

LITERARY TENDENCIES IN MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE: CHARACTERISTICS AND THEMES

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ABSTRACT

Modern American literature includes twentieth and twenty-first century fiction, poetry, and drama. The period is marked by two significant aesthetic movements: modernism and postmodernism. Modernism describes the avant-garde styles of the early twentieth century, while postmodernism describes the period of art that evolved after World War II. Now that we know the different movements, let's look at the common themes found in this type of literature.

Keywords: *Modern American literature, Modernism, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, Eliot, and Pound, Individualism*

АННОТАЦИЯ

Современная американская литература включает художественную литературу, поэзию и драму двадцатого и двадцать первого веков. Период отмечен двумя значительными эстетическими движениями: модернизмом и постмодернизмом. Модернизм описывает авангардные стили начала двадцатого века, а постмодернизм описывает период искусства, сформировавшийся после Второй мировой войны. Теперь, когда мы знаем разные движения, давайте посмотрим на общие темы, встречающиеся в этом типе литературы.

Ключевые слова: *современная американская литература, модернизм, Фицджеральд, Хемингуэй, Фолкнер, Элиот и Паунд, индивидуализм.*

INTRODUCTION

American Literature is the literary area which contains many of the most renowned writers in English. Although it is the literary area of America, its literary tradition begins with the tradition of British Literature. But now it has its own literary tradition. Most of the American writers proved that their novels are the reflection of the society in which they are grown up. Moreover, the political writings in American Literature discussed the social issues like liberty, education system of modern culture

etc. In the 20th century American Literature, it is found that the American writers were much interested in the field of socialism. It includes many political writers and many journalistic critics. We can find many autobiographical writings in the same period. American writers were highly inspired by the British writers because present day United States was a series of British colonies in early days. In the middle of 19th century they found their own tradition, style and themes. It led to their contribution of inimitable styles and themes to the world of literature. During this period, many American writers exhibited their sensitivity to the people who were victims of the World War II.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Alienation, an important theme in modern literature, responds to the impact of World War I. Modernist writers describe the effects of war in terms of disconnection. For instance, the speaker in T. S. Eliot's famous poem, "The Waste Land," wanders around a barren scene, trying to reassemble the ruins into some kind of coherent meaning. Alienation is also reflected by the types of narration that modernist authors favored. William Faulkner's novels, for instance, use multiple perspectives or viewpoints to suggest that reality is broken and fragmented, depending on the subject. Characters are alienated from each other because each lives in a world of her own making.

Poet and literary critic Ezra Pound's declaration, "Make it new", emphasizes the importance of transformation to the modernist aesthetic. Modernist artists are known for refashioning classical or mythic forms. For instance, T. S. Eliot's poem, "The Waste Land," modernizes Greek mythology by alluding to Greek gods in the context of the modern scene of war. Postmodern fiction also portrays how art, like reality, is always being reshaped. Postmodern narratives often end inconclusively to suggest that narrative is ongoing, always subject to change.

Another important theme in modern fiction is consumption. In the twentieth century, capitalism expanded across the globe, and fiction reflects this expansion by portraying the excesses of consumer culture. Don DeLillo's "White Noise" is famous for its critique of consumer culture. The narrative portrays characters who are addicted to shopping. The main protagonist shops in order to avoid thinking about death. By associating consumer culture with distraction, "White Noise" suggests that modern capitalism tries - but ultimately fails - to overcome the problem of human mortality.

merica entered the twentieth century optimistically as a wealthy, strong world power. Although this time period started off with prosperity, it soon became one characterized by two world wars and a severe economic depression. These events ushered in a new age in American literature, Modernism, as writers began to attempt to express modern life with their writings.

The Modernist era was an era of boldness and fast-paced living. The culture saw the Harlem Renaissance and the Roaring Twenties (also known as the Jazz Age). This was a time of flourishing art and extravagant living that acted as a prequel to the Great Depression. In literature, the era was characterized by a break away from traditional styles of poetry and other types of writing. Ezra Pound began the Imagist movement. This poetry abandoned all traditional form and sought to portray a single image in time. It was during this time that the authors began to experiment with different styles of writing and earned American international acclaim.

Although their works were very different, Modern authors shared a common purpose, which was to capture the essence of modern life. This purpose is why most modernist literature was written in a pessimistic way. Most modern works reflected the thoughts and confusion of most Americans, especially during the Great Depression and the two World Wars. The chaotic literature revealed the instability of the American people's mindset as they attempted to understand what was going on around them. There was also a loss of faith and hope in the American people during this time period and a collapse of morality and values. Furthermore, this loss of values led to a confused sense of identity and place in the world, as is iterated in T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

The literature of the era was often fragmented to cause confusion and intentionally break the flow of words in literature. Two major themes of the era were confusion and disillusionment. These themes and this literary movement as a whole reflected the new mindset of the American people after the turn of the century. It was because of this mindset and the loss of hope in the American dream, that the major authors of the time period such as Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, Eliot, and Pound became known as the Lost Generation.

Individualism

In Modernist literature, the individual is more interesting than society. Specifically, modernist writers were fascinated with how the individual adapted to the changing world. In some cases, the individual triumphed over obstacles. For the most part, Modernist literature featured characters who just kept their heads above water. Writers presented the world or society as a challenge to the integrity of their

characters. Ernest Hemingway is especially remembered for vivid characters who accepted their circumstances at face value and persevered.

Experimentation

Modernist writers broke free of old forms and techniques. Poets abandoned traditional rhyme schemes and wrote in free verse. Novelists defied all expectations. Writers mixed images from the past with modern languages and themes, creating a collage of styles. The inner workings of consciousness were a common subject for modernists. This preoccupation led to a form of narration called stream of consciousness, where the point of view of the novel meanders in a pattern resembling human thought. Authors James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, along with poets T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, are well known for their experimental

Absurdity

The carnage of two World Wars profoundly affected writers of the period. Several great English poets died or were wounded in WWI. At the same time, global capitalism was reorganizing society at every level. For many writers, the world was becoming a more absurd place every day. The mysteriousness of life was being lost in the rush of daily life. The senseless violence of WWII was yet more evidence that humanity had lost its way. Modernist authors depicted this absurdity in their works. Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," in which a traveling salesman is transformed into an insect-like creature, is an example of modern absurdism.

Symbolism

The Modernist writers infused objects, people, places and events with significant meanings. They imagined a reality with multiple layers, many of them hidden or in a sort of code. The idea of a poem as a riddle to be cracked had its beginnings in the Modernist period. Symbolism was not a new concept in literature, but the Modernists' particular use of symbols was an innovation. They left much more to the reader's imagination than earlier writers, leading to open-ended narratives with multiple interpretations. For example, James Joyce's "Ulysses" incorporates distinctive, open-ended symbols in each chapter.

Formalism

Writers of the Modernist period saw literature more as a craft than a flowering of creativity. They believed that poems and novels were constructed from smaller parts instead of the organic, internal process that earlier generations had described. The idea of literature as craft fed the Modernists' desire for creativity and originality. Modernist poetry often includes foreign languages, dense vocabulary and invented

words. The poet e.e. cummings abandoned all structure and spread his words all across the page.

CONCLUSION

The major literary themes of the Modernist Era are confusion, isolation, and disillusionment. These themes reflect the mindset of the American people and the feelings that plagued them throughout the early 1900s. TS Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is a good representation of the theme of confusion by not only being confusing to read because of its fragmentation, but also by showing a man (Prufrock) who is grappling with decision making and trying to figure out what class of society he belongs in like many during this time period did.

The theme of isolation shows not only in everyday relationships but as the American people's take on world affairs. The US desired to remain neutral through both World Wars, but eventually were forced into participation. "In Another Country," by Ernest Hemingway depicts the isolation felt by soldiers and common Americans.

The theme of disillusionment is arguably the most common theme of the Modernist era. There was a disillusionment in the American people that the first world war would be quick and painless. The Great Gatsby displays the theme of disillusionment in that he truly believes that he can recreate his past with Daisy. Katherine Anne Porter's story, "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall," shows confusion and disillusionment that accompanies growing old and dying. Overall, this widespread disillusionment reflected the loss of values and faith that suddenly occurred in the American people at the turn of the century.

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