wise Blood* (1952) has contributed to the innovation of Naturalist and Modernist techniques by her use of the gothic and grotesque as well as by the overlapping of the fantastic and realistic.

Such writers as Saul Below, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), Jerome David Salinger have contributed to the innovation of modernist narrative techniques.

Though with the depiction of the chaotic urban setting, disintegration of moral values, absurdity, radical rebellion, nihilism, alcoholism and vernacularism, expressing a rebellion against standard norms, postmodern authors especially of the 1950s experimented within the framework of modernist literature and its vision of the world. Modernist literature was still dominant in the 1950s (modernist writers as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sherwood Anderson, Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway).

By the late 1960s, a strong generation of postmodern writers who experimented with new postmodern narrative techniques and style appeared and started to dominate American fiction, such writers as :

- John Barth: *The Floating Opera* (1956) and *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960).
- Thomas Pynchon: *V* (1962).
- Richard Brautigan: *The Confession General from Big Sur* (1964).
- The Beat authors: William Burroughs, John Hawks.
- Vladimir Nabokov: *Lolita*.

The new generation of writers use postmodern narrative techniques like black humour, radical irony, fragmental elements, parody, overlapping of fact, fiction, fantasy and dream and metafictional techniques. Their works are often radically fragmented on the level of the narrative line, depiction of characters, setting and the whole composition. These new techniques enable them to reflect the postmodern vision of the world. It can be said that these authors are able to inaugurate postmodern fiction in American literature which start to fully develop in the 1960s.

With more employment, educational and public opportunities, new authors representing minority ethnic groups surface; Jewish, Black American authors, Native Americans, Asian-American and Hispanic-American, gender (female), sexual (gay, lesbian) start to gain a prominent position in American literature.

In literary theory and criticism, it is especially the emergence of feminist and post-colonial theories which has been a result of this development.

American postmodern literature depict a growing awareness of the negative effects of industrialization and commercialization of public life leading to the ecological crisis and consumerism. The Beatnik authors such as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Robert Snyder, Gregory Corso and others express negative attitudes to the Western civilization and emphasize oriental vision and understanding of the world (i.e, Zen Buddhism, Buddhism, Hinduism) along with the appreciation of drugs, alcohol and spontaneity as a liberating alternative to the Western ethical norms, hypocrisy and civilization. (ibid).

Accordingly, the following features prevail in American postmodern literature:

1. New Themes : The consideration of ecological crisis, criticism of consumerism, appreciation of freedom and spontaneity and oriental vision of the world.
2. The changing nature and understanding of art. Art becomes more a part of reality and experience, it becomes closer to the public and was often presented in the form of show or performance. This is manifested in poetry, sculpture, music, and painting.
3. Civil Rights movement has enabled marginalized authors to gain access to education, science and publishing opportunities. Their work becomes postmodern because of their use of postmodern narrative techniques and the vision of the world, although some critics emphasize political and ideological aspects of their works.
4. In postmodern literary text, the idea of originality and authenticity is undermined. Postmodern literary work does not pretend to be new and original, but it uses the old literary forms, genres, and other kinds of literature and art like quotation, allusion and other means to recontextualize their meaning in a different linguistic and cultural contexts to show a difference between the past and present as well as between the past and present forms of representation. .

5. Plagiarism is not meant to "steal" the author's ideas, but to evoke a parody effect of an ironic distance from these texts.
6. Relativism manifests mostly itself in the text's rejection of a close and clear ending in favor of the open ending in which a reader has a space to participate in the creation of the meaning of the text.
7. In postmodern literary works, instability, uncertainty, chaos and paranoia manifest themselves at the linguistic level as well. (ibid).
8. In literary theory and criticism, there is especially the emergence of feminist and post-colonial theories which is a result of this development.
9. Postmodern literature is closely connected with the development of advanced, information and communication technologies and media such as television, film, video, DVD, computers, internet, cell phones and others. They have not only sped up communication among people in the world, and contributed to the globalization of the capital, or consumerism, and popular culture, but have also significantly impacted and manipulated the people's vision of the world.
10. Postmodern authors often use a technique of a collage for the narrative and compositional construction of their works. The collage breaks the linearity of narration, enables the stylistic and generic hybridity and offers a multiple, pluralistic and often relativistic vision of the world.
11. In postmodern literary work, a mimetic, realistic representation of reality often overlaps with fiction, fantasy, dreams and sometimes hallucinations and, different from modernist literary works, it is difficult to distinguish between these spheres and ontological levels. In these works, often real historical characters meet with fictional characters, or the characters from different historical periods meet in the fictional present, or real historical figure is depicted in the fictional situation.
12. In postmodern literary works, instability, uncertainty, relativism, chaos and paranoia manifest themselves at the linguistic level as well. The relationship between the linguistic sign (the word) and the referred object is often undermined and the words do not express the expected meaning, or the metaphors are often literalized.

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COURSE 12

Analysis of Toni Morrison's Novel *A Mercy* (2008)

1. Preparatory task

- When was the novel published ?
- Summarize the story of the novel.
- Discuss point of view.
- Discuss characters.

2. Introduction to Toni Morrison (1931- 2019)

Toni Morrison (born February 18, 1931, Lorain, Ohio, U.S, died August 5, 2019, Bronx, New York) was an American writer noted for her examination of Black experience, particularly Black female experience. Considered one of the greatest contemporary American novelists, she received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, becoming the first Black female writer in history to be honored with the prize. (britannica.com, 2025).

Among her best known novels are : *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved*, *Jazz*, *Love and A Mercy*.

Morrison also branched out to children's literature and produced with her son : *Slade on the Big Box*, *The Ant or the Grasshopper*, *Little Cloud and Lady Wind*. Also, Morrison experienced writing the play *Dreaming Emmett*.

3. A Brief Summary of the Novel

A Mercy is set in colonial America in late seventeenth century. It is a story of sixteen-years old Florens. When she was eight, she was used as a settlement for a payment for a debt between her owner and another slave owner Jacob Vaark. In this context, her mother sees the kindness in Jacob's eyes and begs him to take her young daughter in the hope that the new trader will give her a better life. So Florens goes to live with the Vaark family at the age of eight.

Years later, Florens falls passionately in love with a visiting blacksmith, a free black man who has come to work on a fancy gate for Jacob's new house and miraculously cures.

Lina, a native slave in Vaark's plantation, acts as a surrogate mother to Florens, warns her of the perils of giving away her heart. But Florens refuses to listen and follows her heart. However, when his work is done,

The Blacksmith leaves without even troubling to tell her good bye. Lina has past trauma. She has suffered horrific violence and has been raped by a lover leaving her completely uninterested in love. She acclaims her identity by giving love to Florens and Rebekka's children.

Sorrow is born on board of a ship. She becomes an orphan and Jacob takes pity and brings to his farm. Sorrow is always accompanied by an imaginative character called Twin. In fact, Sorrow talks to nobody but Twin. The latter has witnessed all of Sorrow's experiences, involving her two rapes, her journey to Sir's farm, her seclusion due to Lina's prejudice, her giving birth to her first baby, and her grave sickness and recovery and the Blacksmith's curing and Florens' care. Sorrow spends most of her time with Twin and escapes all her tasks and instead, she roams in nature. However, her life changes drastically when she gives birth to her second baby. Motherhood, has changed her into a new person. Now she divides her time between her duties in the farm and caring for her child. She even changes her name into Complete, and Twin leaves her.

Rebecca is Vaark's wife. She has been sent to America to marry Jacob at the age of sixteen. Her father accepted Jacob's Vaark offer quickly, having one less mouth to feed. She experiences immense heartbreak when her children die.

After the death of Jacob, Rebekka falls ill and sends Florens to fetch the blacksmith. When Florens arrives at the Blacksmith's house. She tells him about Rebekka, and the Blacksmith decides to set out at once. He tells Florens she must stay at his cabin so that she can take care of a little boy, Malaik, that he has adopted.

After healing Rebekka, the Blacksmith returns to his farm to find that Florens has a fight with Mailk but The Blacksmith does not allow her to explain her situation. On the contrary he faces her with her true situation that she is an ignorant slave, leaving her heart broken.

When Florens returns to the plantation, she finds many changes. And she herself also has changed. She spends her nights in Jacob's unfinished grand house, carving words into the wood and hoping that the Blacksmith will one day read them.

4.Point of View

- 1. Third Person Omniscient Narrator :** The majority of the chapters are presented in the third person omniscient narrator. It allows the writer to give the reader great insight into the sights and sounds of the time. In addition, Morrison provides full information

about most of the characters and their historical backgrounds. In addition to her allusion to historical facts.

2. **First Person Narrator:** It applies to Florens and her mother Minha mae. The reader is able to grasp their thoughts and feelings regarding their painful experiences. It enables the reader to identify with them both.

5.Themes

1. The abused black slave woman.
2. Motherhood.
3. Slavery

COURSE 13

The Feminist Literary Criticism Approach

1. Definition of Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism (also known as feminist criticism) is the literary analysis that arises from the viewpoint of feminism, feminist theory, and/or feminist politics. (Napikoski, 2020)

Feminist literary criticism stems from the feminist intellectual and political movement. It challenges male-centered language and engages in “resistant” interpretations of literature and historical texts. Operating on the idea that society is structured patriarchally to favor men, it examines how these power dynamics are mirrored, reinforced, or challenged within literary works and forms of expression. (Mambrol, 2022).

2. Critical Methodology

A feminist literary critic resists traditional assumptions while reading a text. In addition to challenging assumptions which were thought to be universal, feminist literary criticism actively supports women's knowledge in literature and values women's experiences. The feminist literary criticism aims at :

- **Embodying or Undercutting Stereotypes :** Feminist literary criticism recognizes that literature both reflects and shapes stereotypes and other cultural assumptions. Thus, feminist literary criticism examines how works of literature embody patriarchal attitudes or undercut them, sometimes both happening within the same work. By examining the way female characters are defined, critics challenge the male-centered outlook of authors. Feminist literary criticism suggests that women in literature have been historically presented as objects seen from a male perspective.
- **Reevaluating literature and the world in which literature is read:** By revisiting the classic literature, the critic can question whether society has predominantly valued male authors and their literary works. (Napikoski, 2020)

3.Tools of the Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism may bring tools from other critical disciplines, such as historical analysis, psychology, linguistics, sociological analysis, and economic analysis. Feminist criticism may also look at intersectionality, looking at how factors including race, sexuality, physical ability, and class are also involved. (ibid)

Napikoski, states that feminist literary criticism may use any of the following methods:

- Deconstructing the way that women characters are described in novels, stories, plays, biographies, and histories, especially if the author is male.
- Deconstructing how one's own gender influences how one reads and interprets a text, and which characters and how the reader identifies depending on the reader's gender.
- Deconstructing how women autobiographers and biographers of women treat their subjects, and how biographers treat women who are secondary to the main subject.
- Describing relationships between the literary text and ideas about power and sexuality and gender.
- Critique of patriarchal or woman-marginalizing language.
- Noticing and unpacking differences in how men and women write: a style, for instance, where women use more reflexive language and men use more direct language.
- Reclaiming women writers who are little known or have been marginalized or undervalued, sometimes referred to as expanding or criticizing the canon.
- Analyzing multiple works in a genre as an overview of a feminist approach to that genre: for example, science fiction or detective fiction.
- Analyzing multiple works by a single author (often female).
- Examining how relationships between men and women and those assuming male and female roles are depicted in the text, including power relations.
- Examining the text to find ways in which patriarchy is resisted or could have been resisted. (Linda Napikoski, 2020).

4.Gynocriticism

Feminist literary criticism is distinguished from gynocriticism, because it also analyzes and deconstructs literary works written by male authors. While Gynocriticism, or gynocritics, refers to the literary study

of women as writers. It is a critical practice exploring and recording female creativity. Gynocriticism attempts to understand women's writing as a fundamental part of female reality.

In her 1979 essay "*Towards a Feminist Poetics*," American literary critic Elaine Showalter introduces the term "gynocritics." Unlike feminist literary criticism, which can examine male-authored works through a feminist lens, gynocriticism aims to create a distinctly female literary tradition, excluding male authors. Showalter argues that feminist criticism often operates within male-centered assumptions, whereas gynocriticism represented a new stage of women's self-exploration.

5. Assignment

Sort out from the novel the different images of the woman conveyed by Morrison

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COURSE 14

Reading *A Mercy* Through Feminist Literary Criticism

1. Images of the Woman of 17th century America

Morrison portrays various images of the 17th century woman in America in *A Mercy*:

1.1. The Abused Slave Woman: Most of the female characters are slaves like Florens and her mother, Lina and Sorrow. All are victims of rape, exploitation and lack of protection.

Florens' Mother Mina mae: Through the voice of Mina mae, we read how Morrison describes the transportation journey of the blacks from Africa to America. It is a veritable nightmare. And those who manage to survive the journey, they arrive to the shore of America they are sold to plantation owners. In De'Ortega's plantation, Mina mae is raped by De'Ortega and his men too so many times that she doesn't know who is the father of her daughter.

Sorrow: Sorrow witness many traumatizing experiences. She is the daughter of a captain and born on board of a ship. When she becomes orphan, she is taken by Jacob Vaark to his plantation. She is a victim of rape many times. She always escapes her duties in the farm and goes roaming aimlessly in the far fields aimlessly and accompanied with her imaginary Twin.

1.2. The Image of the Mother

- **2.2. Sorrow:** Sorrow has painfully experienced the death of her first baby. However, her second baby survives and has its substantial effect into changing her into a more settled woman. She stops wandering in the fields, and divides her time between caring about her baby and her farm duties. She changes her name into 'Complete' and Twin leaves her. This illustrates how motherhood contributes in shaping her personality.
- **2.2. Lina:** Lina demonstrates another aspect of motherhood beyond the biological determinants. She has suffered past trauma. She is beaten and raped by her lover. Though these experiences are painful, they contribute in her maturity. The first time she sees Florens, she loves her and acts as a surrogate mother to her. She always takes care of her and gives her advice. She also takes care

of Rebekka's children before they die. Also motherhood helps her to construct her identity.

1.3. The Sacrificial Mother: Florens' mother Mina mae lives in the plantation of De'Ortega with her young daughter and little baby. In order to settle his debt, De'Ortega asks Vaark to choose a slave . At first, Vaark chooses Min mae; however, seeing mercy in his eyes, she begs him to take her daughter instead. This is because she has endured sever trauma in De' Ortega's plantation that she prefers to let her daughter go away rather than watching her expereince the same fate.

2.Assignment

Write a coherent paragraph in which you discuss the image of the woman in Morrison's novel.

COURSE 15

Reading *A Mercy* Through Historical Criticism

1. Definition of Historical Criticism

A historical approach to literary interpretation and analysis is perhaps the oldest and one of the most widely-used critical approaches.

The historical approach involves understanding the events and experiences surrounding the composition of the work, especially the life of the author, the historical and social circumstances of the time and using the findings to interpret that work of literature. The context that a historical approach provides to a work of fiction gives the reader a better understanding of the purpose of the writing as well as the mindset of the author.

3. Applying the Historical Approach on the Reading of *A Mercy*

Consider the following steps :

- Look for the situation of America in the 17th century (social and historical).
- Search what do critics say about Morrison.
- Depict from the novel some slavery aspects.
- Interpret: Why does Morrison return back to the history of slavery in America ?.

2.1. Truth about Slavery in America

In America, slavery started in 1819, when a Deutch ship brought twenty slaves in Jamestown, Virginia. In the 17th century, Europeans in North America made the African slaves as their labour source. By 1860, slavey in the south had reached four million in cotton producing states.

Slaves were living only to serve their masters. They were prevented from expressing themselves or taking actions without the permission of their holders. They were restricted to their masters' orders and desires. Learning to read and write was forbidden to them. Even though, there was no legal basis for slave marriages, they marry and get children, but the owners were always trying to separate the slave families by sale or removal. In addition to :

- Slave owners control the slaves' personal life.

- Slaves were treated as property.
- Slaves were forbidden from practicing their religious rituals and punished if discovered.
- Slaves were brought from Africa, they were miserable and harshly treated.
- When they arrived to America, they were sold to several plantation owners. Men, women and children were obliged to work to produce goods like tobacco and sugar. If they refused work, they were punished by whipping, shackling, beating, mutilation, and/or imprisonment.
- The slave woman has often been victimized not only by the white masters, but also by the black slaves as well.
- Black female worked hard as male.
- Blacks were deprived of their humanity.

2.2. Toni Morrison through the Critics :

- Morrison uses her art at the service of her political struggles.
- Her works are directly or indirectly linked to slavery.
- She articulates her own voice.
- Her works reflect the historical reality of the black community.

2.3. Slavery References in A Mercy

- The Bacon Rebellion : was an armed rebellion held by Virginia settlers that took place from 1676 to 1677. It was led by Nathaniel Bacon against Colonial Governor William Berkeley, after Berkeley refused Bacon's request to drive native American Indians out of Virginia. It ended by the establishment of inhuman laws that granted absolute protection and rights to whites and deprived blacks from all their rights.
- The letter Rebekka gave to Florens.
- Black family separation.
- Enforced labour.
- Black women were raped to produce children.
- Blacks were brutally treated (in De' Ortega plantation).
- Blacks were treated as property.

2.3.1. Interpretation

- Morrison aims to provide a voice for the oppressed who have been overlooked.
- ' Rememory' is a key term coined by Morrison to recreate the popular memory through fiction to reflect the experiences of real people.

- By giving voice to the oppressed groups, she managed to write a literary history that may complement history books and to better understanding this period in history.
- Healing the traumas of African American past because the history of African American slavery is filled with silences and omissions. She aims to rectify, retell and reconsider the history of both the individual and the collective.
- To state details that history books overlook, such as : the hardships and lack of opportunities for indentured servants ; ecological disaster that the early establishment of the colonies brought to the new world ; individual experiences of those suspected of witchcraft ; rape ; parents being forced to give up their children, among others.
- Explore true suffering of Blacks.
- To relate the impact of past events on present situation.
- To fight racism.
- To comment on black life in the past.
- To draw lessons from the past.

COURSE 16

Tips for Writing a Literary Essay

1. Introduction

- Should capture the attention of the reader (eg. By a startling statement or provocative question).
- Mention the name of the author, title of the work, and the date of publication.
- State the thesis of your essay.
- Introduce the background of the thesis.

2. Development/Body

- No more than three paragraphs and no less than two paragraphs.
- Each paragraph should develop one idea.
- Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence and should relate the details of the paragraph to thesis statement.
- Each developmental paragraph should contain summaries, explanations, paraphrases, specific details or quotations.
- The explanations of one's ideas should be supported with evidence from the text.

3. Conclusion

- Restate the thesis in different words.
- Synthesize the ideas of the development briefly.
- State the importance of your literary essay and state that you have defended your argument.

4. Assignment

Write a coherent essay about one of the following topics

1. The Blacksmith in Morrison's *A Mercy* was a minor character in the novel who made a huge impact on the plot. How did he accomplish this, and would the plot have been altered had he not been included in the story.
2. Discuss the following quote: « The author is educating her audience, in an unconventional way, to understand an important history of slavery and history » (From : Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* : The Significance and Power of the Written Word », by : Sar O'Leary).

COURSE 17

An Overview on the Development of American Drama

1. American Drama Through Time

The early beginnings of the American drama go back to the early native American tribes that performed events, in addition to the plays written by European-born authors (Spaniards, Frenchmen, Englishmen).

Drama in America had a slow start. In the early years of the colonies' settlement drama was not accepted. It was seen as immoral and outright. Besides, most of the drama were brought over from Europe including classic such as Shakespeare.

The birth of the professional theatre in America may have begun when Lewis Hallan arrived with his theatrical company in Williams Burg in 1752. Lewis and his brother William were the first to organize a complete company of actors in Europe and bring them to the colonies. They bought a repertoire of plays that were popular in London at the time, including Hamlet, Othello, Richard IV. The first American mounted play goes with Thomas Godfrey's play "The Prince of Parthia" in 1767.

The American Revolution had shed with its light on the theatrical scenery infusing it with plays for heroism, satire and political debates. Nevertheless, there were no professional dramatists until William Dunlap whose work as playwright, translator, manager and theatre historian has earned him the title 'Father of American Drama'. With him, the amateur Royal Tyler (1757-1826) who produced a piece of play worth to be noted "*The Contrast*" in 1787. Though he was influenced by European theatres, the American character was present in his play.

By the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century, ethnic theatres existed. They were established by the first settlers like the French and the Italians. Their existence brought new plays and theatres increased within the Jacksonian era (1820's-1830's). Thus, during the antibellum years, with new immigrants pouring into America, theatres appeared for each group: Italian American, Swedish American, Irish American, Ukranian American, Norwegian American which each group of them appealed to their own sensibilities and culture. As an example, the staging of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* brought into light issues of race and ethnicity (Sbteir, 2005).

It is to note that within the same era, the first native American theatre which features Americans first appeared with John Augustus Stone's *Metamora* (1829). Ultimately, after the Civil war, and with the

rising immigration of the new plays portrayed the new realities on immigrants' life, thus, emphasis on realism was noted. However, the influence of the European drama still shows up in these plays up to the late nineteenth century (ibid).

By the 19th century, though most dramas were imitations of European melodrama, they were native in content, appealing to popular nationalism by dramatizing current events and portraying American heroism. By the end of the 19th century, drama tends to be more realistic and less romantic.

In the modern times, like Europe, America was undergoing huge changes inside without being isolated from world changes as well. Particularly, the first half of the 20th century, as it was the age of innovation and technological advancement, it was also the age of conflicts in ideologies between communism and capitalism, in addition to the nuclear bombing of Japan, the two world wars and their consequences on the individual and the society. At the meantime, outside America, we can talk of the spread of fascism in Europe and the Reds in Italy.

In this context, the artist is in a position to look for other means of expression capable of translating this new reality characterized by its ambiguity, fragmentation, incoherence and fluctuation.

The early to mid 20th century marks the true beginning of American drama as a legitimate literary form. In fact, two factors contributed in the development of the American theatre. They are the urbanization and the territorial expansion.

By the twentieth century, American theatre had developed into two main forms: commercial theatre and avant-garde theatre, reflecting the country's industrial growth. As a result, the theatre industry became a lucrative business (Krasner, 2005; Gainor and Dickey, 2005). These two forms were exemplified by notable figures: Susan Glaspell was associated with the experimental theatre tradition, while Sophie Treadwell was linked to the commercial stage. Their works were shaped by modernist ideas, feminist perspectives, and political concerns, influencing their approaches to dramatology. (Gainor and Dickey, 2005).

During the 1910s and 1920s, voices for a native American drama were heard. Thus, American modern avant-garde drama is characterized by its experimental approach to form, content, and stage craft, often breaking away from traditional narrative structures and realistic representation. It emphasizes innovation, symbolism, and abstraction, using unconventional techniques such as non-linear storytelling, fragmented

dialogue, and expressive physicality to challenge audience expectations. Themes frequently explore social, political, and psychological issues, reflecting modernist concerns with identity, alienation, and the complexities of contemporary life. Avant-garde drama also often foregrounds marginalized voices, including women and other underrepresented groups, seeking to question dominant cultural norms and provoke critical reflection. Overall, it prioritizes artistic exploration and experimentation over commercial appeal, aiming to expand the boundaries of theatrical expression.

Additionally, There was modern lyricism featured by rhythm, image and anxiety. American experimentalist plays did not feature magical creatures. Playwrights experimented with form, different narrative techniques and vernacular language. It is suggested that Eleanor Gate's *The Poor Little Rich Girl* (1913) as the earliest American experimentalist drama simply because it is written by an American playwright. Alice Gerstenberg's one-act *Overtures* (1913) is considered a good example of American experimentalism too (Beard, 2005).

Modern experimentalist playwrights emphasized innovation in form, symbolism, and psychological depth, challenging traditional theatrical conventions. These playwrights pushed beyond realism to emphasize emotional truth, symbolism, and social critique, which are hallmarks of expressionism. Key figures:

- Susan Glaspell: known for her innovative structures and symbolic, non-realistic techniques.
- Sophie Treadwell: pioneered fragmented, expressionist-inspired drama, as in *Machinal*.
- Eugene O'Neill: experimented with expressionism and non-linear narratives in plays like *The Hairy Ape*.
- Elmer Rice: used abstraction and symbolic settings in works such as *The Adding Machine*.
- Murray Schisgal: blended absurdism and unconventional dialogue in mid-20th-century experimental theatre.

Furthermore, Expressionism features American drama in the 1920s. In literature or theatre, expressionism is defined as the external manifestation of an internal condition(ibid).

Expressionism in early 20th-century American drama was a theatrical movement that aimed to depict the inner emotional experience of

characters rather than external reality. Influenced by European expressionism, it emphasized exaggerated, distorted settings, dialogue, and actions to convey psychological states, fears, and social critique. American expressionist plays often focused on issues like industrialization, dehumanization, and social injustice, presenting protagonists struggling against oppressive societal forces. The style was marked by symbolic characters, heightened emotion, and a rejection of naturalistic conventions, seeking to make the audience feel the intensity of the characters' inner worlds.

American playwrights who are more closely associated with pure expressionism in early 20th-century drama include:

- Elmer Rice, known for *The Adding Machine* (1923), which uses distorted, mechanical settings and symbolic characters to critique industrialization and dehumanization.
- Eugene O'Neill, especially in plays like *The Hairy Ape* (1922), which portrays psychological and social conflict through expressionist techniques.
- Susan Glaspell, her experimental plays often employed non-realistic forms to explore social and psychological themes.
- Sophie Treadwell, in works like *Machinal* (1928), she used fragmented dialogue, symbolic staging, and heightened emotion to depict societal oppression, particularly of women.

At the modern era, seminal literary figures come to shape the American drama like Eugene O'Neil.

Eugene O'Neil (1888-1953): Scholars describe him as a key literary figure who introduced modernism into American drama with his enormous plays which combine between originality and emotional depth. His career as a playwright started in 1916 with his play "*Bound East for Cardiff*". He produced around forty theatrical pieces, including "*Beyond Horizon*" (1920), "*The Iceman Cometh*" (1946). He was honoured with the Pulitzer Prize in 1921, and the Noble Prize in Literature in 1939, and thus, he became the distinguished playwright of his time. He brought newness to the American theatre, realism and dream in a way that fascinates his audience. In his plays, he tried to abstract the nature of emotions, to discern the true reality without deceiving appearances. He also probed the American dream, race relations, class conflicts, human aspirations, alienation and psychoanalysis. His aim was to create a modern American drama that would rival the great works of European modernists.

In the spring of 1922, the play *The Hairy Ape* by Eugene O’Neil features expressionist drama. Following the success of this play, the American theatre enjoyed the trend of expressionism. In fact this play was considered as exemplar of American expressionism (Beard, 2005). It is also displayed in his play *The Emperor Jones* (1920). O’Neil rises to prominence in America and also reached an international stature. Meanwhile, other dramatists have also reached recognition: George S. Kaufman, Maxwell Anderson, Philip Barry, George Kelly, Sidney Howard, Elmer Rice (Londré, 2005). In line with them, women dramatists include: Zoe Akins, Rachel Crothers, Susan Glaspell and Sophie Treadwell (Ibid).

Drama of the Harlem Renaissance (1917-1935) also contributed in the development of American drama. Playwrights worked hard to provide a portrayal of black life to black and white audience. In this context, four genres of plays are introduced: pageant, folk, social issue and historical (Bean, 2005).

The African American theatre comes into prominence by 1940, with influential playwrights Frederick O’Neal and Abraham Hill. By the mid to late 20th century, American drama began to gain international recognition on a large scale. The two most influential playwrights of this period are Arthur Miller (1915- 2005) and Tennessee Williams (1911-1983). Both of them use their plays to delve deeply into the American psyche and developed complex characters. They emerge at the forefront of post world war II literature. They are concerned with psychological and moral dilemmas of individuals in society.

Arthur Miller graduated from the university of Michigan and majored in English. He was active in politics. He was also president of PEN International on behalf of fellow writers subject to oppressive governments. He was awarded the Noble Prize for his play *Death of a Salesman* in 1949. He wrote about family trauma in *Time bends* (1987); *depression in Price* (1968); The great depression also in *The American Clock* (1980); and about the killing of the Jews in his play *Broken Glass* (1994) (Biggs, 2005).

This period saw also the rise of African American theatre including Lorraine Hanberry, Amiri Baraka and August Wilson.

As the century progressed, American drama continued to diversify coming up with a complex body of works. Furthermore, notable contemporary American playwrights include: Edward Albee, August Wilso, Tony Kushner, David Henry Hwang, John Guare and Wendy WassersTien.

2. Postmodern Theatrical Techniques

A postmodern theatrical production might make use of some or all of the following techniques:

- The accepted norms of seeing and representing the world are challenged and disregarded, while experimental theatrical perceptions and representations are created.
- A pastiche of different textualities and media forms are used, including the simultaneous use of multiple art or media forms, and there is the 'copy' of a heterogeneous group of artistic forms.
- The narrative needs not be complete but can be broken, paradoxical and imagistic. There is a movement away from linearity to multiplicity (to inter-related webs of stories).
- Characters are fragmented, forming a collection of contrasting and parallel shards stemming from a central idea, theme or traditional character.
- Each new performance of a theatrical piece is a new Gestalt, a unique spectacle, with no intent on methodically repeating a play.
- The audience is integral to the shared meaning-making of the performance process and its members are included in the dialogue of the play.
- There is a rejection of the notions of "High" and "Low" art. The production exists only in the viewer's mind as what the viewer interprets - nothing more and nothing less.
- The rehearsal process in a theatrical production is driven more by shared meaning-making and improvisation, rather than the scripted text.
- The play steps back from reality to create its own self-conscious atmosphere. This is sometimes referred to as metatheatre.

While these techniques are often found in postmodern productions they are never part of a centralized movement or style. Rather, they are tools for authentic introspection, questioning and representation of human experience. (postmodern theatre, 2023).

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COURSE 17

Analysis of Arthur Miller's Play *Death of a Salesman* (1948).

1. Preparatory Task

- When was the play published?
- Discuss the socio-historical context of the play.
- Present a short biography on the playwright Arthur Miller.
- Summarize the story.
- Discuss the main characters.
- What is the theme of the play?.

2. Introduction to Arthur Miller (1915-2005)

Arthur Miller is an American playwright, who combined social awareness with a searching concern for his characters' inner lives. He is best known for *Death of a Salesman* (1949). After the second world war, he established reputation after Eugene O'Neil along with Tennessee Williams.

Miller was shaped by the Great Depression, which brought financial ruin onto his father, a small manufacturer, and demonstrated to the young Miller the insecurity of modern existence. After graduation from high school he worked in a warehouse. With the money he earned he attended the University of Michigan (B.A., 1938), where he began to write plays.

Among his popular plays : *All my Sons*, *The Crucible*, *A View from the Bridge*, *The American Clock*, *Resurrection Blues*, *The Price*, *The Ride Down Mount Morgan*, among others.

Miller's, *Death of a Salesman*, became one of the most famous American plays of its period. It is the tragedy of Willy Loman, a man destroyed by false values that are in large part the values of his society. For Miller, it was important to place "the common man" at the centre of a tragedy. As he wrote in 1949 (britannica.com, 2025).

Miller was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for drama. In 1980, he received the St. Louis Literary Award from the Saint Louis University Library Associates. He also received the Prince of Asturias Award and the Premium imperial Prize in 2002, and the Jerusalem Prize in 2003, as well as the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Lifetime Achievement Award.

As a dramatist, Miller is seen as the writer of social plays with strong emphasis on moral problems in American society. He deals with eternal themes of life, death and human purpose.

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3.Summary of the Play

Death of a Salesman is a tragic play that follows Willy Loman, an aging and struggling salesman who is unable to accept the reality of his life and failures. Living in Brooklyn with his loyal wife Linda, Willy clings to the American Dream and believes success is based on being well-liked and personally attractive.

His two sons, Biff and Happy, are also affected by his delusions. Biff, once full of potential, is now disillusioned and confronts his father about their unrealistic expectations. Willy experiences hallucinations and flashbacks, often reliving past events and conversations with his deceased brother Ben, who symbolizes success.

As the pressure builds and his mental health declines, Willy becomes increasingly unstable. He eventually takes his own life, believing his death will provide financial security for his family through insurance money. The play ends with a somber reflection at his funeral, where it's clear that Willy's dreams were never truly realized.

4.The Socio-historical Context

Arthur Miller wrote the play in 1949, in the aftermath of World War II, during a time of booming American capitalism, American dream and growing consumer culture.

5.Characters' Analysis

Willy Loman: Willy Loman is the central character around whom the story revolves:

- His Personal Character:
 - Overdreamer, detached from reality, self-centered, lives between the past and present.
 - His Tragic Flaw: false perception about the American dream.
 - His Dramatic Conflict: His weak potentials in a capitalist world.
- His Family Situation:
 - Unfaithful husband and moody.
 - Recently, in constant conflict with his son Biff.
 - Tries to transfer his false illusion about the American dream to his sons.
- In Business:
 - A hard worker, struggling for living.
 - Inhuman working condition.
 - Victim of the capitalist system.

Biff

- He was a successful high school football player.
- He is 34 years old, and still unsettled with any job.
- At the beginning, he returns home to achieve the American dream.
- He wants to borrow some money from Oliver to start a business.
- After his deception from Oliver, he decides to leave home again.
- In the end, Biff finds his purpose in life, and will no longer follow his father's path.

Ben

- He is Willy's deceased brother.
- He left home at early age and became a successful business man.

- He is completely the opposite in character from Willy.
- Unlike his brother, he understands the requirements of the American dream.

6. Style of Language

6.1. Flashback

- Flashback is strongly present in the play.
- Through flashbacks, we know more about Willy's past life and affair, Ben and Biff's misfortunes.
- The playwright makes a juxtaposition between past and present.
- Flashback contributes to the construction of the play.

6.2. Foreshadow

- The sound of the flute reminds us of Willy's father who used to make flutes and sell them. His father also left his family; a foreshadow that Willy will also leave his family.

6.3. Sound Effect

- The sound of the flute follows all the sad events of the story. An exception is at the beginning of Act II, which is a moment of hope in the life of the family.
- The sound of the flute contributes in establishing the dark tone of the play.

6.4. Dramatic Irony

- Willy, without any potential, dreams of achieving the American dream.
- Unsuccessful father who wants his sons to succeed.

6.5. Situational Irony

- Willy and his work condition.
- Willy and his life.

6.6. Symbols

- The Flute: a symbol of abandonment.
- The seeds: A symbol of Willy's failed dream.
- Stockings: Symbol of betrayal.

6.7.Stage Directions

- Stage directions are very informative, they contribute in the story.
- They inform about the family's socio-economic situation.
- They serve as flashback in some situations.
- They provide descriptions about Ben.
- They inform about the sound effects and setting.

6.8.Themes: The play explores the illusion of the American Dream, self-deception, identity, family conflict, and the cost of blind ambition.

➤ **The American Dream**

The play critiques the American Dream, exposing the pressure on individuals, especially men, to achieve success through material wealth and popularity. It reflects post-war economic optimism, but also reveals the emotional and psychological toll on those who fail to thrive in this competitive society.

➤ **Fathers and Sons**

In the conflict between between Willy and Biff who, in the past was a successful athlete. However, being impacted by his father's adultery, Biff becomes a drifter in his life with unsettled jobs. Willy contributes to the failure of his sons by instilling wrong ideas about the American dream ignoring the important values of hardwork and expertise.

➤ **Betrayal**

Betrayal in the play takes a variety of forms: Willy's betrayal towards his wife; Willy's false teachings about the American dream to his sons; and finally, Linda's passivity towards Willy's illusions about the American dream.

7.Assignment

Write an essay in which you discuss how is *Death of A Salesman* a social criticism play.

COURSE 18

American Postmodern Poetry

1. Introduction

American postmodern poetry refers to a broad set of movements and styles that developed in the United States mainly after World War II 1945 onward, though many trace its beginnings to the late 1950s and 1960s. Postmodern poets generally rejected the conventions of modernist poetry like those of T.S. Eliot or Ezra Pound, which valued form, high culture, and the search for meaning, and instead embraced fragmentation, irony, playfulness, and a skepticism toward grand narratives or absolute truths.

Additionally, contemporary culture references such as song lyrics, television references, and advertising slogans are frequently mirrored into postmodern poetry, which also challenges preconceived concepts of syntax and grammar. Charles Bernstein, Lyn Hejinian, Susan Howe, and John Ashbery are a few examples of prominent American postmodern poets.

2. Schools of American Postmodern Poetry:

American postmodern poetry encompasses a broad range of literary approaches and styles grouped into movements :

2.1. The Beat movement

The Beat Generation, emerging in the 1950s, was one of the first major postmodern currents in American poetry. Writers such as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso, and Diane di Prima broke away from conventional forms in favor of free-flowing, improvisational verse inspired by jazz rhythms, Eastern philosophy, and a desire for spiritual liberation. Their poetry embraced raw honesty, openness, and political critique, creating a countercultural literature that resonated with the turbulence of postwar America. The Beats turned poetry into a form of rebellion, often performing their works in public spaces and helping to democratize access to literature. Key works include: Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* (1956) and Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *A Coney Island of the Mind* (1958). (Hoover, 1994).

2.2. The New York school

The New York School of poets, including Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, and James Schuyler, brought a spirit of wit, spontaneity, and urban vitality to poetry in the 1950s and 1960s. They were a group of painters that share the same style, method and subject matter. Vigorously influenced by French experimental writing,

Closely linked to the visual arts scene, particularly Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art, these poets celebrated the everyday, cafés, conversations, movies, culture, humor, spontaneity and fleeting encounters, through a playful and conversational style. Rejecting solemnity, they favored humor, irony, and a collage-like method of assembling images. Their poetry reflected the vibrancy of city life and suggested that art could be casual, joyful, and inclusive rather than solemn and authoritative. One of the popular subject that New York school dealt with is "Personist Poetry" which speaks about immediacy, directness of everyday life and experiences and everyday language. (Hoover, 1994). Key works include: Frank O'Hara's *The Day Lady Died* (1964) and John Ashbery's *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1975)

2.3. The Confessional Poets

The Confessional poets of the 1950s and 1960s shifted poetry inward, using verse as a medium for self-exposure and vulnerability. Figures such as Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, and John Berryman confronted themes of mental illness, family dysfunction, and personal trauma with unprecedented candor. Their work blurred the traditional boundary between private life and public art, challenging the modernist ideal of detachment. In giving voice to intimate struggles, confessional poetry resonated deeply with readers, paving the way for a more personal and emotionally charged kind of postmodern writing. Key works include: Sylvia Plath's *Lady Lazarus* (1962); Anne Sexton's *Her Kind* (1960) and Robert Lowell's *Skunk Hour* (1959).

2.4. Black Arts Movements

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Black Arts Movement gave poetry an explicitly political and community-centered role. Spearheaded by writers such as Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Nikki Giovanni, and Haki R. Madhubuti, the movement aligned with the Black Power movement and sought to create a literature that reflected and uplifted Black culture and identity. Poetry was no longer just an aesthetic endeavor but a weapon of resistance, performed in community spaces and infused with rhythm,

vernacular speech, and music. By merging art with activism, the Black Arts Movement pushed the boundaries of postmodern experimentation, showing how poetry could serve as both personal expression and collective empowerment. Key works include: Amiri Baraka's *Black Art* (1966); Sonia Sanchez's *Homecoming* (1969) and Nikki Giovanni's *Nikki-Rosa* (1968).

2.5. The Language Poets

The Language poets of the 1970s and 1980s took postmodern experimentation even further by questioning the very foundations of meaning in poetry. Figures like Charles Bernstein, Lyn Hejinian, Ron Silliman, and Rae Armantrout rejected the notion of poetry as personal confession or expression of voice. Instead, they foregrounded the materiality of language itself, producing fragmented, non-narrative, and often disorienting works that forced readers to engage critically with how texts generate meaning. Indeed, Language poetry also seeks to involve the reader in the text, emphasizing reader participation in meaning construction.

Their poems resist closure, destabilize syntax, and emphasize process over product, reflecting postmodern skepticism toward fixed truths or unified subjects. The idea that language dictates meaning rather than the other way around is central to language poetry. Thus, it aimed to place complete emphasis on the language of the poem and to create a new way for the reader to interact with the work, following movements such as the Black Mountain and the New York schools. Language poetry poets published in many literary magazines, they called themselves L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E and definitely got a mature voice and a name with the publication of the first issue of the magazine L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E. Key works include: Lyn Hejinian's *My Life* (1980); Ron Silliman's *Ketjak* (1978) and Rae Armantrout's *Necromance* (1985).

2.6. Black Mountain School

Beyond these major schools, other experimental and hybrid movement enriched the landscape of American postmodern poetry. Black Mountain was the direction or the home of many number of figures including painters such as Josef Albers and Robert Rauschenberg, composer Jhon Cage, dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham, and futurist thinker Buckminster Fuller, creator of the geodesic dome. The poets Robert Creeley, Ed Dorn, Hilda Morley, Jhon wieners and Robert Duncan were in residence (Hoover, 1994).

The Black Mountain poets, led by Charles Olson and Robert Creeley, developed “projective verse,” a style that emphasized open form and breath-based lineation, rejecting rigid meter. Feminist avant-garde poets such as Adrienne Rich and Judy Grahn challenged patriarchal traditions both in theme and in form, experimenting with structure to articulate new visions of gender and power. Black Mountain poets rejected traditional poetic forms and conventions and their target is to try different forms, styles, and techniques, as well as with different subject matters and themes and they also were interested in creating poetry that related to their experiences and perspectives and forge new ways or modes of expression that would be targeted and authentic instead of sample expression as what had come before, the end of Black Mountain is generally considered to be 1970 , the year Charles Olson died.

Later, in the 1990s and beyond, performance and slam poetry revitalized oral traditions, blending politics, identity, and entertainment in live settings, making poetry accessible to diverse audiences.

Together, these currents illustrate how postmodern American poetry became a site of innovation, inclusivity, and cultural resistance.

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COURSE 19

Analysis of Lawrence Ferlinghetti's Poem :

Dog

From the 1958 collection : *A Coney Island of the Mind*

1. Biography of Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1919- 2021) , San Francisco, California was an American poet, one of the founders of the Beat movement in San Francisco in the mid-1950s. His City Lights bookshop was an early gathering place of the Beats, and the publishing arm of City Lights was the first to print the Beats' books of poetry. (Britannica.com, 2025).

Lawrence Ferlinghetti's father passed away just before his birth, and his mother was later institutionalized, leaving a female relative to care for him. She took him to France, where he spent much of his early childhood, before they eventually moved to an estate on Long Island, New York, where she worked as a governess. During World War II, Ferlinghetti served as a U.S. naval officer. After the war, he pursued higher education, earning his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina, a master's from Columbia University, and, in 1951, a doctorate from the Sorbonne.(ibid)

In 1955, Ferlinghetti's newly founded City Lights Press released his poetry collection *Pictures of the Gone World* as the inaugural volume in its Pocket Poets series. The following year, Allen Ginsberg's *Howl and Other Poems* appeared as the fourth book in the series. Over time, City Lights Books went on to publish additional works by Ginsberg, along with titles by Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso, Denise Levertov, William Burroughs, William Carlos Williams, and several international writers.(ibid)

His collection *A Coney Island of the Mind* (1958), with its notable verse "Autobiography," became the largest-selling book by any living American poet in the second half of the 20th century. (ibid).

Ferlinghetti's later poems continued to be politically oriented, as such titles as *One Thousand Fearful Words for Fidel Castro* (1961), *Where Is Vietnam* (1965), *Tyrannus Nix?* (1969), and *Who Are We Now?* (1976) suggest. Retrospective collections of his poems were published as *Endless Life* (1981) and *These Are My Rivers* (1995). In 1988 Ferlinghetti published a short novel, *Love in the Days of Rage*, about a romance during the student revolution in France in 1968.

A Far Rockaway of the Heart, a sequel to *A Coney Island of the Mind*, appeared in 1997. Two years later he published *What Is Poetry?*, a book of prose poetry, which was followed by the collection *How to Paint Sunlight* (2001) and *Americus: Part I* (2004), a history of the United States in verse. In *Poetry as Insurgent Art* (2007), a volume of prose poems, he exhorted a return to the firebrand political poetics of the Beat generation. *Time of Useful Consciousness* (2012) contains poems analyzing the state of contemporary culture. Some of his meditations on travel were collected as *Writing Across the Landscape: Travel Journals 1960–2010* (2015), and a number of his exchanges with Ginsberg were published as *I Greet You at the Beginning of a Great Career: The Selected Correspondence of Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Allen Ginsberg, 1955–1997* (2015). Shortly before his 100th birthday, Ferlinghetti published the autobiographical novel *Little Boy* (2019) (ibid).

2. Summary of *Dog*

Dog follows a dog trotting freely through an urban landscape and describes what the dog *sees* and *smells*, from drunks in doorways and moons on trees to fish on newsprint and chickens in Chinatown windows. The poem uses the dog’s straightforward, sensory perspective to contrast instinctive, immediate reality with human-made structures and social ills; that perspective becomes a lens for social critique and philosophical reflection. It’s included in Ferlinghetti’s *A Coney Island of the Mind* (1958)²¹.

3. Point of View

The poem is written in the third person omniscient narrator, it follows the dog as it moves through the city. In addition, the narration often blends into the dog’s own perspective, describing what the dog “sees” or “knows.” This point of view is shifting between being observational, the poet describing the dog, and partly experiential by entering the dog’s consciousness.

By seeing the world through a dog’s eyes, Ferlinghetti gives us an outsider’s critique of human society. The dog notices hypocrisy, injustice, and absurdity without the filters humans use.

²¹ <https://writersalmanac.publicradio.org>, 2025

The poet is creating a Satirical distance, the third-person lens lets him mock human systems: politics, religion and materialism indirectly, through what the dog observes, softening critique with humor.

In speaking about the dog's own real life, the poet is contrasting between the natural truth vs. artificial society .The dog represents instinct, freedom, and honesty, and its point of view highlights the contrast between natural being and the corruption of human culture.

4. Metaphors

1. The Dog itself: The dog is more than an animal, it represents common sense longing for freedom and honesty standing in contrast to human corruption and conformity. The dog becomes a living critique of society: free where humans are constrained, truthful where humans are hypocritical.
2. "*The dog trots freely in the street*": The dog's trot is a metaphor for independence and nonconformity, a Beat ideal of moving outside societal restrictions. It suggests the possibility of existing authentically, unfazed by human structures. It is a metaphor for the Beats ethos: wandering, open, curious and unbound by convention.
3. Encounters with human society (politicians, church, stores, etc). Each thing the dog sees becomes symbolic: politicians = corruption, churches = empty ritual, shops = consum. The dog's perspective makes these institutions look absurd or shallow, exposing them as mere human constructs.
4. The dog "*sees reality and the things themselves*", this quotation "*Sees reality*" suggests the dog perceives truth directly, without cultural filters or ideologies. It contrasts with humans, who distort reality through politics, religion, or consumerism.

4.1. Function of Metaphors in *Dog*

- **Social Critique:** The metaphors expose hypocrisy in politics, religion, and consumer culture.
- **Alternative Vision:** The dog stands for a freer, truer way of living, instinctive and honest.
- **Beat Philosophy:** The poem's metaphors embody Beat ideals: nonconformity, rejection of materialism, celebration of direct experience.
- **Humor and Satire:** Using a dog to critique society undercuts the heaviness of the message, making it witty and playful while still profound.

5. Symbols

1. **The Dog:** a *symbol* of freedom, honesty, instinct, common sense and nonconform. It stands in for the Beat spirit, living outside the cages of politics, religion, and consumerism.
2. **The Street:** a symbol of everyday life, the public sphere where society plays out. It represents openness, possibility, but also exposure to corruption and inequality.
3. **Politicians and public figures:** are a symbol of corruption, false authority, and hypocrisy. By reducing them to objects in the dog's path, the poem undercuts their supposed importance.
4. **Churches and religious imagery:** symbolize empty ritual and institutionalized religion. These contrasts with the dog's direct, instinctive spirituality, natural, not dogmatic.
5. **Shops, products, and material goods:** *Are a symbol* of consumerism and shallow desires. The poet critiques America's obsession with buying and owning, as opposed to simply *being*.
6. **The Dog's Eyes:** "*sees reality and the things themselves*". They represent truth and unfiltered perception. This Suggests that animals, by living directly, perceive reality more clearly than humans weighed down by ideologies.

5.1. Function of Symbols in the Poem

They turn the dog's walk into a symbolic journey through American culture, exposing flaws and contradictions. It emphasizes contrasts: instinct vs. ideology, freedom vs. confinement, authenticity vs. hypocrisy. They embody Beat ideals of simplicity, immediacy, and truth against mainstream American materialism and conformity.

6. Contrasts in the Poem

1. Dog vs. Humans

- The dog is free, instinctual, and honest.
- Humans are trapped in politics, hypocrisy, consumerism, and empty rituals, contrary to the animal which turns out wiser than the supposedly "civilized" humans.

2. Nature vs. Society

- The dog belongs to the natural world, seeing "*the things themselves*."

- Human society is full of artificial structures: politics, religion, money, status. A contrast between pure immediacy versus corrupted institutions.

7. Paradoxes in the Poem

- The “uncivilized” dog is more civilized than humans. Paradoxical because we assume humans are superior, but the poem flips that hierarchy.
- Freedom through instinct, not reason. Paradoxical because Western tradition often associates freedom with rational control, but here freedom comes from surrendering to common sense.
- Seeing reality by not interpreting it. The dog perceives truth precisely because it doesn’t analyze, theorize, or distort. Paradox: Less “thought” equals more wisdom.

7.2. Function of Contrast and Paradox

- They mock human arrogance by showing how a dog lives more authentically than people.
- They underline Beat values: rejecting convention, celebrating instinct and immediacy.
- They create a playful, ironic tone; heavy critique wrapped in lighthearted imagery.

8. Forms of Experimentation in *Dog*

- **Free Verse and Conversational Tone:** The poem abandons traditional meter and rhyme. It flows like casual speech or storytelling, echoing the dog’s trotting rhythm. *Experiment:* It merges poetry with everyday, spoken American English.
- **Perspective Shift (Dog’s-eye view):** Instead of a human speaker, the poem centers on a dog. This “outsider” point of view is playful but also radical: it decenters human authority. *Experiment:* Using an animal consciousness as a vehicle for social critique.
- **Stream-of-Consciousness Movement:** The dog’s trot guides the flow of images, giving the poem a wandering, open structure. *Experiment:* Form mirrors content. The poem itself “trots freely” like the dog.
- **Play with Irony and Satire:** Serious critiques (political corruption, religious hypocrisy) are presented with humor. *Experiment:* Blending comedy and social protest, so the poem is both light and biting.

- **Beat Ethos of Openness:** The poem rejects rigid literary tradition in favor of spontaneity, improvisation, and directness. *Experiment:* Poetry as jazz-like, free-flowing, responsive to immediate experience.

8.1. Function of Experimentation in the Poem

- Challenges literary norms, just as the dog challenges societal norms.
- Embodies freedom: the poem's form especially the last lines enacts the very freedom it praises in the dog.
- Accessible voice: experimentation breaks down barriers, making poetry closer to street language and everyday life.
- Satirical impact: the looseness, humor, and shifting perspectives make the critique sharper without being preachy.

9. Themes in *Dog*

1. **Freedom vs. Conformity:** The dog trots freely, instinctively, without concern for rules or social structures. It reflects the Beat ideal of nonconformity and spontaneous living.
 - *1950s Context:* America in the 1950s emphasized conformity (suburbs, consumer lifestyles, rigid social roles). The dog's freedom critiques this.
2. **Authenticity vs. Hypocrisy:** The dog "*sees reality and the things themselves,*" in contrast to politicians, priests, and consumers who live behind masks and illusions. It *Connects* the Beats who sought authentic experience (through art, spirituality, sexuality, travel).
 - *1950s Context:* The era was marked by political spin (Cold War rhetoric), religious revivalism, and consumer advertising, all critiqued as fake.
3. **Nature vs. Society:** The dog, representing natural instinct, contrasts with artificial human institutions. Beats often turned to nature, Eastern philosophy, and organic living against industrialization and materialism.
 - *1950s Context:* Postwar America emphasized industrial growth, technology, and suburban sprawl, but Ferlinghetti celebrates the raw vitality of nature.

4. **Social Critique of Institutions:** The dog wanders past political leaders, churches, shops, all symbols of corruption, emptiness, or materialism. On their side, the Beats rejected mainstream politics, critiqued organized religion, and distrusted capitalism.
 - *1950s Context:* McCarthyism, consumerism, and strict religious morality defined the decade. The poem uses satire to undermine them.
5. **Wisdom in the “Low” or Marginalized:** The humble street dog embodies more truth than society’s “high” institutions. Indeed, The Beats found value in outsiders, drifters, jazz musicians, and marginalized voices.
 - *1950s Context:* Against a backdrop of American exceptionalism and rigid hierarchies, the poem elevates the “low” to critique the “high.”
6. **Spontaneity and Direct Experience:** The dog lives fully in the moment, responding directly to sights, sounds, and smells. This mirrors Jack Kerouac’s “spontaneous prose” and Allen Ginsberg’s celebration of raw, unfiltered experience.
 - *1950s Context:* American culture was dominated by structure and control (from politics to gender roles). Spontaneity was a radical alternative.

9.1. How do the Themes Relate to Beat Generation and 1950s America

- **Beat Generation:**
 - Nonconformity, rebellion against mainstream values.
 - Celebration of instinct, immediacy, and outsider perspectives.
 - Critique of politics, religion, and consumerism.
 - Search for authenticity and spiritual renewal.
- **1950s America:**
 - Time of conformity (suburbia, gender roles, anti-communist paranoia).
 - Religious and political conservatism.
 - Consumer boom and advertising culture.

- Cold War tension fueling hypocrisy in politics.

Dog directly embodies the Beat critique of the 1950s: the dog's free trot contrasts with a society obsessed with rules, appearances, and materialism. It's playful, but beneath the humor lies a sharp rebellion against the decade's cultural norms.

10. Assignment

- Write an essay in which you discuss how does Ferlinghetti convey his themes in the the poem *Dog*.
- Write an essay in which you discuss how does the poem *Dog* relate to the Beat generation.
