

Poets and high modernism: an analysis of ernest hemingway's "the snow of kilimanj...

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Ernest Hemingway's "the snow of Kilimanjaro" (Moreira 1) is modernistic. It has a number of characteristics common for modernist art. The poet switches between the traditional and the modern. The italicized passages reveal the memories and thoughts of the protagonist. My opinion on the same is that despite the fact that they are not written in the first person, they are still relatively effective and innovative. They help explore Harry's deeper experiences in life, his memories and feelings. Modernity is depicted in the conclusion of the story where the Hemingway explains events that happen both in reality and in Harry's mind. Modernism is depicted in T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." (Eliot 1) The poet uses irregular rhyme, fragmentation and objective correlative. He expresses some of the basic attributes of modernist poetry such as a theme based on psychology and contrasting language-both formal and informal. The poem has a stream of consciousness-poet's description of his reactions, feelings, and thoughts in a relatively continuous manner. These characteristics qualify the poem as modernist. This poem has typical attributes of modernist poetry. It has the required degree of compactness of information-it passes the intended message by use of relatively fewer words than most of the traditional poems.

The line, "Make It New" has been used in T. S. Eliot's poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." (Eliot 1) to call for poets to abandon the traditional styles of presenting written art. It calls for the artists to challenge the styles that were used during the Romantic period. The poet employs the free verse, a styling commonly used by modernist poets. Virginia Woolf and James Joyce are among the few poets of the period that "made it new." My opinion on

this stylistic change is that these poets employed the strategy in order to make readers understand their work in a better way. The approach would create a better experience for readers, especially for more complicated poems such as “ Rime of the Ancient Mariner” by Taylor Samuel. Eliot uses lines such as “ half-deserted streets” and “ one-night cheap hotels” (Eliot 1). The lines show that the poet is completely tired of the traditional culture which he relates to a deserted street. For him, the urban life characterized by bustle and hustle is his ultimate experience. The traditional era did not have all these and was generally “ deserted.” I think Eliot’s message in this poem is a contradiction of some modern poets’ views such as Wordsworth who, in some poems, considers the life in a rural setting the ultimate experience.

The line, “ I grow old ... I grow old ...” is modernistic (Eliot 1). It has been presented in the first person, a typical attribute of a modernistic art. The writer intends to put across a message that humans are, indeed, mortal. The person who says that line is obviously not happy about the natural phenomenon. It is as if they were not ready for it. The message has been put across by use of least words, possible, a compression style commonly used by modernistic artists. The line, “ Kilimanjaro is a snow-covered mountain ... the highest mountain in Africa” and “ Each day of not writing, of comfort...” (Moreira 1) in Hemingway’s “ the snow of Kilimanjaro” portrays some modernistic characteristics. The poet uses the lines to summarize the attributes of the mountain in Africa. Despite the fact that they are short, they convey a lot of the artist’s message. They summarize the feelings that he

experienced while there. The use of such compressed pieces of written art is clear evidence that the work is modernistic. It tells the reader that this environment contained most of what the writer feels happy/bad about in life. It prepares the audience to read and understand the characteristics of Kilimanjaro that make someone feel what they feel under such conditions. Lines such as, “ I’d like to destroy you a few times in bed” and, “ What is, my dear” are modernistic (Moreira 1). They have been written in the narration of the first person. The type of sentence also offers a “ stream of consciousness.” I think modernist artists preferred this style based on the fact that they tried to avoid the traditional chronological narrations that had the beginning, middle and the end of a story. They prefer the use of flashbacks, instead. The lines, “...being that which he despised, dulled his ability...” (Moreira 2) and “ had never quarreled much” are modernistic. The writer employs flashbacks, a typical modernistic style. Harry is seen to be unhappy of the events that happen in his life and views himself as a loser. He regrets not having achieved most of his goals in life. Flashbacks, when placed in the context of traditional and modern ages, represent two time-periods- the past as the traditional and the present as the modern. I think the writer employed this method to support modernistic over the traditional art.

The movements of modernism revolted against the values of realism, which they described as being too conservative and unfit for the new social, economic and political conditions. They felt that the industrial period required a change in the way people carried out daily activities. They were

against the “ traditional” religious faith, literature, architecture, forms of art and social organization. They were against the existence of a compassionate, super-natural being-God as well as the lingering certainty of religious enlightenment.

Works Cited

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