

History Repeats Itself

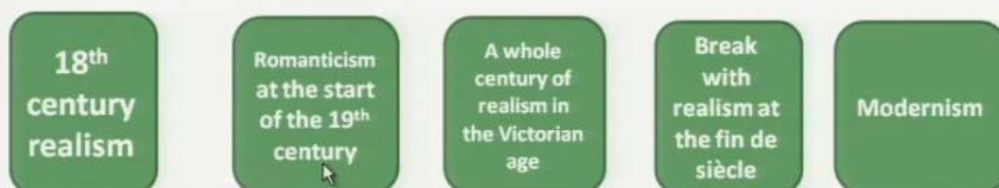
How does history repeat itself?

- The novel in the 18th century dealt with the problems of society and the suffering of people.
- At the start of the 19th century writers left realism and preferred to talk about nature, love, and beauty. This new shift away from society was called Romanticism.
- Then the greater part of the 19th century was a return back to realism. It was the greatest age of realism in the English novel.

History Repeats Itself

By the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th, writers got sick of the traditional realism of the 19th century. They came up with something totally different, this time it was called Modernism.

History has really repeated itself in the following way:



Modernism

What is modernism in brief?

It is a rebellion against old traditions of form and content. Classical, conventional ways of expression and even subject matter were rejected and newer, forms and themes were looked for.

Modernism

The ordered, stable and inherently meaningful world view of the nineteenth century could not, wrote T.S. Eliot, accord with "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history." Modernism thus marks a distinctive break with Victorian bourgeois morality; rejecting nineteenth-century optimism, they presented a profoundly pessimistic picture of a culture in disarray.

Modernism

"Modernism" is an international artistic movement, flourishing from the 1880s to the end of WW II (1945), known for radical experimentation and rejection of the old order of civilization and 19th century optimism; a reaction against Realism and Naturalism

Modernism

when did it start?

According to Virginia Woolf, on or about 1910, the world changed. So she believes it began at about this time.

Other scholars see that it began at the fin de siècle of the 19th century until the end of the 2nd world war in 1945.

The words fin de siècle mean: the end of the century.

Questions

☐ The words fin de siècle mean: (the end of the century- the start of the century- the middle of the century).

☐ Modernism means writers used (different- the same- opposite) ways of expression.

☐ Modernist writers are (optimistic- pessimistic- neutral).

☐ History repeats itself in English literature, which means every age (relies on romanticism- reacts to realism- is realistic)

Questions

- ☐ Modernist writers (liked- objected to- supported) the order and stability of the 19th century.
- ☐ Modernism started in (the 19th century- the 21st century- the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century)
- ☐ According to Virginia Woolf, modernism began in (1910-1945-1888).

Modernism Major tenets:

- Break with all traditional approaches to form and content.
- Experimentation
- Free verse
- Fragmentation: nothing connects with anything else.
- Dissatisfaction with the world of politics and the attempt to escape from it through invention of some forms like fables and journeys.
- Again history repeats itself. *Robinson Crusoe* is an 18th century novel that used the trope of the journey. It is used again William Golding (*Lord of the Flies*) and George Orwell (*Animal Farm*).

Modernism

In literature, the movement is associated with the works of (among others) Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, H.D., Franz Kafka and Knut Hamsun. In their attempt to throw off the aesthetic burden of the realist novel, these writers introduced a variety of literary tactics and devices.

Questions

Some writers associated with modernism are (James Joyce- Charles Dickens- Daniel Defoe).

Modernism: some more tenets

- Marked by a strong and intentional break with tradition. This break includes a strong reaction against established religious, political, and social views.
- Belief that the world is created in the act of perceiving it; that is, the world is what we say it is, not what others tell us about it.
- There is no such thing as absolute truth. All things are relative.
- No connection with history or institutions. Their experience is that of alienation, loss, and despair.
- Championship of the individual and celebration of inner strength.
- Life is unordered.



Thematic features

- Intentional distortion of shapes
- Focus on form rather than meaning
- Breaking down of limitation of space and time
- Breakdown of social norms and cultural values
- Dislocation of meaning and sense from its normal context
- Valorisation of the despairing individual in the face of an unmanageable future
- Disillusionment
- Rejection of history and the substitution of a mythical past
- Need to reflect the complexity of modern urban life
- Importance of the unconscious mind
- Interest in the primitive and non-western cultures
- Impossibility of an absolute interpretation of reality
- Overwhelming technological changes

Questions

Modernism is marked by a strong and intentional break with tradition:

- ❖ It respects and imitates tradition
- ❖ It is a rebellion against tradition
- ❖ It uses the same techniques and methods of the past
- ❖ It values traditional concepts

How far can *Animal Farm* be considered a modernist novel?

Breaks away with the form of the 19th c novel

Breaks away with traditional language of fiction

Grapples with the predicament of the modern man who sees himself dissociated from the world of politics around him.

Uses new experimental form summoned from history.

It is pessimistic.

Predicts a dark future for humanity

Uses parody

Calls for the same mottos of the French Revolution

1945

Animal Farm by George Orwell 1945