Introduction

We have perceived profound changes in our social and political life in recent decades. Our traditional notions and manner of living are increasingly being challenged. Such challenges have resulted in a crisis of hority which is known by the general term of postmodernism.
The label "postmodernism" seems to be a paradox. As far as the feeling of the "now" which occupies us is concerned, "Modernity" is not something we can be "post." But the modernity alluded to is not the "now" of the completely modern. Modernity is a long era of historical change, provoked by scientific and technological progress and governed by the growth of the capitalist market economy. All over the modern epoch, cultural, philosophical and political discussions have demarcated an intellectual space between the diminishing authority of the Church and the economic and technical needs encouraging the speed of change.

Even according to this definition, modernity, inheriting a very long tradition of change and controversy over change, can hardly be claimed to have ended. The diminishing position of religion and the speed of economic and technological change are elements that will construct the future as firmly as they have constructed our past. But in the second half of the twentieth century something has changed in the very essence of tradition and in the manner that we connect to the past. Every feature of the past seems to be accessible. But it is made reachable, mediated, packaged, presented and represented. Postmodernism can be defined as that mutant of modernism which has lost hope of releasing itself from the ruins of modernity or of defeating the forces released by modernity.

Here, it makes sense to outline a cluster of issues which have been closely connected to postmodernism:
Introduction

In this thesis I intend to discuss some salient features of the social, historical, and cultural content of literary postmodernism. I also attempt to delineate a postmodern style of thought. The thesis focuses on some of the major textual strategies employed by Beckett in order to demonstrate radical changes in the contemporary theatre. Lastly, the thesis provides a useful criterion for sorting out those contemporary dramatists who might legitimately qualify as postmodernists.

We have perceived profound changes in our social and political life style in recent decades. Our traditional notions and manner of living are increasingly being challenged. Such challenges have resulted in a crisis of authority which is known by the general term of postmodernism.
I. Scepticism about the “Enlightenment project”: that reason may depend upon a stable founding for choosing between truth and falsehood, a tradition closely related to science.

II. The idea of progress and traditional humanism are under attack.

III. An utterly extraordinary growth in the mass media, especially visual media (television, film, advertising, etc.), since 1950’s.

IV. Pervasive prosperity in the West that seems to go deep in society, revealing itself as consumerism.

V. The undermining of any sense of central social authority for a plurality of adequate ethics and lifestyles.

The following discussion will explore these themes.

Generally speaking, postmodernism is considered as a refusal of many of the cultural certainties on which life in the West was constructed over the last couple of centuries. It has cast doubt on our commitment to cultural “progress” (that economies must keep on growing, the quality of life continue to improve unlimitedly etc.), as well as the political systems that have supported this notion. Postmodernists often make reference to the “Enlightenment project,” signifying the liberal humanist ideology that has dominated Western culture since the eighteenth century. This ideology has attempted to
give rise to the emancipation of mankind from economic need and political tyranny. For postmodernists, this project has oppressed mankind and allured it to take certain set ways of thought and action. It is therefore to be opposed. For this reason, postmodernists criticize universalizing theories ("grand narratives" or "metanarratives" as they have been called by the philosopher Jean-François Lyotard), as well as being anti-authoritarian in their view. In order to shift from the modern to the postmodern, cultural, economic, and political certainties should be greeted and treated with scepticism.

Television proved to be the most pre-eminent postmodern medium. Many of the specialized terms of postmodern debate such as simulation, hyperreality, fragmentation, heterogeneity, decentring, intertextuality, and pastiche can be applied to TV. The quick development of television into a diverse, multinational, and practically worldwide industry illustrates the socio-economic processes of postmodernization.

The postmodern sociologist Jean Baudrillard, in his influential book *Simulacra and Simulations*, makes use of the terms "simulation" and "hyperreality" in order to define the "mediatization" of reality in postindustrial society. Discussing abstract and totalizing theory, he rarely refers to television directly but this view shows a good judgement to the context of watching TV. He maintains that the immense increase in signs and images broadcasting in post-war media society, the differentiation between objects and their representations has vanished. He argues that we are now living in a world of
“simulation,” where media-produced images act freely from any external reality. Signs and meanings move aimlessly in a self-referential “hyperreality,” an extreme reality and also one that is literally “hyped” by advertisers and others.

Another postmodern claim that “TV is the world” put forward by Fredric Jameson who believes that postmodernism is nothing but “the cultural logic of the late capitalism.” According to Jameson television acts as the social cement in an excessively subcultural and privatized postmodern consumer culture. The post-war development of consumer society, occurred first in the United States and then in Europe and elsewhere, was provoked by the coexistent growth of the media, especially television, which added to the allure of commodities and re-created a consumerist ideology. Deriving from a neo-Marxist idea, Jameson, in his important essay *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1984), views the aesthetic forms and techniques of the avant-garde and modernism to be located at the service of consumerism in postmodern aesthetics. So, the emphasis on style, novelty and innovation which stirred up the avant-garde is displaced by the packaging and marketing of everyday commodities. Advertisers attack the history of art which is a massive cultural canon in order to search a new “seize” on a product. According to Jameson, the development of “lifestyle” choices in advertising where the symbolic, imaginary and social qualities of homes, furniture, cars, clothes, cosmetics or food and drink outweighs their physical uses and has turned to be the real business of television and other
Here it is appropriate to say that product arrangement in drama and the dimming of the differentiation between advertising and other forms of programming present the commercial urge which supports television in a postmodern consumer culture. As competition becomes more rigid, TV channels also devote much more time to improve their programme. What is important here is the way in which they act within the heterogeneous conditions of the postmodernized TV industry. In such an industry, audiences appreciate and enjoy the intertextuality, recycling and self-conscious play which extends throughout postmodern TV.

The demonstration of postmodern art as something which appears in the form of leisure and consumption in contemporary society is the common theme of many of postmodern artists and theorists.

These artists are allured to the world of shopping, and it is the objects of consumption that they reproduct. In this sense, shopping turns to be a form of "urban tourism" in which commodities function as memory: by purchasing something an endeavor made to grip on the experience which forced the purchase in the first place.

Such a "stimulated art" takes its reference point from the most contemporary of environments, namely the shopping mall. It presents a process of parody and pastiche, in which historical and cultural styles are woven together in unmatched arrangements. The shopping mall is the sophisticated space of mere dream. Representing shopping as a leisure "experience" through
the unification of "themed" spaces, the shopping mall mixes the "ordinary" and the "exotic." It changes consumption into something "exciting." Here shopping turns to be the dream of escape, the dream of holiday. We can say that shopping embraces and regenerates the world: shopping is tourism.

The postmodern artists's effort here is to join two realities together, the shopping mall and the home. Such artists describe the manner in which the experience of both is constructed around a relaxed, cosy, calm banality. In this world, the objects of consumption have turned to be the modern counterpart of primitive totems, because shopping has turned to be a kind of religion, a fantasy of purity. Simultaneously there is an inevitable hollowness here, a vast emptiness which cannot be remedied, because consumerism rests on the notion of consumption. Desire is stimulated but never gratified. The commodity creates a feeling of loneliness which must be defeated by yet more consumption.

We do not follow conventions of the old occupational cultures any more and instead we select a "life style." Lifestyle, as a term, is not in itself a new one, but was derived from the advertising and designer culture of the 1980s to represent the "individuality" and "self-expression" which was the fundamental basis of the free market revolution of that decade. The age of mass consumption which put a particular weight on conformity and similarity. But it has been substituted for an openly unlimited choice and variety of consumer goods worked for particular market segments. Although it is necessary here to bear in mind that some people in advanced societies and
many in all over the world are omitted from this process, it is equally
significant to realize that the formation of identity through the purchase of
consumer goods is an optional one. Those who take part in such an activity
are not mere fashion victims, they willingly take the opportunity to join in
and effectively seize the chance for self-expression which are given by the
choices of shopping malls. It may simply appears that we are unusual citi-
zens, but we wish to be recognized with the style which best shows the way
that we desire to be seen. Power has now turns to be considered as the
ability to spend in order to utter expression for an ambitious lifestyle.

Here, it makes sense to deal with the dominant role of capitalism as
a crucial link being established between science and technology in postmodernity.

In the second half of the twentieth century, science plays an impor-
tant role in the shaping of the postmodern condition. This is less because of
the theme of scientific notions than it is caused by the progressively strong
economic situation it has under a capitalism that has connected to techno-
logical advance. Science can no longer be regarded as the objective quest
for the truth about nature, because its economic survival is closely connected
to the making of new technologies. Science cannot only wish to know, it
must perform. Therefore “techno-science” is the main means for the devel-
opment of capitalism in postmodern societies. Of course, to the extent that
capitalism has grown together with technological change since the beginning
of the industrial revolution, there is no new spirit in this notion. The con-
struction of factories and the development of automation have always had a direct influence on the working lives of individuals, and on the social frameworks emerging from these changes. What is new in postmodern, capitalist techno-science is first that it gives priority to the maximization of profit at all cost, minimum in (labor costs, machinery, maintenance, administration and regulation), maximum out (productivity, self-regulation, progressive automation and profit). Therefore, science can exist only by clinging to this rule. In the postmodern condition, dealing with incredulity toward metanarratives, science cannot rationalize itself or legitimate its practices any more by putting in a plea for the inherited value of “knowledge in itself,” because knowledge in itself is not a saleable commodity. Quite the opposite, scientific knowledge must be changed into successful economic outcome. Its business is to make techno-science proportionate with capitalism, and to reduce all language games to the single rule of profit.

Again, we may face the objection that there is no new idea in this. Science has always been subject to rule from outside. For instance, the state prohibited Galileo’s theories and the military supported nuclear physics. What is new in this condition is the degree to which capitalism has relied on techno-science in the shape of the computerized society. Funds, capital itself, has turned to be a flow of information, transforming the norm from the maximization of profit into the maximization of “information.” Techno-science is always capitalist, because it is subdued to capital’s performativity rule; but capitalism has turned to be techno-scientific in turn, in order that capitalist
techno-science now moves toward the maximization of private information. Whereas in modernity knowledge and capital strove for power, contemporary postmodern capitalist techno-science has changed both into information as the measure of power. Therefore Lyotard's remedy for the postmodern condition, let people access to databases freely, will appear to be odd (can we think that Marx plainly advises capital to give people free access to money?).

Of course, Lyotard's idea of free access to information plays a language game that opposes the capitalist rule. It is for the sake of this reason that the game should be played experimentally, rather than in compliance with its rules. Even such an experimentation should not be seen just in aesthetic or cultural terms (as in Jameson). Here, Lyotard is not simply looking for an artistic renaissance similar to the early-century avant-gardes, he is also paying a close attention to the condition of science under postmodern capitalism. Just as capitalist techno-science attempts to maximize the efficiency or "performativity" of the game, so postmodern science tries to thwart this rule, as mentioned by Lyotard, for the sake of searching paradox. In place of legitimating itself regarding knowledge or progress, science now legitimates itself by competing with the capitalist game in search not for "winning," but for undermining the rules and constructing paradox. Just as Nietzsche once declared, the realm of the quest of truth is over; long live the quest of the false! It is for this reason that postmodern science is not merely about knowledge of the natural world, not about the most effec-
tive means to move forward the computerization of a global society, but about creating the formation of social, technical, and political experimenta-

tion.

Another set of contemporary analytic positions exploring the concept of postmodern and poststructural critical theory tends to be centered on four major lines of theoretical influence: the critique of modernity, the suspicion of science, the attack on general theory, and the rise of pragmatism and attacks on foundationalism.

Postmodern theorists launch a major attach on the value systems and notions of modernity. They suggest that the promises of the modern era are no longer conceivable because there is evidence that for the vast majority of people worldwide there is no realistic reason to pin their hopes on any version of the notion that the world is good and getting better. For many, the expression of a postmodern philosophy is unavoidably involved in this kind of evaluation of modernity and its optimistic ideas of human progress, reason, universalism, and science. Zygmunt Bauman’s Modernity and Ambivalence is an important point of reference for those who wish to demonstrate this position. He argues that modernity wished to control contingency (chance, diversity). It had a “dream of order” and was preoccupied with dominating, regulating, and classifying. The outcome was a society that tried to construct order through regulations, institutions, laws, and moral codes. These attempted to pinpoint universally appropriate norms for truth, justice, and reason and eliminate relativism, uncertainty, and ambiguity. Although this
all appears to be very impressive, there was an inappropriate negative side to these ambitions. In the act of establishing order through classifications, modernity also created binary oppositions. These suggested the recognition of the “other” that which did not go with the positive side of the binary and which must be constrained by power and control. For Bauman, then, modernity inescapably constructed and legitimated hierarchies of tyranny. It also gave the idea of severe reactions against the “other.” Social groups who could be classified into more than one class, or who failed to fulfil modernity’s ordering rules, were liable to homogenization policies or (as occurs to Europe’s jews) liable to severe punishment and genocide. What is particularly attractive about Bauman’s idea here is that he attacks the notion of “totality” or “totalism” which is a common theme in the postmodern discussion. This aims at intellectual and administrative systems that attempt to take social life as a whole; that try to comprehend and dominate it within a single coherent rational or legislative system. Postmodernists generally maintain that endeavors to comprehend fragmentation, difference and the local are less hazardous and more useful.

A critique of science has been connected with the attack on modernity’s ordering rules. During the Enlightenment assaults were made in the name of science on religion, folk knowledge, and superstition. The philosophies of modernism, such as Marxism (“scientific socialism”) and positivism, suggested that scientific knowledge and experts could unearth universal truths and act liberally for the common good. Postmodernists regard
these assertions as certainly doubtful. Making use of Foucault’s critiques of power / knowledge largely, they give the idea that science has generally acted as an ideology through which disciplinary discourses are underpinned. It is associated with domination, rationalization, and control rather than emancipation and truth. Here we can see Thomas Kuhn’s book *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1970) as a cornerstone of this idea. Although Kuhn is a conventional historian of science rather than a postmodernist or critical theorist, his work subverted the notion that scientific knowledge was constructed in an intellectual void and that observations alone caused theories. On the contrary, Kuhn suggested that our theories and intellectual systems, what he called “paradigms,” form the manner we receive the world. More recent sociological research on science has also called into question its claims to objectivity and certainty. Ethnographic studies, for instance, have indicated that many scientific findings are artifacts of laboratory practice, social systems, competitions for prestige and founding, and so on.

Relying on this work, postmodernists have called into question the supporting ontological and epistemological principles of science. According to postmodernists the basic boundaries between logic and emotion, or objective knowledge versus personal experience, are problematic. It is much being discussed that knowledge is constructed as a result of identity and social situation. Science is a discourse of dominant white males, and a responsibility of postmodern and poststructural theory is to regain secondary voices, such as those formed by race, gender, or sexuality.
The evaluation of science in postmodernism is closely associated with "relativism." This is a philosophical situation which suggests that there is no definite and objective view from which we can uncover the truth. Rather, all knowledge is stemmed from a specific outlook and is underpinned by specific beliefs and foundations. Although charges of relativism are often used against postmodernism, many postmodern theorists feel no difficulty with the label. They consider it as conforming to the postmodern claim that we cannot grant a privilege to any specific perceptions, illustrating how they are imperfect, prejudiced, or socially built in different ways. This intellectual move has been speeded up by a diminishing belief in the grand narrative of science, a process proposed by Lyotard, and the work of Foucault, who maintained that there were multiple, contradictory "truths" that the intellectual should labor to unearth.

For Bauman, the emergence of relativism has revealed that the role of the intellectual has been shifted. Under modernity they were "legislators" who had task of constructing universal classifications and objective knowledge. Under postmodernity such a responsibility is regarded as both impossible and unacceptable. As a result, their role has changed into that of "interpreters." In a world without definite norms, the cultural theorist turns to be a kind of interpreter whose role is to construct dialogue and reflexivity between and within different social domain. Postmodern cultural theorists in general favor to regard themselves not as scientists of but rather as carriers of discourses that stimulate the open exchange of notions and sound, reflex-
As it is obvious in the discussion of Zygmunt Bauman, an evaluation of totalizing knowledge is closely associated with the assault on science and modernity. For Steven Seidman, the epistemic doubt which is in the heart of postmodernism questions the central objective of disciplinary discourses to generate general, universally well-grounded concepts of society, history and modernity. He argues that we should substitute endeavors in general theory (a theory of everything) for theoretical formations that are more local and contextual. These should be reactive to the needs and struggles of marginalized groups in specific locations.

Pivotal to this situation is the idea, stemmea partly from Foucault, that we should permanently pose questions to our conceptual classifications for evidence of power/knowledge. We should try to unearth the unseen prejudices behind the ideas that we use and the manners that they act to regenerate relationships of domination. Endeavors in the formation of a general or universal theory are to be avoided because they are part of modernity’s failed project. This project was inescapably about domination as much as understanding. It tries to build knowledge to the degree that it is also (sometimes accidentally) trying to dominate or change difference. General theory finally reproduces power where it declared the uncovering of truth. But, according to a postmodern view, we need to reconsider our understanding of knowledge as something that is outside of power. Rather than proclaiming endeavors in understanding that stem from general para-
digms and grand narratives (theories), we need to proceed with caution and be sensitive to the fact that our notions are possibly hazardous. Giving up notions about “truth” and “reason” may yield a main initial step on this path. Permanent reflexivity about the intellectual means that we use is another important outlook on this process.

As it discussed above, postmodern theories are highly doubtful about endeavors to establish or comprehend society on the basis of universal values, methods, or ideas. The modernist emphasis to set a chain of originating values or absolute beliefs or “the truth” is repudiated as “foundationalism.” Marxism, liberalism, functionalism, structuralism, and so forth can all be understood as foundationalist projects, although each was foundationalist in its own particular way. Using Derrida specially, postmodernism suggests that the basic binary oppositions of modernist idea (true / false, mind / body, reason / emotion, etc.) are less firm than we may take for granted. It is also maintained that there is no promise that foundational ideas like freedom or democracy really give rise to a better society. Nor can ideological plan for policies, institutions, and interventions. Putting forward the fact that universal beliefs have been repudiated, some type of touchstones have to be used for guiding and judging our society. But what are they?

The theorist Richard Rorty is arguably the most important figure who can provide a solution to this issue. Rorty gives the idea that we should deploy pragmatic touchstones for evaluating social change and social policy
rather than celebrating doubtful and ineffective values. Making use of the American pragmatist tradition of philosopher John Dewey as much as of Derrida’s anti-foundationalist philosophy, Rorty suggests that we should attempt to understand “what works” rather than permanently arguing about the best abstract principles for organizing our societies. Following this kind of situation, most social criticism is vague and doubtful. What is demanded in its place is a measure of practicality and sound suspicion of authority. Rather than debating about capitalism versus communism, it is much better to have a look at the world around us for clues about what to do next.

While Rorty’s anti-foundationalist idea seems to be a kind of soft American optimism, Bauman’s can be regarded as a gloomy fatalism. He argues that now we are living in an age of contingency, where we must stotically face with the postmodern condition. Where there is no trust, no preconceived solution to uncertainty and doubt, and only a prevalent radical ambivalence, we have to have “nerves of steel.” His hope is that a common existential understanding of contingency will force people together into a new reflexive feeling of harmony and community. He maintains that this may prevent tendencies towards individualism and market-driven discrepancies that have occupied the vacuum left by the decline of modernist social manipulations and its related foundationalist values.

Here, a convenient way to perceive the highlights of postmodernism is to focus on three considerations. The first concern weighs up some main features of the social and cultural environment of literary postmodernism (the
The second discussion tries to define a postmodern style of thought (philosophical issues). The third analysis considers some of the salient textual strategies used by postmodern writers (themes and strategies of postmodern writing).

Three aspects of the social and cultural milieu in which authors live and work today are particularly significant for a grasp of postmodernism: I. the organized saturation of life; II. the cybernetization and mediatization of cultural communication; III. the rise, as political forces, of subordinate groups that have traditionally been set aside from the political power. Partially, the sociological literature on postmodernism has paid attention to these movements. In order to give an outline of the context in which postmodern texts are produced and received, a short description of these above-mentioned aspects will be given here.

The organized saturation of life just conveys that the individual’s models of activity are established, in all domains of his / her experience, by a group of superpersonal and pseudo-autonomous organizations. In the realms of law and government, this trend creates what is labeled the “welfare state” (distinguished by noticeable intervention in fields formerly considered as beyond the complete reach of state action) and the “corporate state” (distinguished by the continuous similarity of state and society, of the public and the private level). Society is constructed as a system of functionally differentiated but complicatedly interdependent institutions: organizations for the formation and maintenance of knowledge (universities, disciplinary groups,
research centres), organizations for the management of birth, health and death (hospitals, homes, asylums) autonomous economic organizations (corporations), and organizations entrusted with responsibility for the socialization of the young (schools). In this context, semi-independent agencies of government are not taken into account. Within this system, questions of “right” change into questions of “procedure,” and values are substituted for policies and regulations. The new roles of expert, manager and therapist (doctors today are educated to deal with the physico-psycho-social unit) are increasingly significant here. Organizations are no longer closely associated with a specific chain of meanings, nor do they aim at a dominant institutionalizing subject (God, the people). Rather, they are subject to permanent revision following regularized methods. We can say that the process of institutionalization itself has turned to be institutionalized. It indicates that how social life in this milieu is felt as paradoxical, at the same time regulated and baseless. For, although our lives are completely organized, there is no single or supreme organization, no centre of authority that is not itself part of a larger network of interdependencies. The organized saturation of life produces both the feeling of confusion and suffocation in our lives.

Cybernetization and mediatization are trends within the postmodern milieu that directly influence the author’s medium and area of activity, but they also spread through the society altogether. The rise of a generalized theory of cybernetics (information theory) and the growth of computer technology to its present advanced and ever-advancing situation have given rise
to social, cultural, and intellectual changes that have firmly reshaped the nature of our lives. Language, as code and information, now develops from the simplest processes within the living cell to the most complex computation. This suggests that cultural communication is no longer revolve around its traditional cores. This is the fact that every postmodern author must learn to live with. As a result, the mutually defining ideas of the authorial subject and of the book as totality have lost their vigor. Knowledge is no longer a depiction and understanding of the world, but a procedure of processing information, and even the capital is only a single stream within the global flow of data. In the same way, cybernetization has brought about new models and problems in the fields of politics and government as Daniel Bell (see Chapter 1) especially has emphasized. This condition has been well-defined by Heidegger's depiction of our epoch as "the age of information."

In a similar way, the aftermath of mediatization is widespread. Television, film, tape, phonograph, photograph and so on accommodate the culture with scene, sound, and picture in extraordinary density and scale. It can be good reason for the demise of the book: it just means that there is no longer the dominant carrier of the myths and meanings. Writing today is one type of media production among others, and in many cases, such as the formation of political symbols, it is not the most important one at all. This situation has created a number of cooperative projects between authors and other media experts, particularly filmmakers, as well as many hybrid professions. But it is also noteworthy to bear in mind that there is another way
in which mediatization affects postmodern writing. There is no successful author today who is not to some degree created by the media. His work and personality has been constructed through images, both exaggerated and typecast, that advertise on television, radio, and the news.

Finally the postmodern condition is distinguished by new social and political struggles including what can be labeled “outsider groups,” women, the restricted, the “deviant,” abnormals of all kinds. The environmentalist movement complies with this criterion because it moves towards its goals in the name of an excluded “other” (nature). In this context, we must take into consideration the struggles in the Third World which have often revolved around political, economic, or strategic colonization. Such conflicts, from Algeria to Vietnam and Palestine, have been a vital element in the configuration of the contemporary European intellectual consciousness. Again, here, Foucault is the key figure to give us the most salient interpretation of these tendencies. According to him, firstly, they are struggles that question the position of the individual, suggesting on the one hand the individual’s right to be “different,” while on the other hand standing against those forces that act to weaken social life, to vanish the communal. Secondly, these new conflicts often reveal themselves as oppositions to kinds of domination that are associated with “knowledge,” “competence,” and “qualification.” Of course, they are also so significant where social life is saturated in an organized way. Finally, these contemporary conflicts all deal with a re-demarcation of our identity. they are a rejection of those ideas, of economic and ideological
governmental violence, which disregard who we are individually. They are also a rejection of a scientific or administrative questioning which establish one’s identity. Here, it is fully understandable that Foucault’s remarkable study of the history of psychiatry, medicine, punishment, and sexuality is stimulated by these new types of social struggle. Generally, postmodern discourse is concerned with the voice of an “Other” which is thoroughly suppressed, in fact, which has traditionally been set aside from the field of cultural communication.

There is no coherent body of postmodern philosophy, and obviously not one that can be clearly single out from modern philosophy. The labels “modern” and “postmodern” refer to neither philosophical schools, nor even unified cores of thought. The classification here is made just for the matter of study.

The issue of great matter here is a lecture first delivered in September 1980 by Jürgen Habermas. Its dualistic title Modernity Versus Postmodernity gives warns of a threat of a conservative alliance of postmodernists and premodernists. In order to stand against this threat, he suggests a fresh commitment to the “project of modernity.” For him, “consensus” is constructed through an act of “exclusion.” The importance of this idea is that we immediately identify the enemy camp a so-called “Young Conservative Faction” in France this line embraces Bataille via Foucault to Derrida.

Perhaps the most notable point of contrast between Habermas and
such French philosophers as Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard deals with the theme of discourse. In both cases, this theme is at the heart of the philosophical issue, but in each case it is weighed up in a very different view. For Habermas, the starting point is the idea of a perfect communication condition that acts both as a touchstone for appraising real illustrations of discourse and as an Archimedean view from which to build a social theory. To put it briefly, this idea puts forward a universal standard of “communicative action,” a framework of symbol use in which the participants achieve consensus without external force (originated from organizations and networks of domination) and without internal force (originated from a transformation of communicative action itself). At this point, the French philosophers mentioned above oppose these views. Whereas Habermas sticks to a perfect and transparent communication, the French probe into the obscurities inherent in speech itself. Whereas Habermas puts a particular weight on the coordinated features of consensus, the French suggest that consensus can only be constructed through the acts of exclusion. And whereas, through the ideas of truth, truthfulness and correctness, Habermas attempts to find a touchstone which stands above language and gives it its validity, the French consider such ideas as strategies to control speech and, through speech, others. Of course, Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard look at the language in very different perspectives, they do not establish a unified school at all. But the comparison of their work with that of Habermas demonstrates what is maybe the most important characteristic of the postmodern style of thought.
postmodern philosophers reject the vision of an innocent language.

The second feature of postmodernism can be regarded as the repudiation of the Great Narrative. This is a theme that Lyotard has put at the heart of his influential analysis *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Here the narrative in focus, is the narrative of history. It is considered as the story of a single logical-temporal movement that includes and provides intelligible and individual histories. Because it is an interpretation that allows different events to be connected one to another. This line of thought appeared in the last third of eighteenth century with the growth of universal philosophies of history in the work of Kant, Herder, Condorcet, and finally Hegel. Habermas’s work can be interpreted as a continuity of this “historicophilosophical” discourse. But in France, the narrative of history is traced with skepticism. It is viewed as a manoeuvre, an ideology, the very role of which is to repudiate the reality of history to announce such mythical heroes as Man, Reason, or Consciousness. The classical philosophy of history is a sort of myth that heralds the homecoming of a representative hero again, as Lyotard puts it, either a “hero of knowledge” or a “hero of liberty.” And like all myths, it sets up to legitimate, and to shield from criticism, a particular chain of cultural values. Whether these values are explained as the basic ideas of the discourse of metaphysics since Plato, as in the case of Derrida, or as the bases of the anthropological humanism that started in the late eighteenth century, as in the case of Foucault and Lyotard, bears a matter of little importance. The crucial point is the common repu-
diation of the Great Narrative, a repudiation that is not an escape from the historical world, but rather the first step towards understanding of our historicity without mythical deformation.

Both the philosophical (or perhaps antiphilosophical) issues discussed above can be seen in the work of Nietzsche, the most important influence on the philosophers mentioned here. Of course, other figures such as, Marx, Freud, Saussure, and Heidegger have been very significant as well, and their influence should not be ignored. But in the case of Nietzsche we can say that a particular creative reading of his works is the cornerstone of the postmodern style of thought. Nietzsche's works have created new areas for philosophers such as Deleuze, Foucault, and Derrida effective realms of analysis. For example, Nietzsche's genealogical method, as an alternative to the totalizing outline of history, has been reshaped by Foucault in his study of such socio-cultural phenomena as punishment, medical practices, and the organization of sexual behavior. For Deleuze, Nietzsche's works propose a new paradigm for philosophical thought, an alternative both to dialectics and to positivism. And finally, Derrida has adopted both Nietzsche's evaluation of the controlling metaphors of Western philosophy as well as his outstanding use of literary strategies to construct a hybrid philosophical-poetic form of discourse. Other Nietzschean themes which are presented in the works of all postmodern philosophers are: the emphasis on difference and repetition, the idea of the body as a plural and changeable form of identity, the doubt on the formal organizations of education, the resistance to the homog-
enizing trends at work in mass culture.

Assaults on science, launched by postmodernists, proposed the im-
possibility of an objective perception of the world. This has in turn indicated
an interest in the texts and representations through which knowledge asser-
tions are built. Knowledge is thought of as the product of textual strategies
and methods of writing. Thus rhetoric and discourse changed into a position
of prominence as both objects of analysis. As a result, postmodernists hold
the attention of exploring the ways that language is engaged in processes of
definition, classification, and control. Differently from earlier analyses of ide-
ology, there is no specific stress here on proving the “false” nature of spe-
cific worldviews. Rather the objective is to study discourses and their re-
sults. Line of demarcation between society and text has been made as
problematic as those dividing truth and rhetoric. Foucault, maintained that the
social world is decorated with delicate and irregular patterns of discourse.
“Real” organizations and practices (e.g., the prison, punishment) can be thought
of, in a sense, as illustration of underlying rambling patterns. Therefore we
need to “read” the social and unearth the linguistic and textual practices with
which it is marked. Research now can be regarded less as a scientific
exercise and more as a sort of literary criticism or deciphering exercise.

Postmodern and poststructural theorists are attentive to the power of
language. They are interested in avoiding the mistakes of modernists and
positivists. A reflexive consciousness of the methods the language involves
itself in the formation of knowledge has given rise to the selection of per-
plexing textual forms by some postmodern authors. The objective of these is to avoid “logocentrism” by leading the deforming and constructive role of language in academic activity. These writing strategies can be summed up as follows:

I. Comparing different descriptions of the same part or episode.

II. Selecting various narrative personas.

III. Constructing dialogue and dispute into an argument.

IV. Writing in patterns that are unconventional in academic areas, such as employing real (or fake) diary extracts, or scripting dramas.

V. Disintegrating, transforming, or hybridizing words to illustrate their ability to bear multiple meanings at the same time.

These different tendencies are well demonstrated in Michael Mulkay’s work in the area of sociology of science. The difficult task he sets himself is to write about science and scientific communication without imitating the “empiricist monologue” that is common to both scientific and social scientific writing. In order to fulfill this task, he employs drama, dialogue, and parody, even at one point he pretends to be the book speaking to the reader. This sort of writing can seem to be absurd, annoying, or self-indulgent to outsid-
ers, but the intention is serious. Writers such as Mulkay propose that by giving prominence to the use of language and by disregarding conventional ideas on its use, we can be more reflexive about textual practices and their concerns. From a postmodern view, we can say that such nonconformist styles of writing are more honest than mainstream social-scientific writing that selects a quasi-objectivist attitude.

At the core of postmodern writing is the idea that it is just "writing." Typically our use and understanding of language are influenced by limiting goals and classifications. We could say that this is literature or fiction, or a novel, a story, a poem; and now what a writer is engaged in is science, or social theory, or philosophy. The postmoderns try to disconnect the use of language from those controlling patterns in order to give an active part to that which accounts for all literary types. Here writing itself is considered as an autonomous fruitful practice. A postmodern writer writes to such a degree that his writing reveals the coerce and complexity of writing. This is the strategy that states precisely the postmodern author’s intention towards language. The work and the book, the traditional literary genres, all give priority to the text.

There are two kinds of strategy used to achieve this program of writing: a chain of methods created to uncover the limitlessness of language and another to portray language in its materiality. The first embraces all the limiting devices the authors of past have prepared to go beyond universal limits and to reverse mechanisms of fictional closure. The notion is to con-
struct a text without finality or completion, one with which the reader can never be finished. In this manner, stories turn back on themselves and endings become beginnings. It gives the idea that we have an unending repetition and genre distinctions are made dim in order to prevent the text from being fixed firmly to a unique communicative purpose. And here again the act of writing itself becomes problematic and writer’s pose challenged. We can see that difference between metalanguage and object language eliminated to the degree that no stable, dominant condition outside the text lasts. Another important point in the notion of the boundless nature of postmodern writing is the issue of “intertextuality.” The text admits the reality of its connection with a network of other texts, authored and anonymous, and spontaneously gives itself as a text to be perpetually reconstructed or rewritten by its readers. In this manner the delimiting singularity enforced by “originality” and “authority” is repudiated and the text is engaged in an indefinite process of writing.

This limitlessness of language, however, must be viewed in a close link to the second characteristic mentioned here, the endeavor of authors to give particular importance to the materiality of their products. The area of textuality in which postmodern literary production attempts to locate itself is firmly not a mental or spiritual domain. The postmodern author tries to make his language as clear in all material results as possible. In this view, concrete poetry, often considered as a rejection of the literary, is unbroken with other forms of postmodern writing. The concretists’ focus on the visual - typo-
graphical characteristics of texts only emphasizes the common interest in materiality. Other authors bring into focus different kinds of material characteristics. Language is materialized as body and rhythm, as document, as tendency towards energetic noise, as area, and movement within that area. In this manner, the text disconnects itself from the authority and internality of the conscious subject, turning to be other, at the same time autonomous and disunited. This is the reason why we have a speaker in postmodernist texts. He/she often participates in his/her language as externalized and perplexing, an odd phantom.

The postmodern position of language is intermixed with another chain of interests, which maybe labeled as “the issues of power.” Generally, for postmodern authors, language contains all the frameworks of activity, the institutional paradigms, standards and bans, the authorities, belief systems, and systems of legitimations, which support, and are supported by, our speaking and writing. Postmodern aesthetic experimentation should be regarded as bearing a constant political aspect. It is inseparably related to a critique of domination.

Here, we should add a third main area of interest to the tendency towards writing and the critique of domination, regarding both as two interrelated themes or particular positions of postmodern texts. This third major feature is “the issue of subjectivity.” The point here is that a main characteristic of much postmodern writing is that this subjectivity has turned to be problematic. The general tendency is to consider the subject as the effect of
a structure rather than as its source or origin. The subject does not speak and is not the origin of meaning. The subject is, rather, spoken by law and culture. The signifier is primary, the subject becomes little more than a support for the exchange of signifiers. The divided subjectivity of postmodernism is an area of uncertainty than can be applied to the novel, the diary, or the lyric. Analysis of this area constructs exact texts only to the degree that the subject being discussed is not simply given, but it is in some sense closely related to an "otherness" that makes it problematic, threatened, and equivocal.