**Postmodern Literature**

1. What is postmodern literature?

2. What are the postmodern characteristics? How do they work into the novel?

3. Should it be read as a postmodern novel, why or why not?

* **Modernism/ Postmodernism**

Our “definition” of Postmodern Literature. a complex set of terms. Pastiche – a hodgepodge, a “mess” or “jumble” of ideas that connect or relate in some way. **Irony** – A humorous work based on contradiction and/or opposites. Satire – The use of wit in a work to criticize behaviour **Bricolage**- A piece of work created from diverse recourses. Multiple Genre's - There are no boundaries, set of ideas, or a definite outline of what a Postmodern works’ genre should be.

* **Meta-fiction**: A type of fiction that self-consciously addresses the devices of fiction exposing the fictional illusion. Poses questions about the relationship between fiction and reality (usually irony and self-reflection). It can be compared to presentational theatre, which does not let the audience forget it is viewing a play **-** meta-fiction does not let the reader forget it is reading a fictional work.
* **Magic realism** **–** an aesthetic style in which magical elements or illogical scenarios appear in otherwise a realistic or normal setting. (A normal setting invaded by something too strange to believe.)

Whereas **Modernism** places faith in the ideas, values, beliefs, culture, and norms of the West, **Postmodern** rejects Western values and beliefs as only a small part of the human experience and often rejects such ideas, beliefs, culture and norms.

Modernism attempts to reveal profound truths of experience and life, Postmodernism are suspicious of being “profound” because such ideas are based on one particular Western value systems. Robyn Toloki speaks about how people want to create their own traditions, like he had become a professional mourner, an untraditional profession. Original traditions are just as important to some people as historical traditions that have been around for a long time. Reference, page 140. Ruth is very narrow-minded and is unaccepting of Obed’s personal choices to become a part of the church. Reference, page 309.

3. Whereas Modernism attempts to find depth and interior meaning beneath the surface of objects and events, Postmodernism prefers to dwell on the exterior image and avoids drawing conclusions or suggesting underlying meanings associated with the interior of objects and events. Colton

The quilts are viewed in a post-modern way in the sense that it would appear to be just a quilt made by the Abyssinian Queen (pg35). • In a deeper look however, we find that she made two quilts, one for each son, which were actually maps to their safe escape. • The first quilt she gave to her son Abednego, they called this one the “crazy quilt”. This map contained the actual map. • The second quilt she gave to her son Nicodemus, they called this one the “sampler quilt”. This quilt contained the general warnings and advice for their escape route on the other quilt. The Gnome. Another example of this aspect of postmodernism is Mr. Quigley’s gnomes. • While the modernist would just view them as a hobby of his to decorate with them. • In the post-modern view – Mr. Quigley admires his gnomes so much because they cannot die so he does not grow anything anymore, so there is no death in them.

4. Whereas Modernism focused on central themes and a united vision in a particular piece of literature, Postmodernism sees human experiences as unstable, internally contradictory, ambiguous, inclusive, indeterminate, unfinished, fragmented, discontinuous, “jagged,” with no one specific reality possible. Therefore, it focuses on a vision of a contradictory, fragmented, ambiguous, indeterminate, unfinished “jagged” world. Ryan In a modern novel, unlike Cion, the object or quote will mean one thing and one thing only with no room for interpretation • By Cion being a post modern novel, the reader is granted the ability to allow these objects to mean several ideas as they wish • These examples also state why Cion is a post modern novel due to the many ways a object can be viewed and used for Quilts (chapters 2,8,9) • Modern thinkers would look at the quilt as only a way to stay warm. Where in Cion, a post modern novel, the quilt is used for much more then a blanket • A hidden map in the pattern created by the Abyssinian Queen for Abednego and Nicodemus to help her children escape • Symbols=Freedom in the Queen’s mind • Pattern=Map to freedom for her children • Modern thinker would never even notice this because a quilt is a quilt to them, they are not allowed to “work outside the lines” so to speak “We all construct our pasts as we go along”—Toloki (pg 272) • By Toloki saying this quote, there are many ways a post modern thinker could look at this • Readers could interpret by saying “We grow into the people we are today, by the actions we performed in the past.” or they could look at this by saying “every decision we make effects our pasts.” • By having the ability to determine the quote as the reader wishes, they make the quote what they want it to mean • There is no true right or wrong answer like there would be in a Modern Novel.

5. Whereas Modern authors guide and control the reader’s response to their work, the Postmodern writer creates an “open” work in which the reader must supply his own connections, work out alternative meanings, and provide his own (unguided) interpretation. Kelli Aspects within the novel, as many Postmodern works do, are supposed to be read between the lines. The novel ends very open ended, allowing the mind of the reader to make what they wish of the future of the characters. Because many of the past novels we have read have been guided by Modern writers, this novel may have seemed slightly confusing to readers having not seen Postmodern style writing before.

The “Big Picture” Postmodern Literature is a highly complex set of ideas that incorporates many non-western ideas of multi culturism, having no set boundaries as a literary piece, and various other literary concepts intertwining together. Cion, as a whole work, is a complex set of characters, themes, and ideas. Also, the “theme” of Cion can be based off the idea that making quilts binds together past experiences to tell a story.

Should Cion be read as a Postmodern work? Yes. After learning about the ideas of Postmodernism, we all feel that the book can be better understood while having a concept of what Postmodernism is when reading. The reader can have a better idea of what to look for in this book and it’s moral values if they understand Postmodernism. While Modernist books are supposed to be read by the authors controlling what the readers think, this book, being read as a Postmodern piece of work, allows the reader to think freely about the bizarre content within it.