

## Angry Young Men

The "**angry young men**" were a group of mostly working and middle class british playwright and novelists who became prominent in the 1950s. The group's leading members included John Osborne and Kingsley Amis. The phrase was originally coined by the Royal Court Theatre to promote John Osborne's 1956 play *Look Back in Anger*. It is thought to be derived from the autobiography of Leslie Paul, whose *Angry Young Man* was published in 1951.

Following the success of the Osborne play, the label "angry young men" was later applied by British media to describe young writers who were characterized by disillusionment with traditional British society. However, the naming was rejected by most of the writers to whom it was applied; for instance in "Answer to a Letter from Joe" John Wain (*Essays on Literature and Ideas*, 1963) commented: "(T)hey do *not* belong to a united movement. Far from it; they attack one another directly or indirectly in these pages. Some were even reluctant to appear between the same covers with others whose views they violently oppose", though their political views were usually seen as identifying with the left, sometimes anarchistic describing social alienation of different kinds. They also often expressed their critical views on society as a whole, criticizing certain behaviors or groups in different ways. On television, their writings were often expressed in plays in anthology drama series such as *Armchair Theatre* and *The Wednesday Play* which, all together, gave a strong voice of anger and resentment of the common people to be heard by the state authority.

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## John Osborne

**John James Osborne** (Fulham, London, 12 December 1929 – 24 December 1994) was an English playwright, screenwriter and actor, known for his excoriating prose and intense critical stance towards established social and political norms. In a productive life of more than 40 years, Osborne explored many themes and genres, writing for stage, film and TV. Osborne was one of the first writers to address Britain's purpose in the post-imperial age. He was the first to question the point of the monarchy on a prominent public stage. During his peak (1956–1966), he helped make contempt an acceptable and now even clichéd onstage emotion, argued for the cleansing wisdom of bad behavior and bad taste, and combined unsparing truthfulness with devastating wit.

His *Look Back in Anger* was largely autobiographical, based on his time living, and arguing, with Pamela Lane in cramped accommodation in Derby while she cuckolded him with a local dentist. The main issues that it had were "impatience with the status quo, refusal to be co-opted by a bankrupt society, an instinctive solidarity with the lower classes." Referred to as "kitchen sink realism" literary works began to deal with lower class themes. In the decades prior to Osborne and other authors, less attention had been given to literature that illuminated the treatment and living circumstances experienced by the lower classes. As the Angry Young Men movement began to articulate these themes, the acceptance of related issues was more widespread. Osborne depicted these issues within his play through the eyes of his protagonist, Jimmy. Throughout the play, Jimmy was seeing "the wrong people go hungry, the wrong people be loved, the wrong people dying".

In post-World War Britain, the quality of life for lower class citizens was very poor; Osborne used this theme to demonstrate how the state of Britain was guilty of neglect towards those that needed assistance the most. In the play there are comparisons of educated people with savages, illuminating the major difference between classes. Alison remarks on this issue while she, Jimmy and Cliff are sharing an apartment, stating how "she felt she had been placed into a jungle" Jimmy was represented as an embodiment of the young, rebellious post-war generation that questioned the state and its actions. *Look Back in Anger* provided some of its audience with the

hope that Osborne's work would revitalize the British theatre and enable it to act as a "harbinger of the New Left".

His *The Entertainer* was not only a comment on the condition of common people in particular, but on the moribund state of the British Empire and its eclipse by the power of the United States in general, something flagrantly revealed during the Suez Crisis of November 1956 that elliptically forms the backdrop to the play by using the metaphor of a dying music hall. An experimental piece, *The Entertainer* was interspersed with music hall performances. Most critics praised the development of an exciting writing talent:

These were the issues that he dealt with consistently in other plays like *West of Suez*, *sense of Detachment*, *Dejavu* inviting different responses from the critics. Though some ridiculed the plays as mere presentation of his fancy and immature indulgence, yet his reputation lies today as giving a voice to the agony and suffering of the common lower class people and their resentment towards the state.

As a dramatist, Osborne's work transformed British theatre. He helped to make it artistically respected again, throwing off the formal constraints of the former generation, and turning our attention once more to language, theatrical rhetoric, and emotional intensity in order to present theatre as a weapon with which ordinary people could break down the class barriers.

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## Auden Circle

Auden circle is a group of five poets and playwright, sometimes said to be seven, of the inter-war period who were loosely connected each other by their shared belief in the left-wing politics. They envisioned a change in the war ridden society by shifting the power to the hands of the masses. The members of the group include W.H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, and Christopher Isherwood. (sometimes Edward Upward and Rex Warner).

They reacted to the fragmented, artificial and hollowness of the contemporary situation and voiced through their poetry for a change and entrusted their hope on the ideologies of the masses following the failure of existing political system. Auden was a spokesperson of the masses whom he contemplated with warm understanding, compassion, and deep insight and showed clearly in his early poetry, like *The Orators*, *Look*, *Stranger*, a faith in violent social upheaval as a means to a better order. Yet he was outspokenly anti-romantic, and, like others in the group of writers-friends, stressed the importance of clinical and objective attitudes. At times, however, he oversimplified issues for the sake of emphasizing his radical views, but had an outstanding ability to experience and express the spirit of the age in the poetry like *The Age of Anxiety*, *The Poet's Tongue*, in a language and a style which always distinct him from the 'highbrow' of the modern poetry.

The poetry of Stephen Spender who had also same beliefs and expectation, was involved in a struggle with his concern for the individual. The most introspective of the group, Spender showed a tendency to look more and more within himself for his subject matter. Lyrical in nature most of his poetry, express the pity of war and emotions of a lover. Poems like *World Within World*, *The Destructive Elements* expresses his ideology at its best.

Cecil Day Lewis also heaped his hope in left-wing ideals as is evident in the poem *The Magnetic Mountain*, but he is more balanced and common-sensical than many of the political poets of the thirties. More often he indulges himself in poetic renderings of things than making it a mouthpiece of a certain ideas. Therefore, in his verse we find his fondness for imagery drawn largely from the machinery and similar aspect of modern life. In matters of technique he owes

much to the poetry of Eliot and Hopkins, though he never approved of the despair manifested in *The Waste Land*.

Like C. Day Lewis, MacNeice too never embraced wholeheartedly any political creed, though he was acutely aware as any of them in the inter-war period. He combined a keen, analytical observation of contemporary life with a strong common sense, a very definite sense of humour, while his classical training has impressed itself upon the form and style of his work. A purer artist than Auden, MacNeice is acutely aware of the musical and rhythmical potentialities of language, and he wrote with a control, finish, lightness of touch, and a structural sense which are often lacking among the members of the group.. *The Earth Compels, Plant and Phantom, Holes in the Sky* are a few important works of this poet.

Mentor of Auden, Christopher Isherwood is recognized as member of the circle. Though not a wholehearted supporter, his novels shows distaste and rejection of upper class ideology, his play *Dog Beneath the Skin, On the Frontier* are dramatical renderings of his ideas. More often his ideas are marred and covered by his involvement in bringing out the relationship among individuals. With a richness of a style he always hides behind the surface an unnatural relation among the individual, especially among the man.

The Auden circle was borne out of a 'time of crisis and dismay' after the first world war and in the shadow of the second one. The frustration and hatred towards existing political and economic structure at failure to handle the situation breed among people a deep resentment and a perception of a changed world. This group of poet echoed this sentiment of the people. It is this transition that they were asking for though it never came as they wished.

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## **Culture and identity in post colonial studies**

Due to cultural pollination, creolisation, impellation and hybridization during the imperial era a mixed culture and identity evolve among the people of the colonized countries in the postcolonial period which Homi. K. Bhaba referred as 'third space'. The impossibility to define one's culture in its earlier term has been an important issue in postcolonial studies. With the change of the culture, subsequently, emerge an identity different and unique both from the colonized and colonizers which is regarded as the most controversial issue in postcolonial time and literature and its crisis exist in all postcolonial communities. Due to the circumstances of post colonial era and the problematic conditions that faced newly freed nations and countries in their search and formation of self identity the crisis floated on the surface. The issue of identity is not a clear and fixed concept as it may be imagined, that led to the crisis and became a phenomenon as Mercer argues "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty"( 43) In the following of World War II, the act of decolonization and liberation of nations under colonial rule provoked a noteworthy move in the direction of recreating social and individual identities. The period also marked by the struggle of decolonization in all the levels of life, culture, economy, arts etc, that demanded to regain their identity which was lost by the powers of colonization. Edward Said argues that it is a historical truth that nationalism-restoration of the people, declaration of identity, coming out of new cultural practices as a mobilized political power initiated and then raised the struggle against western authority in the non-European world(Said, 1993: 218). According to Oxford English dictionary; identity is defined as "The fact of being who or what a person or thing is" but in postcolonial context, identity is a complex concept that would be difficult to define. The identification of an individual or a group or a nation in postcolonial terms as one notices easily is linked to the "other", that means they recognize themselves "us" with the existence of the "other". Otherness is a feature to recognize identity in postcolonial era in which also means it is twofold, "both identity and difference, so that every other, every different than and excluded by is dialectically created and includes the values and meaning of the colonizing culture even as it rejects its power to define" (Sinha, 4). In addition, this binary relation of otherness created a kind of identity dislocation and paved a

hierarchical situation in the period. The national identity that's formed in a post colonial states "is believed to be never fixed and is very changing according to environment and culture, because of transfer and sovereignty which leads to a confusion in identity." (Chan, i). Since the identity is not a stable and fixed notion as Hall confirms —Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses (Hall 1989, 10) and the impact of colonial legacy was multi dimensional besides there was a different consequences of colonialism in different locations, the issue of identity appeared in different shapes and forms. Collective and individual identities also differ physically and psychologically. The resistance of decolonization process took various outlines due to countries, societies and individuals. Therefore, identity "is not simply imposed. It is also chosen, and actively used, albeit within particular social contexts and constraints. Against dominant representations of "others" there is resistance. Within structures of dominance, there is agency" (Goldberg). For instance, the crisis of identity in Caribbean region "lie[s] in the contested and interrelated process of colonization, slavery, and migration. Caribbean society bears the legacy of colonial oppression, exploitation and marginalization."(Guruprasad, 27) also in Africa British colonialism as Bonnici confirms "took different forms and native peoples reacted to it differently ( Bonnici, 6). Furthermore, the chaos that left behind by colonizers in creating a kind of ruling systems in areas especially in Africa added to the crisis of identity additional irresolvable dilemma. Mahmood Mamdani explains that " Colonialism was not just about the identity of governors, that they were white or European; it was even more so about the institutions they created to enable a minority to rule over a majority."

Bill Ashcroft in *The Empire Writes Back* argues that the literature offers a one of the most important ways in which the postcolonial period's perceptions are expressed and the day to day realities experienced by colonized peoples have been powerfully encoded. The novelists inclines to "discrepant approaches in order to heal the effects that the colonial experience left on the colonized peoples. As a result, Postcolonial novel finds itself engaged with questions and issues such as resistance, nationalism, Diasporas and identity construction and its crisis. Postcolonial novelists form their novel in a counter-discourse of resistance to the forms, styles and themes of English Literature" in difference rather than the ambivalent form of mimicry; a difference, moreover, which enables them, in Rushdie's words, to straddle two cultures with the ease of long acquaintance."

To conclude, as an aftermath of long imperialism, the colony suffered the crisis of culture and identity. Postcolonial study examines this crisis in order to create an identity of its own.

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## **Modernism and literature**

Modernism refers to the radical shift in aesthetic and cultural sensibilities evident in the art and literature of the early twentieth century. The combined effect of many contemporary issues and incidents like development of modern industrial societies, the rapid growth of cities, individualism, the horror of two world wars, gender, class and race struggles had stricken the moral basis, coherence and durability Christian civilization. People began to lose faith in government, society, religion, civilization and more importantly, in God. They questioned the authenticity and viability of such institution and entered in a condition of gloom, helplessness, aimlessness, confusion, frustration and spiritual darkness.

Every individual was bothered by this new discovery which resulted in the fragmentation, dislocation and shattering of their consciousness. Unlike the people of Victorian era which was guided by moral rigidity and spirituality to a definite end, people in this age suddenly discover themselves drawn to a hopeless and meaningless end due to the absence of purpose and guidance. The soundness and linearity of the Victorian consciousness was substituted by confusion and fragmentation. Modernism, as a movement, aims to present this new individual consciousness.

In literature, it has two distinctive effects—in form and in content. The loss of faith in institution has given way to speculate and analyse individual and his consciousness rather than the society.



The events of outside world matter less than the thought streaming through one's mind. In form, modernist writers felt the inadequacy of existing literary technique to effectively present the consciousness. Hence, they experimented with the form and emphasized on the need to use techniques like stream of consciousness, internal monologues etc. James Joyce's *Ulysses*, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* which was published in 1922 were example of modernist literature in that sense. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot replaced the standard syntactic flow of poetic language by fragmented utterances, and substituted for the traditional coherence of poetic structure a deliberate dislocation of parts, in which very diverse components are related by connections that are left to the reader to discover or invent. Similarly, the prose fiction of Joyce and Woolf subvert the basic conventions of earlier prose fiction by breaking up the narrative continuity, departing from the standard ways of representing characters, and violating the traditional syntax and coherence of narrative language by the use of stream of consciousness and other innovative technique.

Modernist literature, to be precise, commensurate with the very consciousness of an individual. In the words of T.S. Eliot, modernist literature is a, 'way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futile anarchy which is contemporary history... it is a step towards making the modern world possible for arts.'

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## **The Stream of Consciousness narrative technique in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man***

Stream of Consciousness technique is a narrative mode or device that depicts the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind. Thoughts and feelings are continual flow like the flow of water; there is no stop or gap. Exact depiction of such thought is not possible with the traditional method of narration-whether it is third person omniscient narration or first person narration. There always remain some sorts of lapses or lacking in actual depiction of thoughts. Stream of consciousness technique, by virtue of its emphasis on thoughts, has been able to successfully delineate thoughts process of the characters. James Joyce used the 'stream of consciousness' narrative technique in 'A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man', to depict the very process of development of the consciousness of Stephen Dedalus.

From the point of narrative technique, 'A Portrait of the Artist' can be divided in to two parts. The stream of Stephen's consciousness flows without break up to the middle part of the fourth chapter. This first part is very important since it shows the development of Stephen's consciousness through childhood, adolescent and maturing time. The next part starts with his admission in university. However, this is not a continual flow of consciousness. It is the physical action that dominates the scene, stream of consciousness appears more as flash back by fits and starts.

As a narrative mode, stream of consciousness is highly experimental and differs to a great extent form any conventional mode of narration. The novel does not start with 'Stephen was born at Blackrock, Ireland in 1882', neither does it start with a sentence like 'Stephen was sent to Clongwoes Wood College, at six years of age'. The novel starts with Stephen's initial consciousness. It flows from an incident of his father telling him a scary story of about an age of six, an age when people's consciousness begins to shape. In this chapter, the young Stephen is only capable of describing his world in simple words and phrases. The sensation that he experiences are all jumbled together with a child's lack of attention to cause and effect. For instance, in the very opening of the novel, when he recollects his version of father's song 'O, the wild rose blossoms/On the little green place', as 'O, the green wothebotheth', he did not add

color or modification to it. It came as it happened and as it is stored in his consciousness. Stephen's present age and present situation did not affect the process in the least. This is much more evident, when he recollects that 'when you wet the bed first, it is warm then it gets cold. His mother put on the oilsheet. That had the queer smell.' Or when he recollects 'the Vances live in number seven. They had a different mother and father'. In both case the memory that it evoked is equivalent to the very thought process of a child. The physical sensation that he arouses through the former has the nuances of each and every child 'wetting his/her bed'. In the latter, the immaturity of child's reasoning come into fore. In both cases the expression are appropriate to the context. Any other form would have been inappropriate. Later when Stephen is teenager obsessed with religion, he was able to think in a clear manner. Sentence and Paragraphs were more logically ordered than in the opening section of the novel and Stephen's consciousness show the traces of maturity and logicality yet is never free from the adolescent emotional responses to the outside world. His blind adherence to the religion, sin and punishment had caused a lot of suffering which his consciousness express in the next part of the novel. His adolescent carnal desire and encounter with the prostitute and his subsequent realization of committing sin had intense repercussion in his mind. It is only in the final chapter, when Stephen is in the University, that he seems truly rational. By the end of the novel, Joyce renders a portrait of a mind that has achieved emotional, intellectual and artistic adulthood.

Conscious is an uninterrupted continual flow. This continuity depends not on logic or reason. The end of one thought will be inevitably followed by another, depending on the major image that it carries. And in most cases the interlinking images may be color, smell, taste or sounds. Thus the consciousness will continue unless and until there is any forced intervention from the part of the person. In Joyce's 'A Portrait of The Artist', the consciousness of Stephen continues till the middle part of chapter four without any break. The sentence 'He could wait no longer' and a comparatively a bigger gap in between the paragraph marks this break in his consciousness. Until then it is a continuity of his consciousness interlinked by the images of sound, color, smell etc. For instance, in the opening page of the novel, Stephen recollected that 'His mother put on the oil sheet. That had the queer smell'. The smell of the oilsheet which was 'queer' will evoke in his consciousness any other incidents where the feeling of 'smell' was

dominant. In this case, therefore, the next paragraph which starts off ‘my mother had a nicer smell than his father’ is not an arbitrary selection on the part of the author; rather it is due to law of the human consciousness. This process has been repeated throughout the novel. Eileen, who was occupying a place in Stephen’s young imagination, has been referred and understood by Stephen as ‘ivory tower’. Therefore, wherever in his consciousness that phrase appears, the next paragraph will immediately and inevitably be about Eileen. The first chapter ends with an image of sound and sight in his consciousness—‘from here and from there through the quiet air the sound of the cricket bats: pick, pack, pock, and puck: like drops of water in a fountain falling softly in the brimming bowl.’ The sound of a cricket bat hitting on the surface is compared with the sound of a drop of water falling in brimming bowl. So the image that it carries is a bowl full of water placed in the corner of a house or a place like this where water falls in single drops. A bowl is a part of that image. Therefore, when Joyce started the second chapter it is the bowl image that continues in his consciousness. In this time, however, the bowl is not with brimful of water, but a bowl that uncle Charles used to keep with as an ash tray while smoking—‘while he smoked the brim of his tall hat and the bowl of his pipe were just visible beyond the jambs of the outhouse door’. Division of chapters, therefore, does not necessarily mean the shift in the story line. Convention division of paragraph cannot be applied to the five chapters of the novel. The division is strictly based on the development of his thoughts and it reciprocates the very process of thought.

In fact, the author has no power over the consciousness. It flows its natural course. It does not even follow punctuation, grammar. Joyce’s *Ulysses* is good example in this instance. However, **A Portrait of the Artist** is not so experimental enough to be identical with the actual thought process. There is judicious use of punctuations and grammar to make it intelligible for the readers. Often, there is the authorial voice to understand the sequential link between two sets of events which helps a reader may find the meaning of the text without understanding the law of stream of consciousness. The absence of authorial note as well as punctuation in *Ulysses* requires close understanding of stream of human consciousness. Even though Joyce is careful to mark the changes of scene clearly, the reader has to keep his wits about him in order to follow the transition that occurs when Joyce moves from presenting the outer scene to the mind of Stephen. For instance, when Stephen is still wondering whether he really dare take his complaint against father Dolan to the Rector when he was approaching the rector’s door—‘ He was walking down

along the matting and he saw the door before him. It was impossible: he could not.' The shift, here, is made very skillfully. Against the first sentence which was authors comment, the rest part is his inside his consciousness. The movement from author to the mind of the mind is not indicated. It is where Joyce is different from Virginia Woolf and his later works.

Stream of consciousness narrative technique is used in most of the modernist novels. Joyce portrait plays an important role in its development. Unlike his contemporary Virginia Woolf for whom thought is a composite of individual sufferings, Joyce area of treatment is bit more panoramic. He could successfully bring out the mental thought process of a person in conjunction with different situations and conjunction, yet he is much more natural than the former. However, thought is a continuous flow like stream and comes not one after another. In most cases a thought is accompanied by many correlative thoughts. A Portrait is of course not to that extent experimental, there is enough clues and indication from the author's part to understand the oddity and difficulty of stream of thoughts.

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### **Marginalization (postcolonialism)**

Marginalization is a concept popularized in the postcolonial studies to refer to a process where a strong ideology, faith, religion or economic pushes the other ideologies to the margin or to the periphery. It imagines the power structure in terms of circle and believes that the dominant one will always occupy the centre and others will be relegated to the margin. State will keep interest in preserving and sustaining the interest of those who occupy the centre-stage, others voices, their sufferings and interest were never heard. Therefore, the apparent unity of a nation always

hides exploitation and injustice done to many people. Moreover, Marginality unintentionally reifies centrality because it is the centre that creates the condition of marginality. But ‘Who are the marginal? Or ‘Marginal to what?’ Is it that the process started with imperialism since, ‘imperialism marginalizes, and the colonized people are marginalized’. But they are neither *all* marginalized nor *always* marginalized. Imperialism cannot be reduced to a structure, a geometry of power that leaves some particular races on the margin. Hence, marginalization is continuous process working through individuals as well as upon them. It reproduces itself within the very idea of the marginal. Therefore, despite its ubiquity as a term to indicate various forms of exclusion and oppression, the use of the term always involves the risk that it endorses the structure that established the marginality of certain groups in the first place.

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### **SUBALTERN (postcolonial study)**

*Subaltern, meaning ‘of inferior rank’, is a term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in society who are subject to the **hegemony** of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers and other groups denied access to ‘hegemonic’ power. Since the history of the ruling classes is realized in the state, history being the history of states and dominant groups, Gramsci was interested in the historiography of the subaltern classes. In ‘Notes on Italian history’(1934–5) he outlined a six point plan for studying the history of the subaltern classes which included: (1) their objective formation;(2) their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations; (3) the birth of new parties and dominant groups; (4) the formations that the subaltern groups produce to press their claims; (5) new formations within the old framework that assert the autonomy of the subaltern classes; and other points referring to trade unions and political parties*

Gramsci claimed that the history of the subaltern classes was just as complex as the history of the dominant classes (52),although the history of the latter is usually that which is accepted as ‘official’history. For him, the history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic (54), since they are always subject to the activity of ruling groups,even when they rebel. Clearly they have less access to the means by which they may control their own representation, and less access to cultural and social institutions. Only ‘permanent’ victory (that is, a

revolutionary class adjustment) can break that pattern of subordination, and even that does not occur immediately. The term has been adapted to post-colonial studies from the work of the Subaltern Studies group of historians, who aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian Studies. It issued in *Subaltern Studies* 'as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way' (Guha 1982:vii). The group – formed by Ranajit Guha, and initially including Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman and Gyan Pandey – has produced five volumes of *Subaltern Studies*: essays relating to the history, politics, economics and sociology of subalterneity 'as well as the attitudes, ideologies and belief systems – in short, the culture informing that condition' (vii). *The purpose of the Subaltern Studies project was to redress the imbalance created in academic work by a tendency to focus on élites and élite culture in South Asian historiography.* Recognizing that subordination cannot be understood except in a binary relationship with dominance, the group aimed to examine the subaltern 'as an objective assessment of the role of the élite and as a critique of élitist interpretations of that role' (vii). *The goals of the group stemmed from the belief that the historiography of Indian nationalism, for instance, had long been dominated by élitism – colonialist élitism and bourgeoisie nationalist élitism – both the consequences of British colonialism. Such historiography suggested that the development of a nationalist consciousness was an exclusively élite achievement either of colonial administrators, policy or culture, or of élite Indian personalities, institutions or ideas. Consequently, asserts Guha, such writing cannot acknowledge or interpret the contribution made by people on their own, that is, independently of the élite.* What is clearly left out by the class outlook of such historiography is a 'politics of the people' (4), which, he claims, is an autonomous domain that continued to operate when the élite politics became outmoded. One clear demonstration of the difference between the élite and the subaltern lies in the nature of political mobilization: élite mobilization was achieved vertically through adaptation of British parliamentary institutions, while the subaltern relied on the traditional organization of kinship and territoriality or class associations. Popular mobilization in the colonial period took the form of peasant uprisings, and the contention is that this remains a primary locus of political action, despite the change in political structure (6). This is very different from the claims of élite historiography that Indian nationalism was primarily an idealist venture in which the indigenous élite led the people from subjugation to freedom. Despite the

great diversity of subaltern groups, the one invariant feature was a notion of resistance to élite domination. The failure of the bourgeoisie to speak for the nation meant that the nation of India failed 'to come into its own', and for Guha 'it is the study of this failure which constitutes the central problematic of Indian historiography'(7). Clearly the concept of the subaltern is meant to cut across several kinds of political and cultural binaries, such as colonialism vs. nationalism, or imperialism vs. indigenous cultural expression, in favour of a more general distinction between subaltern and élite, because, suggests Guha, this subaltern group is invariably overlooked in studies of political and cultural change. *The notion of the subaltern became an issue in post-colonial theory when Gayatri Spivak critiqued the assumptions of the Subaltern Studies group in the essay 'Can the subaltern speak?'* This question, she claims, is one that the group *must* ask. Her first criticism is directed at the Gramscian claim for the *autonomy* of the subaltern group, which, she says, no amount of qualification by Guha – who concedes the diversity, heterogeneity and overlapping nature of subaltern groups – can save from its fundamentally essentialist premise. Second, no methodology for determining who or what might constitute this group can avoid this essentialism. *The 'people' or the 'subaltern' is a group defined by its difference from the élite. To guard against essentialist views of subalterneity Guha suggests that there is a further distinction to be made between the subaltern and dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels. However, Guha's attempt to guard against essentialism, by specifying the range of subaltern groups, serves only, according to Spivak, to problematize the idea of the subaltern itself still further.* 'The task of research is to investigate, identify and measure the *specific* nature of the degree of *deviation* of [the dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local level] from the ideal [the subaltern] and situate it historically' (Spivak1985b: 27). But, asks Spivak, 'what taxonomy can fix such a space?' *For the 'true' subaltern group, she says, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself. One cannot construct a category of the subaltern that has an effective voice clearly and unproblematically identifiable as such, a voice that does not at the same time occupy many other possible speaking positions.* Spivak goes on to elaborate the problems of the category of the subaltern by looking at the situation of gendered subjects and of Indian women in particular, for 'both as an object of colonialist historiography and as a subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant' (28). For if 'in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more



deeply in shadow' (28). Spivak examines the position of Indian women through an analysis of a particular case, and concludes with the declaration that 'the subaltern cannot speak'. This has sometimes been interpreted to mean that there is no way in which oppressed or politically marginalized groups can voice their resistance, or that the subaltern only has a dominant language or a dominant voice in which to be heard. But Spivak's target is the concept of an unproblematically constituted subaltern identity, rather than the subaltern subject's ability to give voice to political concerns. Her point is that no act of dissent or resistance occurs on behalf of an essential subaltern subject entirely separate from the dominant discourse that provides the language and the conceptual categories with which the subaltern voice speaks. Clearly, the existence of post-colonial discourse itself is an example of such speaking, and in most cases the dominant language or mode of representation is **appropriated** so that the **marginal** voice can be heard.

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## **Hegemony (postcolonial study)**

Hegemony, initially a term referring to the dominance of one state within a confederation, is now generally understood to mean domination by consent. This broader meaning was coined and popularized in the 1930s by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who investigated why the ruling class was so successful in promoting its own interests in society. Fundamentally, hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the economy, and over state apparatuses such as education and the media by which the ruling class's interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted. The term is useful for describing the success of imperial power over a colonized people who may far outnumber any occupying military force, but whose desire for self-determination has been suppressed by a hegemonic notion of the greater good, often couched in terms of social order, stability and advancement, all of which are defined by the colonizing power. Hegemony is important because the capacity to influence the thought of the colonized is by far the most sustained and potent operation of imperial power in colonized

regions. Indeed, an 'empire' is distinct from a collection of subject states forcibly controlled by a central power by virtue of the effectiveness of its cultural hegemony. Consent is achieved by the **interpellation** of the colonized subject by **imperial** discourse so that **Euro-centric** values, assumptions, beliefs and attitudes are accepted as a matter of course as the most natural or valuable. The inevitable consequence of such interpellation is that the colonized subject understands itself as peripheral to those Euro-centric values, while at the same time accepting their centrality. A classic example of the operation of hegemonic control is given by Gauri Viswanathan, who shows how 'the humanistic functions traditionally associated with the study of literature – for example, the shaping of character or the development of the aesthetic sense or the disciplines of ethical thinking – can be vital in the process of sociopolitical control' (1987: 2). Such control was maintained by the British government when it took responsibility for education in India after the Charter Act of 1813. Searching for a method of communicating the values of Western civilization to Indians which avoided offending their Hindu sensibilities, the administration discovered the power of English literature as a vehicle for imperial authority. 'The strategy of locating authority in these texts all but effaced the sordid history of colonialist expropriation, material exploitation, and class and race oppression behind European world dominance . . . the English literary text functioned as a surrogate Englishman in his highest and most perfect state' (Viswanathan 1987: 23). This Englishman was, at the same time, the embodiment of universal human values. As Viswanathan puts it, the 'split between the material and the discursive practices of colonialism is nowhere sharper than in the progressive refraction of the rapacious, exploitative and ruthless actor of history into the reflective subject of literature' (22–23). This refraction is a precise demonstration of one mode of hegemonic control. It proved a particularly effective one because the discourse of English literature was disseminated with its attendant spiritual values, cultural assumptions,

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### **HYBRIDITY (postcolonial study)**

One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in postcolonial theory, hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new **transcultural** forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, 'hybrid' species. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc. Linguistic examples include **pidgin** and **creole** languages, and these echo the foundational use of the term by the linguist and cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who used it to suggest the disruptive and transfiguring power of multivocal language situations and, by extension, of multivocal narratives. The idea of a polyphony of voices in society is implied also in Bakhtin's idea of the carnivalesque, which emerged in the Middle Ages when 'a boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture' (Holquist 1984: 4). The term 'hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities (see **mimicry and ambivalence**). Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation' (1994:37). Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which for Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical 'purity' of cultures untenable. For him, the recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us to overcome the **exoticism of cultural diversity** in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural may operate.

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## **E.L.Doctorow's Ragtime: a post-modernistic interpretation**

Postmodernism as a movement tried to challenge the quest for meaning or certainty that modernism or other movements tried to establish. It shows, often playfully, that it is impossible to attain certainty or represent facts truthfully since there are only uncertainty and plurality in the world. Postmodernism, in that sense, is a parody of the quest for meaning.

Postmodernist literature, particularly novels, articulated this feeling of uncertainty through various means. Historiography, which appears to be an objective account of events of certain period, is actually a narrative account of the same time. The so called objectivity is actually an imagining of the author about that incident in a particular way only; there could be many ways to imagine the same period. Historiography is one of that ways only. So the totalizing nature or objectivity of history is a purely constructed phenomenon. Doctorow's *Ragtime* dealt with the unreliability of history by drawing attention to period from 1900 to 1917, which was constructed as an age of purity in American culture. Doctorow's use of intertextuality, his mix of historical and fictional characters, and his rewriting of the narrator and the characters' identities all point to how reality and history are not fixed notions and they are rewritten and recreated continuously. In fact, the constant intermingling of what is generally considered verifiable historical fact and the author's fictive imagination allows Doctorow to redefine the past and open it to new and multiple interpretations. This is particularly obvious in *Ragtime*, where the categories of history, reality and fiction become helplessly blurred in a postmodernist celebration of uncertainty and plurality of meanings. As Doctorow concludes in his essay "False Documents," "there is no fiction or non-fiction as we commonly understand the distinction: there is only narrative"

This he did with his departure from conventional authorial voice as well as his delineation of factiousness of history by his use of metafiction. The narrator—who is ultimately unplaceable and stands in the novel for the figure of the writer—grapples with his/her untimely realization that whatever the efforts to capture reality, meaning seems to slip away from his/her hands, leaving him/her with serious doubts as to the possibility of ever representing truth. This is made evident by the narrator's playful switching from omniscient stream of consciousness to a mock pursuit of historical accuracy when he/she attempts to justify the source of specific information: "we have the account of this odd event from the magician's private, unpublished papers".

In *Ragtime*, Doctorow's postmodernist subversive drive is also revealed in stylistic terms--highly self-reflexive mode of writing that is characterized by narrative experimentalism, the decentering of subjectivity, parodic revision of traditional forms and intertextual playfulness. Echoing such understanding, *Ragtime*'s aesthetic affinities with postmodernism may be seen, first of all, in the paradoxical rejection of objectivity that it deploys. In an interview with Friedl and Schulz, Doctorow seems to advocate a dismissal of the central authority of the writer, who is instead replaced by a "multiplicity of witnesses": "since history can be composed, you see, and then you want to have as many people active in the composition as possible. A kind of democracy of perception. Thousands of eyes, not just one" (1999: 113). According to the writer, then, the plurality of perspectives that literature generates can provide a better understanding of different models of reality. Such an aspiration manifests itself in *Ragtime* mainly in terms of experimentalism with the narrating subject. The voice of the narrator is ultimately unplaceable, since it remains impossible to establish whether the narratorial voice is merely that of the mock historian or the Little Boy in the WASP family, or even a first-person plural collective narrator that comprises the voices of the Little Boy and Tatch's Little Girl.

Furthermore, the postmodernist revision(rejection) of metanarratives that *Ragtime* thematically represents also manifests itself formally in the blurring and reassessment of the traditional conventions of literary genres. In *Ragtime* this is mainly achieved through the use of parody. The genre of the historical chronicle is parodically appropriated by emphasizing the chronicler-narrator's unreliability and playfulness, in effect destabilizing and playing against traditional frameworks of generic interpretation. Similarly, Doctorow's inclination towards postmodernist aesthetics can be observed in the parodic intertextual references that pervade his novel. Discussing Jorge Luis Borges's experiments with fiction as an example, Barth (1984:73) refers to the continuous importance of intertextuality for the emerging postmodern novel in his 1967 essay. As Hutcheon eloquently elaborates in her seminal book on postmodernist poetics, intertextual parody "offers a sense of the presence of the past, but a past that can be known only from its texts, its traces--be they literary or historical" (1988: 125). In this sense, it is worth highlighting that the title of the novel already points to its intertextual nature through its parodic connections to historical intertexts, namely the *Ragtime* Era, but also *Ragtime* music, whose syncopating structure the novel seems to imitate (see for example Foley 1983; Ostendorf 1991 and Roberts 2004). More specifically, intertextuality plays a paramount role not merely in its

relation to historical events, but also in its ironic reworking of the textual literary past, which deeply affects issues of characterization: for instance, the name of one of its main protagonists — Coalhouse Walker — and the events in which he becomes involved have been recognized by many critics as an intertextual reference to Kleist's short story "Michael Kohlhaas" (see for example Kurth-Voigt 1977; Moraru 1997 and Orbán 2003).

Ragtime's indebtedness to postmodernism may also be seen in its displacement of subjectivity. As Hutcheon has argued (1988: 27), postmodern novels problematize the notions of enunciation and subjectivity through allegory or even through textualized questioning of the notion of narrative focalization. This is precisely the case in *Ragtime*, since its fragmented, iterative structure challenges the narrative conventions of the inscription of the subject as coherent and continuous centre of consciousness. Indeed, the novel is constructed on the basis of constant abrupt through smooth shifts of focalization that make it impossible for the reader to be sure of which of the character's consciousness is being favored: "They were immediately sensitive to the enormous power of the immigration officials. [...] Such power was dazzling. The immigrants were reminded of home. They were despised by New Yorkers. They were filthy and illiterate. [...] They had no honor and worked for next to nothing. They stole. They drank. They raped their own daughters" (13). Further, as Hutcheon has suggested, "[t]he meeting of fictional characters and historical personages in the novel may also have a function in the problematizing of the nature of the subject in the sense that it foregrounds the inescapable contextualizing of the self in both history and society" (1988: 27).

Finally, Doctorow's indebtedness to postmodernist aesthetics may be substantiated by *Ragtime's* metafictional self-reflexivity. According to Patricia Waugh's (1984: 2) definition, a metafictional text is one that self-consciously draws attention to its own status as an artifact. This is something that *Ragtime* actively seeks: the narrator constantly reflects on the process of his/her own textual composition, which is presented to the reader as the text that we are reading: "Our knowledge of this clandestine history comes to us [...]" (205). Further, the novel carries out a metafictional rethinking of the epistemological and ontological relationship between history and fiction without trivializing either the historical or the factual.

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## Seamus Heaney

Seamus Heaney was a national poet of Ireland. Starting with personal and family matters, he engages his poetic resource to the maximum to the cause of Irish nation which was suffering from various socio-political and religious crisis. His first collection of poetry *Death of Naturalist* discusses his involvement as poet in search of his identify and poetic responsibility. Recollecting incidents from his predecessor of three generation before, in *Digging*, he curves out his aim to dig but not as they did but metaphorically with his pen the various phases that he passed through. Ireland went through a period of crisis in the 50s and 60s due to the *Trouble movement* which divided the whole north of Ireland religiously and politically. The Catholics who were minority in that area expressed their deep attachment and loyalty to the Republic Ireland, faced resentment and opposition from the protestant who expressed their attachment to England. It had shocked the whole of Ireland and killed many people resulting in the 'bloody Sunday' massacre ' of 1972. It is this sense of stillness of death and unease that pervades *At a Potato digging* thought it feeds on an image cascades from the earlier poem. The smell and feel of the newly dug potato along with its upside down roots reminds him some other images of horror, which he would more prolifically elaborate in the subsequent poetic volumes. The association of different images with the contemporary Irish History was so superbly consummated in his subconscious that his poetic indulgence of it came much closer than is projected.

With his *The Door into the Dark*, he plunged himself more into the socio-political realities of Ireland. The forge, which is an imageric renderings of a blacksmith's activities in a dark room metaphorically relates to the broil and gloominess of the time. The sparks and the hammer that

blacksmith uses is nothing but the rhythm of violence, which was so intense that it led to murder of many people which was buried secretly in bogland. The discovery of such bodies caused such stir in Ireland later that the bogland acquired a presence and characteristic of something ominous. Heaney brings the nuances of such a presence in his *The Bogland*. *The Tollund Man* is another poem where he gives different dimension to such an incident, by bringing an obvious comparison to discovery of an ancient figure in Tollund of Denmark. The comparison is important because in the later case the buried body was a victim of a ritual. His death was believed to have the power of bringing regeneration and fertility to that place, whereas in Ireland the bodies were the victims of ethno-political conflict. However, Heaney is optimistic of the fact that like the earlier case, the deaths of Irish people will bring reconciliation and stability to the society. The sense of glorification and sublimation of victim's life is a major concern in Heaney. The massacre 1916 also brought similar perspective from the poet in *Requiem for the Croppies*. Like W.B. Yeats he offers a heartfelt tribute to the martyrs of the massacre.

Heaney's preoccupation became much more intense at the time of the publication of *North* (1975). This is a poetic reworking of the bloody Sunday of 1972 and its subsequent situation. In *North*, a poem in this collection, the violence and pervading hatred was beautifully evoked via the image of Thor's hammer, a deity of the Viking, to comment on the pointlessness of the Irish feud. The hope of reconciliation he nourished is disturbed by the recent violence so much that he had to take imaginative flight for the union of the nation since he saw no hope for the unity of the same. 'In Act of Union', the perplexity and optimism of mind surfaces through his imaginative engagement of a newly born baby and a newly born nation. The archetypal concept of pain and suffering of a mother while giving birth to a baby leads the poet to believe a similar process that the nation of Ireland is to embrace and it is this escapist and romantic note that Heaney takes recourse to in his poetry at the end.

Heaney, a noble laureate, engages different issues ranging from personal, familial to national interest. Starting with childhood memory of his family, he found that in his unconscious lie many things which he was not aware of. Therefore, though he wanted to dig in order to create his identity, ultimately he ended up digging socio, political and ethical issues that he experienced and led him to involve passionately with the Irish cause.

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## **Ted Hughes poetry and Animal imagery**

One of the recurrent images in Ted Hughes poetry is that of animals. Almost every poem is replete with an image of animal drawn from the wildness of nature. Whether it is the ferociousness of a pike or the Jaguar, or the authority of hawk or stillness of a dead pig, it appeals to our different senses. Hughes poetic exercise never portrayed any animal removed from its immediate context. His images are not vehicle for his feelings and emotion as most of the romantics did, neither was they symbolic as the symbolist group of poets did. They are the realistic accounts the animals with all its instincts and wildness. In 'the Hawk Roosting' the image of the bird in the tree-top surveying the surface beneath commandingly where the strength of the beak and the claws were foregrounded to give him superiority over his prey. The implicit comparison of God surveying his creation and the bird surveying the surface offers the poet to view the bird as distinct from the bird of prey. The poetic orientation of Hughes towards instinct and wildness sustains through 'The Jaguar', an animal of big cat family. The swiftness and strength of it distinct it from other animals and birds. Apes, parrots and tigers do not approach to the vigor and swiftness of a jaguar. A prowling Jaguar in the forest is far more beautiful than a lion or a tiger in a zoo.

'Pike' also refers to this aspect of animality. Though a small fish, it is recognized for its aggression and ferocity. It not only hunts its prey masterly, but also devours its own species mercilessly. The image of pike eating another pike is so stark in this poem that it works as an agency to refer to its characteristic traits.

However, Hughes could bring successfully could bring the image of a dead animal and its evocation on human senses. In 'View of a Pig', the image of dead pig with all the stillness and coldness of death comes before the readers, which was even more intensified by bringing an obvious comparison to a pig which is alive and full of vitality. It is the life force that is also

manifested in 'The Kings of Clarion', where a vulture among the carcass and bones is portrayed to refer to its beauty in this situation.

Ted Hughes is a poet of nature. The collection of poem 'The Hawk in the Rain' communicates his relation with nature. Unlike Seamus Heaney who used natural objects often to objectify hidden human instincts, Hughes highlighted the rawness and naturalness of them and to give it a non-anthropocentric view of this world. According to Edward Albert, in his History of English Literature, 'in animals he see the certainties, the pointlessness and the violence ' against the code of conducts and values which govern human society and he uses them to clarify and intensify human experience.'

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## **The literature of Exhaustion**

In the essay 'the Literature of Exhaustion' (1967) John Barth articulated his feeling for a new kind of literary form—inter-media art. This call for a new form is based on his belief that like ancient epics and classical tragedy, the novel form has also exhausted its possibilities. Though the need for change had already started in the beginning of the twentieth century when the writers like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Eliot emphasized on the need for a sophisticated technique against the realistic tradition of romantic and Victorian novelists yet, according to Barth, this experimentation was not sufficient enough to save the novel from its used-upness. The present condition of the society was so vast and varied that mere experimentation of narrative form cannot encapsulate it, the need is, therefore, for the blending of literary genre, cutting across different planes of aesthetics. In other words, the need for inter-media art.

Inter-media is not only technically up-to-date art form, it is also a radical departure from the conventional notion of artist and audience. The western aesthetic practice of dominant position of the author and his hold over the subject and situation had undergone huge change in it. Instead

emphasis was laid on the expertise and artistry of the artist mind which cannot be imitated with distinctive stamp of the one who made it in the first place.

Inter-media art has much more aesthetic advantages than the art form existed earlier. J.L. Borges's *Pierre Menard: the Author of Quixote*, for instance, blends different form of genre. Instead of representing life directly as the conventional novels do, it imitates the representation of life from Cervantes's famous *Don Quixote*. However, in both cases the ultimate effect is the same, i.e. life. Therefore, in the Borges's work we find the exact copying of chapters from the original works of Cervantes. However, new work will have its effect in different way. The repetition will give an added meaning to this new form, which will be perhaps missing from any work written for the direct representation of the contemporary condition. The historical and cultural baggage that the original work carry will be colored, at subsequent date, by the conditions of irony, parody and taste and it will occupy the centre-stage in the mind and imagination of the audience. It is in this investment of the ironic potential that Borges's brilliance lies. The imitation of presentation of an existing paradigm and the changed contours of cultures where it re-emerges hold great responsibilities for new creative exercises. It will open up the fictional world beyond the limits of predictability and convention and re-invents the narrative in an altogether new fashion. Bath also noticed that the application of inter-media in the linguistic level can be oriented towards the discussion of multiple dimension of 'ultimacy'. Language is not only a means of communication; it is also an illusory net in understanding the existential reality. Novelists of the past failed to reflect on that aspect. Whether it is Jane Austen or any Victorian novelist language is treated only as a medium. For Beckett, it is used as the articulation of discourse—the questions of existence and being. For that effect his exploration of the possibilities of language involved the accommodation of silence as both strategy and instrument.

Therefore, inter-media art has not only opening up a new possibility in the form of extending the limits beyond predictability, but also re-energies the exhausted novel through a new, inventive frame. The play between real and imagined realities, Bath finds, in process of exclusion and selection, the clue for a new poetics.

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