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Modernism in Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*
and
Postmodernism in Kurt Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions*

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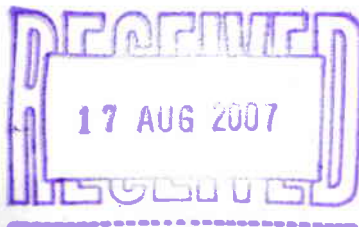


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Preface

The two trends, modernism and postmodernism have created a storm in the world of English literature. Literary figures have received these two trends cordially and criticized both. Virtually, these two trends have enriched English Literature a lot.

In Bangladesh the term 'modernism' is quite known to the students of English literature but the term 'postmodernism' is quite unknown to all. I think, if we have not known about modernism and postmodernism both, our literary knowledge will remain incomplete. I have highlighted the authentic and practical forms of modernism and postmodernism in my dissertation paper. I have researched a lot and worked hard for this because, there are no sufficient books on postmodernism in Bangladesh. For this reason, I had to collect some books from foreign countries about postmodernism and modernism both. If the students of English literature are benefitted by my dissertation paper, my efforts will be successful and worth while.

I have represented modernism through the novel *To The Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf. On the other hand, I have represented postmodernism through the novel *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. In this dissertation paper, I have discussed and examined the principles, the ideologies and the elements of modernism and

modernism in detail. I hope that those who will come to research on modernism
and postmodernism in future will be benefitted by my dissertation paper.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The term 'Modernism' and 'Postmodernism' look different but in fact they are not completely different from each other. Modernism and postmodernism are interrelated. The modern age has come after the Romantic age and the Victorian age, in the same way, the postmodern age has also come after the modern age. Since it has no particular time frame, it is difficult to establish specific dates for these trends. In the true sense, postmodernism is the new form of modernism.

Modern literature believes in unity, order, form, logic, cause and so on. Postmodern literature does not believe in any kind of boundary, chronology, logic, unity, order and form. I think, Virginia Woolf's novel *To The Lighthouse* is a perfect modern novel and Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Breakfast of Champions* is a true postmodern novel. The novel *To The Lighthouse* has almost all the elements of modernism. It has a beginning and an ending. It is a close-ended novel just like other modern novels. *To The Lighthouse* is based on a particular issue or a subject matter. The novel *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. has all the elements of postmodernism. This novel has no form or stage. It has no beginning and no ending. *Breakfast of Champions* rejects unity, order, logic etc.

Modernism has a long historical background. It highlights the experiences of history, which dominate modern life and modern culture. It recruits tradition and customs that we find in modern philosophy. Modernism has its own ideologies and principles. It believes in the progress of science and technology and the growth of knowledge. Modernism always accepts the changes in society. It looks at the future but not at the past. Modernism gives new ideas and thoughts to the society. Capitalism originates from modernism. People are highly dominated by capitalism in the modern age. Capitalism is the greatest enemy of socialism. Because of the capitalistic impact in the modern world, everything has been institutionalized. As a result, power, money, religion become all in all in the modern age. These are called 'grand narratives'. These grand narratives dominate the modern world. Modernism believes in logic, unity and order. It also follows a particular form and shape. Modernism focuses on the center and emphasizes only on the subject matter. For this reason, modern people have become selfish and self-centered. Modernism believes in the absolute truth. The features of modernism firmly believe in value judgment. It shows the distinction between rich and poor, black skin and white skin, high class and low class. For this reason, modernism confines all the things to a boundary, which marginalizes everything in this modern world.

Postmodernism is a collection of trends. It criticizes the excesses of modernism. It is neither any ideological movement nor any chronological movement. Postmodernism always challenges some notions of modernism. It criticizes the grand narratives in the

world because everything has been centralized and institutionalized by the grand narratives. Postmodernism always goes against these grand narratives. It also highlights those areas which dominate the daily life of man. Postmodernism challenges the whole idea of value judgment; example: superior, inferior, high, low, black, white etc. Postmodernism tries to break these ideologies of modernism. Postmodernism does not believe in symbolism and any kind of form. It rejects the idea of absolute truth. Postmodernism asserts that in this world nothing is absolute. It also does not believe in seriousness. Postmodernism teaches us self-realization, self-investigation, and self-examination. The motive of postmodernism is to create anything new breaking the old. Postmodernism has no time frame and no fixed identity. It thinks that truth is not fixed; it is flexible. Postmodernism is beyond all boundaries, so it breaks the margins of society. It trusts in pluralism and flexibility.

Now the world of literature is divided into two trends; one is modern literature and another trend is postmodern literature. Some literary people think that modern literature is the best literature and some other think that postmodern literature is the best one. So, modernism and postmodernism compete in dominating the literary world. It is evident that the ideologies and philosophies of modernism and postmodernism are different from each other. In this dissertation paper I discuss and analyze modernism in *To The Lighthouse* and postmodernism in *Breakfast of Champions*. I also highlight the elements of modernism and postmodernism, and examine how modernism and postmodernism affect our life.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The word 'modern' in its Latin form 'modernus' was used in the late 5th century for the first time. It was used in order to distinguish the present which had become officially Christian from the Roman and pagan past. After wards the concept of modernity is related to the Renaissance. People considered themselves modern during the period of Charles the Great, in the 12th century and in France in the late 17th century. This was the time of famous 'Querelle des Anciens et des Moderns'. It says that "The term 'modern' appeared and reappeared exactly during those periods in Europe when the consciousness of a new epoch formed itself through a renewed relationship to the ancients- whenever, moreover, antiquity was considered a model to be recovered through some kind of imitation" (Habermas, 1981:92). The term 'modern' again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch which relates itself to the past of antiquity. It views itself as the result of a tradition from the old to the new.

An article *Modernity versus Postmodernity* by Jurgen Habermas is an excellent article about the concepts. Jurgen Habermas gives us the clear idea about modernism and postmodernism. He says, "The idea of being 'modern' by looking back to the ancients changed with the belief, inspired by modern science, in the infinite progress of

knowledge and in the infinite advance towards social and moral betterment” (Habermas, 1981:92). After that another form of modernist consciousness was formed in the wake of this change and the romantic modernists sought to oppose the antique ideals of the classicists. A new ideal age was established early in the 19th century. This radicalized consciousness of modernity freed itself from all specific historical ties. The most recent ‘modernism’ makes an abstract opposition between tradition and the present. Habermas says, “Of course, whatever can survive time has always been considered to be a classic. A modern work becomes a classic because it has once been authentically modern” (Habermas, 1981:93). The relationship between ‘modern’ and ‘classical’ has lost a fixed historical reference.

Jürgen Habermas discusses ‘aesthetic’ modernity. According to him, aesthetic modernity is characterized by attitudes which find a common focus in a changed consciousness of time. This aesthetic modernity first appeared in the midst of the 19th century. Since then we see the distinguishing works, counted as modern. It means the new time consciousness. “Modernity revolts against the normalizing functions of tradition, modernity lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative. This revolt is one way to neutralize the standards of both, morality and utility.”(Habermas, 1981: 94).

American neoconservative Daniel Bell says, “The crises of the developed societies of the West are to be traced back to a split between culture and society. Modernist culture has come to penetrate the values of everyday life – world is infected by modernism.”

(Habermas, 1981:95). As a result, forces of modernism, the principles of unlimited self-realization, authentic self-experience and the subjectivism of a hyper stimulated sensitivity have come to be dominant. According to Daniel Bell modernist culture is altogether incompatible with the moral basis of a purposive rational conduct of life. Modern culture stirs up hatred against the conventions and virtues of an every day life, which has become rationalized under the pressures of economic and administrative imperatives. Daniel Bell also says, "A religious revival to be the only solution.

Religious faith tied to a faith in tradition will provide individuals with clearly defined identities, and with existential security." (Habermas, 1981:95).

According to Jurgen Habermas neo-conservatism shifts onto cultural modernism the uncomfortable burdens of a more or less successful capitalist modernization of the economy and society. The neo-conservatism doctrine blurs the relationship between the welcomed process of societal modernization of the one hand, and the lamented cultural development on the other. Habermas says, the neo-conservative does not uncover the economic and social causes for the altered attitudes towards work, consumption, achievement, and leisure. But, neo-conservative doctrines turn our attention precisely away from such societal processes: they project the causes, which they do not bring to light (Habermas, 1981:97). Under the pressures of the dynamics of economic growth and the organizational accomplishments the social modernization penetrates deeper and deeper into previous forms of human existence.

Max Weber characterized cultural modernity as the separation of the substantive reason expressed in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous spheres. They are: science, morality and art" (Habermas, 1981:97). The concept and the idea of modernity is deeply tied to the development of European art and culture. For this reason, theories of morality, jurisprudence, scientific discourse, the production and the criticism of art have become 'institutionalized'. As a result, special experts have become all in all in the society. The distance has grown between the culture of the experts and that of the larger public. The project of modernity was formulated in the 18th century by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. It consisted by their efforts to develop objective science, universal morality, law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic. Habermas says, the Enlightenment philosophers wanted to utilize this accumulation of specialized culture for the enrichment of everyday life. But the 20th century has shattered this optimism.

The concept of beauty and beautiful objects were first constituted in the Renaissance. Literature, fine arts, and music were institutionalized in the 18th century. But, in the 19th century an aesthetics concept of art emerged, which encouraged the artist to produce works according to the distinct consciousness of art for its own sake. "More or less in the entire Western world, a climate has developed that furthers capitalist modernization processes as well as trends critical of cultural modernism." (Habermas, 1981:103). Jurgen Habermas distinguishes the anti-modernism of the young conservatives from the pre-modernism of the old conservatives and from the postmodernism of the neo-conservatives. According to him the Young Conservatives

manipulate the basic experience of aesthetic modernity and the Old Conservatives do not allow themselves to be contaminated by cultural modernism. They observe the decline of substantive reason, the differentiation of science, morality and art. Habermas also says that Neo-conservatives welcome the development of modern science, as long as this only goes beyond its sphere to carry forward technical progress, capitalist growth and rational administration.

An article *Toward a Concept of Postmodernism* by Ihab Hassan, gives us a complete picture of modernism and postmodernism. In this article Ihab Hassan discusses the elements of modernism and the elements of postmodernism. He distinguishes postmodernism from modernism and indicates differences between them. According to Ihab Hassan 'modernism' believes in symbolism, form, purpose, design, hierarchy, finished work, distance, creation, synthesis, presence, centering, boundary, semantics, paradigm, hypo-taxis, metaphor, selection, depth, reading, signified, narrative, master code, symptom, type, paranoia, origin, cause, metaphysics, determinacy etc.

According to Ihab Hassan 'postmodernism' believes in anti-form, anarchy, decreation, play, dadaism, chance, process, participation, happening, deconstruction, antithesis, absence, dispersal, rhetoric, parataxis, metonymy, combination, surface, misreading, signifier, scriptable, anti-narrative, idiolect, mutant, schizophrenia, difference, irony etc.



"Postmodernism relates itself to the earlier modes of chance as turn of the century avant-gardes or the high modernism of the 20th century." (Hassan, 1987:273). The significance of postmodernism touches the people of the present age. There is a large change in education, culture, language, economics, science, etc.

"Darwin, Marx, Baudelaire, Nietzsche, Cezanne, Debussy, Freud, and Einstein still pervade the Western mind." (Hassan, 1987:274). History repeats it self again and again. Postmodernism revises these significant theories in a different method. Ihab Hassan mentions the names of those who are involved with the development of postmodernism. They are: Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard (philosophy), Michel Foucault, Hayden White (history), Jacques Lacan, and in America, John Barth, William Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon, Donald Barthelme, Walter Abish, John Ashbery, David Antin, Sam Shepard and Robert Wilson. These people formed a movement against modernism. After that they become successful and give new ideologies which form postmodernism.

In the article named *Toward a Concept of Postmodernism* Ihab Hassan addresses a number of conceptual problems that both conceal and constitute postmodernism. Ihab Hassan highlights ten points of 'postmodernism'. These are:

"1) The word postmodernism sounds not only awkward, uncouth; it evokes what it wishes to surpass or suppress, modernism itself. The term thus contains its enemy within, as the terms romanticism and classicism, baroque and rococo, do not.

- 2) Like other categorical terms – say post-structuralism, or modernism, or romanticism for that matter – postmodernism suffers from a certain semantic instability.
- 3) A related difficulty concerns the historical instability of many literary concepts, their openness to change.
- 4) Modernism and postmodernism are not separated by an Iron Curtain or Chinese Wall; for history is a palimpsest, and culture is permeable to time past, time present, and time future.
- 5) This means that a ‘period’, as I have already intimated, must be perceived in terms both of continuity and discontinuity, the two perspectives being complementary and partial. Sameness and difference, unity and rupture, filiations and revolt, all must be honored if we are to attend to history, apprehend (perceive, understand) change, both as a spatial, mental structure and as a temporal, physical process, both as pattern and unique event.
- 6) Thus a ‘period’ is generally not a period at all; it is rather both a diachronic and synchronic construct. Postmodernism, again, like modernism or romanticism, is no exception; it requires both historical and theoretical definition.
- 7) As we have seen, any definition of postmodernism calls upon a four-fold vision of complementarities, embracing continuity and discontinuity, diachrony and synchrony.

8) All this leads to the prior problem of periodization itself, which is also that of literary history conceived as a particular apprehension of change. Indeed, the concept of postmodernism applies some theory of innovation, renovation, novation or simply change.

9) Postmodernism can expand into a still large problem: is it only an artistic tendency or also a social phenomenon, perhaps even a mutation in Western humanism? If so, how are the various aspects of this phenomenon – psychological, philosophical, economic, political – joined or disjoined?

10) Finally, though not least vexing, is postmodernism an honorific term, used insidiously to valorize writers, however disparate, whom we otherwise esteem, to hail trends, however discordant, which we somehow approve? Or is it, on the contrary, a term of opprobrium and objugation?" (Hassan, 1987:276 – 279).

According to Ihab Hassan 'postmodernism' is a 'tradition of the new' and a renovation not only of social institutions but of man himself.

Modernism is a blanket term for an explosion of new styles and trends in the arts in the first half of the 20th century. "Modern era was the values of the 18th century, the Age of Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason. Probably the main values of the age, besides reason, were the idea of progress." (Powell, 1998:8).



Modern art was so far out that it divided culture into 'Highbrow' and 'Lowbrow'. In the 18th century thinkers became optimistic that by using the universal values of science, reason and logic. They could get rid of all the myths and holy ideas that kept humanity from progressing. "Postmodernists often see no reason for a center. Instead they favor a decentering – a play of chance, anti-form, and surface. Postmodernist often create, compose, or paint entirely by chance – spilling or throwing paint on canvasses, randomly determining the pitch and duration of musical notes in a melody, seeking to de – define art to create non-art or anti-art." (Powell, 1998:18).

Postmodernism generally refers to a form of contemporary culture. The term postmodernity alludes to a specific historical period. "Postmodernity is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation." (Eagleton, 1996:vii).

"Postmodernism is a style of culture which reflects something of this epochal change, in a depthless, decentred, ungrounded, self-reflexive, playful, derivative, electric, pluralistic art which blurs the boundaries between 'high' and 'popular' culture, as well as between art and everyday experiences." (Eagleton, 1996:vii).

"Postmodernism has demystified the most stubbornly naturalized of institutions by laying bare the conventions which govern them, and so has sometimes run headlong

into a brand of neo – Sophism for which, since all conventions are arbitrary anyway, one might as well conform to those of the Free World.” (Eagleton, 1996:27).

Modernism is a term from the Latin ‘modo’ that means ‘current’ and has a far wider currency and range of meanings than ‘Modernism’. According to Peter Childs, “Modernist art is, in most critical usage, reckoned to be the art of what Harold Rosenberg calls, ‘the tradition of the new’. It is experimental, formally complex, elliptical, contains elements of creation and tends to associate notions of the artist’s freedom from realism, materialism, traditional genre and form, with notions of cultural apocalypse and disaster.” (Childs, 2000:1).

According to Peter Childs, “Postmodernism is the new avant garde literature (neo-modernist or postmodernist) partly carried modernism further, partly reacted against it – for example against its ideology and its historical orientation.” (Childs, 2000:2).

Modernism is variously argued to be a period, style, genre or combination of these. But modernism is first of all a word which exists alongside cognate words. “Modernism has predominantly been represented in white, male, heterosexist, Euro-American middle class terms, and any of the recent challenges to each of these aspects introduces another one of a plurality of Modernism.” (Childs, 2000:12).

From 1970’s onwards postmodernism made its influence felt in different field, such as, in the field of art and architecture, in the field of philosophy, and in the field of social

science. Lyotard defines postmodernism as incredulity toward meta-narratives and the decline of narrative. "The age of modernism is about to end and the age of postmodernism begins. Modernism as represented by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution and later by Marxism is now super-annulated and has no chance of survival." (Kaviraj, 2005:1).

"Postmodernity stands for the acceptance of differences and the celebration of heterogeneity within an overwhelmingly capitalist framework. In the postmodern scheme of things consumer culture manages to push its way into the mainstream of social science." (Kaviraj, 2005:21).

"Postmodernism has largely found expression in the form of cultural artifacts conceived in relation both to an indigenously defined and a European Modernism." (Waugh, 1992:3).

"Postmodernism, an art of the surface, was the contemporary period's answer to Adorno's 'negative aesthetics' of Modernism: an art which in making itself opaque and resistant to interpretation would, in its effective silence refuse consumption even as it partook of a culture of consumption." (Waugh, 1992:4).

"Postmodern theory can be seen and understood as the latest version of a long-standing attempt to address social and political issues through an aesthetics view of the world." (Waugh, 1992:6).

“The postmodern self-conscious awareness of the material and the plasticity of the imagination is often expressed through parody: a mode which explicitly speaks through the reformulation of an existing discourse.” (Waugh, 1992:11).

The studies of modernism followed two main paths, the first in Anglo-American criticism, and the second in Western Marxism. The topics about ‘Western Marxism’ have also continued to be relevant to discussions of postmodernism. The topics were on the use and effects of new technologies on art and mass culture, on avant-garde experiment and realist convention. “Postmodernism, Eco defines by its intertextuality and knowingness and by its relation to the past. Whereas modernism wished but failed to abolish the past, postmodernism revisits it, at any historical time, with irony.” (Brooker, 1992:225).

Both modernism and postmodernism are phenomena, primarily of 20th century Anglo-American and European culture. Both are related with a changing relation to that culture. “Modernism had little more than a walk on part as a critical term, and could be written into the category ‘modern’ or dismissed by Larkin’s kind of snobbish provincialism.” (Brooker, 1992:9).

The European alternatives to ‘traditionalist modernism’ explored in Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism and Cubism had little to no life in English culture. Literary

modernism was a particular Anglo-American construction and it was cut to different lengths and widths in these cultures, especially in the period of its simultaneous decline and definition in the post-war years. Levin sees, "The modernistic movement comprising 'one of the most remarkable constellations of genius in the history of the West', receding before a tide of unreason he associates with the postmodern." (Brooker, 1992:9). The invention of sweep and richness of modernism had been enchained in the academy and compromised in a society of technical reproduction and material consumption.

Modernism is the name of a period in the beginning of a previous century. It is too distant to serve as a figure for the grandparent. "Modernism is at once a historical scandal and a contemporary disability." (Levenson, 1999:1). No one should be surprised by the distortions and simplifications of Modernism, nor should anyone waste tears of sympathy on figures. "Many forces have joined to change the vectors of late twentieth-century culture but our contemporary imperatives to declare a new period and to declare ourselves citizens of a liberated postmodernism has badly distorted and sadly simplified the moment it means to surpass." (Levenson, 1999:1).

Modernism becomes the assumed background against which to define postmodernism and it is in danger of being both banalized and misappreciated at the same time.

"Modernism's peak period in the Anglo-American context lay between 1910 and 1925, while thought associated with Marx, Freud and Nietzsche." (Levenson, 1999:9). Yet

despite its apparent familiarity, interpretation of the literature of the period has become less rather than more clear by the end of the century.

Steven Connor distinguishes four different stages in the development of postmodernism. These are: accumulation, synthesis, autonomy and dissipation.

According to Steven Connor, "Postmodernism has indeed shown an extraordinary capacity to renew itself in the conflagration of its demise. One might almost say that the derivative character of postmodernism, the name of which indicates modernism, modernity or the modern." (Connor, 2004:1). Steven Connor also says, "It is true that something like a sex culture is in the process of arising this may suggest that, though sexuality has certainly featured centrally in many discussions of the postmodern, it may now itself have achieved a kind of autonomy from it." (Connor, 2004:11).

Postmodernism and postmodern discourses may now be entering a new phase of productive dissipation, in which some of the cultural themes and phenomena. Now it has made its concern are now themselves achieving a kind of autonomy. Some accounts of postmodernism depended on the argument that not only had the conditions of social and economic organization changed. But an effect of those changes had the relations between the social, economic and the artistic culture.



Chapter 3

Modernism in *To The Lighthouse*

To The Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf is regarded as a complete modern novel. This novel contains almost all the elements of modernism. The novel *To The Lighthouse* is a great work of modern literature. We know that modern literature is based on form, design, purpose, hierarchy, finished work, distance, creation, symbolism, synthesis, presence, centering, boundary, semantics, metaphor, selection, root, reading, narrative, origin, cause etc. All these are the elements of modernism. Virginia Woolf applies all these elements of modernism in her novel *To The Lighthouse*.

Virginia Woolf was born in a highly cultured and educated family in London, on January 26, 1882. Sir. Leslie Stephen was her father. He was renowned critic, historian, scholar and author of a large number of critical, biographical and philosophical essays. Virginia Woolf gathered much of the materials for her novels from this social and cultural milieu in which she had much for her experience of life. This milieu was composed of a small number of families and most of them were intimately connected. The members of this group constituted the cream of the middle class and they had their high intellectual attainments. Virginia Woolf was a very beautiful woman. She had great affection and attachment for her sister Vanessa and her brother Thoby. The sudden death of Thoby at the age of 25 during a holiday in Greece had a profound effect on her work. Virginia Woolf did not go a conventional school because of her

delicate health. She was taught at home mainly by her father. Virginia lost her mother when she was just thirteen. It was the first great loss of a very dear and near one that affected her deeply. Virginia Woolf married Leonard Woolf in 1912. She was looked upon with great honor and admiration in the Bloomsbury circle. The association with this literary club meant a constant source of pleasure and inspiration for her. It did much to soothe her ruffled spirit and stimulate her creative activity. The Second World War destroyed her will to live. In the past she had suffered from fits of depression and illness. The strain proved too great for her to overcome. At last she committed suicide on March 28, 1941.

The most outstanding biographical facts about Virginia Woolf are her literary family background, her fits of acute depression and bouts of mental disturbance, her originality as a writer and her suicide. Virginia Woolf had lost many near relatives and dear ones and got much shock in her life. All these are reflected in her novels directly. In her novels we see that incompleteness and depression. We always find some sad characters in her novels. The sad experience of her life and her attitude towards life deeply dominate the novel 'To The Lighthouse'. Because she was a tragic figure herself. We find all these features of Virginia's life in her modern novel *To The Lighthouse*.

To The Lighthouse is a modern novel which contains almost all the elements of modernism. The novel *To The Lighthouse* has a particular 'form' and it has a beginning and an ending. It is a close-ended novel just like a modern novel. The novel has three

parts: *The Window*, *Time Passes* and *The Lighthouse*. In the first part of the novel named *The Window*, we see that Mrs. Ramsay, the central character of the novel wants to take her son James to the lighthouse. But Mr. Ramsay does not allow his son to go to the lighthouse because of the bad weather. This decision of Mr. Ramsay seriously hurts Mrs. Ramsay because she has a great desire to go to the lighthouse with her son. In the second part of the novel named *Time Passes* we see that, this part of the novel covers a period of ten years. During these ten years many incidents have taken place in the family of Ramsay. In the mean time Mrs. Ramsay dies, Mrs. Ramsay's elder son Andrew gets killed in the war and her elder daughter Prue who gets married and dies in childbirth. All these incidents put a great impact on Mr. Ramsay. The third part of the novel named *The Lighthouse* narrates the ending of the novel. In this part we see that Mr. Ramsay realizes that he should fulfill the desire of his late wife. Now Mr. Ramsay decides to take his son, James to the lighthouse for the fulfillment of the desire of his wife. Both James and Cam feel rebellious because they regard their father as too egotistical and tyrannical. They join their father in the trip to the lighthouse most reluctantly. But ultimately, even before they land at the lighthouse, they have begun to perceive the good side of their father. Then they change their minds about their father. In this way the novel ends.

The novel *To The Lighthouse* has a particular purpose. In this novel we see that Mrs. Ramsay is a woman of extraordinary beauty. When the novel begins, she is already fifty years old and the mother of eight children. Mrs. Ramsay is a devoted wife and a loving mother. She is a woman of great personality and many good qualities. She is an

excellent hostess and a social worker. But, Mrs. Ramsay is not happy in her married life. She is mentally tortured by her husband. Mr. Ramsay always dominates her indirectly. Mrs. Ramsay has no voice in her family. Even she is unable to fulfill her desire during her life time. She wishes to go to the lighthouse with her son. But, her husband has not allowed them. In the Second World War she loses her dear ones and gets a great shock. Mr. Ramsay has fulfilled the desire of Mrs. Ramsay after the death of her. The novelist Virginia Woolf is a feminist writer. In this novel she draws the character of an unsatisfied woman. The purpose of the novel is to highlight the tragedy of a talented woman.

The novel *To The Lighthouse* has also shown us the purposes of the two characters of the novel. After the death of Mrs. Ramsay, Mr. Ramsay serves a purpose. The purpose is to take his son, James to the lighthouse. At the end of the novel we find that Mr. Ramsay has fulfilled the desire of Mrs. Ramsay. Here is also another purpose. Lily Briscoe is a painter living in the house of Ramsay as a guest. Lily also has a desire to draw a picture of Mrs. Ramsay. She tries to draw the picture of Mrs. Ramsay throughout the novel but at the end of the novel she becomes successful. So, this novel has the element of modernism named 'purpose'.

The novel *To The Lighthouse* is a finished work just like a modern novel. It is true that every modern novel has a beginning and an ending. We find the beginning and the ending of this novel. At the initial stage the novel shows that Mrs. Ramsay has a desire to take her son to the lighthouse. But, during her life time, she is not able to fulfill her

desire. At the end of the novel it is seen that Mr. Ramsay takes her son, James to the lighthouse to fulfill the desire of his wife. In this manner the novel gets a fulfillment. So, this is a finished work.

Modernism believes in hierarchy. The novel *To The Lighthouse* follows hierarchy. We find three parts in this novel. These are: *The Window*, *Time Passes* and *The Lighthouse*. These three parts maintain a chronological order. The first part *The Window* shows the desire of Mrs. Ramsay who is the central character of the novel. In the first part we see the general description of the family members of Ramsay. In this part we also find a particular description some guests and some friends. The second part *Time Passes* shows the death of some family members including Mrs. Ramsay. In this part we see a large change in this family. During these ten years Mrs. Ramsay dies, Andrew, the elder son of Mrs. Ramsay gets killed in the Second World War and Prue, the daughter of Mrs. Ramsay dies in child birth. The last part *The Lighthouse* shows the fulfillment of the desire of Mrs. Ramsay. Here we see that Mr. Ramsay finally takes his son to the lighthouse. In this manner the desire of Mrs. Ramsay is fulfilled and in this way a particular hierarchy has been maintained in this novel.

Distance is one of the features of modernism. In this novel we see the distance of time and the distance of relationship among the characters of the novel. The novel *To The Lighthouse* has three different parts. All these three parts are maintaining the distance of time always. The second part of the novel maintains ten years distance from the first part. The novel shows the distance of relationship between two major characters. In

this novel Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are not happy in conjugal life. They always maintain distance from each other. They are unable to fulfill the mental desires of each other. Mr. Ramsay is a professor of philosophy but he is not a successful husband and not a successful father. In this novel there is a clear distance between Mr. Ramsay and his son, James. Mrs. Ramsay wants to take James to the lighthouse but Mr. Ramsay never allows them to go there. Because of this, there always exists a mental distance between father and son.

Creation is one of the best features of modernism. The novelist Virginia Woolf creates a desire in Mrs. Ramsay. For mental creation Mrs. Ramsay wants to take her son to the lighthouse. But her husband always breaks the dreams of Mrs. Ramsay. For this reason we find inter-conflict in the family. In this way, the novelist creates a gap among the members of the family. At the end of the novel Mr. Ramsay takes his son to the lighthouse. In this way, Virginia Woolf creates a good relation between father and son. So, the term 'creation' is always maintained in *To The Lighthouse*.

Every modern novel stands on a 'center'. In modern novels the writers always centralizes the subject matters. The novel *To The Lighthouse* also has a center. In this novel the center is the 'lighthouse'. Every event and incident takes place centering the 'lighthouse'. Mrs. Ramsay ardently desires to reach the lighthouse with her son. But, she is unsuccessful during her life time. After the death of Mrs. Ramsay, Mr. Ramsay and his son arrive at the center finally. In this manner the story of the novel is concluded in the lighthouse.



Modern literature believes in 'boundary'. The novel *To The Lighthouse* is confined to a boundary by the novelist. All the characters of the novel belong to this boundary. The novel begins with the discussion of the lighthouse and ends in the lighthouse. In this novel there is a special significance of the lighthouse. It has a symbolic meaning. This meaning is boundary which is the destination of all the characters of the novel. Nobody has crossed this boundary. It is seen that the lighthouse is the place where Mr. Ramsay fulfills the desire of Mrs. Ramsay. The novel has not gone beyond this boundary.

Modern literature believes in cause and effect. The novel *To The Lighthouse* is the story of cause and effect. The novel shows the dissatisfaction of the life of Mrs. Ramsay. She is not happy in her family life but she never expresses it. Mrs. Ramsay's husband Mr. Ramsay always tries to dominate her. As a result, emptiness is always seen in her whole life. In this novel we see that Mrs. Ramsay has a great desire to take her son, James to the lighthouse. But her husband prevents them from going there. As a result, James begins to hate his father. It is the cause of the family conflict. At the end of the novel, Mr. Ramsay realizes his mistakes and decides to take her son to the lighthouse. In this manner he tries to fulfill his wife's desire. For this reason, Mr. Ramsay is able to create a good relation to his son James and after that James also starts honoring his father. This is the effect of the novel which has been highlighted by the novelist Virginia Woolf.

Every modern novel is based on a particular design. The novel *To The Lighthouse* has also a particular design. Virginia Woolf is a brilliant designer. She has designed the story of the of the novel well. This novel is divided into three parts. The first part is *The Window*, the second part is *Time Passes* and the third part is *The Lighthouse*. Each part has its own individuality. All major and minor characters belong to the design of this novel. All the characters of the novel are individuals.

Modernism always believes in symbolism. We find that the novel *To The Lighthouse* is rich in symbols and symbolism. The novelist Virginia Woolf uses symbols everywhere in this novel. The symbols are: the sea, the lighthouse, the personality and quality of Mrs. Ramsay and so on. Through these symbols Virginia Woolf highlights the nature of human life and human existence.

The novelist Virginia Woolf uses the sea as a symbol of eternal flux of life in which time and we all exist. The sea always changes its mood and its face. We see that Mrs. Ramsay at one moment thinks that the sound of the sea is soothing and consoling like a song. At another moment she thinks that the sound of the sea is ghostly because it is announcing the warning of death. In the novel *To The Lighthouse*, the sea surrounds the island where all the actions and events take place.

Virginia Woolf uses the lighthouse as a symbol of impersonal reality. Mr. Ramsay is an egotistical person in this novel. He has never surrendered to the decision of anyone in this novel. The lighthouse is a symbol of internal peace and beauty, which enlightens

all the hearts of people. Only for this all comes to the lighthouse. Mrs. Ramsay also has a desire to go to the lighthouse where there is eternal happiness. But, Mrs. Ramsay could not come. Finally, Mr. Ramsay and his son came there and realized the truth. As a result, Mr. Ramsay became a prideless man. So, we call the lighthouse a symbol of sorrow and joy.

In this novel Mrs. Ramsay is a symbol of positive qualities such as: love, truthfulness, charity, service, generosity etc. Mrs. Ramsay dominates the whole novel through her authentic qualities. She dominates it not only during her lifetime but also after her death. In this novel we see that she is a loving mother and a devoted wife. She is an ideal woman. Mrs. Ramsay has devoted herself to social service. Therefore, she is respected everywhere but her husband has not appreciated her. Through Mrs. Ramsay, Virginia Woolf highlights feminism.

Remark: I think *To The Lighthouse* is a complete modern novel. I see modernism everywhere in this novel. Virginia Woolf uses modern elements excellently in *To The Lighthouse*. All the characters, events and actions represent modernism apparently. It is a great work of modern literature. This novel is absolutely educative because it represents the real picture of modern life and its impact on us. *To The Lighthouse* is really a perfect modern novel with the combination of all.

Chapter 4

Postmodernism in *Breakfast of Champions*

Breakfast of Champions by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. is a great work of postmodernism. This is a complete postmodern novel. *Breakfast of Champions* contains almost all the elements of postmodernism. Postmodern literature believes in anti-form, play, anarchy, process, happening, chance, decreation, participation, deconstruction, antithesis, absence, anti-boundary, irony etc. We find all these elements of postmodernism in the novel. The novelist Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. uses the postmodern elements in this novel excellently. Here we find Vonnegut as an artist of postmodern literature and postmodernism.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. is one of the pioneers of postmodernism. He is a great postmodern writer. Vonnegut writes postmodern novels, science fiction, short stories etc. He is a great satirist of America. Usually, his novels are full of social criticism. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. is the son and grandson of Indianapolis architects. They were painters too. His only living sibling is a distinguished physicist who discovered among other things that silver iodide can sometimes make it snow or rain. *Breakfast of Champions* is Vonnegut's seventh novel. He wrote it mostly in New York City. The novel *Breakfast of Champions* represents postmodernism and its ideologies and principles.

Breakfast of Champions is a true postmodern novel. It has almost all the elements of postmodernism. The novel has no particular form and it has no beginning and no ending. It is an open-ended novel just like a postmodern novel. We see that the postmodern novel *Breakfast of Champions* contains anarchy, happening, play, anti-form, participation, deconstruction, combination and irony. The novelist Vonnegut uses all these postmodern elements in this novel.

The novel *Breakfast of Champions* is full of various pictures which have a great significance on human life and the world. These pictures make this novel into a true postmodern novel. Through these pictures the novelist Kurt Vonnegut criticizes the modern society and modern life. Every picture of this novel has its own individuality. All the pictures highlight the bad sides of modernism. Kurt Vonnegut narrates the whole novel through these pictures. He satirizes the narrowness of the modern society and modern culture through these real pictures.

We notice that postmodernism criticizes the excesses of modernism. Postmodernism rejects some notions of modernism. Postmodernism always rejects all kinds of grand narratives. In this novel Kurt Vonnegut also rejects all kinds of grand narratives such as: money, power, religion, dominion, sex and capitalism. In the novel *Breakfast of Champions* the novelist Kurt Vonnegut criticizes the American history, American culture, and American society. In this novel he also criticizes American philosophy, American ideology, and American politics and so on.

In this novel Kurt Vonnegut says that human beings are 'robots'. They have already become 'machines'. According to Vonnegut human beings have no emotions and no feelings. They have lost their humanity and manhood. *Breakfast of Champions* also shows that human beings are without kindness and love. They are more ferocious than beast. Man can do anything for his own interest. Even a man can kill his brother for a piece of land. In this novel Vonnegut says that human beings have become selfish and self-centered because of 'capitalism'. Kurt Vonnegut asserts these social issues from his own experiences about the real world. In this novel he says, "This book is my fiftieth birthday present to myself". Vonnegut gathers 50 years' bad experiences which he describes in this novel.

Kurt Vonnegut thinks that it is a damaged planet. Robot like people makes this beautiful planet a damaged one. In this novel he says, "I think I am trying to make my head as empty as it was when I was born onto this damaged planet fifty years ago". Vonnegut is very much disappointed about this world and its ideologies and philosophies. He believes that man lives only for sex and gold in this world. Man cannot think beyond this. In the present world man is a slave to money and passion. As a result, human beings lost morality, sense of value, and humanity. For this reason, Kurt Vonnegut mentions a line in the novel; the line is that "I think I am trying to clear my head of all the junk in there – the assholes, the flags, the underpants". In this novel Kurt Vonnegut has used many abusive and vulgar words which have not been used in the modern novels. It is possible only in postmodern literature. So we can call it a true postmodern novel for this reason.

In *Breakfast of Champions* the novelist Kurt Vonnegut criticizes American national anthem because of its question marks. He also criticizes 1492 the year of the discovery of America. He asserts that, there is nothing to be proud of the year of the discovery of America because America was discovered by the 'sea pirates'. These sea pirates were all in all in America. They formed the government and made the laws of America. In this novel, Vonnegut mocks at this matter that now America always talks about human freedom. This America introduced slavery in this world. Now America is one of the richest and powerful countries on the planet. It has most of the food and minerals and machinery. In spite of having these, America always threatens all other countries of the world. America will shoot and drop bombs on other countries if they do not obey. Kurt Vonnegut asserts in this novel that Americans are very good at grabbing and holdings. Vonnegut also thinks that human beings are being misled and misguided by the bad ideas. These bad ideas are produced in human minds by the 'capitalism'. As a result, human beings already have been affected with bad chemicals. In this novel we see that 'American President' is a 'chimpanzee' in the eyes of the novelist. This is a perfect postmodern view. In this process the novelist Kurt Vonnegut has established 'postmodernism' in *Breakfast of Champions* excellently.

Breakfast of Champions is a formless novel. We know that postmodernism believes in anti-form. This novel has no beginning and no ending. It has no particular shape because this novel starts with pictures and also ends with pictures. So, we find postmodernism everywhere in this novel.



Anarchy means disorder and indiscipline. Postmodernism totally believes in anarchy. *Breakfast of Champions* does not maintain any chronological order. All the chapters in this novel are inconsistent with one another. In this novel Vonnegut uses many chapters and many events. But all the chapters and events are disappearing when we are arriving at the next chapters. As a result, of which, it creates ambiguity and obscurity. In this novel Vonnegut mentions various kinds of subject matters. But, these subject matters do not maintain any interlink. They are totally different from one another. It is only possible in postmodern literature. In this way *Breakfast of Champions* contains postmodernism.

Absence is an important element of postmodernism. We find 'absence' everywhere in this novel. This novel is based on absence. The meaning of absence is non-presence. The novel *Breakfast of Champions* is bare of symbolism, order, purpose, design and centering. The novelist Kurt Vonnegut talks about many issues but there is no central issue. This novel has no specific purposes. It only criticizes some notions of modern society and culture. This novel always represents postmodernism.

The novel *Breakfast of Champions* rejects all kinds of value judgment and rejects all kinds of grand narratives. Postmodernism always rejects value judgment and grand narratives in society. In this novel Kurt Vonnegut criticizes the distinction between high class and low class, rich people and poor people, white skin and black skin and so on. Vonnegut rejects these value judgments in the society. In this novel he also criticizes the grand narratives such as: power, money, sex, dominance etc.

In *Breakfast of Champions* we find 'irony' clearly. It is another important element of postmodernism. Irony means victim of bad luck. Human beings surrender themselves to irony. *Breakfast of Champions* shows that white people dominate the black people, the weak people are being exploited by the rich people every where in the world and powerful countries always attack on the powerless countries for their own benefit. The rich people create disparity between man and man. Kurt Vonnegut says that wars and corruptions are going to destroy the world. That's why he calls this planet a 'damaged one'. He also says all people are created by God but one man rules another man and one country dominates another country. It is really sorrowful. For this reason, Kurt Vonnegut firmly believes that "human beings deserve to die horribly".

Desire is one of the most important elements of postmodernism. In *Breakfast of Champions* the novelist Kurt Vonnegut expresses his desire. In this novel we find that Vonnegut is very disappointed about this dirty capitalistic world. Every thing of this world has been polluted. According to Vonnegut we are living in a dying planet because human beings have lost their humanity, love, kindness, and morality. Now every thing is in the grip of 'capitalism'. Basically, the capitalists are ruling the world. America is a capitalistic one. Kurt Vonnegut says that the American people think only about their own interest. America always attacks other countries if they do not honor America. The novelist Kurt Vonnegut does not want such a nasty world. He would like to destroy this world and also wants to create a new world. He has a dream to make an ideal world where there will be no capitalism, no evil politics, no racism and no wars. That's why he says, "open your eyes, open your eyes" at the end of the novel.

This novel stands on 'combination' and 'play'. Kurt Vonnegut combines many characters and events in this postmodern play. All the characters and events are different from one another. These characters do not maintain any chronological order. The various events of this novel do not maintain interlink also. Vonnegut combines newer and newer topics one after another. In this novel every subject matter maintains its own individuality. Kurt Vonnegut combines all of these in a postmodern way.

Postmodernism believes in 'playfulness'. We find the term 'play' in this novel everywhere. In this novel Kurt Vonnegut plays with the characters and the events. This novel is going on and on and it has not stopped its journey anywhere. At times we find Vonnegut in his novel serious and unserious in any paragraph. He has used both terms – tragic and comic in one paragraph. Vonnegut always changes his mood in this novel. He seems to have played with whole novel. Kurt Vonnegut is a worthy player in the eyes of the readers.

Postmodernism believes in process, performance and happening. We find all these terms in *Breakfast of Champions*. Kurt Vonnegut writes this novel in a continuous process. Every event in this novel is always happening. This novel has no ending and interval. It is based on the progressive style. It has been going on from first to last. All the characters are always running in this novel. The novelist has arranged the novel with running characters and running events. We know that every postmodern novel moves in a continuous process. There is no exception to this novel. According to Kurt Vonnegut, the people of the world are always performing. They do not know when

their performance will end. It is just like continuous tense. In the novel *Breakfast of Champions* all the chapters and events are coming like sea tide. We have not seen the beginning and ending of these chapters and events. It is eternally going on.

Postmodernism believes in the strong participation of the novelist in the novel. We find that the novelist Kurt Vonnegut himself is present in *Breakfast of Champions* and he greatly dominates the other characters of the novel. There are another two main characters besides the novelist in the novel. They are Kilgore Trout and Dwayne Hoover. Kilgore Trout was a science-fiction writer. He was nobody at that time and he supposed his life was over. But that time Kilgore Trout was mistaken. He was an alone man. He owned a parakeet named Bill. Trout was all alone at night and talked to his parakeet. Kilgore Trout had written one hundred and seventeen novels and two thousand short stories. But all his writings remained unpublished. Another main character of this novel is Dwayne Hoover. He was a successful auto dealer. In this novel Dwayne Hoover was a widower. He lived alone at night in dream house in Fairchild Heights. It was the most desirable residential area in the city. Dwayne Hoover was also all alone at night. Dwayne's only companion at night was his dog named Sparky. He reserved most of his conversation for the dog. Dwayne Hoover get down on the floor and roll around with Sparky. Both, Kilgore Trout and Dwayne Hoover were the Americans. Kilgore Trout would always insert bad ideas and bad chemicals in to the brain of Dwayne Hoover in this novel. As a result, Dwayne Hoover was on the brink of going insane. The novel shows that Dwayne Hoover realized that he himself is a machine in this world. These two characters are always controlled by the novelist

Kurt Vonnegut. From top to bottom we find the participation of the novelist in this novel *Breakfast of Champions*.

The most important element of postmodernism is decreation or deconstruction. The term decreation or deconstruction means to destroy something to reform it new.

Postmodernism likes to renew anything for its new form. In this novel we see that the novelist, Kurt Vonnegut is a reformist. He wants to create the new ones breaking the old ones. He thinks that old views and old ideologies are harmful for the society. That's why in this novel Vonnegut has all along criticized the American culture, American philosophy, American ideology, American society and its people. He also hates wars, power abuse, inequality, sex and capitalism in this novel. For this reason, Kurt Vonnegut wants to renew and reform the civilization. The present civilization is burdened with sin, falsehood, deceit, adultery, bribery, corruption etc. To save the civilization from these curses, Vonnegut wants to reform the modern society. For the reawakening of the sleeping people he says repeatedly, "Open your eyes; open your eyes".

Postmodernism believes in 'The Holy Ghost'. At the end of the novel Kurt Vonnegut asserts, "He would meet his Creator, who would explain everything". For him the Creator is the Holy Ghost. The people of the world believe in the existence of God who is our creator. Every thing has been created by Him; not only that every thing is totally controlled by Him. People believe that one time God will destroy every thing. Various religions are saying various things about God. According to the Bible God is the father

of humankind. If people do better, God will reward them. But, postmodern philosophers do not believe in this ideology. They tell that there is someone who has created this world. According to them, He is neither our God nor our father. He is the Holy Ghost. Every thing is under the Holy Ghost and at His will everything happens on earth. Postmodernism and postmodern literatures strongly believe in the idea of the Holy Ghost.

Remark: I think *Breakfast of Champions* is a great work of postmodern literature. It is a perfect postmodern novel. Kurt Vonnegut uses postmodern elements brilliantly in this novel. *Breakfast of Champions* clearly represents postmodernism. It is a great satire on modern life and the modern world. Kurt Vonnegut criticizes the dark and negative sides of modern world bitterly in this novel. *Breakfast of Champions* breaks the modern tradition and style. It has introduced a new trend in the literary world. This is really a complete postmodern novel.



Chapter 5

Conclusion

In case any good **literary reader** goes through the novel *To The Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf, he or she **will easily realize** that it is a perfect modern novel. This novel is replete with **modern elements**. *To The Lighthouse* is entirely written in the light of modernism. **We find that the philosophy** and the ideology of modernism highly dominate this novel. **Modern literature** trusts in unity, form, order, logic, cause, origin, boundary, **symbolism, purpose** and so on. All these elements of modernism exist in the novel *To The Lighthouse*. This novel begins with the deep desire of Mrs. Ramsay and ends with the **fulfillment of the desire** of Mrs. Ramsay. The novelist Virginia Woolf creates a good **relation between father** and son at the end of the novel. It is seen that the purpose of the novelist **has been successfully served**. It is evident that the novel *To The Lighthouse* is bearing the **tradition of modernism**.

Modernism familiarizes us **with various concepts** and ideas. Modernism has institutionalized everything **in the modern society**. As a result, everything is confined to a boundary in the **modern age**. **Modernism** introduces 'capitalism' to the society. Capitalism alters this **modern society**. **We find that everything** comes under the control of capitalism. As a result, **grand narratives** appear in this world. Subsequently, these grand narratives become **all in all in this world**. For this reason, 'value judgment' plays an active role **in every corner of the society**. Because of this, rich people exploit the

poor people, powerful countries dominate powerless countries, white people detest the black people and the higher class neglects the lower class. These disparity and discrimination are clearly seen in the modern novels. The subject matter of the modern novel is based on the social hierarchy. Even the novel *To The Lighthouse* is not beyond this arena. In this novel the dominance of Mr. Ramsay on Mrs. Ramsay is clearly reflected. We find a real picture of modern society in this novel. Virginia Woolf has manifested herself and the modern society through *To The Lighthouse*.

Breakfast of Champions by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. is an ideal model of postmodern literature. The novel *Breakfast of Champions* represents postmodernism. By reading this novel we can make out the principles and the ideologies of postmodernism. In this novel Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. rejects some notions of modernism such as grand narratives, value judgment in society, social hierarchy, capitalism, racism, discrimination, disparity and so on. In this novel Vonnegut deeply criticizes the thoughts and ideas of modern people and the modern world. In this novel Vonnegut says, "We are living in a dying planet" because morality and humanity have died. In this world human beings have been turned into a beast. According to Vonnegut, human beings are selfish and self-centered and they become robots and machines in the present world. They are running after only money and sex. For this reason, Kurt Vonnegut says that "it is a damaged planet". He has detested the evil activities of people who are doing harm to the civilization. That's why the novelist Vonnegut asserts that humanity deserved to die horribly.

I think that *Breakfast of Champions* is a perfect postmodern novel. It has almost all the elements of postmodernism. This novel has no form, no unity, no order, no beginning and no ending. It is based on play, process, anti-form, anarchy, happening, combination, irony, deconstruction etc. The novel *Breakfast of Champions* begins with pictures and ends with pictures. It is only possible in postmodern literature. In this novel its pictures are really significant and momentous. Each picture has an inner meaning. Through these pictures Kurt Vonnegut criticizes the modern society and its people. The pictures of *Breakfast of Champions* turn it into an authentic postmodern novel. These pictures clearly represent postmodernism.

The novel *Breakfast of Champions* is a great satire on America and American people. Vonnegut calls the American President a 'chimpanzee'. Kurt Vonnegut also says that human beings are robots and machines. In this novel we see that Kilgore Trout, the one of the major characters of this novel dies in '1981' but the most interesting matter is that *Breakfast of Champions* has been published in '1973'. How it is possible? But it is only possible in postmodern literature.

Postmodernism has never **cancelled** the whole concept of modernism. Postmodernism has challenged some **notions of modernism**. It always criticizes the excesses of modernism. Postmodernism **focuses only** those areas produced by modernism, which **complicate human life and their activities**. Modernism believes in the absolute truth but postmodernism rejects this **notion of modernism**. Postmodernism says that nothing is absolute in this world. **Modernism has enriched** and empowered grand narratives,

value judgment, capitalism, fundamentalism and so on in the world. Postmodernism strongly rejects all these notions of modernism. Postmodernism teaches us self-realization, self-reflexivity and self-examination. Postmodernism always likes to renew and reform the modern concept because it is based on decreation and deconstruction of the modern civilization.

The novel *To The Lighthouse* represents modernism; on the other hand the novel *Breakfast of Champions* represents postmodernism. We have already seen that the novel *To The Lighthouse* bears the elements of modernism while *Breakfast of Champions* carries the elements of postmodernism. But there is a similarity between these two novels. Both the novels are life oriented and they talk about life. In these two novels we have found frustration, sorrow, mental torture, dominance, social degradation etc. The novel *To The Lighthouse* has shown the dominance of grand narratives and the real picture of modern society and the novel *Breakfast of Champions* has shown the rejection of the excesses of modernism. Although, there is a contradiction between two concepts but modernism and postmodernism both are correlated because modernism is the foundation on which postmodernism emerges.



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