

A shift of conformist Culture from Mainstream to Margins” Investigating conversion trends from Modernism to Postmodern in American Literature

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Abstract

The current study aims to conduct a diagnostic survey of American literature to investigate the connection between political and societal incidents in Americas and the transformations they brought upon the written word. The researcher has tried to map the causative agents from the societal and political scenario that materialized the modification from modernism to postmodernism in literature. Keeping the move from conformist culture as the main paradigm shift, the study analyzes the emergence of “conspiracy theory”, pluralistic approach, consumerism, identity politics, quest for identity and theme of madness while also bringing in its fold, the inclusion of marginalized voices into the published word. The research has established that the swing from modernism to postmodernism in American literature has been shaped by the societal and political fluctuations.

Keywords: Modernism, Postmodernism, American Literature. Conformist Culture

1. Introduction

There has been an innate tendency in literature to mirror the times in which it has been produced. As far as the American literature is concerned, although its annals have been shaped with initial springs of poetry and novels; there have been ample accords of political documents that have adorned the anthologies of early American Literature. Being the most statistically transmuted land on globe, the continent grew in multiple directions and a study of its literature points to the map of changes that it went through. The literature initially produced was under the influence from foreign masters but within a matter century, it came out of the influence of its British, Italian and French masters. It was with Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Romantic phase of American literature, that truly American ideals

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started sprouting out of America's soil and got fixed in the forms of written records of the times and passions that people went through. The contemporary literature took its roots from the footprints of Ezra Pound and T.S Eliot and then it was with the post war world that the perceptions changed from modern to postmodern. A study of literature of the contemporary era, no doubt, yields deep insights into the waves of societal and political changes that the land faced in the present times.

2. Literature Review

The twentieth century was a time of great flux, both within the political arena as well as in the national, domestic and personal lives of the American people. The nineteenth century itself, had sowed the seeds for a diverse life in twentieth century, the events of nineteenth century including the Monroe Doctrine, Civil War, Abolishment of slavery to Mexican American War, Spanish American War- the nineteenth century had laid the foundation of the creation of the exceptional collage of upcoming American century.

The contemporary literature takes its roots from the post-World War II period and extends to the current production of literary works. The contemporary literature, albeit having been influenced by a wide array of events, movements and cultural strains, took the Second World War as a touchstone to move forward in its time travel. The post-world war era can be best described as a time of rapid changes, shocking transformations and a topsy-turvy of belief systems to a complete alteration of values and events that shaped and transformed the mindsets. As a reaction to the mega century, known as the American Century, a wide array of attitudinal adjustments' can be observed. The best neat classifications that can be made can be of two predominant attitudes; one trend was of conformist culture and the second more rebellious and more leading one, was that of the of counterculture.

It is a fact beyond doubt that literature is bound to have impacts of time in which it is produced and on a similar note, it also affects the way the readers comprehend the world around them. The Post Modern world as it has come to be known, has been shaped by a host of phenomenon, the most outstanding amongst them include the likes of Second World War, the Cold War and its demise and in between the economic and international realignments that America went through and how have they shaped the American lives and also the way in which this change came to be expressed.

The rapid technological developments and demographic shifts produced a new sprout of cultural and literary tradition.

It is an established fact that the United States victory in Second World War shaped the position of US on the international stage as a dominant world power. However, deeply rooted complications came out as an aftermath of glory in post war world. The idea of “progress” itself came under profound questions, which on one hand marked the advancement of humanity while on the other hand, it reddened history with the mass genocide of the horrific war and surfaced the atrocious and devastating emergence of the impacts of atom bomb, dropped by the United States on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Besides these events, there were raised doubts and questions as to the official and real stories of the Vietnam War and the Korean War. Connecting it to more contemporary times, current events have risen in their magnitude as well as in their sphere of influence. The transitional phases of ending of previous century and the start of the new millennium, produced, even more, devastating historical chapters of terrorism on the American land and how the United States responded to that on the global stage by initiating Global War on Terrorism.

The literature of contemporary times has tried to resolve these paradoxes. The million dollar question of the contemporary era posed the juxtaposition of good or evil as the sum total of the contemporary achievements. Can we suggest that with the acquired Enlightenment, humanity has reached the culmination of progress OR is it that reason has failed itself and still more perplexing is the question that is it the failure of “reason” or the employment of reason for evil purposes? What seems to be daunting and mocking metaphors of the history of human advancements have been the symbols of Second World War, Hiroshima, Holocaust and Atom Bomb and the imprints on society that these so called mega events left on society.

The emergence of counter culture and trends specifying identity crises, immigrant problems, ethnic amalgamation, McCarthyism and distrust of authority have marred the distinctions between the real and the unreal. The emergence of events like the “Water Gate Scandal” and the “Pentagon Papers” has given birth to the concept of the “official story” and “real truth”. These affairs occupy central position in the American Political history. While the Watergate Scandal is of perennial importance and is “the most serious scandal in the history of U.S. presidential politics,” (Gage, 2012).

World War II left the world divided, between Soviet and American spheres of influence. The Cold War between the two world powers left the United States with an increased and heightened sense of the perception of Crises. The presence of external threats increased the need and urgency for a unified and national consensus on majority of issues, demanding conformity from the public. The state of such affairs were at the peak in the decade of 1950s which erupted in the mass protest in the form of Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s leading to the Vietnam War and going along with these historic events were trends of counterculture and Women Liberation movements. A host of writers very particularly, predominantly instigated with the San Francisco Renaissance and Beatnik authors, the writing of these authors further intensified the perception of the conformist culture and the growing distaste of every trend that was mainstream in American culture and life. What added fuel to the fire was the assassination of President John F Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert F Kennedy. These incidents brought the disruption of social fabric of American society to forefront.

3. Material and Methods

The “official story” of American fabric came under a series of skepticism after the disclosure of the fore mentioned scandals of government had a direct result on the attitude of American public to almost any form of authority. The natural birth of this situation was the resulting conspiracy theory in the American society. The conspiracy theory was extended to provide explanation to almost any phenomenon that appeared beyond comprehension. What came under the attack of suspicion and as an outcome of conspiracy theory included the likes of mega events as MIAs in Vietnam, the United Nations policy and UFO sighting.

One apt location of the conspiracy theory is presented by fiction author, Thomas Pynchon, who was the first to introduce this concept into American Literature. Pynchon (1996), in his novel “Crying of the Lot 49” presents the distinction of reality and simulacrum of reality besides the constant presence of constant signs of conspiracy theory which suggested the presence of an underlying and concurrent presence of truth beyond that presented by the so called official story in the novel. He also highlighted other traditions of contemporary fiction by using such uncommon rather unrealistic names such as “Mucho Mass” and “Oedipa Mass” and additionally the use of other characteristics like metafiction and pastiche,

these trends besides the characteristic features of contemporary cannons are infact reflections of the contradictions, residing in American society.

The Crying of the lot tells the story of Oedipa Mass, who is trying to execute the will of her ex-boyfriend and in the sojourn, is faced with the multiplicity of reality that exists in the contemporary world. She suffers from rolls of shifting identities and character roleplaying in which the quest for truth remains unfulfilled. The most reliable form of truth in the contemporary world has come out to be whatever can be obtained in fragments and clues as a complete and substantial picture of truth is beyond the grasp of capture. The same has been propounded by the novel, "The Crying of the Lot 49" (Pynchon, 1996).

"She touched the edge of its voluptuous field, knowing it would be lovely beyond dreams simply to submit to it; that not gravity's pull, laws of ballistics, feral ravening, promised more delight. She tested it, shivering: I am meant to remember. Each clue that comes is supposed to have its own clarity, its fine chances for permanence. But then she wondered if the gemlike "clues" were only some kind of compensation. To make up for her having lost the direct, epileptic Word, the cry that might abolish the night."

Pluralistic approach in literature of the contemporary era is undeniably the result of variegated trends in American social fabric. The inculcation of marginalized voices into literature, which had been hitherto unattended and unheard of, indicated on one hand the transformation of American society, indicated by such tangible events like Brown versus Board of education, the Civil Rights Movement and the Civil Rights Acts of 1964. However, the continual segregation and a divided progress towards racial integration and equality have given birth to the emergence of identity politics. The American literature in response to these facts has become fragmented in its fabric and texture. The identity crises where the notion of identity came to the fore as a description of racial, sexual gender, ethnic and religious identity became a question often addressed in literary works.

The major shifts in economic trends of the American Century had a massive impact on American social life. From changing perspectives on pursuit of American dream, it created vast fields of mechanical consumers, who no longer acted as human beings rather as "consumer of commodities".

Contemporary literature has been the sway and impact of consumerism. These themes were dealt principally in fiction but the genre

of poetry also responded to the way in which American life was shaping up. Pynchon (1996), in his “Crying of the Lot 49”, “Gravity Rainbow” and Don DeLillo in his “White Noise” seem to be capturing the most primal themes by incorporating reflections of popular culture and its impacts on the American experience. DeLillo talks about the impact of mass consumerism and it in his novel *White noise*, where one of his daughters even dreams of brands and automobile names, Harriet Mullen in her poetry talks about the same grappling monster of consumerism in her poem the [S*PeRM**K*T] (Mullen, 1992).

Lines assemble gutter and margin. Outside and in, they straighten a place. Organize a stand. Shelf space. Square footage. Align your list or listlessness. Pushing oddly evening aisle catches the tale of an eye. Displays the cherished share. Individually wrapped singles, frozen divorced compartments, six-pack widows all express themselves while women wait in family ways, all bulging baskets, squirming young. More on More online incites the eyes. Bold names label familiar type faces. Her hand scanning throwaway lines.

These lines of Mullen’s prose poetry are quintessentially connecting threads of mundane life in a contemporary era that circulates around consumer behavior; the items in a supermarket are arranged with respect to their price tags. Even the title of the poem is very suggestive, she deliberately misses the letter U-A-R-E, which can be an abbreviation for “you are what you eat”. There are cameras that follow the movements of human eye, and the most expensive products are placed at isles that have been determined to be the most eye catching for the shoppers. Mullen observes that whether you go with a list or visit the supermarket without it, people are bound to bulge their baskets with things needed along with those that have been marketed to snare their attention. Interview with William for Multicultural review, she opined (www.poetryfoundation.org)

"When I was writing this poem it made me very conscious of what I was doing in the supermarket—how we behave as consumers and define ourselves by the products we purchase. . . . We really are what we eat, what we consume. As a nation, as a culture, as a society, we consume way more than the rest of the world."

The talk of poets as Mullen makes it impossible to ignore the mention of Black Arts Movement in Literature. Having started just at the

advent of Postmodernism in 1960, it was an offshoot of Harlem Renaissance.

Alongside this culture of consumerism, the economic escalation and then downturns in the late twentieth century, affected the blue collar workers as economy moved from one based on manufacturing to the one grounded on provision of services and dissemination of information technology. A massive impact of this shift was the great displacement of blue collar workers, who were left unaided, unemployed and in shatters. The shift also altered what seems to be previously their search: their pursuit of happiness as stated by the American Constitution to a search for other sources of fulfillment and happiness. As the fact is quite well propounded by the author Bobbie Ann Mason (1982), in "Shiloh", where a disabled and an unemployed truck driver dreams of building a log Cabin and living all by himself, in a way self-sufficiently.

As mentioned earlier the political cataclysms comprised of the major shifts in political realities, the Pentagon Papers, the Watergate scandal and the death of John F Kennedy and Robert F Kennedy. The emergence of "official story" culture, and "conspiracy theory" highlights the impacts of the political ruptures on the society of Americas (Oliver & Wood, 2014).

The rapid shifting currents in political transitions were not only restricted to the American land, rather the Western hemisphere was also under the sway of trends of American imperialism and expansion. A representative work of political upheaval in the Americas is "The Hundred Years of Solitude" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The work deals with the impacts of war, suffering and the death in the mid 1960 Columbia, which had resulted in more than two hundred thousand politically motivated murders. The work has refocused attention on how the politics of Latin America has resulted in a non-ceasing array of tragedies. The work also with the aid of magical realism depicts the concurrent existence of myths, legends alongside with the arrival of modernity and technological advancements.

One of the characteristic features of American social culture was the emergence of suburbanization in America. The creation of suburbs or "edge cities" as the Archeologist Joel Garreau calls them, denotes the creation of communities around, but at a distance from the main high technological industrial parks. The 1990 census revealed that the majority of Americans

reside in suburbs. This fact highlights the disintegration of American community and disruption of what had been the concept of a modern city. The suburbia, on one hand, describes the distance that has disheveled the community structure in America but also tells the stories of other communities, which are called slums. One prominent author that took upon the task of capturing the essence of this segregation and impact of post war, postindustrial society is Saul Bellow. Bellow writes a very characteristic fiction, describing the deteriorating condition of slums, a tattered piece of the American social fabric. Bellow in his short story "Looking for Mr. Green depicts the condition of Chicago Slums, while the protagonist is in search of Mr. Green and through the Protagonist's eyes, the readers are made to travel the thins of slums and subhuman conditions of their dwelling (Bellow, 2002).

A prominent reaction to the contemporary social and political upheaval came to the literature with authors questioning the ideas of conformity like the character of Chief Bromden in "One flew over the Cuckoo's nest" by Ken Kesey who raised in opposition to the symbol of authority and the so called "system", represented by the character of "Nurse Ratchet". The narrator stiches an image of post war world where those who will not conform to the authority will be branded as lunatics and there is no way out of the mechanized system and those objecting to it will be forced through whatever means available and if still not possible then death is the only way out, as was the fate met by Randal McMurphy. The Chief refers to a Combine, a system that is controlling all humans. The narrator's story also high lights the treatment received by the margin tribes, the way that Indian tribe of Columbia was displaced from the sight of the plantation of a hydropower plant. The horrors inflicted by society and after seeing his father fighting in the Second World War has led to the formation of a dark vision of society. This has also formed the horrific idea of an all pervasive, controlling and authoritative Combine.

In contrast to the repressive attitude to authority is the bold,confident and non-conformist character of Randal McMurphy, who as a foil to Chief Bromden resists all kind of enforcement. He is a voice against the system and tries to change, all that tries to curb his free spirit, he stands against the idea of subjecting himself to the authorities at the Pendleton Work Farm. Later when he discovers the authority figure of Nurse Ratched at the asylum, he spares no stone unturned for confronting her. He obstinately challenges the routine at the asylum by asking to allow the patients for viewing match, later he rejects the rules and challenges the

established conformist system, where patients have made themselves subservient to the dictates of Nurse Ratched.

Nurse Ratched compares the manipulations of McMurphy with that of a previous patient, named Taber. This fact hints at what future has in store for McMurphy, for his non-conformist, non-complying and non-subservient attitude to the system, he had been lobotomized and made into a vegetable.

Thus the condensation of these characters in “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” is a commentary on serious upheavals of American society in the contemporary world, depicting the influence and mechanical hues of authority and at the same time mirroring the divergent attitudes to the repressive and authoritative Combine.

4. Results

The mechanical world and artificial mode of contemporary life patterns have quadrupled the cases of insanity in American society. The so called land of opportunity witnessed a growing tendency of madness in individuals faced up with shocking transformations of present world. Literature along with other art forms has taken upon itself the responsibility of mirroring the madness in society. The concept came first to the fore with the “Confessional Movement” in literature, where poets and novelists started discussing the inexplicable.

One of the representative works depicting the personality crisis in reaction to the untoward world of social and cultural disruptions is the *Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath. The *Bell Jar*, which was published initially under the pseudo name of Victoria Lucas initially in 1963, witnessed the death of its author after the first month of the novel's publication in the United Kingdom. In this novel, Plath gives voice to the torments, felt by the protagonist in the utter pangs of what was in real life suffered by Plath in clinical depression. The protagonist Esther finds her in a complete antonym to the socially and culturally unaccepted role, assigned to the women of her age.

A still more interesting aspect highlighted by literature that focused and mirrored insanity was the question of madness itself. Was it that madness is the natural outcome the socially, psychologically and technically perplexed series of alteration that the world faced in the American century or was it that the concept of defining madness had become relative in the contemporary world? If the conditions of displacement and bombardment

of changes would be removed from the context, the literary artists might like to stick to the second form of possibility, relying more on the relative statement of facts than putting efforts to exactly describe and accepting the established criterion of madness.

The *Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath also provides with the possibility of linking madness with creativity, since the reactionary counterculture clan of literary artists, comprised of many who seems to have believed in accepting the altered position of capturing reality than dealing with it in their full command and grasp of reality. One relevant testimony of this fact can be gathered by citing the example of the Beatniks, who often switched to drugs and other aids, in order to blur the clear picture of their immediate present and relying more on perceptions of reality, by viewing it through a distance in their use drugs and other means of escape.

Ken Kessey also provides insightful case studies of insanity, madness, and limits to the boundaries of rational in his work “*One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*”. In the novel, the reader is familiarized with actual and accepted notions of sanity. Like the characteristic feature of the contemporary world and resultantly of the concurrent literature, the book poses more questions than it gives answers. Even what was hinted upon by the author is open ended and not a neat classification of who was right and, based on what criteria, who can be classified as wrong.

The character of Bromden suffers from hallucinations and Paranoia; he thinks that there are machines that in psychological and physical control of the patients. It may appear real madness to the authorities in the mental asylum but if considered in the context of the dehumanization suffered by the members of his native American tribe might be just a heightened sense of perception of what goes on around him. The chief, who is also the narrator of the story declares the fact right in the start of the chapter when he says that what he is going to tell, is part of reality even if it did not happen. This line is extremely packed with meaning and reference to the contemporary times in America, in its obvious metaphoric connotations and connections with the blurring distinctions of real and unreal, right and wrong, good and evil and also about what is made to come on fore and how goes the actual proceedings of the actual linkage of “official story” in the United States and now also in its spheres of influence.

“*The Bell Jar*” mirrors the suffocation that women found even after they were given the right to suffrage in 1920 and had seen the independence

of working in factories and in other jobs that were initially found suitable and acceptable for men only. In the post war years with growing awareness of gender discrimination and with voices getting raised for the women liberation movements and just in the flux of Civil Rights Movement, the *Bell Jar* mirrors the identity crises that women found themselves in. This was also in line with the withering of family values and the established role of women as the domesticated and home bound center of the supposed American family.

Deep understandings of the disintegrating Southern families can be captured from the plays like the “*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*” by Tennessee Williams. The author has projected a world that is filled with mendacity and there is a wide array of societal disrupture, fraught with pretense, self-deception and a host of social lies. The play depicts the fact that people are surrounded by lies and they keep on distancing themselves from every possible effort from the truths that must be told. The character of Maggie provides an interesting study in the Southern women, who had class and is in a state of war with ills that define her life and challenges that she must face. An interesting comparison can be made between the character of Maggie and Mrs. Compson from *Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner, a pre-World War, work that discusses the impacts of Civil War. Mrs. Compson has been ever complaining about her predicament and is losing class and grandeur while Maggie is determined to be at war with the shortcomings of her life but has still ensured to keep class. The quest for identity is quintessentially a part of the mainstream works of literature.

These identity crises posed further searches for existentialism in society, where some authors continued in the confessional terrain and others switched to a world of magical realism, where they could fill up the gaps left by the real world through relying on a more acceptable and in line with the wandering expectations of world, by switching to the techniques of Magical realism.

Sylvia Plath depicts the suffering of women in their socially unacceptable positions, where men still dominate and are oppressive. Those who stand in rebellion to socially and culturally acceptable roles of women are branded outcasts and losers of the defined borders of sanity. Plath also voices the concerns regarding the loss of a women’s inner self in compression of her personality through the range of domestic duties that she is bound to perform. The patriarchal society in the mid of American

century may have killed a woman emotionally without facing the murder charges.

The societal impact on women in Plath's time can also be verified by Plath's poetry, she voices the pangs of living under the shadow of an almost Hitler like father, that have made her life to the like of a hurt toe in a suffocating shoe. Here again, Plath does not refrain from depicting the impact of social and domestic suffocation.

The mid twentieth century witnessed such attacks on the pre-defined roles of American families. In the 1950s and 1960s, the family was presented as the symbol of stability and coherence in American life but these notions were attacked by the literary genius and in poetry, the stereotypes were attacked by the poets like Sylvia Plath who delineates the character of her father in her poem *Daddy* (Plath, 1962).

“You do not, you do not
Any more, black shoe
In which I have lived like a foot
For thirty years, poor and white,
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo”

A very characteristic and telling feature of the contemporary life has been a shift from the outward to the inward. There was more of the trend to make public of the private life. The Confessional poets also reacted to the theory of impersonality, propounded by Eliot and followed by the moderns; they shifted their sphere of influence from the outward to the inward and explored the states of their own psychology. The examples of Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath are relevant to describe the mental and physical breakdown of a personality as they ended up in taking their own lives. The resulting rise of Feminist poetry in literature started from such episodes in American literature and Elizabeth Bishop does not stand an exception to these roles. Bishop is often hard to mark as a category since her works depicts a shifting from one philosophical position to the other, but one thing that can be said for sure about her works is that she took a confrontational approach to life, which is a step further ahead in literature's reaction to the socially changing American society. She added psychological surveys while dealing with the daily bric-a-brac of her life and again getting bold enough in a step further ahead in expressionism.

In an attempt to disclose the reactions of women in American literature and their response to the changing times, in adopting more clear

positions to the issues surrounding their gender, makes it inevitable to mention the name of Adrienne Rich. The magnificence of Rich's work is primarily the way in which she surveys the condition and predicament of women in the established roles of motherhood, sisterhood, as a wife, as a daughter and her overall status in the fabric of American society. An advancement of the gender roles in America in the late twentieth century is very aptly described by Plath, when she goes a step further ahead than Plath and Anne Sexton by not pouring the wrath on herself, rather directing it on the society by critically examining her gender role in American social landscape.

The works of Rich are diverse as much as the roles attached and played by her gender in America. She discusses the idea of women survival in the land of equal opportunities and then sexism, and other relevant socio-political aspects Rich has dealt with diverse themes as diverse as socio-political dialogues to peace, the issue of survival for women, sexism and the limits attached to apparent boundaries of freedom. She also takes the credit for establishing the second wave of feminism in literature. She writes about the evolution of female literary tradition in "Diving into the Wreck" (Rich & Gelpi, 1972).

"We are, I am, you are
by cowardice or courage
the one who find our way
back to this scene
carrying a knife, a camera
a book of myths
in which
our names do not appear"

The postwar America saw multifaceted changes in political, cultural, economic and international dimensions. A reaction to the vast changes in technological advancements and also by a conformist strain adopted by the government towards the people, resulted in a reaction of counterculture, in which instead of branding themselves as outcasts, they made efforts to inculcate their new set of morals and ideals into the mainstream American culture. Allen Ginsberg sings of the same treatment with the best men of his generation. Ginsberg along with the poets of the Beat generation, sing of the taboo subjects in their poems and found solace in Oriental religious philosophies and often times, resorted to the use of drugs in order to escape the immediate realities.

The practitioners of this generation included Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Gregory Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Amiri Baraka, Joanne Kyger and Diane Di Prima. Their vital role was in providing freedom to the printing and publishing media in the United States. The uncluttered talk of sexuality and obscenity, a major portion of their writings, was also a response to the conventional values. The military Industrial complex along with major strains of capitalism that had in turn bred, strains of consumerism as the United States was striving to become in those days had its own excesses and in response to it, generated a reaction against materialism and a search of resort in oriental religions.

Probably the most famous poem by the group is by Allen Ginsberg and called "Howl" (McClatchy, 1990, p 255).

"I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,
starving hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the Negro Streets at dawn looking for
an angry fix"

It just turns out later with surprise to the reader that the best men are not scientists; rather they are drug addicts, drop outs and poets as well. Apparently, it seems that there is no point of organization in "Howl" (1955). However, the poem is divided into three sections and scheme of poem has the same question at the starting word followed by a verb. Each section has a different theme that the poet has dealt with element of surprise to shock the reader. The poet takes a stance on the havocs caused by materialism and capitalism in the post-World War II scenario, like the "Waste Land" of Eliot; it is a land of spiritual bareness where the monsters like Moloch are after love and youth. The industrial revolution that brought the United States under its sway had created machines that mechanized many aspects of human life as well.

The rigid social norms came under stringing attacks of the counterculture revolutionaries, who reacted against the Vietnam War, segregation in Deep South and also on the issues of women rights. The emergence of "popular culture" also speaks volumes about the fact that people of tired of government manipulations. They did not want their opinions to be shaped in light of the political agendas, rather they wanted to use their influence and appear as catalysts of change in a society where values and belief systems were struck at the cross roads.

The Contemporary era in America saw the emergence of unprecedented volumes of literary reflections that voiced the political and social changes that the Americas went through in the present times. Literature in a way freed itself from moral, ethical and social conventions and became a highly open and candid canvass for painting the divergent and unspoken of tints of human life.

The freedom of printing press with the Beatniks and then the entry of marginal sections of society into the literary clan enabled the possibility for the production and reflection of societal upheaval and reaction of society to political, governmental, and international realignments that the Americas suffered on the verge of so called “progress” of human race.

5. Conclusion

Besides becoming a medium for the discussion of Post War mega events to the likes of Holocaust, Second World War, Civil Rights Movements, Brown versus Board of Education, Vietnam War, Korean War and very prominently Cold War, literature opened up to encompass the recurring under currents of society that focused on American Dream, American Values, American Culture and the reactionary Counterculture. Literary artists discovered and were given the power to explore taboo subjects such as sex, drug taking, extreme violence, homosexuality and other subject matter that would never have been allowed to become a part of literary annals.

The transformational growth in the twentieth and later in the twenty first century has been captured by the literary annals of American Literature. Contemporary American literature is as diverse, pluralistic, and multidimensional as the series of conflicting and contradictory mega events and their impacts that define American history in the contemporary era. The American century witnessed an unimaginable level of technological and industrial progress but the resulting ruptures in the social fabric and impact of political shifts shaped the direction of the literature produced under unprecedented growth of mindfulness and consciousness. Counting the world history, the arrival of America on global map is comparatively recent.

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