

Modernism in literature

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Modernism in Literature

1. The roots of Modernism in literature lay in a rebellion against, or reaction to Victorianism.

It stresses image over logic, impression over form, and the unconscious over the conscious. Modernism describes the tendency to break away or split from the traditional values and the established rules of style and form, at times going as far as abandoning form in favor of total experimentalism. In the subject matter, theme, and viewpoint, modernism focuses on the individual's subjective, most often alienated, consciousness. Modernism rejects the traditional framework of description, narrative, and expression, and substitutes it with a stream-of-consciousness effect that appears to be uncrafted completely.

In the structural form, whereas the frame of the plot, in the case of a play or novel, and a metrical, usually rhyme stanzaic form (poetry) formed the basis of literary work in the 19th century, the image forms the basis of literary work for modernists. A radical unique expression of modernism is displayed by James Joyce in her short stories including the short story "The Dead". The whole story entitled "The Dead" is a heartbreaking and poignant demonstration of the conflict between Victorianism and Modernism. The subject matter or themes articulated in modernism forms mostly some of the most disturbing, diverse, and hard to understand. One of the major themes articulated in modernist literature is alienation. Alienation can be found in the short story "The Dead" as a depiction of modernism in the subject matter of the story. Gabriel and Gretta at the start of the party appear to be a very happy couple joking and laughing together something that turns out not to be true at the end when Gabriel realizes that he did not know his wife well

especially after a marriage of several years. Gabriel alienated he never and never bothered to ask her about her about her past because of self-centeredness and selfishness. Gabriel has been so much wrapped up with the elevation of his social status and spreading his wisdom to an extent that has no idea who exactly his wife is, feels, thinks, or wants in life (Joyce 266). Regarding the structure of the story, "The Dead" is not talking about a straightforward death but uses some modern equivocal terms. The examples of terms used are "Galway", 'the Aughrim lass", and "Connacht" all of which is an intent to the west. The structure of the story captures the image as its basis to reflect modernism. At the start of the story, Gabriel is portrayed as being confident, belonging to the upper class, having fair hair and adored by his relatives. His image and ego are captured and this is carried throughout the story included a scene at the party where he looks down on the other partying individuals.

2. The story depicts Gabriel's interior dialog or psychological insight from egoism to self-awareness, both of which being subjective, a similarity to the visual art of the modernist era.

When the story starts Gabriel comes from the middle class, participates in the party and the first female that captures his attention is Lily through her bitter response. The answer that Gabriel gets weakens his masculine dignity. Gabriel becomes nervous upon the invitation to give a speech because he considers using a number of words from Browning meant to suit or fit his status. Gabriel thinks that his speech may be lofty to his audience and this portrays him as proud of himself regarding himself as belonging to another superior class. Throughout the events in the story, the interior dialogue of the major character Gabriel comes out in most instances. Therefore, the <https://assignbuster.com/modernism-in-literature/>

short story presents a dramatized dialogue occurring between the consciousness and the unconscious of Gabriel. According to the modernist era's visual arts, the tendency of breaking away from the traditional values implied the unconscious being stressed over the conscious. This is evident in the interior dialogue of Gabriel. Drawing from the start of the story, Gabriel is seen from an iconic distance behaving in a clumsy manner towards Lily and his failure to link or connect with the other people vacillating uncomfortably.

The author writes that he was still discomposed by the bitterness of the girl (Lily) and the sudden retort. Gabriel would only make himself be ridiculous by quoting the poetry to them (audience), which they could not comprehend. In this way, the audience would think that he (Gabriel) was airing his better-quality education. However, Gabriel would fail with the audience the same way he had failed with Lily in the pantry. He had actually taken up a wrong tone and his entire speech was also a mistake from the start to end, an utter failure (Joyce 24). From Gabriel's self-diminishment to self-aggrandizement, his social clumsiness is associated with an emptiness he has within. The sense of better and quality education that Gabriel has incapacitating self-consciousness and emotional shortness reflects much about his creator. In addition, he speaks to self-consciousness characteristic that is paralytic of modernism.

Work Cited

Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. Gutenberg. org, 5 November 2012. Web. 8

November 2012

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