

John Ashbery's Poetry: a Postmodern Approach

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to discuss the poetry of the American poet, John Ashbery (b. 1927) in terms of postmodernist movement in poetry. Postmodernism which began in the sixties had its influences in different aspects of culture. It has had its influences on different literary genres such as fiction, drama, and poetry. Truly, fiction has been the center of attention in many critical studies. But the manifestations of the movement can also be traced in poetry. John Ashbery is one of the contemporary poets whose poetry is best regarded as the postmodernist poetry. His works has been characterized by a free-moving and disjunctive syntax, experiments with linguistic elements, integrated humor and prosaic features. In his poems, the human mind and its workings are evident. He experimented radically with different elements of poetry such as linguistic and semantic aspects. Nowadays he appears to have been to the second half of twentieth century what Eliot was to the first: the most universally acknowledged of poets writing in English. The present essay elaborates on Ashbery looking back at poetic tradition while absorbing current techniques of combining present and past, centrality and marginality, and placing reader and writer side by side.