



Proliferation of Literary Movements in English Literature

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ABSTRACT

Literary movements are a way to divide literature into categories of similar philosophical, topical, or aesthetic features, as opposed to divisions by various branches or time period. Like other categorizations, literary movements provide language for comparing and discussing literary works. These terms are helpful for readers to understand the interest and concept of the people lived in the particular time.

It's been necessary to understand literary movements to decipher the works written in the particular time and the writer's concept. The major literary movements created in literature are, MetaPhysical, Romanticism, Realism, Magical Realism, Symbolism and Post Modernism. These movements been created in various times in society. Everything is entirely differing from other movements, The MetaPhysical poets intellectual enough draws two different objects and makes connections, which seems a bit difficult to understand the concepts. Just opposite to that, Romanticism very simplistic portrayal of nature and express emotions. Realism portrays the ordinary poor people's life events in simplified writing style. Magical Realism uses some fantastical ideas with ordinary life. Symbolism focussed on structure rather than poetic form. Post Modernism reflects the post- colonial and World War impacts with embracing diversity, irony and word play.

KEY WORDS: Movements, Definitions, Writers, Aspects, Influence.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Change is the only thing that never change" is a popular saying. Literature is reflection of human life. As human life undergoes changes often, it's been usual that it would reflect in literature too. In each century a few radical thinkers come and spreading different ideas. They don't want to stick to the orthodox format to pursue their literary career. As we know the meaning of the

word "movement" means the process of moving and especially changing place or position from one place to another. So, literary movement means, development or growth of literature from one stage to another. The classical writers have followed rules and regulations about the creation of art. In 16th century John Donne invented a new form of writing poetry. It appeals to the carnal pleasures and words been used in a revolutionary way. It's been named as Metaphysical by Dr. Johnson. 'meta' means 'far', so metaphysical means far from the physical matter.

The moment we look at Donne's poetry, it becomes apparent that he is breaking away from the ways of writing that are characteristic of the sixteenth century. His originality is evident in a poem such as "The Sun Rising",

"Busy old fool, unruly sun

Why dost thou thus,

Through windows, and through curtains call on us"

Donne's metaphysical way of handling this theme, suggests that the poem is more significant than its trivial subject matter might initially lead the readers to believe. Donne scolds the sun for disturbing him and his partner in bed in the morning. The Sun Rising starts abruptly, almost aggressively, as soon as it starts there is a rapid sequence of images which accumulate so quickly that it is difficult to understand all in first read. Moreover, as Donne introduces images, he seems to turn them inside out, playing with them, creating a sense of a mobile and confusing world. The sun might traditionally suggest warmth and security, but Donne work on the image of sun which results as restless and unnerving. We can relate this impression of strange aspects of metaphysical to other qualities that are present in Donne's poetry. There are sudden leaps in imagery, a twisting ideas, paradoxes and unexpected reversals.

So, the metaphysical poets have used complexity which may be regarded as a reflection of the poet's temperament. They favour unorthodox and personalised lyric forms. Changes in form could be seen as merely a reaction against the poetic



forms of a previous age, but metaphysical form enables to move from the conventional sense of an idealised love to a sense love as a mysterious and untidy complex of physical desire and with spiritual impulse. They have changed the old patterns as fixed ideas and considered as that familiar pattern is a thing of past. The reasons for such changes are complicated as their use of concept of the conceit. A conceit is a far-fetched metaphor in which a very likely connection between two things is established.

The Romantic movement begins at middle Eighteenth century. This period is called as Artistic intellectual movement. The political and economic atmosphere at the time heavily influenced the period. Many writers finding inspiration from the French Revolution. There was a lot of socio-political changes happened during this period. The writers of this time, gave more importance to nature and values human emotions. They have awareness and acceptance of emotions. Most importantly artistic creativity increased and their power of imagination was celebrated. Romantic poets believed that artists and writers looked at the world differently, and they enjoyed that vision in their works. These writers believed that creative inspiration came from solitary exploration. They enjoyed the feeling of being in solitude, whether that meant loneliness or a much-needed quiet space to think and create. The romantic poems written about the antiques and the gifts of ancient culture around the world, and far away locations provide the setting for some literary works of this period. For example, S.T. Coleridge's "Kubla Khan". Though they are lovers of nature, they didn't turn away from the darker side of emotion and mysteries of the supernatural. They explored the contrast between life and death. Thus, Romantic movement marked by the characteristics of celebration of nature, focus on the individual and spirituality, Revolution, democracy, and republicanism, isolation and melancholy, interest in the common man, idealization of women and personification and pathetic fallacy. Some remarkable poets in this era are, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake. This movement continued till Nineteenth Century, writers from this time noted as second generation romantic poets, notable writers in this group are, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats and Lord Byron.

The Realistic movement begins in mid Nineteenth century, differs entirely from the previous types of notions about literature. It focuses on the ordinary life of the people especially poor

and middle-class people and the society from their view point. The obvious difference is not difficult to explain. As the world changes rapidly, people long to have the security of sound beliefs, rules and fixed codes. There is an air of quiet desperation to mid nineteenth, its otherwise called as Victorian age, religion of clinging on to what one can amidst the wreckage of change. As a matter of fact, Realism is a literary movement which attempts to portray life. The particular problem faced by the people, in case of religion was, that the old narratives in religion seemed no longer capable of making sense of their lives. The result was that they sought new ways of ordering their world, both intellectually and in concrete terms. As the people took practical measures in their life styles and also needed intellectual explanations that could make them sense of a world that had changed and was changing so fast. There are a number of Victorian writers helped the Victorian age people to make sense of their lives. Some of the prominent writers among them were, Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Mathew Arnold and John Ruskin. These writers been referred as Victorian Sages. The Victorian Sages provided new narratives that were of great importance to their contemporaries. When analysed cautiously, it will be clear that that time emerged three new narratives, that are of a different order altogether which are still relevant to people's lives today.

The three major European thinkers of the Victorian time are Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. Darwin developed the theory of Evolution, Marx was the founder of international Communism, and Freud was the founder of Psychoanalysis. The new narratives of these three men offer, in each field and collectively, a new means of making sense of all of life. The first one, Darwin, reads the world on a scientific basis, the second one, Marx, focus on the political terms and the last one, Freud, in terms of the importance of the individual mind. The writings of all three men are the astonishing products of an age of uncertainty. Particularly the Reality age, developed a new form, that the writers used a kind of policing of the fictional world in line with middle-class values. The assumptions of the middle-class observer are taken to be universal standards of morality, propriety and conduct. Essentially a moral frame, a kind of secularised version of an old religious code, is imposed upon life. This might seem to hold out the promise of nothing more than the most tedious moral tracts, but the realistic novels habitually contradict, complicate and frustrate the overall scheme of values that they



might seem to be advancing, revealing an awareness of the tensions that lie just below the surface of respectable life.

In Twentieth century, a new type of writing emerged, which was different from the previous various types had emerged. This literary term got its name from the term given for German painting style in 1920s, which was Magic Realism. Matthew Strecher(1999) defined it as “what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe”. The term often seems to confused as of its various definitions, the writers been called as magical realists. The characteristics of this genre was, that included fantastic or mythical elements into seemingly realistic works. Magic Realism is different from Fantasy works. The former one deals mostly with reality life occasionally wonderful or magical elements would appear. But the latter one grounded on the basis of non-realistic world. J.R.R.Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* would be the best example for fantasy works. Magic Realism show cases the world which is familiar to the reader, ordinary world. It must have a unique plot which consist of magical elements and some traditions would bring about mythological elements bring back to life. These kinds of stories provide limited information about the plot, which would make the readers become very curious about the work. These kinds of works needed intensified reading. For an example, Gabriel Garcia Marquez’ novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the readers must let go of pre-existing ties to conventional exposition, plot advancement, linear time structure, scientific reason to strive for a state of heightened awareness of life’s connectedness of hidden meanings. The narrative is really withholding most of the information and explanations about the current set up of the work. In Salman Rushdie reviewed Gabriel Garcia Marquez’ novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, he says that the formal experiment of magic realism allows political ideas to be expressed in ways might be impossible through more established literary forms,

“El realism magico”, magic realism, at least as practised by Marquez, is a development out of Surrealism that expresses a genuinely “Third World” consciousness. It deals with what Naipaul has called “half-made” societies, in which the impossibly old struggles against the appallingly new, in which public corruptions and private anguishes are somehow more garish and extreme than they ever get in the so-called “North”, where centuries of wealth and power have formed thick layers over the surface of what’s really going on. In

the works of Marquez, as in the world he describes, impossible things happen constantly, and quite plausibly, out in the open under the midday sun”

Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*(1981) proved that, there was an immediate realisation that this was a major text and which was written in an ambitious way, quite unlike anything published in past years. *Midnight’s Children* is a history of India since independence. This story coinciding with the narrator’s personal history. The narrator’s name is Saleem Sinai who was born on 15 August 1947. In the first hour that an independent India came into existence. The plot shifts here with the detail that, the children born on the particular time gifted with power. Here Rushdie didn’t go through the realistic history which was occurred during the time. On the contrary, he has employed an approach that might be referred as fabulation or magic realism. He presented the plot with strange characters, odd events, and plot developed, out of the conventional logic. This book considered as it belonged to two traditions. *Midnight’s Children* belongs in the history of Indian literature, but also belongs to the history of English literature.

The next movement happened was Symbolism. Symbolism is a literary device which make use of symbols, may they be words, people, or things. The literal meaning would be different from the indicative meaning in the context. The words will mean more than it seems. In literature symbolism is used to produce some effects by adding more meaning to an action, or name. this is a loosely organised literary movement that originated with a number of French poets in the late Nineteenth century, in order to spread painting, and the dramas and influence European and American literatures of the Twentieth century in various ways. These artists tried to express individual emotional experience through the subtle and significant use of highly symbolized language. Symbolism makes a work of art more interesting by letting the readers to decipher the meaning which presented inside the text in the symbolic or indirect way. It far more desirable to find out meanings rather than given in abrupt way. The Symbolist writers wished to liberate poetry from its expository functions and its formalized oratory in order to describe instead of transient, make it as approach the immediate sensations of man’s inner life and experience. They check out the ineffable intuitions and sense instincts of people’s inner life and to communicate the underlying mystery of existence through its five



types. Those were, metaphor, simile, allegory, archetype and myth.

One of the remarkable symbolist writers is Charles Baudelaire, particularly his poem *Les Fleurs du mal* (1854). Baudelaire used to convey his concept in a way of correspondences between the senses and added musical qualities to the poem. Thus, the real intention of symbolism is meant to be used partly on their idealistic judgement that underlying the materiality and individuality of the physical world was another reality whose essence could best be glanced through the subjective exceptional responses contributing to the work of art. The Symbolists' works had a strong and lasting influence for the forth coming century writers in British and American literature. Their experimental techniques enriched the technical collection of modern poetry and symbolist theories gave desired result in the poetry of W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot. It represented in the modern novel by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. In the writings of these writers, words harmonies and patterns of images often take prominence over the narrative. Postmodernism movement focuses on the individual rather than society, it denies some of the claims which has been accepted by people in case of arts, literature and culture. For an example, robbery didn't accept by all people as negative one, some tends to analyse the action by the situations behind the person who committed the action. Post modernism emphasis mostly on peculiar themes. The themes and techniques are frequently used together. In the late twentieth century, Britain's main weakness was its economy. The economic changes within Britain accompanied by a boom in the world economy. People suffered of poverty and social indiscipline. It was obvious that the health and education services were worse. As the old structure and values began to disappear, people tend to move to fill the void with their own rules and systems of regulations. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945), *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949), have dystopian fantasies about totalitarian states, both focus on the limitations on individual freedom that could occur in the near future. Literature revealed the change of values and reflected all areas of life in a country that had lost its world role and lost a sense of purpose and direction. This is certainly the state of Britain over a period of about twenty years that begins with John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956). With *Waiting For Godot*, changed the perspective of drama and vision of the world altogether. The post-modern view in literature characterized by the use of unreliable narration, self-reflexivity, intertextuality. Edward

Bond's *Lear* (1971), rewriting of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. But it was written more provocatively cruel than the original work. This indeed, sums up the state of modern society. As Beckett seems to convince the readers about the absurdity of contemporary society, Bond seeks to show its appalling and meaningless cruelty. Thus, each literary movement proclaimed the state of the political economic conditions of the society and framed accordingly.

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