

1. Modernist movements in writing and theater were closely allied with those of other arts.
2. More than a movement of a single era, it became a way of representing the world through art.
3. Twentieth-century artists felt the need either to react against modernism or build on its innovations.

I. Influences of Asia on Modern European Theater

A. Antonin Artaud (1896–1948)

1. Psychological and naturalistic plays that depend on language and everyday situations for their effect were NOT what Artaud thought theater should be about.
2. He believed theater should engage the body and spirit through dramatic staging and visual effects which he called “a theater of cruelty.”
3. The author and script would be secondary to the director and the staging under Artaud’s framework.
4. A performance by a company of Balinese dancers he observed had a profound effect on Artaud.
5. The dancers’ physical language of ceremony with its rich language of metaphysical and religious significance suggested to Artaud that Western dance had become unduly limited.

B. Bertolt Brecht (1895–1956)

1. Brecht was a seminal dramatic theorist as well as an influential author and director from the 1930s to the 1950s.
2. He was associated with the expressionist cultural movement in Germany during the 1930s and eventually became involved with Marxist and other leftist political movements.
3. Brecht was influenced by encounters with Chinese theater which informed his aesthetic of drama.
4. He believed theater should narrate rather than embody the drama and that actors should show their characters rather than become their characters.
5. Artaud believed Western theater could be enlarged and revitalized through contact with the East.
6. He put his theory into practice successfully with works such as *The Three Penny Opera*, *Galileo* and *The Good Woman of Sun Setzuan*.

II. Modernist Movements in Fiction and Poetry

1. The romantic notion of writers as outcasts seemed to take on a new meaning after World War I.

A. A Literature of Exiles

1. Most of the great modernist writers lived at one time or another in Paris.
2. These modernists not only included Europeans from Italy, Germany, and throughout Europe but also Africans from the French African colonies.
3. American expatriates were a vital part of the Paris literary scene—Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Pound, Baldwin, Wright, and others.

4. Gertrude Stein, who was influential in the career of Picasso and other artists, was the person who coined the phrase “The Lost Generation” to describe the American literary expatriates.
- B. Exploration of the Unconscious and Technical Experimentation
1. The modernist had a strong belief in the transformative power of art.
 2. Art was viewed as a form of salvation in the midst of a cultural breakdown and decline.
 3. Freud’s discovery of the unconscious had immediate and pronounced implications for art and culture, particularly in literature.
- C. The Modernist Novel
1. The most important work in artistically rendering psychological states was done by novelists.
 2. Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, and Virginia Woolf experimented with the interior time to convey the inner reality of their characters.
 3. Faulkner used extremely long and ungrammatical sentences to convey an inner reality below the surface of appearance.
 4. Joyce used the techniques of interior monologue and stream of consciousness in dramatizing the unconscious facets of the mind.
- D. Virginia Woolf and Modern Feminism
1. In addition to her influential work as a novelist, Woolf was profoundly interested in the feminist movement, which had been an organized form in England for over 50 years.
 2. Her widely read feminist work, *A Room of One’s Own*, asserts that economic independence and equal opportunity were more important than the right to vote.
 3. In a section of the book called “Shakespeare’s sister,” Woolf speculates as to the likely fate of a woman in Shakespeare’s time with a talent for writing plays.
- E. Poetry of the City and the Theme of Spiritual Emptiness: T. S. Eliot (1888–1965)
1. The erosion of traditional religious faith and the devastation of World War I led to a world-weariness that pervades much of modernist writing.
 2. Eliot’s poem, *The Waste Land*, portrays the spiritual desolation of a modern city.
 3. His *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* describes an overcivilized man in an overcivilized society unable to think, act, or even feel.
- F. Imagist Poetry and the Influence of China and Japan: Ezra Pound (1885–1972)
1. Pound too was an American expatriate in Europe affected by the cultural chaos of World War I.
 2. His poem *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly* combines classical references with sometimes vulgar language.
 3. It juxtaposes the disillusionment arising from World War I and the modern age with the sense of beauty in classical European culture.
 4. Pound was deeply interested in the aesthetics and techniques of both Chinese and Japanese poetry.
 5. In the *Cantos*, Pound sets Confucian China as a model of salvation for the West.

III. Surrealism

1. Paris was an artistic mecca for artists of all types up until World War II.

2. It was a particularly important artistic hub for *surrealism*.
3. Surrealists were deeply influenced by Freud and sought to tap into a reality in the depths of the psyche.
4. André Breton, the leader of the group, advocated a form of “automatic writing” that would be unhampered by the socially conditioned conscious mind.

IV. Négritude

1. The term *négritude*, first coined by Aimé Césaire from the Caribbean island of Martinique, referred to an attempt to define and celebrate the specific political and cultural identity of black people.
2. Césaire’s autobiographical work, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, deals with the devastating effect of slavery and colonization on people of African descent.
3. The members of the *négritude* movement were deeply influenced by surrealism.
4. Many became involved in the anticolonialist movements in their countries.

V. The Harlem Renaissance

1. Another influence on the poets of *négritude* was African-American poets such as Langston Hughes (1902–1967) and others.
2. The political and artistic outpouring of African Americans, centered in the Harlem section of New York City, became known as the “Harlem Renaissance.”
3. The Harlem Renaissance had its origins in the political New Negro movement which sought political equality and to celebrate black identity and achievement
4. The New Negro movement helped create a context for African-American artists in music, literature, art, and other forms of cultural expression to forge a single artistic movement.

VI. Developments in Latin-American Literature

1. Three types of writers flourished in the Latin-American modernist period.
2. Some of those who sought inspiration and aesthetic values purely from indigenous sources were Mariano Azuela, Ciro Alegria, and José Lins do Rego.
3. The second group were cosmopolitan writers such as Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) who saw themselves as part of a larger world literary scene.
4. A third group, which combined indigenous American themes with avant-garde

techniques, includes two Nobel laureates—
Miguel Angel Asturias (1899–1974) and
Pablo Neruda (1904–1973).