

Experimentation in modern Literature

Experimentation in literature means the use of new techniques and forms in literature. It is caused by the writer's search for devices that would enable him to solve the breakdown of a public sense and tackle the problems of the age.

Factors Leading to Experimentation in Literature

- 1- The breakdown of the public backgrounds of belief.
- 2- The terrifying *weapons* of the First and Second World Wars.
- 3- A number of new intellectual theories.

Modernism: All these generated a new attitude towards life, a sense of disordered and fragmented reality which motivated or forced the authors to find new values and systems of faith. As a result the twentieth century had to explore for new experimental methods rendering life in literature. It was humming with new ideas in art and literature. These new ideas can best be categorized under the heading “modernism”. The writers used the modernist techniques in quite an individual way. Modernism involves the rejection of traditional forms. It is experimental by nature. It includes the many techniques like the use of stream of consciousness, the use of mythical allusion and poetic images that challenged the traditional literary notions and beliefs.

Experimentation in Modern Novel

In all three forms or fields (poetry, drama and novel) experimenters were evolving new forms to sustain the new demands being made upon them. But the 20th century has seen a great amount of experimentalist activity in the field of modern novel.

Modern Experiments

The novel in the 18th century and 19th century was enriched in a social world. But some of the 20th century novelists have drawn novel from the public arena. Novelists as Henry James and Virginia Woolf have given wider space to novel and have made experiments in regard to matter and manner of novel.

Modernism reveals a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at man's position and function in the universe and many experiments in form and style. It is particularly concerned with **language** and how to use it.

There has been a shift from a **narrative mode** to a symbolic mode or an ironic mode. Novel was defined as “personal, a direct impression of life”. Novel is regarded primarily as an art form to be judged solely artistic canons concerned, not with moral purpose.

Elements of Novel: The old concepts as plot, character, theme, point of view and language perceived a blow by modern novelists. As innovators they did not care for a well-knit plot. There is no logical arrangement of events. Their novels are formless and without pattern because life itself is chaotic, confusing and incomplete. For some of them there is no plot, no character, no tragedy, no comedy and no love as in traditional novel.

The concept of reality was changed. The reality lies not in the outer action, but in the inner working of human mind. The modern novelists used a psychological technique. They did not portray passion and action and uphold no social and moral belief. The novels impress not for their realism, but for their sensibility.