

Modernism

Defination :-

Modernism is a broad cultural and artistic intellectual movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was a response to the rapid social, technological, and political changes of the time particularly, the industrial revolution of the first world war. Modernists sought to break away from traditional forms and conventions in art, literature, architecture and other fields.

Introduction:-

Modernism is a broad and complex literary movement that emerged in late 19th and early 20th century. It represents a significant shift from the conventions of previous literary eras, particularly Victorianism and Romanticism. Modernist writers explored new narrative structures, such as stream of consciousness and fragmented narratives to capture the fragmented nature of human experience.

Characteristics :-

Characteristics of modernism are given below:-

1. Experimentation :-

Modernist literature employed a number of different experimental writing techniques that broke conventional rules of story telling. Some techniques are blended, imagery and themes, absurdism, stream of consciousness etc.

2. Loss of Faith:-

A questioning of traditional religious and moral values.

3- Individualism:-

Modernist literature focuses on the individual rather than society as a whole. Stories follow characters as they adapt to a changing world, often dealing with difficult circumstances and challenges. It emerged as response to the growing of alienation and fragmentation of modern life. Modernist work to celebrate "the power of individual", thought and **creativity**, often rejecting collective norms and universal truth in the favour of personal expression.

4- Literary device:-

Many modernist writers rely on literary device like **Symbolism**, **allusion** and **imagery** to help the reader to understand the writing and to create a strong connection between the text and the reader. Literary device also conveys the complexity of modern life, human consciousness and nature of reality.

5- Free Verse:-

Modernist rejected the traditional structure of poetry and adopted free verse, which lacks a consistent rhyme scheme, metrical pattern or musical form in favor of a more natural, flexible and experimental approach to the poetic expression. This device aligns with modernism's broader emphasis on innovation, individualism and the reflection of the complexities of Modern life.

6- Intellectualism:-

Intellectualism in Modernism refers to the movement's deep engagement with ideas, critical thinking and the pursuit of knowledge to understand and interpret the rapidly changing world of the late 19th & early 20th century. Modernism valued intellectual exploration as a way to challenge traditions, question established truths, and address the complexities of modern existence.

7- Subjectivity :-

Subjectivity in modernism refers to the emphasis on individual perception, personal experience and internal reality as central to understanding and interpreting the world. Modernist writers and artists prioritize the unique and often fragmented perspectives of individuals over universal or objective truths, reflecting the complexities of modern life.

8- Interiority :-

Interiority in modernism refers to the focus on exploring the inner thoughts, emotions, and physiological landscapes of characters. Modernist writers often prioritize the subjective experience over external events, delving deeply into the consciousness of individuals to reflect the complexities of human existence in a fragmented modern world.

9- Alienation :-

Alienation in modernism refers to the sense of disconnection, isolation and estrangement individuals feel in a rapidly changing, fragmented and impersonal modern world. Modernist artists and writers often depict characters who experience alienation from society, others and even from themselves. This theme reflects anxieties and uncertainties of the 20th century, particularly after World War I, as traditional structures of meaning, identity and communications were increasingly eroded.

10. Disillusionment :-

Disillusionment refers to the sense of profound disappointment or loss of faith in the ideals, values and institutions that previously shaped society and individual lives. It emerged as a response of devastation after World War I.

11- Rejection of realism:-

Rejection of realism refers to the modernist movement's departure from the traditional conventions of 19th century realism, which sought to depict life as it appeared in an objective accurate manner. Modernist influenced by the rapid in **society, technology and psychology** believed that realism focus on the complexities of modern experience.

12- Cultural & Historical content:-

Modernist literature was deeply influenced by the cultural and historical content of time including the two world wars rapid urbanization and the rise of mass media. It reflected a number of anxieties and uncertainties of the modern age.

13- Stream of consciousness:-

Stream of consciousness is a narrative technique that became central to modernist literature, it attempts to depict the continuous, often chaotic flow of thoughts, feelings, memories and sensory impression that occur in a character's mind. Rather than following traditional narratives structures or dialogues, stream of consciousness presents a more fragmented, internal experience, often disregarding punctuation, linear times and clear narrative organization.

14- Narrative Fragmentations:-

Fragmented narratives are a hallmark of modernist literature, reflecting the modernist rejection of traditional storytelling conventions. Modernist writers deliberately fragmented narrative structure plot, and character development to capture the disjointed, chaotic, and often alienating experience of modern life. The fragmentation aligns with modernist themes of alienation disillusionment and the subjective nature of reality.

Influential Peoples:-

1- Virginia Woolf:- (1882 - 1941)

Virginia Woolf was a British novelist, writer, essayist, feminist and central figure in the modernist literary movement, which sought to break away from traditional narrative forms and explore new ways of expressing the human experience.

Early life:- Born in London, Virginia Woolf was the seventh child of eight, to Leslie Stephen, a literary critic, and Julia Stephen, a nurse. Her childhood was marked by intellectual and artistic stimulation, with her father's vast library and the frequent visits of prominent literary figures. However, she also faced personal struggles, including the death of her mother at a young age and her own mental health issues.

Major works:- She wrote many novels that contribute to modernism.

- 1- "Mrs. Dalloway" (1925)
- 2- "To The Lighthouse" (1927)
- 3- "Orlando" (1928)
- 4- "A Room of One's Own" (1929)
- 5- "The Waves" (1931)

2- T-S Eliot:- (1888 - 1965)

Thomas Stearns Eliot was a British-American poet, playwright, critic and editor, widely regarded as one of the most important poets of the 20th century. He was a central figure in the Modernist movement, which revolutionized art and literature.

Works:- He worked on

- Intellectualism
- Experimentation
- Disillusionment

Contribution to Modernism:-

- 1- "The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915)
- 2- "The waste land" (1922)
- 3- "The Hollow men" (1925)
- 4- "Murder in the cathedral" (1935)
- 5- "Four Quartets" (1943)

Other Modernists

1- James Joyce

- "Ulysses" (1922)
- "Dubliners" (1914)
- "A Portrait of the Artist as a young Man" (1916)

2- Ezra Pound

- "The cantos" (1915 - 1969)
- "A Lume Spento" (1908)
- "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" (1920)

3- F-Scott Fitzgerald

- "The great Gatsby" (1925)
- "Tender Is the night" (1934)
- "The Diamond as big as the Ritz" (1922)

4- Ernest Hemingway

- "The old man and the sea" (1952)
- "A Farewell to arms" (1929)
- "For whom the Bell Tolls" (1940)

5- Kafka Franz

- "The Metamorphosis" (1915)
- "The Trial" (1925)
- "The castle" (1926)

6- DH. Lawrence

- "Sons and Lovers" (1913)
- "The rainbow" (1915)
- "Women in love" (1920)

F. E. M. Forsters

- "Howards End" (1910)
- "A Room with a View" (1908)
- "A Passage to India" (1924)

8- Gertrude Stein

- "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" (1933)
- "Tender Buttons" (1914)
- "The Making of Americans" (1925)

9- Wallace Stevens

- "Harmonium" (1923)
- "Ideas of Order" (1936)
- "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" (1942)

10- William Faulkner

- "The Sound and the Fury" (1929)
- "As I Lay Dying" (1930)
- "Absalom, Absalom!" (1936)

Conclusion

Modernism represent a revolutionary period in history characterized by a break from traditions and a quests to capture the complexities of modern life.

