

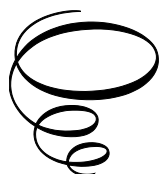
Postmodern and Postcolonial Intersections

Postmodern and Postcolonial Intersections

Edited by

Lotfi Salhi

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



Postmodern and Postcolonial Intersections

Edited by Lotfi Salhi

This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2020 by Lotfi Salhi and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-5691-3

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-5691-1

CONTENTS

Contributors.....	vii
General Editor's Preface.....	viii
Acknowledgements	x
Foreword	xi
<i>Professor Theo D'haen</i>	
Chapter 1	1
Introduction	
<i>Lotfi Salhi</i>	
Chapter 2	7
The Ethical Turn and Beyond: Investigating Postmodernist Poetics through Pragmatic Lenses	
<i>Professor Mounir Triki</i>	
Chapter 3	23
Postmodern/Postcolonial Encounters: Deconstructing “the white myth” in Nadine Gordimer’s “Beethoven was one-sixteenth black”	
<i>Noura El-Aoun</i>	
Chapter 4	40
The Otherness of Poles in Britain Prior to and in the Aftermath of the 2016 Referendum	
<i>Fethi Bourmeche</i>	
Chapter 5	57
J. M. Coetzee’s <i>Foe</i> : A Postcolonial Re-writing of Daniel Defoe’s <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	
<i>Radhia Soudan</i>	

Chapter 6	71
Narratives of Anguish and Alterity: Neologisms in William Shakespeare's <i>Othello</i> <i>Khaoula Belacem</i>	
Chapter 7	81
Re-conceptualizing Post-method Pedagogy <i>Ama Ounis and Tenim Ounis</i>	
Chapter 8	93
Postmodern and Postcolonial Intersections: Theoretical and Practical Contexts of Debate <i>Tahar Ben Khalifa</i>	
Chapter 9	111
L'hybridité textuelle et linguistique dans l'écriture postcoloniale d'expression française d'Assia Djebar <i>Sihem Hasni</i>	

CONTRIBUTORS

Professor Theo D'haen (Leuven University)

Professor Mounir Triki (University of Sfax)

Asma Ounis (University of Gabes)

Fathi Bourmeche (University of Sfax)

Khaoula Belgacem (University of Gafsa)

Lotfi Salhi (University of Gafsa)

Noura El-Aoun (University of Sfax)

Radhia Souden (University of Gafsa)

Sihem Hasni (University of Gafsa)

Tahar Ben Khelifa (University of Sfax)

Tesnim Ounis (University of Gabes)

Scientific Committee

Professor Mounir Triki (University of Sfax)

Professor Saloua Essayah (University of Carthage).

Professor Theo D'haen (Leuven University)

Professor Samia Kassab (April the 9th University)

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

This volume is a new contribution to the multiplicity of perceptions about the relationship between postmodernism and postcolonialism. It is the outcome of a debate between scholars and researchers that took place during a daylong study meeting on postmodern and postcolonial intersections, held on November the 28th 2018 at Higher Institute of Applied Studies in the Humanities, University of Gafsa. This academic event was an opportunity for the contributors to bring to the fore diverse perspectives related to these two concepts on inherent discursive and aesthetic concerns and on the relationship that reconciles both these movements. The study day also sought to explore the confluences and continuities between both movements in terms of their projects and their conceptions of such notions as history, subjectivity, and representation. One way of comparing the postmodern and the postcolonial entails looking at their discourses and examining their attitudes towards the validity of earlier legitimating (master) narratives of Eurocentric imperialism. Equally important in such a comparison is the shedding of light on the relationship between East and West and the exploration of the ways in which such a relationship is presented and re-presented in a multitude of forms in postmodern and postcolonial writings and re-writings of literary and cultural works from the past.

Grounded in contemporary postmodern and postcolonial thematic and aesthetic concerns, the articles brought together here address, among a myriad of other issues, the implication of the umbrella term postmodernism in the broader network of social, cultural, political, and existential interrelations. Also highlighted is the affinity between postmodernism and postcolonialism, being generally conceived in terms of particular phenomena or events and providing a framework for rejecting established norms of rationality and questioning subsequent modes of representation embodied by Western discourses on modernity. The history of postmodern and postcolonial writings, in consequence, is characterized by an ethos of dissent and a rejection of the established order, seeking to question the representation of Western values. Postcolonialism has been transformed into a lighthouse of emancipation in the form of a master-narrative apparatus of legitimation. In more precise terms, the relation between postmodernism and postcolonialism may be found in the assumption that

postmodernism opposes a Western, Eurocentric modernity through a postcolonial or, more generally, a post-imperial perspective. Postmodernism, in this sense, is embroiled in debates and dialogues over the past and past representations of values; this is undoubtedly the case with postcolonial theory and criticism. Postmodern theory provides pathways through which the postcolonial world can talk back to the old empire with a renewed sense of legitimacy. The postmodern and the postcolonial also come together irrevocably in resisting imperialist culture and the totalizing systems and manifestations of modern thought.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is in the nature of a collection of articles such as this one that I have incurred many debts of gratitude to many people. My warmest thanks go to my fellow contributors who, through their writing, made this much-anticipated volume a reality. A special debt of gratitude goes to Professor Mounir Triki of the University of Sfax, Tunisia, whose plenary on the pragmatics of postmodernist poetics was not only insightful and inspiring for participants in the study day, who are contributors to this volume, but gave it shape and purpose as well. It is also a great pleasure to thank the director of the Higher Institute of Applied Studies in Humanities, University of Gafsa, for facilitating the administration of this seminar, especially at a time when the administrative staff were on strike. Last of all, this volume would not have seen the light of day without the kind cooperation of the scientific committee, including Professor Theo D'haen, Professor Mounir Triki, Professor Sadok Bouhlila, Professor Saloua Essayah, and Professor Samia Kassab who pointed out a number of inconsistencies in the volume and helped give it both shape and meaning.

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I welcome this volume on postmodernism and postcolonialism, two movements or currents in literature, but even more so in literary studies, which, for the longest time, have had a somewhat vexed relation as competitors and successors of one another. Postcolonialism can be said to both combat and, at the same time, be enabled by postmodernism, in effect replacing it as a ruling paradigm after its triumph in the 1960s and through to the early 1980s. Postmodernism can be said to have arisen simultaneously from the subcutaneous doubts assailing the hegemonic layers of Western and, in the first instance American, society and culture, as embodied in the writing of authors such as John Hawkes, John Barth, William Gass, William Gaddis, Robert Coover, Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon, and the like, as well as the theoretical writings of European philosophers such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-François Lyotard. In fact, the two currents come together in Lyotard's famous *La condition postmoderne*, originally published in 1979, and in English translation, with a foreword by Fredric Jameson, in 1984. In this "report" on knowledge for the Quebecois government, Lyotard argued that there were no longer any overarching, powerful metanarratives that gave meaning to society, science, or scholarship. Instead, he argued that knowledge had become the terrain of "language games" that vied with one another for precedence, the winner being whichever narrative succeeded in persuading the greatest or most influential number of adherents. In literary studies, this led Stanley Fish to postulate the existence of "interpretive communities" competing for dominance in the profession. Behind this argument lay the Foucauldian idea that language is power in the sense that whoever "owns" language can impose her or his views. Foucault himself elaborated these ideas with respect to madness and sexuality, but they also underpin Edward Said's celebrated *Orientalism* (1978). Said argued that the "Orient" as such does not exist, but rather it is an invention produced by Western—mainly German, French, English, and, later, American—scholars imposing Western hegemonic views primarily upon what we usually, at least until recently, refer to as the Near and Middle East and, furthermore, upon the entire non-Western world. Derrida took all this one step further by basically reducing everything to language. In all, this constituted a powerful attack on the certainties that the dominant forces in the Western

world saw as legitimating their hold upon “reality”, whether the latter were to be defined economically, politically, socially, or culturally. Interestingly, Lyotard, at the very beginning of his book, refers to the American authors I mentioned as having provided him with his crucial insights. Very quickly, the work of these authors became associated with the philosophical tendency that the French authors mentioned represented, that is to say poststructuralism. They were often targeted as having abandoned “referentiality” altogether, rather having withdrawn into a world of linguisticity, without connection to or meaning for the “real” world. In retrospect, of course, we can say that these authors and philosophers were offering a trenchant critique of a world becoming incessantly more mediatized to the point of reality being replaced by what Jean Baudrillard, another French philosopher, called “simulacra”. This is also the point where the reaction set in, as the idea of language games did away with that of a singular truth obtaining in, for instance, history—a view voiced, for example, by the influential US historian Hayden White. Of course, there had always lingered an awareness that history is written by the victors; now, however, alternative histories, that is to say those of the losers, were receiving equal theoretical legitimation. The result has been a tremendous explosion of postcolonial literature seeking to tell the his or her-story of the colonized or otherwise oppressed. The present volume brilliantly addresses all of these issues.

—Professor Theo D’haen

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

LOTFI SALHI

This volume on postmodern and postcolonial intersections is an attempt to bring to the fore one of the most controversial issues in the literary, theoretical, and social scenes. The controversy is not so much due to a shortage of definitions about the two movements, but rather to the fact that they are rarely defined precisely enough, leaving room for diverse interpretations to ensue. No consensus, I contend, is found among theorists about what postmodernism really means, what its origins are, and whether there are specific traits that allow one to designate postmodernism as really postmodern. Attention is more particularly drawn to the various paradigms attributed to the postmodern phenomenon as a framework for newly emerging modes of intellectual and artistic expression.

In *The Postmodern Turn* (1987), Ihab Hassan presents more than 65 names that literary theorists, psychoanalysts, and social scientists, of various disciplinary backgrounds have provided, covering a range of assumptions about postmodernism, and concludes that such names are “far too heterogeneous to form a movement [...] or school”. However, this plurality and multiplicity that surrounds the postmodern, and latterly the postcolonial, does not mean that the two cannot be assimilated or come together under one theoretical umbrella. The labels postmodernism and postcolonialism have markedly been employed to refer to two distinct, yet similar, literary and cultural movements that have broken with a now historic instrumentalized modernism and oppressive colonialism. In other words, the two movements apply several theories of innovation, renovation, or change that allow them to go beyond the static conservatism characteristic of imperialist culture and its totalizing systems of representation.

In her important book, *Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, Gayatri Spivak notes: “There is an affinity between the imperialist subject and the subject of humanism” (202). While postcolonial thought, motivated by its

emerging theory of agency and the existential thrust of identity formation, takes the first as its object of critique, postmodernism largely finds in the second a vast space for scrutinizing the totalizing manifestations of European, and more generally, Western post-industrial culture. This is perhaps to suggest that the prefix “post” in both the postmodern and the postcolonial implies a challenge to the past and an invocation of the notion of history. History, as Ihab Hassan observes in his essay “Toward a Concept of Postmodernism”, moves in a direction, “continuous and discontinuous”, which means that the prevalence, if any, of postmodernity and/or postcoloniality does not mean that the past ceases to influence or to be influenced by the present moment altogether. The past functions for both postmodern and postcolonial theory and criticism as documentary material fraught with multiple forms of deficiency, oppression, repression, excess, misrepresentation, and misconception. Hence, the replaying of history out of context, as a process, highlights the real crisis of representation that lies at the centre of both the postmodern and the postcolonial. What is in crisis, in fact, is the dominant paradigm of literary and cultural studies and their corollary systems of representation. The text, being a cluster of signs and symbols, therefore, becomes an arena for the expression and debunking of opinion.

The impetus in literary studies to challenge the past came from different directions, primarily from those hermeneutical procedures spearheaded by the new methodologies of cultural poetics/new historicism, deconstruction, feminism, cultural materialism, revisionist criticism, and, most importantly, postmodernism and postcolonialism. In fact, what brings the two movements together is the discourse of oppositionality they bring into being by operating both recursively and subversively. They operate recursively by recurring to the past and engaging with canonical and representative texts and subversively by unravelling such texts and turning them upside down and inside out like a wet sock. Here, I capitalize on the motif of “re-writing” as a key feature and an essential component of both postmodern and postcolonial discourses.

Based on the post-Marxist theorist Frederic Jameson’s conception of the postmodern/postcolonial era as marked by reproduction rather than production and recreation rather than creation, as well as on Jean-François Lyotard’s claim in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* that the great hero of previous epochs (and I think here he means among others Shakespeare) is no longer a credible figure in the postmodern period, the phenomenon of re-writing, therefore, emerges as a recent practice that is textually and contextually bound to the postmodern/postcolonial condition.

In fact, the intersection between postmodernism and postcolonialism constitutes a fertile ground for the emergence of rewriting activity as a mode of critical revisionism aiming to hark back to the past and redressing its wrongs. Hence, the appearance, for instance through the rewriting of the past, of “Postmodern Shakespeares” (Jyotsna Singh) and *Postcolonial Shakespeares* (Chantal Zabus). By deconstructing the canonical Shakespeare of his heyday, the authors of these manuscripts define the postmodern/postcolonial era as the age of delegitimation when, in Lyotard’s words, “old [master] narratives from the past no longer hold sway” (9). This, again, allows one to argue that such an era is the era of the quest for alternatives, and this is well embodied by the publication of *Alternative Shakespeares* (John Drakakis) and more obviously *Tempests after Shakespeare* (Chantal Zabus), a book which provides, through the interplay of the relationship between the characters of Caliban, Prospero, Sycorax, and Miranda, a reading of postmodernism and postcolonialism.

In fact, many factors could be used to demonstrate the confluences between the postmodern and postcolonial enterprises regarding the nature of their discourses and their relationship to the concept of history. First, the major project of postmodernism, which, according to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Tiffin Helen in *The Empire Writes Back to the Center*, is “the deconstruction of the centralized, logocentric master-narratives of Western culture” (12) overlaps with that of postcolonialism, which is “to dismantle the center-margin binarism of the imperialist discourse”. Second, the general crisis over representation resulting from the collapse of the former European empires and from incredulity toward the master-narrative apparatus of legitimation has led to a pressing demand for the reworking of existing literary and cultural material and the disruption of its cognitive bases. As far as Singh’s and Zabus’s “Postmodern Shakespeares” and *Postcolonial Shakespeares* are concerned, the project of rewriting, which is predominantly a “post-based” phenomenon, seeks to strategically destabilize the apparently unified rhetoric of Shakespeare’s text and to disrupt its Eurocentric and misleading strategies of classification, categorization, and instrumentalization.

Arif Dirlic, who studies the relationship between the postmodern and the postcolonial in terms of the maternal link between the two, contends that “postcolonialism is a child of postmodernism” (8). As such, I borrow from him the “maternal” label to signal the link between the practice of subversive rewriting and the postmodern/postcolonial condition. In a more precise vein, I define revisionism, a form of subversive rewriting, as a child born of the circumstances characterizing this condition. Two factors

intersect that can account for the relationship between the practice of reorienting the past (here referring to Shakespeare as an example) and the postmodern/postcolonial condition. First, postmodern theorists, according to Hannah Berry, realize, as do postcolonialists, that the past must be revised and refashioned into the structure of the present. Second, the major project of postmodernism, which, according to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Tiffin Helen in *The Empire Writes Back to the Center*, is “the deconstruction of the centralized, logocentric master-narratives of Western culture” (12) overlaps that of postcolonialism, which is “to dismantle the center-margin binarism of the imperialist discourse” (23). By both deconstructing and dismantling, the two movements take on the mantle of destabilizing and re-orienting a certain point of authority.

The post-Marxist theorist Frederic Jameson describes the postmodern/postcolonial condition as a phase of reproduction rather than production, and recreation rather than creation. For Jameson, both postmodernism and postcolonialism are characterized by a compulsion to return to past texts and artefacts through the means of quotation, appropriation, rewriting, and reviewing. Here, Shakespeare can function as the model of a poet and playwright whose plays are objects of cross-cultural reconstructions contrary to the current ideological and sociocultural exigencies of a postmodern/postcolonial era. The reorientation of representations of his canonical plays is manifested in relation to the binary structures of colonizer-colonized, East-West, white-black, male-female, centre-periphery, and also to the deconstructive gaze emerging from within the metropolis itself, spearheaded by Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, Jean Francois Lyotard, and various others. Their theories on deconstruction and the death of the author are used to undo Western culture’s claim to centrality and historical persistence.

As we reach back to the supposed connection between Shakespeare and the postmodern/postcolonial enterprise, it is in the nature of contemporary rewritings of his plays that the Bard is shown as a fluent spokesman for the governing structures of Western power and ideals. In *The Circulation of Social Energy*, Stephen Greenblatt asserts that having “no direct, unmediated link between us and Shakespeare’s plays does not mean that there is no link at all” (Greenblatt, 3). Greenblatt’s stipulation constitutes a vantage point for critics with an interest in the Bard by which to mediate the close connection between the “then” and the “now” understandings of the cultural politics in his plays. This is especially so in an era (here designated as postmodern and postcolonial) when critical argument about the latter’s uncompromising involvement in imperial ideologies and colonial

psychologies has reached unprecedented levels. Recontextualization, or “iterability” to use Derrida’s word, is, therefore, the inevitable destiny of the Shakespearean text in history.

In light of this, I focus on two rewritings of Shakespeare’s plays—*Hamlet* and *The Tempest*—that I consider to be exemplary models for establishing a paradigm for the postmodern/postcolonial intersection at focus in this volume. The works examined include *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, a rewriting of *Hamlet* by Tom Stoppard, the Czech-born, British and postmodernist playwright; and *Une Tempête*, a reworking of *The Tempest* by the Martinican, postcolonial dramatist Aimé Césaire. Both of these playwrights turn to Shakespeare as a “thematic ancestor” (Macherey, 267) in order to unearth from his cultural capitalism a new story of their own people’s anxieties and sufferings.

Tom Stoppard relies on the transformative power of the stage and shifts the very idea of serious tragedy we find in *Hamlet* to laughter. He reduces the story of Prince Hamlet of Denmark to a comical game of questions and coin flipping between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two marginal characters in the original play. The coin lands on heads seventy six consecutive times in a row. The duo has tried many times and referred to many discourses to explain the phenomenon, but fail to reach any explanation, meaning that there is no self-knowledge to be attained at the end of the road. The narrative of Stoppard’s play is frail, back-broken, and fragmentary in its variety. Being widely known as a postmodernist playwright, Stoppard evokes in his play the situation of the Western world in the 1960s, a time when science and knowledge both failed to secure a safe place for Man in the world. The grand narratives of science and knowledge, or “emancipation” and “speculation” in François Lyotard’s words, had instead culminated in two world wars and a great holocaust that reaped the lives of millions of people around the world.

In a similar vein, Césaire takes Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* from the island where it was first set to an imagined land far beyond Elizabethan monolithic parameters and any canonicity, thereby exposing the Caribbean’s colonial past, decolonization, and his own identity. Césaire sides with Caliban, Prospero’s slave on the remote island of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and portraying his master as an outsider who came to the island not to educate him or to lift him up to civilization, but to take away his possessions and satisfy his capitalistic greed for gold and money. The play voices Césaire’s indignation at the colonial policies enacted in the Caribbean, exposing the atrocities of slavery, exile, and prejudice as a

colonial practice. While the play psychically internalizes features of such a colonial system, it also explicitly displays the dynamic operation of colonialism, institutionally and legally, in Shakespeare's own time.

Seen in this light, both rewritings presented here share nearly the same strategy of reproducing Shakespeare and changing the meaning of the original text for the reader. Though these reformulated plays parody their sources, they are also distant to them, ironizing and deconstructing them from within. It is therefore possible to consider the strategy of textual revisionism as a process, in Helen Tiffin's words, of "dismantling, demystifying and unmasking of European authority" (171). As a method and process of reproducing and redefining past texts in new contexts, the strategy of these new plays is to shift, through Shakespeare, from elitist modernism to postmodernism and postcolonialism. As a result, one distinguishable feature of the postmodern/postcolonial intersection lies in the revisionary attitude of both movements towards such notions as the past, history, representation, subjectivity, and legitimation.

References

- Ashcroft, Bill. Griffiths, Gareth & Tiffin, Helen. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Berger, Roger. *Postmodern Culture*, London: Routledge, 1992.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Une Tempête*, Paris, Seuil, 1969.
- Drakakis, John. *Alternative Shakespeares*. Routledge, 2002. Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. University of California Press, 1988.
- Hassan, Ihab. "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism" from *Postmodernism: A Reader*, 1987.
- Helen Tiffin (ed.). *Five Emus to the King of Siam: Environment and Empire*. Rodopi, 2007.
- Lyotard, Jean Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Paris: Minuit, 1979.
- Machery, Pierre. *The Object of Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. The First Folio, 1623.
- Spivak, Gayatri. *Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London: Routledge, 2012
- Stoppard. Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, London: Boston, 1967.
- Zabus, Chantal. *Tempests after Shakespeare*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

CHAPTER 2

THE ETHICAL TURN AND BEYOND: INVESTIGATING POSTMODERNIST POETICS THROUGH PRAGMATIC LENSES

PROFESSOR MOUNIR TRIKI

Abstract

The present paper seeks to contribute to an ongoing theoretical debate on some hot issues in contemporary critical theory. First, it problematizes the concepts of subjectivity, culture, aesthetics and interpretation. Then, it tackles the literary stakes in what has come to be known as the Ethical Turn as a sequel to the controversies on the various posts beyond post-modernism. This is followed by an investigation of poetics, poeticity and staging. The fourth angle is a re-examination of the notions of performance and performativity. These angles culminate naturally in the final angle which focuses on Literary Pragmatics, with special reference to Speech Acts, types of Contextualizations, Genre Analysis and Deixis. The conclusion synthesizes all these trends and proposes future prospects.

Keywords: (Post)-Modernism, Literary Pragmatics, Poetics, Contextualization, Culture, Aesthetics, Interpretation, Subjectivity

0. Introduction

This volume is a timely contribution to the debates that surround the postmodern and its interrelations with different critical disciplines on the theoretical scene. As diverse fields of enquiry compete to understand and explain the present moment, new lenses scrutinize the legacy of postmodernism and look for alternatives. Also questioned is the un/fruitful and frequent overlap between postmodernism and postcolonialism. This

article offers a general introduction that confronts postmodernism with the interaction of complex and heterogeneous patterns in the social construction of reality, the contextualized subject, and the challenges of the aesthetic expression, none of which are insulated from cognition, social relations, and politics. A review of communicative functions, participation structures, and modes of interpretation, all patterned in ways that shape and are shaped by gender, social class, ethnicity, age, time, space, and other factors, signals that this is an era clearly lying beyond the postmodern moment. What seems to emerge from the different attempts to theorize the contemporary moment is a re-bonding in the effect and a response within ethical concerns.

1. Revisiting the Notion of Subjectivity

This section starts by questioning the notion of the self, distinguishing the concept of “Subject” from that of the “Self”, revisiting the relations between aesthetics, interpretation, and subjectivity, and exploring the complex relation between culture and ethnicity. The section ends with a summary that spells out the main bone of contention.

1.1. Questioning the Notion of the Self: Subject versus Self

According to Mansfield (2000, p. 51), in the second half of the twentieth century theories of subjectivity fell into two broad categories: those attempting to define the nature or structure of the subject (its ‘truth’) (Freud and Lacan) and those that took any definition of subjectivity to be the product of culture and power (Foucault). Mansfield detected some agreement between these antagonistic trends in that they see this older form of the subject, the ‘individual’, as a mirage of language’s symbolic order or of power. He makes a useful distinction between the terms “subject” and “self” whereby the word ‘self’ falls short of capturing the sense of social and cultural entanglement that is implicit in the word ‘subject’, this being the way our immediate daily life is always already caught up in shared complex political, social and philosophical concerns.

Conversely, for Thiel (2011, pp. 26-27), the term ‘person’ has a complex etymology. It is important to note that throughout the seventeenth century, ‘person’ most commonly referred to an individual human being—it was simply a term for the individual human subject. However, in some philosophical discussions, ‘person’ referred to a particular aspect, quality, or function of the individual human being. Indeed, the Latin term

‘persona’ (a translation of the Greek ‘prosopon’—face) originally signified the mask through which an actor communicated his ‘role’ to the audience. ‘Persona’ was used to denote the role or character and its denotation was transferred from a role on the stage to the role or function that an individual human being fulfils in real life. Cicero, for example, formulated a theory of four personae, or roles, which applied to every individual human being.

Operating within another tradition, Reynolds (2009, pp. 4-6) attributes to Goffman and Berger the claim that a sense of self, the “I”, and the socially-engaged “Me” are combined in a symbolic, performed, and socially-constructed entity. This “contingent individual” is what literary, cultural, and critical theorists, particularly those strongly influenced by Marxist-oriented intellectual, aesthetic, or political traditions, often mean when they talk about the “subject”.

1.2. Aesthetics, Interpretation and Subjectivity

Bowie (2003, pp. 1-2) provides a vital etymological survey of the term “aesthetics”, showing how the term has acquired a new focus as the significance of natural beauty and of art. It finds its origin in being that part of philosophy concerned with the senses, not necessarily focused on beauty. The author notes that the word derives from the Greek ‘aisthánesthai’ as ‘perceive sensuously’. The importance of these theories is that they conceive of experiencing natural and artistic beauty, and of aesthetic production, as being vital to understanding self-consciousness and thus pertinent to notions of subjectivity.

1.3. Culture and Ethnicity

Mansfield (2000, pp. 120-121) detected another trend in the literature of the second half of the twentieth century, one in which human differences have increasingly come to be understood not in terms of race and blood, but rather of culture and ethnicity. According to current discussions of ethnicity, differences in values, behaviour, and belief are not part of the individual’s natural inheritance, determined by their membership of a racial group, but rather they are part of the culture into which a person is inducted by dint of family life, language, and education.

In this vein, Rahimi stresses the inherent social nature of subjectivity realized through multifarious interactions within society. Subjectivity, according to Rahimi, is both a process of individuation and a process of

socialization since the individual is never isolated in a self-contained environment. On the contrary, the individual is endlessly engaging in interaction with the surrounding world. Consequently, in Rahimi's conception, culture is the living totality of the subjectivity of any given society, constantly undergoing transformation.

1.4. Summary: The Bone of Contention

In a seminal survey covering the beginning of the first half of the twentieth-century, when Marxist philosophy achieved prominence in artistic and academic circles, Reynolds (2009, pp. 4-6) claims that "subject" became a term favoured by literary and cultural critics and theorists, particularly structuralists, as an alternative to "person", "individual", or "agent". For many structuralists, and later post-structuralists in the second half of the twentieth century (Fredric Jameson, Ernesto Laclau, and Chantal Mouffe), the use of 'subject' indicates a disavowal of the humanist/essentialist perspective that the human condition is absolute or universal and therefore humans universally endorse the same interests and values.

2. Revisiting the Literary Stakes: Postmodernism and the Ethical Turn

Mansfield (2000, pp. 162-163) makes a useful comparison between modernism and postmodernism. On the one hand, modernism felt that traditional ways of understanding the world and society had collapsed and needed to be replaced by broad philosophical, cultural, or political principles that could reinvent and reinvigorate humanity. It considered that people were adrift in a changing world where tradition counted for less and less and something had to be found (a national myth, a political ideology, a social plan, an economic model, or a great aesthetic innovation etc.) that would re-anchor them and provide them with some way of dealing with the future. To postmodernism, even this project has been shattered to pieces (ibid).

What defines the postmodern, according to Mansfield (2000, pp. 168-170), is not a principle of meaning, but an uncertainty or interruption, at most a feeling. The dominant postmodern feeling is one of panic and fear (Kroker et al. 1989, pp.13-14). For Klages (2012), modernism represented the world as fragmented and incoherent, as an irrational collection of random events, and lamented the loss of meaning and structure in the modern

world. Postmodernism sees the same incoherence, but celebrates the ridiculousness of trying to make meaning and order out of the irrational and random. By the mid-1960s and on into the 1970s, critics like Leslie Fiedler, Susan Sontag, and Ihab Hassan were outwardly celebrating just such a “rupture” or epistemic upheaval. This revealed the postmodern aversion, or outward resistance, to final meaning(s), authorial intention, and thus interpretation (Toth, 2010).

Baudrillard (1981, translated in 1983 and 1994), explored what he perceived to be “a depthless world of unreflecting images” where signs no longer corresponded to their “real-life” referents, but have replaced them in a world of autonomous “floating signifiers”. As such, postmodernity is depicted in terms of the disappearance of meaning, of inertia, exhaustion, and endings, whether of history or subjectivity (Selden et al., 2005). In turn, Lyotard (1979) launched a vehement critique of the totalizing claims of reason as being without moral or philosophical grounds, stripping legitimating “meta-narratives”, or “grands récits” of any credibility (Selden et al., 2005).

Many critics have highlighted the problematic nature of postmodernism. For instance, Carter (2006) has shown that postmodernism can be seen as a positive, liberating force, destabilizing preconceived ideas about language in its relation to the world and laying bare and debunking all the meta-language of history and society. However, Carter contends, in so doing postmodernism is also undermining its own presuppositions and precluding all coherent interpretation.

As a consequence, it has been perceived by many critics as being apolitical and ironically non-committal. Thus, postmodernism can be seen as dangerously nihilistic in that it undermines the notion of objective knowledge, leading to the demise of all truth and value, i.e. to a moral vacuum.

For Davis (2003), one of the most persistent and damaging allegations made against post-structuralism is that it effectively destroys the grounds for any ethical enquiry or action. Davis echoes Norris’s warning that the “de-centring of the subject” has disastrous ethical consequences. By “de-centring” the subject to the point of non-existence—reducing it to a mere position within a discourse or a figment of the humanist Imaginary—post-structuralism has removed the very possibility of reasoned, reflective, and principled ethical choice (ibid).

What these tendencies reveal is a move beyond subversion and a search for alternative ways to understand fiction's ethical and aesthetic potential. Hence, we see the emergence of ethical questions about the effects of works of fiction on their readers/recipients and on the reality in which they are living. What is highlighted is a more constructive and, potentially, ethical aspect: the fictive here no longer finds its justification in the nature of its relation to material realities, but as a form of communication and connection between human minds, involving mutual exchange, hospitality, and responsibility (Huber, 2014). An overview follows of the major trends beyond postmodernism, as outlined in Rudrum and Stravis (2015):

Re-modernism/Stuckism (Childish and Thomson, 1999): Stuckism is the root movement of re-modernism in painting. The basis of art becomes the artist's exploration of his soul, reasserting the importance of spirituality. Irony, parody or pastiche and bricolage, as recycling modes of production, lose their status. Authenticity, sincerity, beauty, content and skill are reinvigorated as concepts and sought out as effects.

Performatism (Eshelman, 2008): "Performatism may be defined most simply as an epoch in which a unified concept of sign and strategies of closure have begun to compete directly with, and displace, the split concept of sign and the strategies of boundary transgression typical of postmodernism" (Performatism, or the end of postmodernism, 2000).

Hyper-modernism (Lipovetsky, 2004): Lipovetsky proposes the name hyper-modernism for the new phase beyond postmodernism, suggesting that modernity did not come to an end. The prefix "hyper" underlines the "cult of excess" generated by consumerism, which has subjugated postmodernism, with its liberating ambitions, to the logic of the market.

Auto-modernity (Kirby; Lipovetsky): Suggests the intermeshing of human autonomy with technological automation and considers technology to be behind the departure from postmodernism, yielding an empowered individual.

Renewalism (Toth and Brooks, 2007): John Toth does not suggest a simplistic return to the values of enlightenment, i.e. truth, meaning, and progress. He does not embrace the dogmatic postmodern denial of these values either. Rather, Toth points to a prevailing artistic attitude that reflects a "(re)turn to seemingly pre-postmodern ideologies ... very much tempered by the lessons of postmodernism".

Alter-modernism (Bourriaud, 2009): In his manifesto “Altermodern: Postmodernism is Dead”, Nicholas Bourriaud outlines the contention of this new orientation in art in his 2009 exhibition at London Tate’s triennial show. He puts the accent on creolization as the replacement of multiculturalism and increased communication through travelling and globalization as the basic traits of an alter-modernism that redefines white Western modernism. He conceives of alter-modernism as a “synthesis between modernism and postcolonialism”, beyond any “obsessive return to the past”.

Digi-modernism (Kirby, 2009): Postmodern anti-elitism has mutated into cheap populism, the privileging of low culture, in lieu of postmodern ironizing of both the high and low. Kirby critiques this, along with the pervasive effects of technology.

Meta-modernism (Vermeulen and van den Akker, 2010): A pervasive need for ‘answers’ and hope have replaced postmodern skepticism, illusion and irony. As such, meta-modernist artists articulate what theorists have called the neo-romantic turn, being a renewed faith in the individual as an agent of expression and desire.

What filters through from these readings is a sense of moving beyond, not an abrupt departure with—a move that is modelled on the “lessons” of postmodernism. This is an attack on the Western-centric vision of the world, on totalitarianism, on notions of absolute and universal truth—something that may be considered a positive outcome of postmodernism. However, there is a sweeping tendency to reject nihilism, a lack of meaning, and cynicism in favour of realist, ethical, and spiritual revival, with a newfound faith in the individual and artist and their responsibility towards the community.

3. Revisiting Poetics

This section discusses the problems associated with the term “poetics” and proceeds to explore poeticity as a form of staging.

3.1. Problems with the Term “Poetics”

Poetics here is associated with Jacobson’s “poetic function”, whereby language draws attention to itself. De Mendonça (2012, p. 50) raises a number of problems regarding the term “poetics”. The first of these difficulties is the re-semanticization of terms like ‘poem’ and ‘poetry’.

‘Poetry’ originally meant what is made and ‘poesis’ was its making. It is only because lyric poetry took on its modern sense, as the activity by which the virtuosity of ‘making’ is most likely to be expressed, that the ‘poem’ became associated with some form of lyric poetry. It is not absolutely clear to what kinds of ‘making’ Aristotle referred, though he certainly means artistic ‘making.’ His Poetics makes reference to painting and musical composition, but there is no treatment of these subjects *per se*, just a sense that those activities, and tragedy and comedy also, can be grouped under the same conceptual umbrella as the representational or mimetic arts.

3.2. Poeticity as Staging

According to Franssen (2012, p. 4), the term ‘poeticity’ is understood as the extent to which a linguistic event can be experienced as poetic. This understanding of poeticity works in tandem with Jakobson’s initial conception, according to which utterances are experienced as poetry because they foreground language’s “poetic function”. In Jakobson’s account, this function overrides linguistic usage when the language used is not experienced as a representation of reality or an expression of emotions, but rather as a medium that draws attention to its own reality and to the process of signification itself.

Franssen argues that we cannot understand such poetic potential appropriately without also taking into account the complex of aesthetic assumptions, interpretive conventions, and other sociocultural conditions that make it possible for us to experience an artefact or performance as poetic. Franssen uses the concept of ‘staging’ to refer to a linguistic process in which, due to a clash of expectations, such assumptions, conventions, and conditions are brought to light and put into play.

4. Revisiting Performance

This section explores the intertextual dimension of performance and takes audience awareness to be its distinctive feature. It also discusses the ideological dimension of performance, lists the various types of performance, and ends with an in-depth discussion of the performativity of poetry.

4.1. The Intertextual Dimension of Performance

Bauman (2004, pp. 8-9) argues that the performance forms of a society tend to be among the most markedly “entextualized”, generically regimented, memorable, and repeatable forms of discourse in its communicative economy. Likewise, in the eyes of this author, performance forms tend to be among the most consciously traditionalized in a community’s communicative repertoire, which is to say that they are understood and constructed as part of an extended succession of intertextually linked recontextualizations (Bauman and Briggs 1990).

Haring (1988) offers the term “inter-performance” to foreground the dynamics of performance in the production of intertextuality. Likewise, Bauman (2004, p. 10) confirms that a performed text may be subsequently or antecedently reported, rehearsed, translated, relayed, quoted, summarized, or parodied, to suggest only a few intertextual possibilities.

4.2. Audience Awareness as a Distinctive Feature of Performance

Bauman (2004, p. 9) emphatically suggests that performance is based on the sense of responsibility felt towards an audience for a display of communicative prowess. This foregrounds how the act of discursive production is realized, over and above the additional multiple functions that the communicative act may fulfil. He concludes, in line with Foley (1991, 1995), that the act of expression itself is framed as display: objectified, lifted out to an extent from its contextual surroundings, and opened up to interpretive and evaluative scrutiny by the audience both in terms of its intrinsic qualities and associational resonances.

4.3. The Ideological Dimension of Performance

Shuck (2004, pp. 195-196) claims that the strategies used by performers in order to gain and maintain attention, such as repetition, dialogue, rhythm, expressive phonology, and laughter, have a direct bearing on the content of their performances, making them susceptible to dramatic transformation. For this author, the creative contributions of an individual to a given text allow propositions to be moulded, stretched, and ultimately accepted as true. He concludes that the role of the individual performer, dialogically combined with the listener and participating in the performance, is crucial to

participants' interpretations not only of the speech event at hand, but also of the ideological discourse that emanates from it.

4.4. Kinds of Performance

Turner (1987, p. 6) draws an analogy between the theatricality of daily living and social drama construed as a kind of meta-theatre, that is, a dramaturgical language about the language of ordinary roleplay and status-maintenance, which constitutes communication in the daily social process. Performance, then, whether as speech behaviour, the presentation of the self in everyday life, or stage or social drama, can become the centre of observation and hermeneutic attention. Relying on Goffman's dramaturgical model, Turner (1987, p.13) classifies performances into "social" performances (including social dramas) and "cultural" performances (including aesthetic or stage dramas). The self is presented through the performance of roles, through performances that break roles, and through declaring to a given public that one has undergone a transformation of state and status; been saved or damned; elevated or released.

4.5. The Performativity of Poetry

Bauman and Briggs (2013, pp. 59-60) note a paradigm shift between two conflicting views on the role of poetics in social life. On the one hand, there is a long-established tradition that assumes that verbal art provides a central dynamic force, shaping linguistic structure and linguistic study. On the other hand, some scholars have looked upon aesthetic uses of language as merely parasitizing 'core' areas of linguistics such as phonology, syntax, and semantics.

However, Bauman and Briggs (2013, pp. 59-60) contend that attention is being directed away from investigation of the formal patterning and symbolic content of texts and towards greater focus on the emergence of verbal art in the social interaction between performers and their audiences. These authors point to the growing attention paid by many linguists to the indexicality of the assignment of meaning when dealing with naturally occurring discourse; this orientation stems from their assumption that speech is heterogeneous and multifunctional.

Bauman and Briggs (2013, pp. 59-60) stress the heterogeneous and dynamic character of language use and the central place it occupies in the social construction of reality. They stipulate that performance provides a mechanism that invites critical reflection on communicative processes. For

these authors, a given performance necessarily and dialogically alludes to a number of speech events that both precede and succeed it (past performances, readings of texts, negotiations, rehearsals, gossip, reports, critiques, challenges, subsequent performances and the like).

In deference to the need to pay greater attention to the dialectic relationship between performance and its wider sociocultural and political-economic context, Bauman and Briggs (2013, pp. 59-60) set a high premium on how poetic patterning extracts discourse from particular speech events and explores its relationship to a diversity of social settings through the two processes of de-centring and re-contextualization (see below).

5. Revisiting Pragmatics

Speech act theory is the focal point of this section. Speech act theory highlights the importance of the generic dimension, fundamentally revisits the notion of context showing a marked shift from context to contextualization, and, finally, makes the distinction between discourse and text.

5.1. Speech Act Theory

Bauman and Briggs (2013, pp. 62-65) reviewed a number of studies suggesting that performativity does not simply reside in particular formal features alone, but also in larger formal-functional units. They cite Abrahams, Bauman, Bakhtin, Bateson, Goffman, Huizinga, and Turner as all arguing that play-frames do not just alter the performative force of utterances, but provide settings in which speech and society can be questioned and transformed. Consequently, for these authors, participation structure, particularly the nature of turn-taking and performer-audience interaction, can have profound implications for shaping social relations.

The merits of this research, in the eyes of Bauman and Briggs (2013, pp. 62-65), is that it has greatly enhanced our understanding of performativity by showing that the illocutionary force is not reducible to the referential content and/or syntactic structure of a particular sentence. That is to say, the formal properties of discourse, larger units of speech events, frames, keys, and participation structures cannot simply be taken as “felicity conditions” or “preparatory conditions” that activate self-contained performative utterances (*ibid*). For these authors, illocutionary force can be conveyed by a host of elements from the micro-level to the macro-level

and, most importantly, by the interaction of such features; hence, the importance of Austin's notion of the total speech act.

The use of speech act theory in framing research problems has, to a great extent, been displaced in favour of more complex and multifaceted pragmatic approaches to the functions that utterances perform (Levinson, cited in Bauman and Briggs 2013, pp. 62-65). Performance-oriented scholars view performativity as the interaction of complex and heterogeneous formal patterns construed in the social construction of reality. Work in this perspective argues that formal elaboration does not relegate discourse to a Kantian aesthetic sphere that is both purely subjective and carefully insulated from cognition, social relations, and politics. Bauman and Briggs's review of the literature (2013, pp. 62-65) suggests that the concepts of poetic patterning, frames, genres, participatory structures, and other dimensions of performance highlight the fact that speech is to be seen as social action.

5.2. The Importance of the Generic Dimension

Bauman and Briggs (2013, pp. 62-65) reviewed the literature on the crucial role of genre in shaping illocutionary force. These authors infer that genres are far more than isolated and self-contained bundles of formal features. For them, a shift in genre evokes contrastive communicative functions, participation structures, and modes of interpretation. Moreover, Bauman and Briggs (2013, pp. 62-65) contend that the social capacity of particular genres and the relationship between genres are themselves patterned in ways that shape and are shaped by gender, social class, ethnicity, age, time, space, and other factors. In the same vein, these authors add that the pursuit of a particular interactive orientation, such as teaching, exhorting, befriending, and confronting, generally involves negotiated shifts in genre, allowing some features of one genre to be embedded within a token of another.

5.3. Revisiting the Notion of Context: From Context to Contextualization

Pietarinen (2007, p. 127) contends that speech is not a personal possession, but a social one; it belongs, not to the individual *per se*, but to him/her in the capacity of a member of society. This is due to the fact that no item of existing language is totally the original work of an individual and what we may individually choose to say is not considered language until it is