

Core English 316 :Essays 2

*03. 'Post Modern Schools of Literary Criticism'*

****[1] Introduction to Post Modernism:****

△ The term “postmodernism” *first entered the philosophical lexicon in 1979, with the publication of The Postmodern Condition by Jean-François Lyotard. I therefore give Lyotard pride of place in the sections that follow.*

△ Postmodernism is associated with *relativism and a focus on the role of ideology in the maintenance of economic and political power.*

△ Postmodernists are *”skeptical of explanations which claim to be valid for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focus on the relative truths of each person”.*

△ Postmodernism *relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one’s own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal.*

△ *As a philosophy, postmodernism rejects concepts of rationality, objectivity, and universal truth.* Instead, *it emphasizes the diversity of human experience and multiplicity of perspectives.*

△ Postmodernity is *a condition or a state of being associated with changes to institutions and creations (Giddens, 1990).*

△ Postmodernism, *also known as postmodernity, is a sociological theory and intellectual movement that arose after the period of modernity.*

****[02] Deconstruction:****

Δ *Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) was the founder of “deconstruction,” a way of criticizing not only both literary and philosophical texts but also political institutions.*

Δ Deconstruction is *a process of rigorously analyzing and making apparent the assumptions, judgments and values that underlie social arrangements and intellectual ideas.*

Δ Debates *surrounding ontology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, hermeneutics, and philosophy of language refer to Jacques Derrida’s observations.*

Δ Deconstruction is *a method for understanding how some worldviews are oppressive in nature, favoring some while marginalizing others.*

Δ Deconstruction *challenges the way we interpret meaning.*

Δ The point of the deconstructive analysis *is to restructure, or “displace,” the opposition, not simply to reverse it.*

Δ Deconstruction *contends that in any text, there are inevitably points of ‘equivocation’ and ‘undecidability’*

Δ Derrida describes *the task of deconstruction as the identification of metaphysics of presence, or logocentrism in western philosophy.*

****[3] New Historicism:****

Δ *Stephen Greenblatt,* American scholar who was credited with establishing New Historicism.

Δ New Historicism *intersects with postmodernism in its stress on discontinuity and ruptures, eclecticism, heterogeneity, and decentered authority.*

Δ It shares with postmodernism *a “messy vitality,” as Robert Venturi, the father of postmodern architecture once put it.*

Δ New historicism is *a form of postmodernism applied to interpretive history.*

Δ New Historicism as *a theory is attributed to American theorist Stephen Greenblatt.*

△ It involves *analysing a given text in the context of its historical background.*

△ This includes considering the *political, social, and economic conditions of the time the writer lived in.*

△ *When reading a work through a New Historicism reading, apply the following steps:*

1. Determine the time and place, or historical context of the literature.

2. Choose a specific aspect of the text you feel would be illuminated by learning more about the history of the text.

3. Research the history.

4. Analyze the ways in which the text may be influenced by its history or the text may have influenced the culture of the time.

****[04] Postcolonial Criticism:****

△ *The postcolonial criticism thus reflects on the following points:*

1. It is a study and analysis of politics and cultural resistance mentioned in the colonialism history.

2. The ideas of social justice, democracy, and emancipation against the oppressive rule, discrimination, and racism emerge from such criticism.

3. The contrasting differences between the natives and the colonial population reflect in the colonial literature.

△ Postcolonial literary criticism *comprehends the literatures written by the colonizer and the colonized, wherein the subject matter includes portraits of the colonized peoples and their lives as imperial subjects.*

△ Many post-colonial writers write in English and focus on common themes such as the *struggle for independence, emigration, national identity, allegiance and childhood.*

△ Edward Said's book *_Orientalism_* in 1978 is considered the *foundational work on which post-colonial theory developed. Said, then, could be considered the 'father' of post-colonialism.*

△ Some of the best known names in Postcolonial literature and theory are those of *Chinua Achebe, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, Buchi Emecheta, Frantz Fanon, Jamaica Kincaid, Salman Rushdie, Wole Soyinka, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.*

****[05] Modern Feminist Criticism (third wave Feminism):****

△ *Third-wave feminism* therefore focused on Consciousness raising— *one's ability to open their mind to the fact that male dominance does affect the women of our generation, is what we need. Third-wave feminists often engaged in "micro-politics", and challenged the second wave's paradigm as to what was good for women.*

△ Some have critiqued the third wave for *its rejection of some of the older feminist ideals,* including the outright rejection of feminine social norms seen in the second wave; *third wave feminists argued that women should be allowed to choose which feminine norms they play into.*

△ Influenced by the postmodernist movement in the academy, *third-wave feminists sought to question, reclaim, and redefine the ideas, words, and media that have transmitted ideas about womanhood, gender, beauty, sexuality, femininity, and masculinity, among other things.*

△ The third wave of feminism extends *from the early 1990s to the present in India.*

△ A third wave of feminism from the *mid-1990s consciously addressed issues of social justice, including racism and classism, in addition to sexism.*

△ *Postfeminism and the third wave, then, are entirely different entities.*

△ Third-wave theory usually *incorporates elements of queer theory, transgender politics and a rejection of the gender binary, anti-racism and women-of-color consciousness, sexual assault awareness, and feminist theory.*

[06] Cultural Studies:

△ Cultural studies was initially developed by *British Marxist academics in the late 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s,* and has been subsequently taken up and transformed by scholars from many different disciplines around the world.

△ Cultural studies, in this sense, *is a postmodern approach with no tsarian monologue.*

△ It believes that *apparent realities are merely a construct with no absolute truth in them.*

△ Thus, *it demystifies the essentialisms being created and opens up space for dialogue, dissent and disagreements.*

△ Postmodernism *relies on critical theory, which considers the effects of ideology, society, and history on culture.*

△ Postmodern age is *an age of dilemmas.*

△ *This era has given momentum to identity culture.*

△ As mentioned *earlier more and more people are worried about their identities and various discourses at various levels are taking place.*

△ Cultural studies is *avowedly and even radically interdisciplinary and can sometimes be seen as anti-disciplinary.*

****[07] Gender Studies:****

△ Gender studies, which typically *includes queer theory and feminism under its umbrella, deals primarily with issues surrounding gender, masculinity, and femininity.*

△ *Postmodern feminists believe that gender is not determined by biology, but rather by culture and society.*

△ They argue that *women have been oppressed not because they are biologically inferior to men, but because they have been socially and politically marginalized.*

△ Postmodern feminist theory tells us *that both sex and gender are socially constructed through language.*

△ Consequently, *different societies have different constructs of both sex and gender.*

△ Postmodern feminism also *highlights how we create a restrictive gender binary with our language.*

****[08] Conclusion:****

Postmodernist *fiction rejects the idea of the absolute and embraces chaos, disorder, and fragmentation of reality.*