

AMERICAN LITERATURE AFTER THE WORLD WAR II

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ABSTRACT: *In this article, we will discuss how the war affected American life and how the country developed during and after World War II. After World War II, American literature featured many important developments and changes. The war had a deep impact on American society and culture, and this was also reflected in literature time. Post-World War II American literature is characterized by a variety of themes and styles. An artist who rejected mainstream American culture and sought new forms of expression. World War II gave a new direction to the development of literature in the United States. The most important unwritten rule during the War was that “all activities not related to war must be postponed.”*

Keywords: *War II, American literature, education, life, film industry, art, professors, canon, freedom.*

Introduction

The period after World War II was marked by a sense of disillusionment in American literature. and skepticism towards traditional values and institutions. The trauma and devastation of war It had a profound impact on the American collective psyche, and this was reflected in literature. time. One of the most important literary movements of the postwar period was the Beat A generation that appeared in the 1950s. Beat writers rejected mainstream values; I admired nonconformity, willingness to experiment, and spontaneity. Her works often dealt with themes such as: Alienation, self-discovery, and the search for meaning in a world that seemed meaningless. celebrity Beat Writers associated with his generation include Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs. Another important postwar literary movement was the confessional poetry movement.

Modern education and development

From the late 1950s he was created in the early 1960s. This movement was shaped by poets. I have written deeply personal and often autobiographical works that explore themes of love, loss, and... mental illness. Sylvia is one of the prominent poets of the confessional poetry movement Plath, Robert Lowell, and Anne Sexton. In addition to these movements, there were also a number of writers who addressed the effects of war. American society and culture. For example, Joseph Hellerland satirized the absurdity of war in his "Catch-22." Kurt Vonnegand investigated the psychology of the Slaughterhouse-Five. The trauma of war and the nature of time. Overall, this era in American literature was post-World War II. It is characterized by a rejection of traditional values and institutions, a focus on individual experience and self-expression, and an examination of the effects of war on individuals and society.

War II was influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by the postwar Cold War political climate. But what may surprise many is that literature and culture were one of the aspects of American life most affected by the Cold War. However, this fact is not that surprising. The Cold War was a culture war, and the United States' main goal in the Cold War was to convince the world that the American way of life was better than the Soviet way of life. One of the key strategies in these efforts was a multifaceted attempt to demonstrate that Western (especially American) art and literature was more complex and sophisticated than Soviet art and literature.

The problem with this undertaking, of course, was that the US had never before the Cold War placed much importance on art and literature, but instead saw itself as a practical, functional nation capable of solving material problems (and defeat). enemies) with science, technology, hard work and ingenuity. Art and literature, on the other hand, were usually treated as marginal luxuries in American society. Because of the Cold War, the increased emphasis on art and literature in the United States led not only to an increase in literary and artistic production (often supported by US government grants), but also to a greater emphasis on education. arts and humanities. This emphasis caused, among other

things, a sharp increase in American universities in these fields and caused a severe shortage of personnel in humanities throughout the United States. It takes several years to train a new professor, so it was not an easy promotion. employment American universities had to find new and more effective ways of teaching literature, for example by training new professors, increasing classes, and so that many of them could be taught by graduate students who were not yet fully qualified professors.

The solution to this situation is the so-called innovative formalist style of criticism, which focuses on the literary qualities of the text and rejects any interest in the relationship between the text and the historical world outside literature. brought about by the emergence of New Criticism. The ascendancy of New Criticism in American universities made it easier to teach literature by allowing it to be studied at a relatively low level of knowledge, but it ultimately did great damage to American education as a whole. It's an educational project designed to circumvent the need for knowledge, and it's clearly problematic. However, the New Criticism's intense emphasis on literary complexity had other consequences, such as legitimizing a once marginal modernity as the epitome of high literary culture.

The establishment of modernism at the center of the Western canon was part of an overall revision of the canon that had already begun before the Cold War, but was greatly accelerated by the new geopolitical circumstances of the postwar period. An important figure here is his F. O. Matthiessen (1902-1950). Although his idiosyncratic criticism of the 1930s and his 1940s made it impossible to describe him simply as a participant in a particular movement, his work was widely recognized in the American literary world in the 1950s. was widely adopted. We were forced to move relentlessly toward conformity. In line with his own call for a synthesis of "fact and theory," or closer engagement by American intellectuals with the material realities of everyday American life, Matthiessen combined neo-critical aesthetics with seemingly left-wing politics. paradoxically combined. His reading of Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne, and Melville

led to a complete reformulation of the canon of antebellum American literature. This canon survived the 1950s and remains largely intact today after years of radical "canon busting." Indeed, one of the ironies in the history of modern American literary criticism is that Matthiessen introduced these five of his writers, who have since become central to the American canon, in an anticanonical spirit. In particular, he consistently portrays the great American writer as a dissident figure who challenges the status quo in ways that he himself considers important to democracy. Nevertheless, the same figure was adopted for inclusion in the American Cold War canon, supplemented by modernist figures such as T.S., Eliot, Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner. I did. Irish writers James Joyce and W. B. Yeats and the British writers Joseph Conrad and E.M. Forster suddenly assumed central positions in the entire Western canon.

This canon was then presented as proof of the superiority of the Western bloc over the Soviet bloc, in the same way that the British justified their imperial expansion in the late 19th century with a declaration of British cultural superiority (Shakespeare being a leading example). This new canon, in turn, encouraged new writers to follow many of the same formal strategies used by the modernists, who later played a key role in the rise of postmodernism, which became particularly prominent in the 1970s. But in the long 1950s, amid these proclamations of American literary achievement, American writers struggled to find an authentic voice that would work in harmony with the new canon (and the new criticism). For example, Mickey Spillane (1918-2006) was a best-selling author of the long 1950s, whose crime novels presented a sadistic, misogynistic protagonist and whose works were almost completely devoid of the literary flourishes appreciated by the new critics. On the other hand, Jim Thompson (1906-1977), the crime writer of the 1950s who finally achieved the most critical respect, worked in obscurity for a decade with novels like *The Killer Inside Me* (1952) and *Wild Night*. (1953) are so dark and so strange that they were not appreciated until many years later.

Modern education and development

Meanwhile, the surviving modernists—such as Faulkner and Hemingway—did not produce much of real merit in the 1950s, while the novel of the 1950s that later achieved the most critical respect was Vladimir Nabokov's (1899) *Lolita* (1955). -1977), more of the great European the style of the modernists. Unfortunately, it also dealt with gender issues that made it very problematic in the 1950s (and would raise questions again in the era). Furthermore, "Lolita" was written by a Russian émigré who fled back to Europe at the first economic opportunity, clearly fleeing American vulgarity, making her not an ideal candidate to demonstrate American cultural superiority. Of course, Lolita Humbert Humbert is a notoriously unreliable narrator, so it's hard to say for sure what's really going on in this text—which is one of the things that makes it so modernist. Meanwhile, another great modernist American novel of the 1950s, *The Invisible Man* (1952) by Ralph Ellison (1952), is appropriately anti-communist but also sharply indicting American racism; Thus, it was difficult to gain attention in the Cold War atmosphere of the 1950s, because it hardly indicates the superiority of American democracy.

The long 1950s was a relatively rich time in American acting, and some of the most famous American actors did important work during this period. But the drama was again somewhat at odds with the Cold War project of showing the superiority of the American way. For example, the most important play of the decade was probably *The Crucible* (1953) by Arthur Miller (1915-2005), which deals with the Salem witch trials quite transparently as an analogue to the anti-communist paranoia of the 1950s. Finally, the literature most identified with the late 1950s is the work of the so-called Beat Generation, a group of writers and poets whose works collectively rejected the conservative morality of the decade in favor of individual research. for spiritual and material freedom. That freedom often involved drugs and sex, and the Beats were important pioneers of the hippie counterculture of the 1960s. Although the original Beats met at New York's Columbia University in the mid-1940s, the group later became most associated with San Francisco, where most participants gathered in the 1950s (and which

was also an important birthplace of hippie culture). San Francisco actually functioned as a center of poetic activity during this period, as several others joined the Beats in the city during the so-called San Francisco Renaissance, founded by poet Kenneth Rexroth (1905-1982). The phenomenon functioned as part of a larger cultural shift in which California-long the home of the film industry but otherwise secondary to New York as America's cultural center-took on new meaning.

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