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MANAGING EDITOR

Ali Sadeghian

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Alireza Mohseni

CONTRIBUTOR

English Literature
Scientific Association of
the University of Qom

COVER AND DESIGN

Ali Mirzaie Vash

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS/WRITERS

Ali Sadeghian
Alireza Kheirolahi
Alireza Mohseni
Amir Ahmad Oshani
Amir Hossein Aghamohammad
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Asal Vaziri
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Mohammad Amin Dayani
Mohammad Hossein Mohammadian
Mohammad Niazi
Parsa Safaee Tolami
Pooriya Haghani
Sana Qasedi
Tahmineh Valipour
Yasir Inuwa Maiwada



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Postmodernism

By Pooriya Haghani
B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Qom

Introduction

Whether we consider it to be the “cultural logic of late capitalism” or “a way of insulating sectors of radical intelligentsia from popular movements and actual activism”, postmodernism is the most used term to describe contemporary culture. Postmodernism suggests that we have gone beyond the world-view of modernism without specifically knowing where we are going. Postmodernism as a movement began as a reaction against the Modern movement in architecture. The term was widely used in the 1960s by American cultural critics and commentators, and in the following decades began to figure in other academic disciplines besides literary criticism and architecture. Jean-Francois Lyotard defines the postmodern condition as “skepticism towards all metanarratives.” Metanarratives are supposedly universal, absolute or ultimate truths that are used to legitimize various projects, political or scientific. The most important metanarrative is liberal humanism which postmodernism rejects (or at least, has a complicated relationship with) its assumptions and argues that the result of “Enlightenment project” oppressed humankind in its own way, and therefore proposes a somewhat alternative view towards life and meaning. Postmodernist theorists (French intellectuals in the front line) brought up concepts such as society of spectacle (‘derealization’ of reality by media-produced images), simulacra (immateriality of endlessly self-referencing images), paradigm shift from low-tech real to the high-tech world, double-coding (mix of the old and the new), etc. Critics of postmodern theory claim that this vortex of vague and extremely complicated notions, mostly based on principles of linguistics and extended to the fields of social theory, cultural and media study, visual arts, philosophy and history, ends up in chaos, irrationality, and incoherence. (Chomsky said: “Nobody can understand a word they are saying.”)

Postmodernity

Postmodernity refers to the way the world has changed since 1950s. In the period following the Second World War, the first two stages of capitalism, ‘market capitalism’ and ‘imperialist capitalism’, were superseded by ‘postindustrial’ or ‘late’ capitalism. Late capitalism extends the accumulative logic into every possible area of society and into every corner of the globe. It means that areas of society which were previously unaffected by the logic of the market, such as the media, the arts, or education, become subject to the laws of capitalism and require growth and profits. A key factor in this process is the rise of technology. In the intense competition among multinational organizations, the most important resource of all is information which can be used for marketing and research.

The consequence of living in a postindustrial, information-driven, media/culture-saturated world is that we have become alienated from those aspects of life that are authentic or real. We spend most of our time engaging with symbolic representations rather than real objects. Existence has become more ‘virtual’ than real, and that is the meaning behind the notion of ‘virtual reality’ developed by Jean Baudrillard.

Postmodern Literature

Ihab Hassan considers the period between ‘Ubu Roi’ by Alfred Jarry (1896) and ‘Finnegan’s Wake’ by James Joyce (1939) to be the reign of modernist literature, and asks whether we can identify the year 1938, when ‘Nausea’ by Jean-Paul Sartre and ‘Murphy’ by Samuel Beckett were published, as the beginning of postmodernist literature. In a more conventional chronology, the rise of postmodernist literature is often dated to the early 1960s. The term referred to a group of writers who challenged the representational



claims of realist writers, whose novels were seen as unproblematic mirrors of society. They also challenged the subjective, totalizing style of modernist writers and the distinction they made between low and high culture. Although this movement included prestigious figures and major representatives in European (Peter Handke, Italo Calvino) and Latina (Mario Vargas Llosa, Gabriel Garcia Marquez) literature, it remained under the dominance of American writers, because the number of Stateside writers who published postmodernist fiction was large; writers such as Don DeLillo, E. L. Doctorow, Kurt Vonnegut and Thomas Pynchon. By the early 1990s, postmodernist fiction and its style, characteristic techniques and themes had been dissolved into the mainstream and lost the avant-garde stance. Writings after 1990 constitute the 'second wave' of postmodernist literature. The 'second wave' writers' use of postmodernist techniques is more routine than radical.

John W. Aldridge wrote: "In the fiction of postmodernist writers, virtually everything and everyone exists in such a radical state of distortion and aberration that there is no way of determining from which conditions in the real world they have been derived or from what standard of sanity they may be said to depart. The fiction stands as a metaphor of a derangement that is seemingly without provocation and beyond measurement." Postmodernist writers benefit from a group of related devices to reach this impact.

Metafiction, the most important element of postmodern literature, is fiction which is self-conscious and self-reflective, accepts the constructed nature of itself and does not pretend to offer the reader an insight into the real world. Metafiction emphasizes its artificialness by drawing attention to its form. For example, in the 'Murphy', narrator comments: "All the puppets in this book whinge sooner or later, except Murphy, who is not a puppet."

Postmodernist texts have a tendency to mess up with history and time. This includes bogus versions of

famous events (in "Flight to Canada" by Ishmael Reed, Abraham Lincoln uses a telephone, and his assassination is reported on television) and non-linear narrative which destroys the sense of ordinary time and sequence.

Another device frequently recurring in postmodernist works is pastiche. Pastiche means combining stylistic traits of various other writers, which is not new, but is present to a previously unseen degree in this era. In 1967, John Barth asserted that traditional devices of fiction seemed out of date and unable to capture the complexities of the electronic age, and a reconfiguration is called for. Contemporary artists, who had to face the fact that many of the stylistic possibilities had already been exhausted, borrowed the clothes of many different forms. Intertextuality is a concept relatively close to pastiche. It shows how one literary text is, in fact, made up of other texts, by means of citations and allusions, its repetitions and transformations of the formal features of earlier texts, or simply unavoidable participation in common material of linguistic and literary conventions. Some critics discuss that any text is, in fact, an intertext, the site of an intersection of numberless other texts.

Fragmentation, as reduction and diminution of plot, character, setting and theme, is another prominent technique. Out of distrust in wholeness and completion of traditional stories, postmodernist writers opened the way for alternative ways of structuring narrative, such as multiple endings, breaking up the text into short sections, using pictures, diagrams, charts, designs, etc. in 'Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife', William Gaddis used four different colors for pages, multiple typefaces, fonts, musical symbols, and visual jokes (like coffee-cup stains).

Postmodern irony has been blamed for its absorption in popular culture. Under its influence, mass media now promotes a similar cynical approach towards life, and while critics and theorists ask whether the dominance of postmodern aesthetics over literature, cinema and arts has ended, the questions of postmodernism remain unanswered. A few members of the 'second wave' of postmodernist writers, tried to pursue another path and utilize postmodern techniques to reach a rather sincere, instead of ironic, effect. David Foster Wallace described late stages of postmodernist literature as a 'wild disgusting fabulous party' where 'you ran out of drugs.' In his evaluation: "postmodern irony and cynicism have become an end in itself, a measure of hip sophistication and literary savvy. The postmodern founders' patricidal work was great, but patricide produces orphans."

I Beg to Différ!

Literary Criticism: Postmodernism

By Mohammad Hossein Mohammadian
B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Qom



After the romantic period, people like Matthew Arnold wanted to, in a way, revive classicism by following the example of the classics as a guide or in his word a “touchstone” to leave behind the self-expressive current of the Romantics. But the evolutions in the political climate (new political movements and the outbreak of two world wars, for example) of Europe changed the cultural and philosophical outlook of certain intelligentsia toward literature and art in general. Due to their dissatisfaction with the circumstances and the perceived chaos, again they sought to move the humanities to a more relativistic direction.

If we consider modernism a precursor to postmodernism and both as outlets for expression of dissatisfaction and alienation, then we can look at the progression of these movements where first the modernists with their literary experimentations such as non-linearity and unreliable narrator, which implied subjectivity, tried to move away from the conventional forms of literature and then the postmodernists who took a step further to subvert the new conventions brought about by the modernists which they perceived as the new norm.

The general tendency of postmodernism was to ignore the tenets of modernity such as that reality can be studied, the measure for truth is reason, language represents the perceivable world. Hence the name post “modern.” There are also the general beliefs of the absence of an objective reality and the meaninglessness of existence, among them. They also engaged in blending of the literary genres and tones to avoid fitting in classifications. Similar expressions and tendencies can also be seen toward art forms other than literature, such as painting, sculpture, music, architecture, etc.

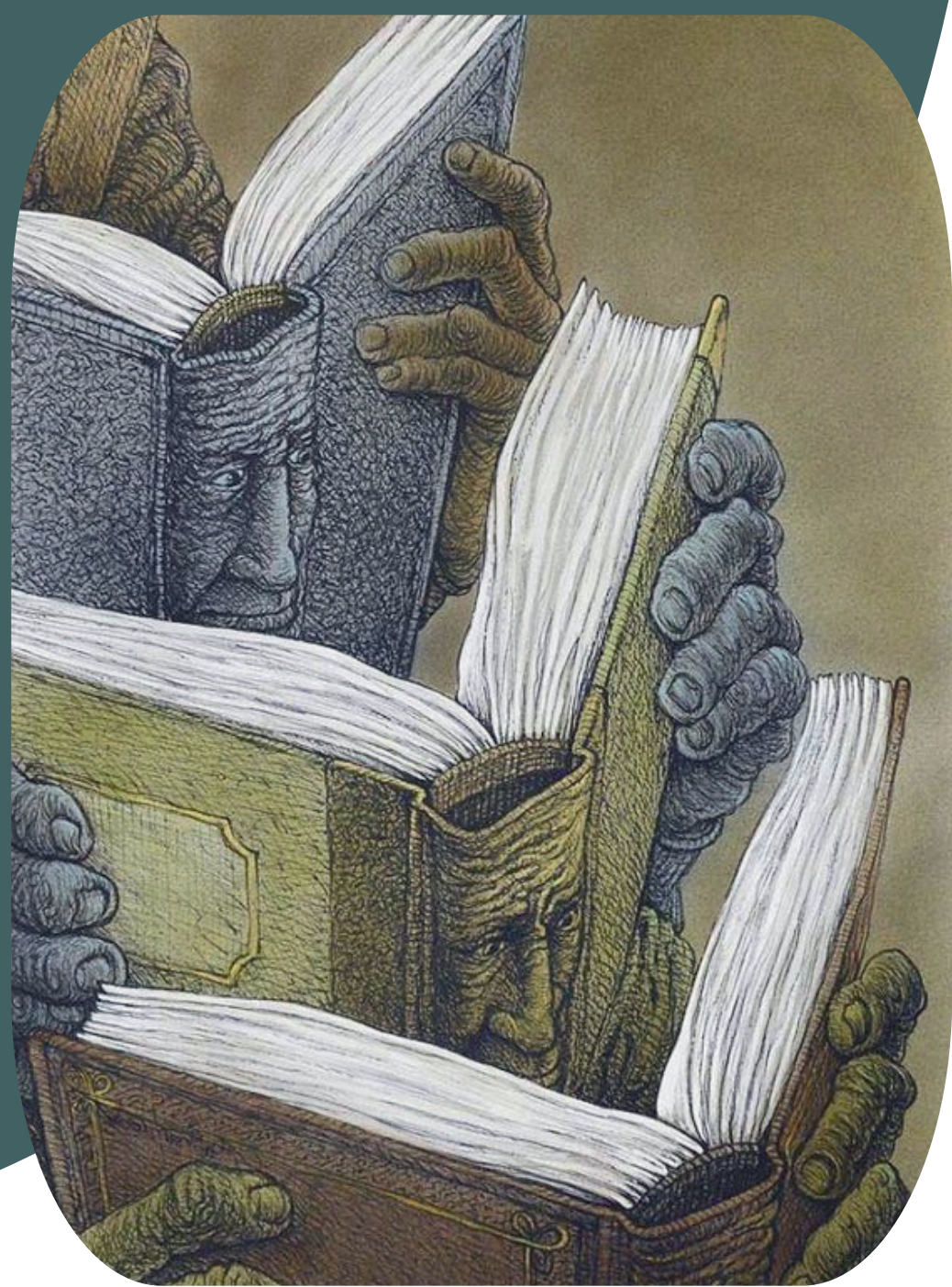
Poststructuralism was not necessarily about literature but was developed in parallel or as a part of postmodernism as its linguistic and philosophical wing. One of the main methods in poststructuralism is deconstruction, coined by Jacques Derrida. Through this method, he sought to subvert the meaningfulness of language and prove the relativism of truth, cultural norms and values.

Under the umbrella term of deconstruction, he also coins other terms such as Transcendental Signified, Logocentrism, Phonocentrism and Binary Oppositions to describe what he believes to be aspects of the belief in an objective truth. An interesting point is that Derrida believed that God, reason, science and humanity are Transcendental Signifieds. That they are the center and foundations of a Logocentric language or culture in which the aforementioned are centered. At the same time, he admitted that he has to use a Logocentric language to communicate his point and reading.

For poststructuralists, reading just happens. Neither the author nor the reader has agency. They are trapped in a tide of linguistic elements and compulsions (the psychoanalytic aspect of this theory), where the definition of the text is fluid and there are infinite meanings. Even if the reader finds a decidable meaning, there is no certainty in interpretation.

There have also been criticisms. Some suggest that postmodernists and poststructuralists are nihilistic. In addition, in scientific circles they are criticized for being anti scientific. Noam Chomsky, for example, a critic of these movements in regards to the question about human nature and agency in a debate with Michael Foucault argued that as opposed to a nature only subject to outside forces, structures exist in human mind that give them creative capability where a person can fill in the gaps when confronted with little information and produce more.

Finally, as much as the interdisciplinary interactions are beneficial, it is important to recognize the challenges and conflicts caused by the assumption of certain philosophical views by the thinkers in different fields, and to examine the dialogue between these branches rigorously to be able to come up with truthful answers worthy of great academics.



If on a Winter's Night

A Traveler: A Review

By Ali Sadeghian

B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Qom

If on a Winter's Night a Traveler walked into a library, he would pass by "The Books You Needn't Read, The Books Made for Purposes Other Than Reading...." It is indeed a long list, but if he were to explore the nature of books and reading itself, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* by Italo Calvino would be an essential choice. Published in 1979, by one of the most influential authors of the 20th century and the postmodernist movement, this novel is widely regarded as a classic. As Calvino himself stated in his essay, "Why Read the Classics?", "A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say."

"You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*. Relax. Concentrate. Dispel every other thought." These iconic opening lines immediately engage readers, highlighting the novel's playful and adventurous tone. Calvino's witty and engaging style quickly forms a bond between the narrator and the reader. The protagonist's vague description in this second-person narrative allows for easy identification and relatability, inviting the reader to project themselves into the story. As the narrative unfolds, however, the sense of control diminishes, and the reader is swept along on an unpredictable journey.

The novel is structured into 12 chapters, each (except the last) divided into two parts. The first part follows "You," the reader—also called "The Reader" by the narrator—trying to read a story while in the second part we have the stories narrated to "You" or rather it is, to put it more clearly, the narrator describing your active reading experience. These stories are repeatedly interrupted, mostly right before the climax—by printing errors, wandering thoughts, or narrative shifts—leaving the reader perpetually searching for resolution. This recursive loop of beginnings without endings underscores the message intended by the author. Calvino intentionally refrains from providing the reader with the ending he seeks, challenging how readers continue to look for endings. This forces readers to reconsider what defines a novel.

In one of the chapters, a character named Silas Flannery, an Irish author, considers writing a novel consisting of the beginnings of 10 novels that do not conclude. Additionally, the title of the actual book appears within the story. Calvino embedding his own novel within the narrative is a technique known as *mise en abyme*. This metafictional device mirrors works such as *The Counterfeiters* and *One Thousand and One Nights*, emphasizing the layered and self-reflective nature of the text.

The fragmented, unfinished quality of the novel is echoed in its title, which, like the stories within, remains incomplete. Interestingly, the chapter titles can be arranged to form a sentence:

If on a winter's night a traveler, outside the town of Malbork, leaning from the steep slope, without fear of wind or vertigo, looks down in the gathering shadow, in a network of lines that enlaze, in a network of lines that intersect, on the carpet of leaves illuminated by the moon, around an empty grave, what story down there awaits its end?

The last sentence, even though it is the only one which can stand independently, indicates a sense of vagueness. Furthermore, it is indeed a question and not a statement, further highlighting the message.

The characters within the novel include "You" or "The Reader", "Ludmilla" or "the other Reader", "Silas Flannery" and "Marana". "Ludmilla" is the love interest of the protagonist and also has her own chapters, meaning we would put on her shoes at times. Marana is portrayed as a mysterious figure whose works are often referred to in the narrative. His character reflects the postmodern themes of authorship and identity, which could be seen as inspired by writers like Ricardo Piglia, who explored ideas of plagiarism as an art form and literary reinvention.

This experimental structure, with metafiction at its core, deeply rooted in postmodern literature, has influenced numerous works in film and literature of our era. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* is not just a novel but an exploration of reading as an evolving and personal experience. For this reason, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* endures as a literary classic—one that continues to challenge and redefine the boundaries of storytelling.



Slaughterhouse Five

By Alireza Mohseni
B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Qom

After World War II, postmodernism began to rise as a movement and so many novelists started using a non-linear style to reflect the chaotic nature of contemporary life. One prominent figure of postmodernism is Kurt Vonnegut. Serving in World War II and witnessing the bombing of Dresden, shaped his worldview and writing. In his novel "Slaughterhouse-Five", he uses a non-linear narrative technique, like William Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury" (1929), to tell the story of Billy's life experience which involves his imprisonment in a slaughterhouse during the Dresden bombing, his post-war life in America and his adventures on the utopian Planet Tralfamadore. Vonnegut's use of multiple perspectives, fragmentation and time shifting gave him the chance to apply complex subjects like free will, death and the absurdity of war in his novels.

Vonnegut's adoption of transformation of perspectives in his novel is a key element, leading readers to understand his war experience. As Genette notes, "Vonnegut integrated the author, the character and the narrator, which broke away the regulation of narration, not only its traditional structure, but also its logic of narration" (Genette, 1990, p.7). Its protagonist, Billy Pilgrim whose adventures are actually Kurt Vonnegut's fictionalized experiences in Dresden, is trying to escape war and find peace and free will. As mentioned in the story, Billy has been "unstuck in time" (10), a term that refers to the fact that Billy has become free.

Most of Vonnegut's characters embody the elements of loneliness, alienation, and are stuck in one destination which brings up the most important thing in his novels, the question of free will and the meaning of life and death. Although it seems that people are able to choose and decide their own fates and that their actions make a change in determining their external forces and people's destinies are decided by others. As the Tralfamadorian guide states in the future, the protagonist discovers that he is directed by

novel: "He has always pressed it, and he always will. We always let him and we always will let him. The moment is structured that way" regarding the destruction of the universe by a Tralfamadorian pilot. Kurt Vonnegut also took the advantage of using fragmentation, a common postmodernist element. Fragmentation of time, space, language, and human subject which leads to a non-linear and unreliable narrator. A non-linear narrative lacks the observation of a logical order. Although Vonnegut's use of a non-linear narrative might initially confuse readers, it demonstrates humanity's helplessness in the face of war. Vonnegut intentionally made a special introduction of Slaughterhouse-Five, describing it as "The Dresden atrocity, tremendously expensive and meticulously planned, was so meaningless; finally, that only one person on the entire planet got any benefit from it. I am that person. I wrote this book, which earned a lot of money for me and made my reputation, such as it is." (Vonnegut, 1981, p. 302). He, by stating this introduction, highlights the meaninglessness of war and its ramifications.

Manipulation of time is considered as a characteristic of postmodernism. Time shifts in the novel from the present to the past to the future, disrupting the traditional narrative structures. "He has walked through a door in 1955 and come out another one in 1941. He has gone back through that door to find himself in 1963. He has seen his birth and death many times, he says" (10). Using this technique, he masterfully creates ironies in the story. However, it is only through a close reading that readers can differentiate between the frame story and the story within. By creating an impressive atmosphere Vonnegut aims to show a utopian-like world. Yet, from Pilgrim's point of view, having a planet means escaping from the horrifying images of the war as well as of modern people. Billy is able to find peace of mind only through creating a fantasy planet. This imagination reflects Vonnegut's idea that modern life is meaningless.



Post-Modernism and Cinema: A Review of One of the Most Inspiring Movies—Pulp Fiction

By Arshia Akbarpour
B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Qom

Introduction

Pulp Fiction, directed by Quentin Tarantino in 1994, is a revolutionary film that explores subjects of violence and humor through its nonlinear storytelling and postmodern elements. The film highlights the artificial nature of cinema and presents characters who exist in shades of gray, avoiding traditional models of absolute heroes and total villains. Instead, they are complex mixtures of both. With its unique blend of genres—noir, thriller, and comedy—Pulp Fiction features scenes where violence occurs in a humorous atmosphere, while jumping between timelines to create suspense and engage viewers. These characteristics directly oppose conventional filmmaking norms, making both the movie and Tarantino himself truly outstanding.

Plot Summary

The movie revolves around various characters, including two hitmen, Jules Winnfield and Vincent Vega, who work for the powerful gangster Marsellus Wallace. Marsellus's wife, Mia Wallace, and a boxer named Butch, who is paid to lose a fight, are also central to the story. Additionally, there is a professional fixer, Mr. Wolf, who cleans up messy situations for Marsellus. Throughout the film, the scenes and timelines shift, creating a non-linear narrative that resembles a puzzle. This storytelling technique adds a layer of suspense and serves as an example of postmodernism in the film. The movie features multiple narratives from different perspectives and combines elements from various genres, including gangster film, musical romance, and horror. The film begins with a robbery, followed by a scene where the two hitmen are sent to recover what has been stolen from their boss. This is followed by a romantic encounter between Vincent Vega and Mia Wallace. Subsequently, the story takes a darker turn with Butch, the boxer, who unexpectedly wins the fight he was supposed to lose, leading to terrible consequences due to his agreement with Marsellus Wallace. Butch's storyline intertwines with his encounter with Marsellus and the aftermath of their experiences. The narrative then returns to the hitmen, showing an accident that occurs in their car, which leads to Mr. Wolf being called in to clean up the mess caused

by Vincent and Jules. The film ends in the final scene of the robbery, where Jules engages in a philosophical conversation with the robbers. This moment completes the puzzle of the movie, connecting back to the initial robbery scene and providing a sense of closure.

Post-Modern Elements

Tarantino's use of a non-linear storyline creates a fragmented narrative that engages the audience and builds suspense. This approach challenges conventional filmmaking standards and exemplifies post-modern features. The film includes numerous references to pop culture, other films, and literary works, blending genres and commenting on filmmaking norms, and showing the interconnectedness of various cinematic traditions. Metafiction is another post-modern element in Pulp Fiction, as characters often discuss their actions and roles, making viewers aware that they are watching a film. Ambiguity and moral relativism are also evident, as there are no clear boundaries between good and bad. The characters are complex and gray; understanding them requires a deeper exploration of their motivations, actions, and beliefs. This complexity challenges viewers to consider the nature of truth, which is portrayed as relative rather than absolute. Tarantino famously stated: "Real-life violence is real-life violence; movies are movies." This quote captures several aspects of post-modernism, characterized by skepticism toward narratives and questioning the portrayal of real-life experiences in film. Tarantino suggests that real-life violence differs from its representation in art and fiction, inviting viewers to engage with cinematic violence without confusing it with ethical issues in real life.

In summary, Pulp Fiction stands out as a typical example of postmodern cinema, going against conventional norms through its non-linear narrative, intertextuality, self-referentiality, and moral ambiguity. It invites viewers to challenge the nature of storytelling itself. Pulp Fiction has inspired and revolutionized cinema, serving as a model for future films and earning numerous awards in the process.

Hateful Hunters

By Mohammad Amin Dayani
B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Qom

Introduction

A movie which really can have you on the edge of the seat for 2 hours and 47 minutes with ample of dark humor, violence, and over the aggression and hostility. The story revolves around eight travelers including bounty hunters, outlaws, and former hunters. The scene sets in post-civil war Wyoming. The predominant scenes take place in a way station during a blizzard. The movie starts with stagecoach trapped in a deep snow. These travelers seek shelter to sojourn for some days to find a way around tough and soul-baring storm. The way station is filled with tension, grudges, and a piquant conundrum which will divulge. The movie is directed by Quentin Tarantino, and it was first released in limited roadshow 5 days prior to its widely theatrical expansion. It was heralded for direction, screenplay, score, cinematography, and performances. It was recognized as one of the sumptuous, top-performance films in Western cinema. In this comprehensive article, we will explore scenes of the movie "The Hateful Eight" and its correlation through the lens of postmodernism.

'The Hateful Eight' encompasses suspense, mistrust, trick, betrayal, brutality and more notably, the unpredictability of humans in relationships. The film indicates the toxic relationships of the characters and also challenges the established narrative structure and tries to show us more of postmodernism. The blurring of genres, skepticism, fragmentation are evident characteristics of postmodernism which can be recurrently seen in the film. The film focuses more dominantly on characters and their interactions rather than the structured format of plot progress. Therefore, the film shatters the customary storytelling which has a restricted setting and linear narrative. This paves the ground for characters and their interactions to reveal more of their complexity in vigorous circumstances and even the individuality of the history of each



character and the sense of enigma in each scene which brings about more tension. This can reflect a theory of postmodernism which rejects the single truth in favor of multiple views to interpret different perspectives.

Metafiction

As the movie starts, the film openly shows characters' engagement in dialogue about morality. This self-awareness represented through characters' dialogue can be a motive for the audience to invite them to think more critically on the movie itself. The restricted use of scenes and narrowing it down to some particular places like stagecoach, way-station, and snow-covered landscape can serve a purpose of microcosm of society. Tarantino breaks the conventional concept of villainy and heroism. This can challenge the preconceived idea of audience in morality. As mentioned above, characters and individuality take a center in the film. Thus, each of them has their own murky way of moral perspective that they try to fortify it in confrontation with others. This often can show the complex and manifested motives, actions, and intentions of humans.

Skepticism

As the movie starts, the film openly shows characters' engagement in dialogue about morality. This self-awareness represented through characters' dialogue can be a motive for the audience to invite them to think more critically on the movie itself. The restricted use of scenes and narrowing it down to some particular places like stagecoach, way-station, and snow-covered landscape can serve a purpose of microcosm of society. Tarantino breaks the conventional concept of villainy and heroism. This can challenge the preconceived idea of audience in morality. As mentioned above, characters and individuality take a center in the film. Thus, each of them has their own murky way of moral perspective that they try to fortify it in confrontation with others. This often can show the complex and manifested motives, actions, and intentions of humans.

Skepticism in postmodernism doesn't dispute the concept of objective truth; it rather calls into question the preestablished truths and notions. Unlike modernism which sought to find a universal truth, postmodernism openly embraces a constructed individual truth rather than ideas which are inherent. Here, it indicatively shows that how hangman describes his idea about justice and its performance and how he sees himself as the one who executes the performance. Skepticism is intertwined with ambiguity which emphasizes the fact of being open to more than one interpretation but multiple meanings.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality, as the film demonstrates by blending influences, genres and text, and convention is rich and multilateral topic. To give an example, characters and archetypes embody a clear representation of western characters which Tarantino tries to deconstruct and defy the easy categorization of the general subjects of heroism and villainy. This allows the audience to deepen into the characters and discover subjects of tension and human complexity, and more notably,



each distinctive character's features. The character of Major Marquis Warren bears resemblance to an archetypical western hero, but this contradicts with the complex figure of radically racial tension and contempt toward the white-skinned individuals which somewhat gives a greenlight to him to kill and murder them as he does to a son of a General.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many exclusive postmodernism signatures of Tarantino in 'The Hateful Eight' which are well-aimed toward this subject. From the complexity of characters, fragmented narrative, nonlinear style and challenging the truth, it crafts an intricate work that not only does it depict a glorious picture of western cinema but it also embeds the essence and body of postmodernism in its fundamentals masterfully and captivatingly.

Personally speaking, the hateful eight delivers a brilliant showcase in characters, tension, interaction and delicate correlation of the movie with postmodernism. Interestingly, it provokes a sense of curiosity in me to explore the intention of each character and anticipate the what action he or she would take. However, thanks to being entangled with the theme of betrayal, infidelity, and ambiguity, you would probably question for. Each character's action than to find reason behind their aim. Overall, this movie could be a stunning experience that lingers long after the credit roll.

“These Fragments I Have Shored against My Ruins”

By Mohammad Niazi
B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Qom

The prominent American-English poet, essayist and playwright Thomas Stearns Eliot was responsible for one of the most important pieces of poetry of the 20th century, *The Waste Land*. Although a central work of modernism, this piece contains characteristics that cause it to shade into the succeeding literary movement, postmodernism. Skeptical of man's conceited certainty toward their ability, postmodernism aims to criticize the principles and conventions of modernism. Eliot wrote *The Waste Land* in the aftermath of World War I, a catastrophe that caused much disillusionment and distrust toward the existence of objective truth and established narratives. In that regard, a number of many postmodernist qualities of this work such as intertextuality, fragmentation and a discontinuous narration will be briefly discussed.

Upon a first read, one can easily sense the fragmented nature of the poem, which is a reflection of the time period when it was written. Repeated and abrupt shifts in style, narration and even language are noticeable from its very dedication (a Latin quotation from Dante) to its final words (*Shantih Shantih Shantih*). This text covers an extensive range of experiences, including a memory of a female Austrian noble, an almost overheard dialogue in a bar which ends with lines that are remarkably similar to those of Ophelia in *Hamlet* before her suicide, a Dantesque depiction of Modern life in London, a somber half-dialogue which closely resembles Eliot's marital issues with his first wife and so many more. For a rather brief but effective exposure to this fragmentation, the final lines (426-433) are suggested.

Another key aspect of *The Waste Land* is intertextuality, which refers to the connection between different literary texts and how they are influenced by each other. Eliot's heavy use of this concept enhances the sense of fragmentation and challenges traditional narrative structures. His allusions, quotations, and

references range from the Bible, Greek and Indian mythology, Shakespeare, Wagner, and Dante to pop culture instances such as the "London Bridge is Falling Down" nursery rhyme and a 1912 song called *The Shakespearean Rag*. At the very beginning of the poem, we are presented with a dismal subversion of the opening line of the General Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*:

"Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the roote..."
("When April with his sweet showers has pierced to the root the drought of March").

Eliot turns this into the following lines:

"April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain."

The narration in *The Waste Land* is also of high importance. Eliot's initial title was "He Do the Police in Different Voices," taken from Charles Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*, in which a character named Sloppy is described as being able to change his voice so as to impersonate different individuals; that is exactly what we are faced with in this poem. The employment of several voices and perspectives in all five parts of the poem, along with a non-linear narration, not only mirrors postmodernist skepticism toward grand narratives but also favors the multiplicity of interpretations and experiences.

This collage-like poem owes much of its reputation to its allusive quality. As with much postmodern literature, *The Waste Land* is ambiguous and somewhat uncharitable toward its audience, but this should not come as a surprise since Eliot himself overtly cherished this difficulty and complexity. And even though written before the emergence of postmodernism, *The Waste Land*, due to its deserved literary significance, explores that realm as well.

Creative Writings

I Grew Up Without a Mother's Touch

I grew up without a mother's touch
No words of love, no gentle hug

I sought her in every face I met
But none could fill the void she left

I'm a grown man now, but still I yearn
For the mother I never had, never learned

I may never get to see her smile
But I will make you my partner for life

You will be the mother of our children dear
They will inherit our love and care

Through them, I will have a mother too
And I will always be grateful to you.

By Amir Hossein Aghamohammad

Why the Snow Doesn't Thrill Me So

You ask why the snow doesn't thrill me so,
Why its glistening dance leaves me unmoved?
I've known a chill that deeper waters know,
In the frost of a gaze, where warmth's disproved.

Your eyes, a glacial realm where feelings freeze,
Your heart, an icy expanse, void of flame,
Your hands, like winter's breath, devoid of ease,
In their touch, the cold's embrace I came to name.

By Amir Hossein Aghamohammad

Silver Trout

Jumping right in the unknown waters,
On the forefront, just like martyrs.
Phantoms of freedom keeping me in,
The tall tales of sirens and their daughters.

They pull me down as a courtesy,
Whispering: "You belong to the deepest sea."
Holding my breath to grow a gill,
Perhaps sinking takes me to me.

Gray skin, silver as a trout,
They look at me with a sigh and pout.
Grabbing my shoulders with their sharp talons,
Dragging me back, pulling me out.

Body back on the shore,
This time lifeless, such a bore.
With some pity they float back,
Maggots marching for attack.

By Maryam Askary
B.A. Student of English Literature
at Chamran University



Passionate Lunatic

You are that blind hope.
In the hidden house of love.

You are the splendour of peace,
You are a breeze, you are spring, you are full of graceful deliverance.

Where should I go from now on?
You are the unadulterated security.

You are the wine of paradise tainted with desire
Sip by sip into the soul of this forlorn lover.

I do not turn to anyone but you and
Do not seek a path of separation in your way.

By Tahmineh Valipour
B.A. Graduate in English Translation
at the Islamic Azad University of
Roudehen



The Lover's Illusion

I was delusional about becoming a poet,
I thought of writing thousands of poems for you...
Reading them to your ears while gazing at your smile,
But neither have I become a poet nor, have you.

By Yasir Inuwa Maiwada
B.A. Student of law
at the university of Qom

Muse to My Heart

For the sake of my heart
As it tries and pumps the blood
As I reach the pen to write
For you to love, to be mine

Have mercy on me
As my head's been a tired mess
My life's been a bitter twist
I've delved into each chapter since

I love with a heart of glass
With it made of tiny cracks
With joy long lost
A smile quivers in doubts

Let me take you to my imagination
Where we're free to wander, to imagine
And lose the time behind us
In total agitation

Let me into your heart.
My vein's in need of blood.
This heart's no longer as it was
Be the muse and no destruction...

By Asal Vaziri
B.A. Student of English literature
at the Islamic Azad University, Mashad Branch

Once Upon a Dream

Once upon a dream
A night teemed with gleam

Walking the tracks of unknown
Carrying the sorrow of being alone

But walls, nothing expecting
Wandering the alleys, detecting

In a hope, searching every place
To trace a face of any race

Where are all the others?
Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers?

No exhale, generating a sound.
To recall a missing, found

Disappointed with soil and dust
Quick to stars with no trust

A world of wonder, the sight
Granting people wings of flight

Earthly speaking creatures, all dumb
As the lips and tongues went numb

Three shining crescents over there
Equal in measure to a bear



Lightning earth, heaven, and the air
There is no similar in compare.

Divine chariot of Selene
Treads on Nyx's dark screen

Competing with the brightest sun seen
Waits for gates' opening, Queen

Once upon another dream
Short after the last, I deem

No more alone, no more astray
A crowd side by side at the bay

Launching dozens of boats
And the air full of notes

Yet these messengers of longing
Loaded with void, departing

On the way back home
Do not pick a river to roam.

Suspended in the air as dust
If it falls, it leads to a bust.

Betrayed by mirrors, folk flee
Invading ceilings with no key

By Fatemeh Soleimani Zadeh
M.A. Student of English Literature
at the Islamic Azad University, Science and Research
Branch

Boundaries Crossed, Identities Lost

By Alireza Kheirolah
B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Arak

Migration, especially when it occurs at a young age, is usually initiated by or with a monumental and sometimes harrowing decision. For one young man from the 1920s, the call to leave his small Midwestern town for the cities of Europe came as both an escape and an opportunity. America was restless after the Great War, its streets filled with speakeasies and dreams, and yet for him, it offered little more than routine. He wanted to leave. Europe was different. Paris beckoned with promises of art, letters, and life lived under a different sun. He packed a trunk, bought a one-way ticket, and boarded an ocean liner heading east. In the stateroom smelling of salt and varnished wood, he felt the weight of his decision.

The Atlantic stretched vast and unforgiving outside the porthole. He sat on the narrow bunk, staring at a photograph of his family: the farmstead, his sisters smiling by the old barn. They were staying behind, tied to a life of chores and winters that bit at the bone. He had written them letters trying to explain why he must go, but the words never seemed to fit. The ship's horn was low and mournful, and he tucked the photograph into his coat pocket. In Paris, the streets seemed to pulse with life in a way he'd never known before.

Cafés spilled onto sidewalks, smoke-filled and full of laughter. Writers and painters talked of revolutions in thought and style. He rented a room on Rue du Bac—small, drafty—gently awakening every morning with the smell of bread baking and coal smoke. Days were spent at the library or wandering along the Seine, sketching bridges, reading volumes borrowed from bookstalls. The nights blurred together in the clink of glasses and hum of Latin Quarter conversation. But even as the city embraced him, loneliness clung to his shoulders like a damp coat.

He missed the sound of his mother's hymns on Sunday mornings, and the steady thrum of crickets in the fields back home. The French spoke quickly, their syllables dancing just out of reach. He learned enough to order wine and ask for directions, but his American tongue felt foreign in his mouth. Sometimes, he longed to hear a drawl, to share stories of baseball games or dances at the town hall. In their place, he listened to poets debate politics and nodded, careful not to show how little he understood. He found work, finally, writing for an English-language newspaper.

The pay was meager, but it kept him fed and bought him time to write his stories. His body hunched over his desk, stained fingers wrestling sentences that simply would not bend. Of home, he wrote of the fields, of people, of those things, but there lay a flatness that made the words seem anemic. Stories he wants to tell have lived across the space of two worlds—where he was and how he tried joining. By and by, the foreignness of the city ground off. He made friends among the expatriates, men, and women who had also traded one life for another.

They spoke of Hemingway and Stein, of books and ambition. They drank wine and talked of love and war. One night, a woman with dark eyes and a cigarette in hand told him, "We're all running from something. The trick is to find something worth running toward." He wrote her words in his notebook and underlined them twice. The ache for home, however, never fully left. It came to him in quiet moments: a familiar scent on the breeze, the way light fell across cobblestones. He began to understand that migration was not just a change of place but a shift in the soul. He carried his old life with him, tucked in the folds of his new one, like the photograph he still kept in his pocket. Years passed, and he learned to live in the in-between.

Paris shaped him, taught him to see the world in layers, and to write with sharpness and clarity.

But the Midwest still lingered in his blood, anchoring him even as he soared.

Migration was not a single journey but a series of crossings, each one reshaping the self. He was neither here nor there but something else entirely: a traveler bound to the road, always moving, always searching. He understood finally that leaving was never about what he was running from but about what he hoped to find. And in that understanding, he found a kind of peace.

The ache became a companion, a reminder of where he had been and what he had become. Migration, he now knew, was not just an act of leaving but an act of becoming. It was a flight toward the self, as endless and uncertain as the ocean itself.



When You Smoke

By Amir Ahmad Oshani
B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Qom



I was seated in my perpetual seat. Was today a really interesting one? Well, you know! It's always tough to go back home when you don't know where you are. Days all begin with sunlight and end with darkness. So, shall we call today an interesting one? I was unfortunate, definitely. I was exactly in the dark part of the day! These sunsets make all pens come out of pockets. What are they for? It depends on you. What did I do? I put it between my lips exactly how a person smokes a cigarette. I love smoking pens. The biggest question that they should answer has always been: "What is the biggest question?" So, let me ask you! Do you smoke darkness? I could sit in my palace there. I could see everyone waiting for a bus.

What is the difference between me and my father? He stopped there. Traffic! You are the greatest opportunity! Again, I could see that I had been seated there waiting for the bus. Was I smoking pens there, too? I don't know! Finally, it came. Miserable man! I have always felt pity for bus drivers. Everyone was choking by smoking darkness. They were all dead. But I was happy; I could still smoke my pen—or pencil, if needed. Someone must ask these drivers! Someone must ask about the destination! Do you consider me a brave man? Well, I'm not; I was forced to do so. "You will find what you are looking for at the end," he said.

Wow! This gentleman was more respectful than I thought. And the person who created all these things? I should find him. All people are getting on the bus, which ends with what they want!? It's brilliant, believe me. Same darkness, same vehicle, same route, but different results. This God! Have you created sunsets and smoking? I wish I had enough time and capacity to answer, but traffic is not going to work forever.

As my father moved on, I had to get on the bus. But what was I looking for? "You will find four people. You will find four people," all the passengers said in chorus. Thank you all! Everything became bright. I was there; I was in my seat. A man came. Why was he so similar to me? "How are you, man?" he asked.

"I knew it's scary to meet someone like yourself in darkness," I answered.

"But it's completely light here."

"Thus, here is the destination! Why are you here? Can't you smoke pens anymore?"

"You will always be able to smoke pens."

"You're lying! You can't. At least I can still do that."

"And that's fine. I think you're good today. Do you like walking? I have read in your file that you have loved walking and thinking."

"Since my pen is here, I would accept your and my recommendation."

"You are too cute! Let me untie these ropes. Then we will go."

"I will remain KIND, thanks to God."

"Do you think God has created kindness?"

"I am in the middle of my way; I don't know."

"Hmm, I will use my pen then."

"Now that we are walking, could you please tell me what happened to that park?"

"Park? Which park do you mean?"

"The one you said you were looking at last time."

"The passengers of the bus destroyed it some days later."

"Why?"

"You know the answer."

"Well, slides were always too short to entertain children."

"They were."

"Do you mind if we return to our room after five minutes? You should eat the second series of your drugs."

"They said I would meet four people at the end. There is no one here except me and you! Where are the others?"

"They are asleep."

"Where?"

"In our brains."

"Wake them up."

"They will get up very soon. Just let the bell ring."

"Is its sound loud?"

"If you don't protect your ears, it will make you deaf."

"What a deep sleep! The sound of bells matches the depth of dreams. It has always been like that. So, I prefer to go back home."

"Where is your pen, man?"

"I think it lost its essence long ago."

"That's bad. At least, I have my pen still."

"Are you going to return to that car?"

"Definitely."

"Amir Ahmad! The radio is playing Shajarian."

I took my pen from my lips and put it in my pocket. Then I asked my father as I bent forward, "Could you please increase the volume?"



The Humanity Debris

By Seyed Parsa Safaee Tolami
B.A. Student of English Literature
at Kharazmi University

Wake up! It's all just begun! Can't you hear it all? The rockets, the tanks, and the bells! Yes! Even the bells! Can't you hear their shrilling knell? Weren't you the one with hyperacusis? Weren't you the one who, even though you cherished his heightened sense of consciousness, the over acuteness of his senses, a phantom of his mind perhaps, loathed every single iota of his being because of perceiving every sound as excruciating? And was it just sounds? Don't you remember the old days when you would come home and cry from your incessant photophobia? Oh, come on! No more of your humdrum jokes! Don't tell me it was solely a matter of your congenital heliophobia! Can't you remember the persistent animosity you would show to any object from which any sort of light could be emanated? And what of it? Suppose you have convinced me that it was only a case of your awkward, congenital disorder "heliophobia". What of it?! Wasn't that a mere excuse? Who are you deceiving? Us? Me? Yourself? And yet you bemoan every single time I label it as a disorder? What should I call it then?

"Condition," a voice echoed in the deafening silence of the room.

"Alright," I continue, "what difference would it make at all to deem your uncanny peculiarities as either a disorder or condition? Here you go! You are TOO MUCH inclined to label yourself, be labeled, or be continuously diagnosed with such conditions so that you can find some fleeting solace in your precarious life! But enough of that. Wake up! Why don't you?"

"Why should I?" the voice grows thicker and louder, "Can you provide me with cogent reasoning so that I wake up? It is not that I cannot wake up as you are well aware of my capabilities. It is just that I find your discourse compelling; even more compelling, provided that you substantiate it with your famous syllogisms for which you are quite well-known. I do not like to dispute, however, that you are somewhat incompetent in your discourse, but, as for the final touch, I implore you to bestow upon me some modicum of your verbal prowess so that I shall be blessed, O my generous orator."

"You always flatter me. But what of it?!!! Though amidst a plight, you plead with me to bestow upon you some modicum of my verbal prowess? We must wake up from our grotesque slumbers and face the catastrophe!"

"But, as you say, what of it?! We are only two lonely poor souls whose endeavors shall be denigrated in any conceivable way! Do you hear me?"

"But if we ascend, we can help people rise from their somber slumbers, too."

"Suppose you and I are fully awakened, perceptive of any danger, who can prognosticate any form of evil, who have swallowed their ignorance. Can we change the world?"

"Why not? Everything is possible as long as you've got the will to do it."

"True, true, true, my optimistic friend. I've got the will and everything is possible, except for the cessation of this war."

"But why not?"

"Because you cannot wake up the one who is playing possum, who has deliberately put themselves into a long long sleep. You see, my dear friend, this is not the first time that war has occurred, and will not be the end. If you ask me, and if all of us cogitate just a bit more over this seemingly interminable enigma, we can vehemently contend the following propositions:

1)The war has always been happening since Genesis.

2)The war has never happened; we are all living in a phantasm.

What kind of phantasm you ask me? I should simply tell you that I do not know; nevertheless, one can hypothesize various scenarios one of which is that of the notion of 'We Are All Living In A Dream'. Imagine we are all in a dream right now. Can you denote what a war is? And no matter how many times you attempt; you might even use the current image of 'war', it does not make your argument sound. Why? Because, even if we consider the tautological meaning of 'war', which is the one having been described to us, and which we have acquired since we had no choice(that's the whole meaning of 'acquisition'), we will easily realize the transitory state of this 'war'; we are in a dream: a vacuum by and in which we abide. And once the dream is over, we begin our real lives. But what if we have never lived in reality and never will? Isn't ethics just concerned with this sublunary, corporeal life?"

"What if we have always lived in reality and will evermore? Shouldn't we take action rather than chit-chatting around? What if we are too ignorant to decide about our milieu? What if we perish and fade away without a trace realizing that we, too, could somehow leave our marks?"

"Well, you might be right. But let's now focus on the first proposition. All I have said now, in all its uneventful, unremitting, unceremonious verbosity and prolixity, has been based on the second proposition. What does the first one seem to suggest? If we scrutinize it as we should, some logical thoughts will emerge. Taking a cursory look you feel everything in that premise is axiomatic; however, it is only when we delve into it that we can grasp its profundity wholly.

If the war has invariably occurred throughout millennia, perhaps it is the nature of humanity to be vicious, villainous, base, and plebeian; as though never have we ever desired some respite so that we could have reposed a bit and pondered: why? Why is it that we have become warmongers? What is gained after all these annexations, massacres, ruin, gore, bloodshed, virulence, and tribulations?

Is it that we become nobler, wiser, more popular, more sacred? After ruminating on the nature of humanity, I can easily glean that we have never been born noble; of all extant and even non-existent species, we are the least noble, that is, the most ignoble.

The animals and the nature are our only true teachers whose nuggets of wisdom should never quench our existential thirst." After listening to his thoughtful words, I, with an unutterable degree

of remorse, proclaimed:"Then let us, my dear friend, knowing too well about the hideous nature of humanity, sleep together like a log and never wake up again, for, as it seems, there cannot be discovered any tenable solutions to this conundrum that has for eons beleaguered the whole humanity, and let us hope, genuinely, from the bottoms of our hearts, that this is all but a dream we live in."



On The Dichotomy Between Reading And Writing

By Seyed Parsa Safaee Tolami
B.A. Student of English Literature
at Kharazmi University

Tonight, I'm attempting to write a story anew. It is not, indeed, a work of fiction that I shall tell or retell, but I am trying to put the murky pieces of the puzzle together so that I can see who I am and hence concoct my own story.

It is absolutely odd to me to write these words down on a clean sheet of paper since we have long been accustomed to our glittering gadgets, and have been long severed from the sheer enjoyment to be gained from the simple act of writing, which entails an unbridled connection or relationship between the writer and the paper.

I have no clue what it is I am endeavoring to write about, just like all the time, but am quite certain that this will yield some marvelous results. It is, therefore, why I think one must always write; without which we shall perish. I should also like to think that this is the main reason a thinker tends to write no matter how short a story, for this mere act shall hone their critical thinking, and hence they grow into the sorts of people we desperately need in this grotesque, gloomy, dismal, abysmal world we live in.

If one ceases to think, they should be doomed to die; for, simply, not thinking is quite tantamount to being dead, as Rene Descartes mused four hundred years ago:

"Cogito ergo sum" can roughly be translated into: "I think; therefore, I am.", and it is from this premise or proposition that we can thoughtfully glean:

"Non cogito non sum" which is not even my word, not even Rene Descartes', but was learned from my twelfth-grade teacher, to whom I would like to ascribe the title "The Fullest of The Professors(wisdom-wise)", Mr.Mansour Mirshakak.

Now, what is so magical about writing that aids us enhance a myriad of skills? How is it that writing is capable of developing our characters? One can assert that the act of reading is so precious that leads directly to thinking, and that can be somewhat justified.

But he who reads is merely a reader, not a writer, and we just claimed that a writer was a thinker. Are readers also writers? Are writers also readers? Are thinkers writers? (which is the main question) and are writers thinkers?

We all agree upon the fact that reading is one of the most timeless and consequential hobbies that one must grow, but who talks about writing? Writers can be readers, or even should be, by the virtue of having read numerous books they are affected and hence propelled to pen down their thoughts. But are all readers, or even a tiny percentage of them, writers? And isn't that what we are arguing against?

There are millions of readers, if not billions, out there who are solely habituated to read! And because they simply don't write, they are not thinkers, perhaps? But is this the idealistic form of thinking we are looking for? Are we after production? Should one contribute to their own presupposed ideas and attempt to refine them? Shouldn't we permit other media of thinking rather than the only one that is jotted down? What makes writing so unique? If all writers are thinkers, are also all thinkers writers? Or, to be quite an extremist skeptic, is a writer at all a thinker? Does he ponder about what is meant to be said, or is it solely a matter of a stream consciousness imposed upon the mind influenced by the milieu? Because there are writers who just write but do not think! And even if they do so, that thinking mode cannot and does not embody the ideal!

So? Who is a thinker you ask me? A thinker is he who thinks! Nothing more! Nothing less! And their thinking can be exemplified in disparate forms. But he who thinks also writes his thoughts down, for, otherwise, they shall vanish into thin air in a blink of an eye. But this act of writing does not make them a fine writer; they are just thinkers.

Nothing more.....Nothing less.....

Shadows of Hope and War

By Kawther Mohammed Sharbo
B.A. Student of English Literature
at the University of Qom

Dear Diary,

As the last days of this year pass like grains of sand between my fingers, I find myself enveloped in a bitter fog of contemplation. I have woven countless dreams for this year, and built so many hopes, and yet, as I sit here in the quiet of my room, I realize that many of these desires will remain unfulfilled, like the stars obscured by the clouds of despair that have settled over my country. I wished that laughter would echo through the streets and that the warmth of connection would replace the eerie silence that now hangs over me. I imagined gatherings filled with joy, but instead, we find ourselves isolated, each person trapped in their circle of sadness, longing, and contemplation. The chaos of war has cast its despair over our lives, leaving us to navigate a landscape stained with conflict and loss. Every day, I witness the toll that this despair exacts on the hearts of those around me. Families have been torn apart and settled far apart, children have been robbed of their innocence, and communities have been shattered by the drums of war and violence. It feels like we are all drifting in a vast ocean of alienation, each of us an isolated vessel struggling with the storms of uncertainty. The sound of ambulance sirens has replaced the laughter and play of children, and the colors of life that every young man and woman, every child and family once dreamed of have disappeared. As I reflect on this year, I can't help but feel a deep sadness. The dreams I held dear have been overtaken by moments of despair at what has become of us. There is no home left that can sing a song of happiness without being marred by memories of war and separation. Loneliness wraps around me like a heavy cloak, suffocating me in its embrace. I often wonder if anyone else feels this deep sense of isolation, this longing for connection that seems so far away. Yet, even amid this sadness, there is still a glimmer of hope within me and my spirit still soars like a butterfly. Perhaps the dawn of a new year brings with it the promise of healing and renewal. I dream of a time when laughter can fill our streets again, old songs can be played from cafes, old people can sit across from each other playing chess, where love can triumph over hate, where we can rebuild what we have lost. In this new year, I wish for peace – not just for my country, but for every soul yearning for solace in a world full of conflict, loss, and uncertainty. I hope that one day we can all come together, and as I close this blog, I remind myself that even in the depths of despair, hope can be a powerful force – a force that can light the way forward, no matter how daunting it may seem.

With a heavy heart but a spirit accustomed to soaring like a butterfly.

Dear Diary, A Poem of Reflection

As the year slips away like grains of sand,
I'm wrapped in a fog, a bittersweet strand.
Dreams woven tightly, hopes built with care,
Yet here in my room, I find only despair.

Laughter once echoed through vibrant streets,
Now silence reigns where connection retreats.
I imagined gatherings, joy's warm embrace,
But isolation lingers, a cold, empty space.

War's chaos has darkened our skies with its weight,
Each heart bears the burden of loss and of fate.
Families scattered, innocence stolen,
In this vast ocean of sorrow, we're broken.

Ambulance sirens now drown out the play,
Colors of life fade to shades of gray.
As I reflect on the moments we've lost,
My dreams feel so distant, and hope comes at a cost.

Loneliness wraps me in its heavy shroud,
A cloak of despair, both silent and loud.
Does anyone else share this longing for light?
A connection that flickers, a beacon in night.

Yet amidst all the sadness, a spark still remains,
A glimmer of hope that dances through pains.
With the dawn of the new year, I dream of rebirth,
Of laughter returning to fill up the earth.

Old songs in the cafes, chess games with friends,
Where love conquers hate and the healing begins.
In this new year I wish for a peace that will soar,
For every lost soul who is yearning for more.

So as I close this diary with a heart heavy yet bright,
I hold onto the hope that can pierce through the night.
For even in darkness, hope's flame can ignite,
Guiding us forward—our spirits take flight.

-December 15



Echoes of Seventeen

Here we are, December,
And the whispers linger—
you are not 17 anymore,
Not for a long stretch of time,
A shadow of who I was,
Dancing just out of reach.

I crave the thrill of that age,
The reckless abandon,
The way love felt like a spark,
But every attempt is thwarted,
Like a mirage fading in the sun.
Love eludes me,
A specter slipping through my fingers.

The diary pages flutter,
Modern-day confessions,
Between Camus' absurdity
And Plath's haunting prose,
I search for love,
A glimmer in the mundane.

I catch it in the burnt coffee smell,
In the snapshots on my iPad—
Framed moments that mock us,
Every controversial word,
A rebellion against the quiet,
Our truth is wrapped in irony.

Yet still, I fly between the lines,
A woman caught in the thrum of time,
Echoes of seventeen whispering—
Remember that spark,
As I navigate this labyrinth of longing,
Seeking love in the spaces between.

By Sana Qasedi
B.A. Student of Spanish Language
at the University of Tehran

Withered Magnolias

Withered little leaves of hope
Fly coldly in the storm
Dripping drowning in the dark
Full of water, full of mud

Ravens fly up the sky
watch me as the tears drop
Seeing me there choking blood
Rivers flowing from my eyes

Feeling dread in my heart
Magnolias on the ground
Hopes and dreams fall apart
Days and nights keep getting hard

Dear lovely lonely buds
I wait till you take me home
Where I'm living all alive
Where I seem to find a light.

By Asal Vaziri
B.A. student of English literature
at the Islamic Azad University, Mashad Branch

Prince of the Night

His hair, black as the night sky
Glossy as the raven's feather
Mesmerizing and magical
Drowns me in the depth of melancholy

His eyes, full of hope yet desperate
I wonder what he's thinking...
I keep the fascinating darkness in here
For the hopes of having him forever

I tell myself to let go
but my heart beats loud and wild
Can this be just a nightmare
Am I dreaming of him?

Lifeless like the blank wall
Shatters silently inside
Pick the pieces left unseen
Each of them filled full with fear

By Asal Vaziri
B.A. student of English literature
at the Islamic Azad University, Mashad Branch

Bipolar

By Maryam Khadi
B.A. Student of English literature
at the University of Qom

Bipolar

I close my eyes,
feeling as light as a floating leaf, and revel in the silence of the water.
I let the water carry me wherever it desires.
With a sense of serenity, I take a deep breath, filling my lungs, and then gently release it.
I could hear the sound of my heartbeat, joyfully announcing its presence.
But...
I knew it was the calm before a great storm.
I should have surrendered long ago.
I smile, sensing that I am approaching the edge of a waterfall.
I try to stop my legs from moving.
I remind myself, we both know you need to do this.
Do it.
I can see the chaos in my brain's nerves, frantically trying to flee this situation.
They slam themselves against every wall.
My body starts to burn up.
I feel the loud pounding of my heartbeat and the surge of blood rushing to my face.
He was getting closer.
I mean, my father.
I wanted to hug him.
This cursed taboo, passed down from generation to generation, had to be broken.
So that my daughter wouldn't sigh with longing every time she saw a close father-daughter bond on the street.
So I pushed myself forward, stopped him, and for the first time, I told him, I love you.
After more than twenty years of living, for the first time, I thought about what I truly wanted or what might
genuinely be better for me.
At first, I felt good, but every time the scissors touched my hair, my fear grew stronger.
I wanted to say, "I've changed my mind, put my hair back," but it was already too late.
So, I consoled myself differently, reminding myself that time cannot be turned back.
I had no choice but to wait patiently and trust the hairdresser.
I stared at the girl in the mirror; I didn't recognize her.
Her smile, her boldness, and the sparkle in her eyes felt unfamiliar to me.
It was as if my soul had found peace and I had answered all my doubts.
Be patient, listen to your heart, and trust the journey.
It was so far away from me.
As usual, the chatter in my head said,
"Don't try; you know you can't reach it."
But somewhere deep in my heart, a voice shouted,
"Not this time."
"Run as fast as you can. Close your eyes and run.
Just run."
Before I knew it, I was gasping for breath.
I felt my cheeks growing wet.
For the first time, I understood how you felt.
It seemed like we both knew it was impossible.
But I saw you run for me.
But you saw nothing of me.
By the time I arrived, it was too late.
The bus was gone.
But my heart was at peace.
Quietly, I wiped my tears and felt a smile form on my face.
For both of us, I made a promise to myself:
Even when there's no hope, I'll run with all my heart.
At the very least, for the peace of my heart.

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