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Modernism is the transient, the contingent and also on the contrary the eternal

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Abstract

Modernism is a literary period which started in the early 20th century and is marked by holocaust across the entire world, namely First World War and Second World War. It was a period of materialism, depression, fragmentation, many such things and along with the society, literature of this period clearly reflected this.

Keywords: Modernism, transient, contingent, eternal

Introductions

We say that this period started in early 20th century but French writer Charles Baudelaire coined the term 'modernity' much earlier in 1863 in his essay 'The Painter of Modern Life' where he said:

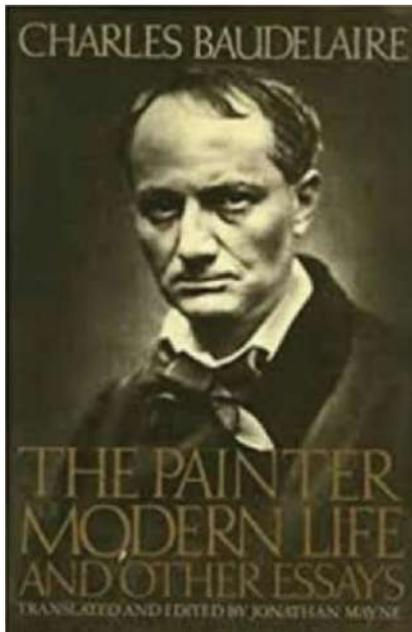
"Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent, is one half of art the other being the eternal and the immovable".

Words like the transient, the contingent, the eternal can be critically examined by comparing the word of Charles Baudelaire and actual characteristic of the period. Aestheticism or the Aesthetic movement started in the late 19th century and it was a rebellion against mass product goods and art teaching mortality or virtue. They believed that we need to simply write work for the sake of beauty and it was a slap on the tradition on art. Art for Art Sake became the rallying cry for the Aesthetic movement, in this artificiality, cosmetics, rituals just to show, these ideas were strengthened by the people supporting Aesthetic movement, also there was a group of writers which comprised members like Oscar Wilde, Vernon Lee, Walter Pater, John Symonds, Arthur Symonds etc. all these members were associated with one common idea, thus we can say that group represent the contingent and these ideas are always present in the minds of the people.

Charles Baudelaire in his works also talked about Bourgeoisie, the middle class professional and in modern period also we can see the prosperity of middle class and its downfall, it was around 1929 and 1930 when the stock market crashed and their entire world went in 'great depression' as their entire saved wealth evaporated. The term 'modernity' was coined by Charles Baudelaire in order to designate the fleeting ephemeral experience of life in an urban metropolis and the responsibility of artistic expression to capture that experience in his essay in 1864. 'The Painter of Modern Life' designated the fleeting ephemeral experience of life in an urban metropolis, in his essay he defines modernity by naming the interrelation of beauty, fashion and lifestyle through the eyes of an artist. He claims that late 19th artists cannot secure their place in history by painting someone's else present. He does not shy away from talking or discussing shocking or disturbing things, rather his content seems to be designed to upset. He also talks about boredom, weariness and the terms like weariness can't be better explained without citing the example of World War period. The war which created horrifying pictures in front of people, these wars caused widespread destruction, killing etc. Apart from all these there was a big shock for Britain and with its decline America emerged as the superpower, this theory of rise and fall is quite natural and eternal, if sun rises in the morning then it will definitely set in the evening.

Britain economy started declining because colonies were moving out from their hand, nature of this period is very transient and after 1950s new period came i. e. 'post modernism'. The chief characteristic of modernism proves the statement of Charles Baudelaire regarding modernism.

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Literature of the modern period has salient features like non-linearity, free verse, poets of this age were writing in free verse and they ignored the traditional meters like iambic, they chose free verse to express their feelings correctly and don't want to hide emotions using rhymed words, non-linearity in their poetry showed that everything is mixed up without any kind of proper beginning middle or end, pessimism can be clearly seen in the writings of this period. Lionel Trilling defines modernity "Disenchantment of our culture with culture itself".

Conclusion

In this period new laws were framed for Women's universal suffrage for women '1928. Also there was various kind of literary group existing in this period like Aesthetic, Georgian poets, war poets, imagist movement etc. Famous writers and their literary works include Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, Virginia Woolf's To The Light House and Orlando, D.H Lawrence 's sons and Lover in which he talked about concept of Oedipus complex, T. S Eliot who wrote famous poems like Waste land and Ash Wednesday, war poets like W. H Auden, W. B Yeats etc.

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