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 Ian McEwan, *The Child in Time* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1987).
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GLOSSARY

Bildungsroman

A German term referring to the 'novel of development', a narrative in which the main character develops from childhood or adolescence into adulthood. Sometimes called the 'coming of age' or rite of passage story. Typically it follows the adventures of an orphaned character who eventually finds themselves reintegrated into the society from which they were at first excluded. It was popular in the nineteenth century in particular, with examples such as Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *David Copperfield*, and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*. The narrative tends to be in the first person with the main protagonist relating their story at some point in the future and looking back on their former selves. Many contemporary novels use a *Bildungsroman* framework but

subvert or parody the form to suggest that the contemporary world no longer allows the neat conclusions available to the nineteenth-century hero. Such contemporary examples include Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*.

Bricolage

A formal style that combines signs or symbols taken from different areas and put together apparently randomly to create a new configuration. One of the more relevant examples in contemporary culture is punk fashion which combined political symbols, such as union jacks and swastikas, with ripped clothing, nappies and safety pins. Dick Hebdige, in particular, has written on the *bricolage* style of punk in his book *Subcultures: The Meaning of Style*.

Consumerism

Refers to a distinct phase in socio-economics after the Second World War in Western societies. It represents a move from production to consumption as the driving force in a nation's economics. Because of this shift it is often associated with the post-industrial age.

Defamiliarization

A literary technique identified by the Russian Formalist critic Viktor Shklovsky in the 1910s. It relates to the way in which an everyday event or object is described in such a way as to make it appear strange or unusual. It is identified as one of the ways in which literature functions to persuade the reader to ask questions about their everyday practices, and in some cases the social, political and ideological frameworks in which they operate. Many contemporary novelists use the technique in this way such as Alasdair Gray in *Poor Things* and Monica Ali in *Brick Lane*.

Eclecticism

A term associated with an art form or cultural space in which elements, symbols or commodities from a wide range of cultures are

placed side-by-side. Jean-François Lyotard has identified eclecticism as one of the primary indicators of postmodernity. Perhaps one of the most visible examples is the food court in a contemporary shopping centre where you might find an American burger bar, a Chinese take-away, a fish and chip shop and a sushi restaurant next to each other in an equalizing consumer space.

Diaspora

A term originally from the Bible that related to the exodus of the Jews led by Moses out of Egypt to the Promised Land. In modern times, it has come to represent the migration of a significant amount of people from one area of the world to another. In a contemporary British context, it is often related to the Caribbean and the South East Asian diasporas, whereby groups of people moved to Britain from these areas and established distinct communities. This process has been one of the most important factors in the development of a multicultural Britain.

Grand Narrative

In a seminal work, *The Conditions of Postmodernity*, Jean-François Lyotard argued that postmodernism represented an ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’. These metanarratives were based on scientific and rationalist thought established during the Enlightenment, and can also be called grand narratives. The term refers to any system of belief or ideology that establishes a fixed set of criteria to understand the way in which the world works and how people should operate within it. The term has, therefore, been associated with a range of discourses including the major religions, patriarchy, science, ‘official’ history, Marxism and the idea of the rational self.

Heteroglossia

A term coined by the Russian formalist and Marxist critic Mikhail Bakhtin to refer to the multiple codes, accents, registers and styles of speech existing within a single language at any moment in society.

He argues that within the social practice of language two opposing forces are constantly fighting each other. One of these is heteroglossia, the other is monoglossia, which tends towards unity in language, and which can be seen in the way dominant authorities in a given society try to impose a singular notion of 'official' language. In the context of the English language, examples of monoglossia could be the 'Queen's English' or 'Received Pronunciation'. According to Bakhtin, the novel is the ideal literary space in which to articulate the multifarious nature of language as it operates in everyday practice, because it can introduce a range of characters from different social, cultural and regional backgrounds, each with their own distinctive forms of dialogue.

Hybridity

A term that refers to the combination of two (or more) cultural influences in the creation of a third distinct category. It has often been used in an ethnic context to refer to the way in which individuals or cultural practices combine to form a dual heritage identity. The critical theorist Homi Bhabha, in particular, has written on the concept. For him, one of the important characteristics of the hybrid situation is that neither of the constituent parts takes precedence over the other. This is particularly important in the context of a hybridity based on the interaction of colonizing and colonized subjects. Several contemporary writers have engaged with the idea including Hanif Kureishi, Salman Rushdie and Zadie Smith.

Hyperreal

A term coined by the postmodernist theorist Jean Baudrillard to refer to the way in which contemporary culture operates in a world where signs, images and simulacra are taken to represent reality, but which, in fact, have no original referent in the real world. The idea is often associated with the mass production of cultural objects, such as MP3 files of a single track, each identical, but none of which can be said to be the original. The term has also been related to a style of art and literature, in which characters, objects or events are

described or presented in such a way that they are exaggerated beyond the conventional form of realism. This attempts to express the strangeness of living in contemporary Western societies. This approach can be seen, for example, in the characters used by filmmakers such as David Lynch and David Cronenberg. In a contemporary British fiction context, Martin Amis's characters in *London Fields* could be described as hyperreal due to the novel's exaggerated representations of stereotypes.

Intertextuality

A term referring to the way in which any one literary (or other) text might refer to another text. In a poststructuralist context, it refers to the way in which language relies on conventions and recognized syntax to show that any sentence, to be understood, refers intertextually to all other sentences that have been constructed. It can also refer to the way in which any individual text relies on the existence of all other texts – that a novel or poem cannot exist in isolation, and part of its production of meaning relies on the fact that other novels and poems exist. The term has tended, however, in literary studies, to refer more generally to the way texts allude to, reflect back or parody another named text, for example, the way that Jeanette Winterson uses the Bible and *Jane Eyre* as intertexts in her *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, or in Zadie Smith's novel *On Beauty* which is partially patterned on E. M. Forster's *Howards End*.

Linear and Non-Linear Narrative

Linear narrative is one of the structural conventions of the realist novel. It is based on the assumption that events occur one after the other in a logical order and that each event has some causal relationship with the events that precede and follow it. Postmodern narrative techniques have often upset this framework by using non-linear structures, thus problematizing the logical relationship between events that you might expect to find in the realist mode. For example, events can be presented in an order that jumps between historical time frames as, for example, in A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* which has two narrative plots running side

by side: one set in the nineteenth century and one in the late twentieth. Another way in which a linear narrative can be disrupted is by using a 'spiral' narrative as Jeanette Winterson claims to do in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. In Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, what appears on first reading to be a linear narrative is disrupted by the epilogue which forces the reader to question the representation of all the events and characters that have been thus far presented as realistic.

Metafiction

A term relating to fiction that self-reflexively and self-consciously announces itself as fiction. It typically draws attention to the use of narrative conventions and techniques and thereby parodying or critiquing them. Although metafiction is nothing new and examples can be found from the eighteenth century (such as Lawrence Stern's *Tristram Shandy*) it has been closely associated with post-modernist fiction. Examples include Martin Amis's *London Fields* and Alasdair Gray's *Poor Things*.

Magic Realism

A style of narrative fiction developed originally from certain Latin American writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Alejo Carpentier. As the term suggests, it constitutes a mixture of realistic scenarios with characters and events drawn from a non-realistic or fantastic context. In contemporary British fiction, writers such as Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie and Jeanette Winterson have often been associated with the form.

Multiculturalism

A term relating to the way in which a nation is made up of communities in which distinct ethnic, cultural or religious codes of behaviour are practised. The term is often contentious and is politicised in relation to other concepts such as Britishness, which is sometimes seen as its opposite, sometimes complementary.

Palimpsest

A writing practice related mainly to the nineteenth century by which, because of the scarcity of paper, a letter writer might complete a page in the normal way, then turn the page sideways and continue writing across the original text. This can then be repeated diagonally. It has come to refer metaphorically to the way in which narrative texts can be layered in terms of meaning, and that a literary description is produced in such a way that it generates several ways of being interpreted.

Parody and Pastiche

Both of these terms relate to a style of writing that takes a previous style, form or genre and either critically or comically emphasizes some of its features. Parody tends to refer to the way in which the style being commented upon is made to seem foolish in some way and presumes that a better or more accurate approach could have been taken. Pastiche tends to adopt a style without the critical edge shown in parody, so that the style is mimicked without suggesting better alternatives. This is the sense in which the critic Fredric Jameson understands the terms and suggests that pastiche, in particular, is a representative form of postmodernism with its depthless recycling of past genres without a fixed ethical grounding from which to launch a critique. Linda Hutcheon, however, suggests that postmodern style is closer to parody, as although no alternative ideal form might be possible, the critical approach of postmodernism serves to create a critique of the conventions and ideologies of the form being parodied.

Patriarchy

A social, political and cultural system whereby men are regarded as the dominant gender. In addition, the father is privileged as the head of the family and by extension, male members of society are seen as the heads of communities and nations. Patriarchy usually relates to economic power, but also to a range of discourses such as politics, religion, philosophy and ethics. Patriarchy is thereby

targeted by those who lose out in this power relationship, most typically women or the young. Young males, for example, might want to challenge the power of a particular father, but not to challenge the power of fathers generally, as they will one day inherit the position. Feminism, on the other hand, serves to break down patriarchy and replace its unfair ways of organizing personal, familial and social relationships.

Phallocentrism

A system of power or cultural significance based on the phallus as the determining factor. It is therefore often associated with patriarchal societies and is seen as a target for feminism. It is a term that has been used often in French feminist theory in particular. In the context of contemporary British fiction, Angela Carter and Jeanette Winterson have explored the concept.

Politics of Difference

A broad concept that relates to a range of political movements that challenge inequalities in society in terms of class, gender, sexuality and age. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, for example, have suggested that a 'chain of equivalence' can exist between different marginalized groups, so that, for example, working-class white heterosexual men and black lesbian women from any class could potentially unite against the dominant forces in society, because they can recognize the other's position. In practice, however, this is often not the case as groups privilege their self-interests above those of other marginalized groups.

Postcolonialism

A term referring to an intellectual and academic practice that is concerned to study the effects of colonization on nations and peoples that were former colonies. It tends to refer to those countries that were colonies of European nations in the period from the mid-sixteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century. It can also refer to the period after a colony gains independence. In a British context, it is

most often used to refer to nations that gained independence from the British Empire in the period after the Second World War.

Postmodernism

A complex term, that most often relates to the artistic practices that have become increasingly dominant in art and culture from the 1960s onwards in Western societies. As can be seen by the term itself, it offers a critical dialogue with modernism, a form of art and culture prominent in the 1920s and 1930s. Postmodernism tends to take an ironic or cynical approach to all art, even that which is done in its name. It is often the art form most associated with consumer capitalism, although the approach varies amongst artists and writers. Some of them celebrate the release from grand narratives such as religion and patriarchy. Others see consumer society as a system that devalues art and social relationships and use postmodern literary techniques to produce a critique of postmodernity.

Postmodernity

A periodizing term suggesting that a set of social, economic and philosophical paradigms have been established from roughly the end of the Second World War that distinguish (usually Western) civilization from modernity. These include theories associated with a post-industrial society and the move to an economics based on consumption rather than production. One of the philosophical tenets of postmodernism is that all claims to truth should be treated with scepticism. This is replaced, philosophically, by a model where a range of discourses (political, social and ideological) communicate with each other, but with none of them claiming absolute authority over the others.

Subaltern

Originally a military term, a subaltern refers to anyone who is lower in rank. It has been used by Gayatri Spivak to refer to a series of marginalized or minority positions related to class, race and gender. A branch of critical theory called Subaltern Studies was developed

in the 1980s by a number of South Asian scholars, and aimed to interrogate the way in which cultural discourses and ideologies served to perpetuate inequalities in society with respect to the social categories identified above.

Thatcherism

An economic and ideological term related to the policies pursued by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government during her time in office from 1979 to 1990, and continued to a certain extent by John Major into the mid 1990s. It stands for a *laissez faire* approach to economics and away from state intervention in the market. It is, therefore, in opposition to the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes, which advocated a mixed economy of private and state run industries, and had been the prevailing system adopted in Britain from the end of the Second World War. Thatcherism championed the accumulation of individual wealth and conspicuous consumption, whilst it set about dismantling many of the social welfare policies that had been established by Clement Attlee's 1945 Labour government. Thatcherism was responsible for the denationalization of several nationalized industries such as British Gas, British Rail and British Telecom. It also set itself to challenge the power of the Trade Unions which culminated in a number of bitter struggles in the 1980s such as the Miner's Strike and the Wapping Print Worker's Strike. Thatcherism has close affinities with Reaganomics, a similar economic ideology named after the U. S. President Ronald Reagan. In a British context, many novelists, such as Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, Alasdair Gray, Hanif Kureishi and Iain Sinclair, have offered a critique of the effects of Thatcher's policies in the 1980s and into the 1990s.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Contemporary British Fiction

Acheson, James and Sarah C. E. Ross (eds), *The Contemporary British Novel since 1980* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005).