



# Historical Dictionary of Postmodernist Literature and Theater (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts)

*Fran Mason*

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Postmodernist literature embraces a wide range of forms and perspectives, including texts that are primarily self-reflexive; texts that use pastiche, burlesque, parody, intertextuality and hybrid forms to create textual realities that either run in opposition to or in parallel with an external reality; fabulations that develop both of these strategies; texts that ironize their relationship to reality; works that use the aspects already noted to more fully engage with political or cultural realities; texts that deal with history as a fiction; and texts that elude categorization even within the variety already explored. For example, in fiction, a postmodernist novel might tell a story about a writer struggling with writing (only, perhaps, to find that he is a character in a book by another writer struggling to write a book).

The *Historical Dictionary of Postmodernist Literature and Theater* examines the different areas of postmodernist literature and the variety of forms that have been produced. This is accomplished through a list of acronyms, a chronology, an introductory essay, a bibliography, and several hundred cross-referenced dictionary entries on individual postmodernist writers, the important postmodernist aesthetic practices, significant texts produced throughout the history of postmodernist writing, and important movements and ideas that have created a variety of literary approaches within the form. By placing these concerns within the historical, philosophical, and cultural contexts of postmodernism, this reference explores the frameworks within which postmodernist literature of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century operates.

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