Lane Moore’s *How to Be Alone*: Deconstruction of Contemporary Identity

Maram R. Alessa  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures  
Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
King Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Nesreen Al-Harby  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures  
Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
King Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Corresponding author: naalharby@kau.edu.sa

Received: 07/04/2023  
Accepted: 10/11/2023  
Published: 10/15/2023

Abstract  
This study explores contemporary concepts of identity as a post-postmodernist perception in Lane Moore’s (2018) Memoir, *How to Be Alone*. The significance of this study is that it examines the impact of cyberculture on human connections and the role of technology in shaping human perception of identity and personhood. It also sheds light on the effects of the internet in creating new social phenomena like ghosting and allowing individuals to transgress social boundaries. The study assesses the representation of the self in the memoir and its effect on the reinforcement of the author’s voice. It reveals that *How to Be Alone* is a text that adheres to the post-trauma paradigm that integrates a narration based on resilience and humor. The study further concludes that Moore’s memoir endorses twenty-first-century generic conventions and signifies the importance of the memoir, as a genre, in forming individuals' social and cultural features. The study employs cyber-criticism, post-trauma theory, and post-postmodernism to evaluate the text’s generic conventions and narrative techniques. It offers fundamental inquiries: It questions the integration of technological conventions into post-postmodernist societies and examines the effect of this incorporation. It also inquires about the evolution of trauma. Finally, it has queries concerning post-postmodernist ideals and their development in the 21st century.

Keywords: contemporary identity, cyberculture, *How to Be Alone*, memoir, post-postmodernism, post-trauma paradigm

Introduction

Lane Moore’s (2018) *How to Be Alone* is a debut memoir that tackles her lonely journey at the turn of the twenty-first century. The memoir revolves around her journey to seek companions while her surroundings emphasize isolation and loneliness (*Kirkus Reviews*, para.1). Moore is a comedian, musician, and former writer for *The Onion*. Although *How to Be Alone* is her first published book, it has instantly hit the bestseller list and gained her wide recognition. Krochmal (2018) describes it on *Entertainment Weekly* as an “inspiring” and a “heartbreaker” (para.1). The book was turned into a mini-speech by the author in the popular TEDx show with the same title, *How to be Alone*. The memoir’s success has also inspired the author to launch a podcast named “It Was Just Me” and later publish a follow-up memoir, *You Will Find Your People*, in April 2023. Moore (2018) grew up in a dysfunctional family, which shaped her identity as an observed person. In many interviews, she described her seclusion and living away from everyone. Moore (2018) is an award-winning writer whose writings have appeared in *The Onion*, *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian*, and many more. She hosts a comedian show, *Tinder Live*, and leads a music band, *It Was Romance*.

The memoir was published when questions about technology started to crystalize and shape human identity. Critics believe that cyberspace has enabled people to portray themselves the way they desire on the internet and even to edit or erase what they have previously posted about themselves (Turkle, 2012). People concluded that technology exerts robust control and is becoming an inseparable part of society (Franzen, 2014). Thus, *How to Be Alone* is written for a community where people are increasingly isolated from each other and attached to their devices even when others surround them (Salemi, 2019). The memoir has regained considerable attention after COVID-19 because of the social distancing during the pandemic that has become ordinary and part of people’s lifestyles. Lane Moore has worked hard to ease people’s difficult and lonely periods (Waller, 2020). Thus, the memoir scrutinizes the increasing influence of technology on human identity and how people are becoming more disconnected from each other in contemporary societies.

The study provides essential questions concerning the effect of technological intervention and its impact on how people perceive and represent themselves in the virtual and the actual sphere. It additionally has queries concerning new modes of representation and features of post-postmodernist literature in Moore’s memoir. Finally, the study inquires about portraying post-trauma concepts and features in the memoir.

This study examines Lane Moore’s (2018) *How to Be Alone* as a post-postmodernist memoir through the lenses of both cyber criticism and post-trauma theory. It argues that the narrative techniques in the text facilitate a sincere representation of the self. The study evaluates the ambivalent perceptions of online connections in cyberspace, their controversial influence on human relationships, and their role in reversing alienation in post-postmodern societies. It additionally highlights that the memoir challenges paradigms of classic trauma by employing a narration based on resilience and humor, which illustrates a post-trauma archetype more in line with contemporary identity.
Literature Review

Post-postmodernism

The emergence of post-postmodernism has marked a new era of skepticism and reevaluation of 20th-century postmodernism. Epstein (1998) has distinguished postmodernity from postmodernism by declaring that postmodernism “is part of a much larger and more extensive whole” (p. 5) that is postmodernity. This makes postmodernity “irreducible to postmodernism,” anticipating the emergence of “some next stage of postmodernity,” which came to be widely acknowledged as ‘post-postmodernism’ (Epstein, 1998, p. 5). Thus, postmodernity necessitates the rise of a new stage after postmodernism.

A Case of Anti-rebellion

Post-postmodernism shifts its interests and ideals by concentrating on authenticity and realism in its aesthetic expression. Wallace (2009) has revealed that the new generation of literary radicals go against previous protestors - postmodernists. Similarly, Epstein (1998) has asserted that post-postmodernism arises as a rejection of the extreme ideals of postmodernism. McLauchlin (2004) has also remarked that post-postmodernism reconnects literature and its tropes to social and cultural factors. Thus, post-postmodernist writers have attempted to “recover an objective look on reality through a literature of honesty” (Quintero, 2022, p. 18). This quote reveals that they have modified their modes of aesthetic writing to fit within different social and cultural contexts. It further indicates that post-postmodernist texts have been affected by different sociohistorical contexts than writings produced under the effects of postmodernist techniques.

Post-postmodernist writings can be described as more related to real life, including different kinds of writers, and non-restricting in their subject matter. Wallace (2009) has emphasized that post-postmodernist literature respects and sympathizes with human misfortunes. Quintero (2022) has contended that post-postmodernist writers who follow the ethos established by Wallace are presently referred to as the “young generation of New Sincerity writers” (p. 18). This new wave of literary expression emphasizes the prioritization of sincerity and genuine human experiences over irony and detachment. Clare (2020) has clarified that post-postmodernism can be described as a way of going back to realism and focusing on the emotions and sentiments of humans. Post-postmodernists utilize genre-blurring techniques to highlight sincerity. By deconstructing generic conventions, they do not aim to negate or downplay the artificiality of the text but rather to use it to convey genuine human experiences (Pignagnoli, 2023). Post-postmodernism additionally seems to restrict literary elitism. Hence, McLauchlin (2004) has highlighted that post-postmodernist writers paid more attention to the collective experiences of humanity than challenging conventional literary techniques. Due to its anti-elitist quality, post-postmodernism creates a broad range of literary works. Ghasemi (2022) has asserted that during the post-postmodern era, exclusiveness and biases against writers because of their race or cultural background have ceased. Therefore, distinctions between the elite and the common and the white and the non-white lessened considerably (Ghasemi, 2022). Accordingly, post-postmodernist texts provide more authentic representations of human feelings and relate writings to their social and cultural contexts. It also stresses that post-postmodernist ideologies seem to discard limitations on writers and promote diversity and inclusivity to re-establish and enhance the link between literature and the social world.
Cyber Critical Theory
Cyber Criticism and Literature

The rise of technology and cyberculture has opened a new mode of literary criticism: cyber criticism. It is a contemporary approach to literary criticism that offers a means of exploring the impact of technology on literature. This type of critical approach has emerged to evaluate texts written in cyberspace or affected by writings in the cyber sphere. Thus, literary texts and modern technology have a direct and solid link (Hayles, 2000). This link indicates that science and technology influence and shape literature and culture (Hayles, 2000). This indicates that as much as human societies and cultures are affected by cyber activities, they equally impact it through their cultural contributions in the cyber sphere. So, literature becomes crucial in articulating scientific trends such as cybernetics and liberal humanism (Hayles, 2000). She has also clarified that literature helps us comprehend ourselves and our universe. This ideology reveals that human societies utilize literature to illustrate their technological advancement. Simultaneously, they demonstrate the impact of scientific improvement by engaging in more advanced modes of literary expression.

Humans and Cyberculture

The emergence of cyberculture signifies a fundamental interconnectedness between digital technology and the human experience. This connection creates what is known today as cyberculture. Haraway (2013) highlighted this connection by describing humans of this age as cyborgs, half-machine and half-human creatures. Her understanding of humanity has emphasized that people during the era of high technology and the internet are highly affected by their social and cultural contexts because these contexts can determine what it means to be a human, a cyborg, or a hybrid. It has further underlined the paradoxical nature of virtual life as it politically represents both fantasy and reality. Haraway (2013) has underlined that cyborgs using technology create a mixture of inspirational images and realistic life aspects. This suggests that cyborgs result from the fusion of our imagination and our relationship with the advancement in our actual world. She has predicted that this mixture can lead to historical alterations in human life. Hence, this indicates that the future social or cultural development of human societies can be highly affected by merging our real and virtual realities.

A fundamental part of our present world signifies our connection to technology and stresses its significance in defining our lives and humanity. Winner (1993) has asserted that people commonly use technology in modern societies. As a result, scientific advancement is no longer restricted to the educated elite. Haraway (2013) has also suggested that cyberspaces have become inseparable from the human experience. This fact underlines the integration of cyberculture into the everyday lives of different classes of people. It also stresses the vital effect of this integration on the formation of cultural expression. Franzen (2014) has revealed that the interference of artificial intelligence and media in people's lives is unavoidable. Franzen (2014) has also concluded that this relationship between individuals is paradoxical and unsettled since it is inevitable and frustrating at the same time. Hence, while cyberspaces have become essential for individuals of the twenty-first century, their attachment to them remains controversial. Moreover, many believe that this attachment is undesirable but inescapable.
**Cyber Era and Construction of the Self**

The impact of technology and cyberculture is not limited to the formation of literary and cultural expression. These aspects can affect the construction of identity that becomes an outcome of actual and virtual factors. Jagoe (2016) has noted that concepts of identity and the self are commonly related and affected by technological advancement. Turkle (2005) has also stated that science and technology unconsciously form our emotions, morality, and ideologies. She further declared that today’s technology has been infused into constructing humans’ identities through our daily interaction with smart devices and computers. Therefore, technology has become the physical and virtual force that intervenes in structuring our identities and personhood. This makes it central to two fundamental areas of human existence: cultural expression and identity formation. Turkle (2005) has additionally revealed that computers have become ‘evocative objects’ and have gone as far as to be “object[s] that provoked self-reflection” (p. 2). Accordingly, Turkle (2005) has emphasized the importance of computers in the “process of world and identity construction” (p. 155). Turkle (2011) also declared that virtual worlds can be described as a ‘second self’ and an extension of the self. She has underlined that technology allows individuals to develop a different sense of the self that only emerges online and is unique to its medium. Finally, Turkle (2011) has pointed out the possibility of forming multiple identities – virtual and actual – in different domains of life. This illustrates that cyberspace allows individuals to recreate their personalities. In so doing, it allows people to participate in the editing, re-editing, or even deleting features of their personhood. It additionally presents humans with the ability to possess dual or even multiple identities, which can crucially influence their identities and sense of self.

**Post-trauma Context**

The scholarly focus on trauma has evolved from clinical perspectives to cultural and literary approaches. Balaev (2014) has clarified that trauma is not only a medical concept anymore since traumatic experiences have become a part of contemporary cultural and literary expression. Basseler (2019) has underlined that trauma theory has evolved and flourished due to the atrocities humanity encountered during the twentieth century, such as wars and political movements. He has further confirmed that trauma has developed to become a refined and creative part of contemporary literary and cultural studies. However, there has been a necessary shift in the trauma paradigm, which is an outcome of increased violence and scientific development (Basseler, 2019). This establishes two fundamental facts: The first is that since the 20th century, trauma has transcended its clinical perceptions to become firmly connected to literary and cultural expression. Secondly, trauma and post-trauma theories have substantially been exposed to evolution during the 20th and 21st centuries.

Trauma as a perception varies in its features according to the society or culture in which it occurs. Balaev (2014) has proposed that responses to traumatic experiences vary due to cultural and personal factors, influencing their interpretation and associated values despite their consciousness-altering nature. This indicates that humans’ reactions to trauma can differ from one society to another and from one person to another. Lynch et al. (2007) have asserted that there are different negative repercussions of traumatic occurrences and that diverse factors – such as the strength of personality, inherited characteristics, social skills, and the ability to handle difficult times – affect the survival of trauma victims. Similarly, Basseler has suggested that the post-trauma paradigm has developed in recent years and mainly focuses on victims’ ability to recover and
quickly overcome emotional and psychological damage. Therefore, 21st-century scholarly approaches to trauma have moved from exploring adverse outcomes to reevaluating cultural contexts and their impact on the potential for resilience.

Analysis
A Post-postmodernist Text: A Trending Hybrid-genre Reinforcing Subjective Truth

The narrative structure of Moore’s (2018) memoir, How to Be Alone, complies with the critical features of post-postmodernist literature. According to Murray (2003), literature has become an expression of social, personal, and cultural factors. Accordingly, employing post-postmodernist techniques significantly contributes to elevating the text’s message. In other words, the memoir uses genre-blurring techniques to highlight sincerity. In retrospect, sincerity allows for a genuine depiction of human experiences. Pignagnoli (2019) highlights that post-postmodernist audiences are interested in genres that combine fiction and aspects of real life, such as memoirs. As a hybrid genre, memoirs “blur the fact/fiction divide” in ways that express the “idea of truth, however subjective that truth may be” (Pignagnoli, 2019, p. 226). Accordingly, Moore’s (2018) memoir blurs generic boundaries by combining generic conventions of memoir, fiction, and poetry to establish a creative representation of subjective truth. For instance, even though the memoir adheres to non-fiction’s tradition of writing a dedication page expressing gratitude or acknowledgment to people close to the author, it begins with an uncommon page of dedication where Moore shows appreciation to public figures like singers and actors (Krochmal, 2018). Thus, Moore (2018) blurs the definite lines between fact and fiction by dedicating her memoir to people who are coming from fictitious creations like novels and television shows. The dedication does not acknowledge real-life relations, which shows that the lack of friends and family dramatically shapes the narrative and stresses the hybridity of the genre.

The post-postmodernist narrative structure in How to Be Alone contributes to the construction of Moore’s identity. Murray (2003) points out that narrating private or public incidents can lead to a social lack of direction or comprehension of a text. Similarly, Gosselin (2011) claims that adhering to a standard structure indicates ‘simplifying the experience’ and does not accurately depict how people live. She introduces the concept of “counterstories” to refer to memoirs appropriating “alternative narrative structures” (p. 133). Accordingly, the narrative structure of How to Be Alone reinforces its primary focus. The memoir’s title, essayistic format, and cover suggest its categorization as a self-help book, including tips to cure loneliness. However, instead of paving the way to factual and objective narration, this formulaic structure allows Moore a degree of selectivity. It permits her to express herself through thematically connected anecdotes and vignettes communicating a particular emotion or experience. This reveals that “the mixing of fiction and nonfiction is meant to represent the most earnest way to engage with the subject” (Pignagnoli, 2023, p. 43). Therefore, the post-postmodernist narrative structure facilitates a genuine and personal exploration of loneliness, highlighting the potential of genre-blurring techniques to convey sincere and authentic human experiences in contemporary literature. Additionally, Moore’s (2018) narration indulges in a subjective and conversational tone that directly addresses her reader: “You might be reading this and thinking, but my family is so wonderful, and I still feel alone” (p. 5). Hence, through this conversational narration, Moore (2018) implicitly prescribes human interaction as the cure for loneliness.
The employment of storytelling is another element that leads to constructing the author’s identity. Basseler (2019) emphasizes the importance of “the identity-making power of narrative” (p. 19). According to Murray (2003), writers provide narratives that consist of multiple stories. Hence, one of the memoir’s key themes is the impact of Moore’s (2018) dysfunctional family on the formation of her perceptions of self, life, and well-being in the past and present. Instead of chronically narrating her experience in meticulous detail, Moore (2018) devotes several loosely connected chapters that discuss the impact of her lack of a familial support system. For instance, in the fourth chapter, she relates her experience of moving to New York to attain self-agency. Throughout the chapter, Moore (2018) tells various anecdotes revealing how the abandonment of her family adds up to the series of obstacles she goes through to make it:

Throughout my childhood and teen years, I read countless books and articles about how people “made it,” and almost all of them boiled down to “Well, my uncle was the voice of Pumbaa in The Lion King, so he was already superrich and successful, and I crashed on his couch and then yay, fame.”…I had none of that. I was surrounded by complicated, creative people but didn’t have a support system, let alone a series of rich uncles with eight-picture deals at Sony. (p. 58)

This reveals how Moore’s (2018) deliberate choice of a non-linear narrative allows her to be selective and gives her the autonomy to construct her identity.

The memoir focuses on contemporary themes, such as toxic parents, the struggle against loneliness, and the quest for self and agency. Wallace (1993) confirms that post-postmodernist literature attacks and aims to resolve isolation because it leads to people's suffering. As a memoir written according to the post-postmodernist conception of self, How to Be Alone highlights sincerity as a critical element. Trilling (2009) defines sincerity as “the state or quality of the self” (p. 2). Thus, sincerity correlates with subjectivity. This indicates that sincere writing is, in retrospect, subjective writing, which reveals the narrator’s true self without hiding behind false facades or personas for social acceptance or gain. Brennan emphasizes that through sincere self-revelation, narrators strengthen “the memoir’s credibility” (p. 4). Accordingly, Moore’s (2018) narration instantly adopts a genuine tone that guarantees her memoir credibility. She addresses the reader in first-person narration, which directs a stark emphasis on an authentic self-representation and thus can be validated as sincere. Through first-person narration, Moore (2018) articulates the authenticity of her experience. According to Gibbons (2017), the employment of women writers of the first-person narration represents their effort to gain empowerment and connect the self with the outside world. Thus, Moore’s (2018) first-person narrative promises to represent a subjective and sincere revelation of the self, increasing the memoir’s credibility.

Human Connection in the Age of Cyberspace

How to Be Alone provides a social critique of the impact of online spaces on human connections. It embarks on the paradoxicality of connecting via the internet, which can simultaneously turn bonding on and off. Turkle (2011) highlights this contradictory paradigm by describing how a person is alone while connected with many online. She further considers online relationships unrealistically superficial, demonstrating that online interactions should be improved. To illustrate, in How to Be Alone, Moore (2018) addresses the viewpoint of her acquaintances who believe it is contradictory to speak about being alone when she has so many contacts and friends. She uses their view to make a disclaimer that having access to someone's
online accounts does not necessarily mean having a solid relationship with them. On the contrary, she may not even know them or find them of any help when bad things occur. Moore (2018) also emphasizes the superficiality of online friendships when she describes that they only share meaningless things but would not communicate if something went wrong. Thus, the memoir depicts the limited and inadequate nature of online connections.

Moore (2018) exposes the drawbacks of substituting real-life relations for virtual ones. Her memoir addresses issues that online communication has brought forward, including ghosting. The Guardian asserts that online platforms facilitate this modern phenomenon: “In this digital age, aren’t we all just pixelated shadows of ourselves anyway? Why not ghost when you have no real connection? When we are all just phantasmagoria in the Cloud?” (para.7). Popescu (2019) declares that ghosting occurs when a person goes offline without justification. Moore (2018) explains that ghosting has been mentally damaging to her. She expresses her disappointment at their neglecting her after they promised to help if she needed them. Her description highlights the ease of abandoning social and moral obligations on media platforms and the sad effects of that on some people. For example, the writer describes the impact of this abandonment on her and how vulnerable and hurt it has made her. Also, it leads her to delete contacts for self-protection and mistrust obsessively. Eventually, Moore's (2018) memoir exposes ghosting as an interminable drawback for online connections, indicating that virtual connections are only a partial substitute for actual relationships.

Transgressing Social Boundaries

How to Be Alone illustrates that Moore’s (2018) indulgence in meaningful online connections enables her to transgress the struggle of fitting in a society where she occasionally feels othered and rejected for her aloneness. Moore’s (2018) deprivation of familial safety leads her to look for other substitutes, which she first finds in a school friend. She explains her devastation upon losing her friend, who – for her – resembles a parental figure:

You don’t have a foundation, so you look everywhere for one, which means the weight of any one connection is so heavy, so important, so delicate. If you lose it, what else will you have? And it has definitely kept me in a ton of awful friendships and relationships because I’d felt like I had nothing or no one else to fall back on. (pp. 34-35)

This indicates that Moore (2018) is looking for a long-lasting connection that will provide her with something that resembles familial love and care. When she fails to find it in a friend within her real community, she starts searching online for a romantic relationship: “It was around this time that I began online dating because, yes, I was the most underage I could possibly be, but also, I had no adult supervision” (p. 44). Hence, online dating allows her to transgress social pressure and restrictions. According to Feenberg (2008), interaction with others on the internet can be an attempt to escape from our actual existence. Accordingly, online dating provides Moore (2018) with a virtual escape from reality. However, Feenberg (2008) contends that the limitations of the virtual sphere hinder this process. After various attempts to create this illusion of finding a companion or the needed emotions, she realizes the restrictions of the internet and that she will not be able to locate love online despite her desperate search. Overall, Moore’s (2018) search for a bond highlights the restraints of online-based relationships and the need for genuine human connection.
The Self in a Post-trauma Representation

Moore’s (2018) text challenges the standard trauma paradigm by developing a narrative embodying resilience, humor, and optimism, overshadowing childhood traumatic history. Hence, it arguably lends itself to the criteria of a new-age post-trauma paradigm. Basseler (2019) argues that there is a modification and a replacement of trauma theory by the post-trauma paradigm. He describes it as the attempt to avoid or overcome trauma and make individuals less susceptible to it. Additionally, Basseler (2019) underlines that self-writing resembles a coping strategy through which trauma victims attempt to create an online account of their lives where they narrate their stories and pretend it is enough to live in cyberspace. Accordingly, Moore (2018) avoids discussing severe details when describing her traumatic familial history. Rosenblit (2018) affirms that Moore had a miserable youth that she does not reveal details about. However, she has disclosed details of exploitation, insecurity, and abandonment (Rosenblit, 2018). Thus, Moore (2018) chooses a resistant response to her trauma. According to Lynch, Keasler, Reaves, Channer, and Bukowski (2007), resilient responses to adversity – such as recognizing one’s unique features, social skills, and the ability to endure hardship – can help victims of trauma survive. Moore (2018) encounters what she describes as ‘stranger’s luck’ when she meets strangers who immediately give her the familial love and instruction she longs for; this frequent experience evokes her traumatic memory of rejection and neglect. However, she reacts resiliently to it by identifying her innate distinctive qualities. Hence, Moore (2018) complies with the post-trauma paradigm through her inferences regarding the pressing questions her traumatic memory arouses and through the resilient reception of her trauma as she engages in a series of positive affirmations.

As a New York-based comedy writer, Moore (2018) further challenges the traditional trauma paradigm by employing humor as an interpersonal skill and coping strategy to overcome trauma with resilience. Rosenblit (2018) affirms that Moore (2018) provides an understanding of how being strong can help overcome the effects of tragic events during childhood. Additionally, Waterstones describes the memoir as revealing Moor’s ability to amuse readers despite the fear it provides. Thus, Moore (2018) uses a humorous tone that further fulfills the post-trauma paradigm and emphasizes personal skills. For instance, in one of the rare incidents where Moore (2018) refers to her traumatic childhood experience, she describes it lightly with a perfect sense of humor that overshadows the harshness of the truth: “So all I knew of relationships as a little kid was everyone is terrified of Dad, and Mom is very, very quiet, and Dad lives in the basement, and everyone is sad” (p. 42). The quotation reveals that Moore’s (2018) text approaches past trauma lightly and with a slightly funny tone. Thus, it represents a self-written story from a post-trauma perspective, highlighting resistance over submission. The post-trauma paradigm is manifested through strong responses to trauma, such as positive self-affirmation and employing personal skills.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study explores Moore’s (2018) memoir, How to Be Alone, as a post-postmodernist text that employs hybrid-genre features. The structure of the text complies with the evolution of literary conventions during the historical and cultural context of the memoir. The study has also focused on cyber criticism and the influence of the internet on human relationships and social cultures. Hence, it stresses several fundamental facts related to cyberculture and its effect on literary expression. Firstly, it has shed light on concepts of multiple and dual identities.
Secondly, it has inspected the interconnectedness between the actual and virtual world. Thirdly, it has detected alterations in literary expression in cyberspace. Finally, the study has scrutinized different perceptions of post-trauma theory in the memoir and their effects on the representation. Hence, it has demonstrated how the memoir lends itself to the post-trauma paradigm by emphasizing resilience and humor as a coping strategy for trauma. ‘Writing the self’ through memoirs or autobiographies is a radical part of post-postmodernist literature. It mainly becomes a flexible and accessible means of expression for the common who have resided outside the classification of the elite-educated writer. With options of writing on different cyberspace platforms, writers have become more capable of achieving the juxtaposition of visibility and, simultaneously, hiding behind nicknames and pseudonyms. In other cases, writers reveal their identity but fictionalize their life details, which hides the authentic self and makes it obscure. These different types of anonymity have allowed many writers a broad area of expression and the space to design a desired rather than actual identity. Interestingly, combining cyber literature with ‘memoir’ writing can be a fascinating area of exploration. Not to distinguish between truth and fantasy but to investigate the outcomes of the fusion of the factual with the literary. Hence, post-postmodern literature, combined with technological advancement and cultural changes, would probably need to be reevaluated regularly to absorb and, even more, appreciate its everchanging key features, narrative techniques, conventions, and aesthetic nature.

About the Authors

**Maram Alessa** is an MA student and researcher in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She holds a beholder degree with first honors from Umm Al-Quora University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Her research interests are contemporary and post-postmodern literature, trauma theory, and cross-disciplinary Narrative Research. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0002-0762-9373

**Dr. Nesreen Al-Harby** is an Assistant Professor of English Literature at the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, King Abdulaziz University (KAU) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Her research interests fall within representations of Women in the cybersphere, cyber literature, Genre theory and effects of genre conventions and tropes on depicting social codes and cultural signs, representations of Arab/Muslim women and societies in Anglophone literature, and monstrosity. She has a PhD from the University of Leicester, UK. Her thesis investigates representations of Saudi women in contemporary Western literature and examines genre theory and the effects of genre appropriation and Orientalist discourse on literary depictions. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4619-8863

References


TEDx Talks. (2019, July 2). *How To Be Alone | Lane Moore | TEDxBoulder* [Video]. YouTube. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGZ5QWdfzhw


