# MODERN HUMANITIES (TURNBULL AND RICCIARDI)

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# Modern Humanities (Turnbull and Ricciardi)

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# Licensing

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# 1: BIRTH OF MODERNISM AND THE MODERN WORLD (1900-1920's)

CHAPTER 1: BIRTH OF MODERNISM AND THE MODERN WORLD (1900-1920'S)

Umberto Boccioni, *The Street Pavers*, 1914. Oil on Canvas. CC0.

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# 1.1: Modernism

1.1 Modernism

WHAT IS MODERNISM?

People use the term “modern” in a variety of ways, often very loosely, with a lot of implied associations of new, contemporary, up-to-date, and technological. We know the difference between a modern society and one that remains tied to the past and it usually has less to do with art and more to do with technology and industrial progress, things like indoor plumbing, easy access to consumer goods, freedom of expression, and voting rights. In the 19th century, however, modernity and its connection with art had certain specific associations that people began recognizing and using as barometers to distinguish themselves and their culture from earlier nineteenth century ways and attitudes.

In Western culture the term ***modernism*** has several meanings. This movement began in the late 19th century and reached its peak in the period between 1910 and 1930. It tried to redefine various artforms in a radical manner. Leading lights within the literary wing of this movement include Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, Marcel Proust, Gertrude Stein, Wyndham Lewis, H.D, Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams and Franz Kafka. Composers such as Schoenberg and Stravinsky represent modernism in music. Artists such as Picasso, Matisse, Mondrian and the Surrealists represent the visual arts, while architects and designers such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe brought modernist ideas into everyday urban life.

Modernism centers on its rejection of tradition. It emphasizes the return of the arts to their fundamental characteristics, as though beginning from scratch. This dismissal of tradition also involved the rejection of conventional expectations. Hence modernism often stresses freedom of expression, experimentation, radicalism and even primitivism. In many art forms this often meant startling and alienating audiences with bizarre and unpredictable effects. Hence the strange and disturbing combinations of motifs in Surrealism, or the use of extreme dissonance in modernist music. In literature this often involved the rejection of intelligible plots or characterization in novels, or the creation of poetry that defied clear interpretation.

Many modernists believed that by rejecting tradition they could discover radically new ways of making art. Schoenberg believed that by ignoring harmony (the relationship between consonance and dissonance) he had discovered a wholly new way of organizing sound, based in the use of twelve-note rows. This became known as serial music. Abstract artists began with the assumption that color and shape formed the essential characteristics of art, not the depiction of the natural world. Kandinsky, Mondrian and Malevich all believed in redefining art as the arrangement of pure color. The use of photography, which had rendered much of the representational function of visual art obsolete, strongly affected this particular aspect of modernism. However, these artists also believed that by rejecting the depiction of material objects they helped art move from a materialist to a spiritualist phase of development.

Ezra Pound’s maxim, ‘Make it new’ (‘Canto LIII’) is often quoted as a succinct summary of modernism. What’s most inspirational about modernism, in my view, is its determination to question the basic assumptions of our lives, and art’s relation to them. Everything is up for grabs—from how we think, to what kind of world we should live in, from the impact of new technologies, to what kind of role the artist should play in contemporary life. Reading such literature is invigorating and challenging and, sometimes, difficult. But how could such profound questioning be easy?

This is not to say that modernist literature is inaccessible, as its reputation can suggest. There is no ideal reader of *The Waste Land* or *Ulysses*, who understands all T.S. Eliot’s or James Joyce’s allusions—and there never was such an ideal reader. If you think about it, we read all literature, understand all language, only partially: we miss references, we fail to understand ironies in every conversation. Modernist literature often foregrounds the limitations of language as a form of communication: many of its protagonists puzzle over how best to express themselves: think of Eliot’s Prufrock in ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’, Joyce’s Stephen in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Dorothy Richardson’s Miriam in *Pilgrimage* or Virginia Woolf’s Bernard in *The Waves*. In examining this problem, modernist writers are not only reflecting on their own struggle to produce a compelling work of art, but examining how effectively language mediates our social and political experiences.

But what is ‘modernism’? It’s a term that can only, really, mean up-to-dateness, yet when we use it to talk about literature in English, we usually mean a movement, or a period, that is in the past. If you take a course on modernist literature at school or university, you’ll probably be studying writers who began their careers between 1908 and 1930—such as those I’ve mentioned so

far. Not everyone would agree that modernism is an early twentieth-century movement, though: there are certainly contemporary writers who would define themselves as modernist or 'neo-modernist'.

If modernism can't be securely tied to a period, can it be defined as a style? Works by the writers associated most strongly with modernism—T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, for example—do seem to share some common features: a preoccupation with the city, rather than the country, a focus on the interior life of characters and speakers, and, as I've already suggested, an interest in experimenting with new ways of using language and literary forms. But these features are hardly consistent across all the works typically termed 'modernist'—little of W.B. Yeats's poetry is about the city, for example, few of D.H. Lawrence's novels foreground experiments with narrative form. Moreover, 'modernism' was not a term these writers used to describe their own writing: it only began to come into currency in the late 1920s, when it was influentially used in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927) by the poets Laura Riding and Robert Graves.

In other words, 'modernism' is a term that says more about the twentieth and twenty-first century's desire to categorize and prioritize certain kinds of writing, than about the literature itself. It's a kind of advertising ploy, reinforcing values that influential poets and critics have wanted to associate with their own work and work they admired—T.S. Eliot, for example, made a powerful claim for 'impersonality' as a feature of good contemporary poetry in his famous essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), which led to some very strained readings of modernist works, like Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, which contain plenty of autobiography and 'personality'.

Interestingly, and by no means accidentally, the term 'modernism' has more currency now than ever before, with ever increasing numbers of books using 'modernism' in their title, at the very same time that critics are more skeptical about its use. Some of the most interesting research in the field of early twentieth-century literature is breaking down the boundaries between writers traditionally thought of as modernist and those that have been kept out of the modernist canon. One way this has been done is through study of early twentieth-century literary journals, which shows which writers were being published together and how they were read. Have a look at Faith Binckes' essay on this site (to follow), which has more to say on this subject, and you can read facsimiles of early twentieth-century journals yourself on-line at the websites of the 'Modernist Magazines Project', based at De Montfort University, and the 'Modernist Journals Project', based at Brown University and the University of Tulsa. Looking through these journals is a fascinating way of thinking about how 'modern' the writers we now call Modernist looked, and a way of finding some 'Great Writers' history has unjustly forgotten.

Almost all of the many avant garde art movements of the high modernist period of the early 20th century included photographers among their members. Photographic images are among the icons of many of these movements, and the medium of photography, as separate from the wider arts scene, produced several modernist movements as well. So, we will consider photography both in relation to the other arts, and on its own terms. Theorization of modernism has often privileged photography as a medium, and this course will explore both photographic images and the critical/historical construction of modernism in terms of photography.

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# 1.2: War and Revolution

1.2 War & Revolution

War World I

Image 1.1

Unlike his immediate predecessors, President Woodrow Wilson had planned to shrink the role of the United States in foreign affairs. He believed that the nation needed to intervene in international events only when there was a moral imperative to do so. But as Europe's political situation grew dire, it became increasingly difficult for Wilson to insist that the conflict growing overseas was not America's responsibility. Germany's war tactics struck most observers as morally reprehensible, while also putting American free trade with the Entente at risk. Despite campaign promises and diplomatic efforts, Wilson could only postpone American involvement in the war.

WOODROW WILSON'S EARLY EFFORTS AT FOREIGN POLICY

When Woodrow Wilson took over the White House in March 1913, he promised a less expansionist approach to American foreign policy than Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft had pursued. Wilson did share the commonly held view that American values were superior to those of the rest of the world, that democracy was the best system to promote peace and stability, and that the United States should continue to actively pursue economic markets abroad. But he proposed an idealistic foreign policy based on morality, rather than American self-interest, and felt that American interference in another nation's affairs should occur only when the circumstances rose to the level of a moral imperative.

Wilson appointed former presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, a noted anti-imperialist and proponent of world peace, as his Secretary of State. Bryan undertook his new assignment with great vigor, encouraging nations around the world to sign "cooling off treaties," under which they agreed to resolve international disputes through talks, not war, and to submit any grievances to an international commission. Bryan also negotiated friendly relations with Colombia, including a $25 million apology for Roosevelt's actions during the Panamanian Revolution, and worked to establish effective self-government in the Philippines in preparation for the eventual American withdrawal. Even with Bryan's support, however, Wilson found that it was much harder than he anticipated to keep the United States out of world affairs (Image 1.1). In reality, the United States was interventionist in areas where its interests—direct or indirect—were threatened.

Image 1.2 While Wilson strove to be less of an interventionist, he found that to be more difficult in practice than in theory. Here, a political cartoon depicts him as a rather hapless cowboy, unclear on how to harness a foreign challenge, in this case, Mexico.

Wilson's greatest break from his predecessors occurred in Asia, where he abandoned Taft's "dollar diplomacy," a foreign policy that essentially used the power of U.S. economic dominance as a threat to gain favorable terms. Instead, Wilson revived diplomatic efforts to keep Japanese interference there at a minimum. But as World War I, also known as the Great War, began to unfold, and European nations largely abandoned their imperialistic interests in order to marshal their forces for self-defense, Japan demanded that China succumb to a Japanese protectorate over their entire nation. In 1917, William Jennings Bryan's successor as Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, signed the Lansing-Ishii Agreement, which recognized Japanese control over the Manchurian region of China in exchange for Japan's promise not to exploit the war to gain a greater foothold in the rest of the country.

Furthering his goal of reducing overseas interventions, Wilson had promised not to rely on the Roosevelt Corollary, Theodore Roosevelt's explicit policy that the United States could involve itself in Latin American politics whenever it felt that the countries in the Western Hemisphere needed policing. Once president, however, Wilson again found that it was more difficult to avoid American interventionism in practice than in rhetoric. Indeed, Wilson intervened more in Western Hemisphere affairs than either Taft or Roosevelt. In 1915, when a revolution in Haiti resulted in the murder of the Haitian president and threatened the safety of New York banking interests in the country, Wilson sent over three hundred U.S. Marines to establish order. Subsequently, the United States assumed control over the island's foreign policy as well as its financial administration. One year later, in 1916, Wilson again sent marines to Hispaniola, this time to the Dominican Republic, to ensure prompt payment of a debt that nation owed. In 1917, Wilson sent troops to Cuba to protect American-owned sugar plantations from attacks by Cuban rebels; this time, the troops remained for four years.

Wilson's most noted foreign policy foray prior to World War I focused on Mexico, where rebel general Victoriano Huerta had seized control from a previous rebel government just weeks before Wilson's inauguration. Wilson refused to recognize Huerta's government, instead choosing to make an example of Mexico by demanding that they hold democratic elections and establish laws based on the moral principles he espoused. Officially, Wilson supported Venustiano Carranza, who opposed Huerta's military control of the country. When American intelligence learned of a German ship allegedly preparing to deliver weapons to Huerta's forces, Wilson ordered the U.S. Navy to land forces at Veracruz to stop the shipment.

On April 22, 1914, a fight erupted between the U.S. Navy and Mexican troops, resulting in nearly 150 deaths, nineteen of them American. Although Carranza's faction managed to overthrow Huerta in the summer of 1914, most Mexicans—including Carranza

—had come to resent American intervention in their affairs. Carranza refused to work with Wilson and the U.S. government, and instead threatened to defend Mexico's mineral rights against all American oil companies established there. Wilson then turned to support rebel forces who opposed Carranza, most notably Pancho Villa (Image 1.3). However, Villa lacked the strength in number or weapons to overtake Carranza; in 1915, Wilson reluctantly authorized official U.S. recognition of Carranza's government.

Image 1.3 Pancho Villa, a Mexican rebel who Wilson supported, then ultimately turned from, attempted an attack on the United States in retaliation. Wilson's actions in Mexico were emblematic of how difficult it was to truly set the United States on a course of moral leadership.

As a postscript, an irate Pancho Villa turned against Wilson, and on March 9, 1916, led a fifteen-hundred-man force across the border into New Mexico, where they attacked and burned the town of Columbus. Over one hundred people died in the attack, seventeen of them American. Wilson responded by sending General John Pershing into Mexico to capture Villa and return him to the United States for trial. With over eleven thousand troops at his disposal, Pershing marched three hundred miles into Mexico before an angry Carranza ordered U.S. troops to withdraw from the nation. Although reelected in 1916, Wilson reluctantly ordered the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Mexico in 1917, avoiding war with Mexico and enabling preparations for American intervention in Europe. Again, as in China, Wilson's attempt to impose a moral foreign policy had failed in light of economic and political realities.

WAR ERUPTS IN EUROPE

When a Serbian nationalist murdered the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungarian Empire on June 28, 1914, the underlying forces that led to World War I had already long been in motion and seemed, at first, to have little to do with the United States. At the time, the events that pushed Europe from ongoing tensions into war seemed very far away from U.S. interests. For nearly a century, nations had negotiated a series of mutual defense alliance treaties to secure themselves against their imperialistic rivals. Among the largest European powers, the Triple Entente included an alliance of France, Great Britain, and Russia. Opposite them, the Central powers, also known as the Triple Alliance, included Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and initially Italy. A series of "side treaties" likewise entangled the larger European powers to protect several smaller ones should war break out.

At the same time that European nations committed each other to defense pacts, they jockeyed for power over empires overseas and invested heavily in large, modern militaries. Dreams of empire and military supremacy fueled an era of nationalism that was particularly pronounced in the newer nations of Germany and Italy, but also provoked separatist movements among Europeans. The Irish rose up in rebellion against British rule, for example. And in Bosnia's capital of Sarajevo, Gavrilo Princip and his accomplices assassinated the Austro-Hungarian archduke in their fight for a pan-Slavic nation. Thus, when Serbia failed to accede to Austro-Hungarian demands in the wake of the archduke's murder, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia with the confidence that it had the backing of Germany. This action, in turn, brought Russia into the conflict, due to a treaty in which they had agreed to defend Serbia. Germany followed suit by declaring war on Russia, fearing that Russia and France would seize this opportunity to move on Germany if it did not take the offensive. The eventual German invasion of Belgium drew Great Britain into the war, followed by the attack of the Ottoman Empire on Russia. By the end of August 1914, it seemed as if Europe had dragged the entire world into war.

The Great War was unlike any war that came before it. Whereas in previous European conflicts, troops typically faced each other on open battlefields, World War I saw new military technologies that turned war into a conflict of prolonged trench warfare. Both

sides used new artillery, tanks, airplanes, machine guns, barbed wire, and, eventually, poison gas: weapons that strengthened defenses and turned each military offense into barbarous sacrifices of thousands of lives with minimal territorial advances in return. By the end of the war, the total military death toll was ten million, as well as another million civilian deaths attributed to military action, and another six million civilian deaths caused by famine, disease, or other related factors.

One terrifying new piece of technological warfare was the German unterseeboot—an “undersea boat” or U-boat. By early 1915, in an effort to break the British naval blockade of Germany and turn the tide of the war, the Germans dispatched a fleet of these submarines around Great Britain to attack both merchant and military ships. The U-boats acted in direct violation of international law, attacking without warning from beneath the water instead of surfacing and permitting the surrender of civilians or crew. By 1918, German U-boats had sunk nearly five thousand vessels. Of greatest historical note was the attack on the British passenger ship, RMS Lusitania, on its way from New York to Liverpool on May 7, 1915. The German Embassy in the United States had announced that this ship would be subject to attack for its cargo of ammunition: an allegation that later proved accurate. Nonetheless, almost 1,200 civilians died in the attack, including 128 Americans. The attack horrified the world, galvanizing support in England and beyond for the war (Image 1.4). This attack, more than any other event, would test President Wilson’s desire to stay out of what had been a largely European conflict.

(a) (b)

Image 1.4 The torpedoing and sinking of the Lusitania, depicted in the English drawing above (a), resulted in the death over twelve hundred civilians and was an international incident that shifted American sentiment as to their potential role in the war, as illustrated in a British recruiting poster (b).

THE CHALLENGE OF NEUTRALITY

Despite the loss of American lives on the Lusitania, President Wilson stuck to his path of **neutrality** in Europe’s escalating war: in part out of moral principle, in part as a matter of practical necessity, and in part for political reasons. Few Americans wished to participate in the devastating battles that ravaged Europe, and Wilson did not want to risk losing his reelection by ordering an unpopular military intervention. Wilson’s “neutrality” did not mean isolation from all warring factions, but rather open markets for the United States and continued commercial ties with all belligerents. For Wilson, the conflict did not reach the threshold of a moral imperative for U.S. involvement; it was largely a European affair involving numerous countries with whom the United States wished to maintain working relations. In his message to Congress in 1914, the president noted that “Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned.”

Wilson understood that he was already looking at a difficult reelection bid. He had only won the 1912 election with 42 percent of the popular vote, and likely would not have been elected at all had Roosevelt not come back as a third-party candidate to run against his former protégée Taft. Wilson felt pressure from all different political constituents to take a position on the war, yet he knew that elections were seldom won with a campaign promise of “If elected, I will send your sons to war!” Facing pressure from some businessmen and other government officials who felt that the protection of America’s best interests required a stronger position in defense of the Allied forces, Wilson agreed to a “preparedness campaign” in the year prior to the election. This campaign included the passage of the National Defense Act of 1916, which more than doubled the size of the army to nearly

225,000, and the Naval Appropriations Act of 1916, which called for the expansion of the U.S. fleet, including battleships, destroyers, submarines, and other ships.

As the 1916 election approached, the Republican Party hoped to capitalize on the fact that Wilson was making promises that he would not be able to keep. They nominated Charles Evans Hughes, a former governor of New York and sitting U.S. Supreme Court justice at the time of his nomination. Hughes focused his campaign on what he considered Wilson's foreign policy failures, but even as he did so, he himself tried to walk a fine line between neutrality and belligerence, depending on his audience. In contrast, Wilson and the Democrats capitalized on neutrality and campaigned under the slogan "Wilson—he kept us out of war." The election itself remained too close to call on election night. Only when a tight race in California was decided two days later could Wilson claim victory in his reelection bid, again with less than 50 percent of the popular vote. Despite his victory based upon a policy of neutrality, Wilson would find true neutrality a difficult challenge. Several different factors pushed Wilson, however reluctantly, toward the inevitability of American involvement.

A key factor driving U.S. engagement was economics. Great Britain was the country's most important trading partner, and the Allies as a whole relied heavily on American imports from the earliest days of the war forward. Specifically, the value of all exports to the Allies quadrupled from $750 million to $3 billion in the first two years of the war. At the same time, the British naval blockade meant that exports to Germany all but ended, dropping from $350 million to $30 million. Likewise, numerous private banks in the United States made extensive loans—in excess of $500 million—to England. J. P. Morgan's banking interests were among the largest lenders, due to his family's connection to the country.

Another key factor complicating the decision to go to war was the deep ethnic divisions between native-born Americans and more recent immigrants. For those of Anglo-Saxon descent, the nation's historic and ongoing relationship with Great Britain was paramount, but many Irish-Americans resented British rule over their place of birth and opposed support for the world's most expansive empire. Millions of Jewish immigrants had fled anti-Semitic pogroms in Tsarist Russia and would have supported any nation fighting that authoritarian state. German Americans saw their nation of origin as a victim of British and Russian aggression and a French desire to settle old scores, whereas emigrants from Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire were mixed in their sympathies for the old monarchies or ethnic communities that these empires suppressed. For interventionists, this lack of support for Great Britain and its allies among recent immigrants only strengthened their conviction.

Germany's use of submarine warfare also played a role in challenging U.S. neutrality. After the sinking of the Lusitania, and the subsequent August 30 sinking of another British liner, the Arabic, Germany had promised to restrict their use of submarine warfare. Specifically, they promised to surface and visually identify any ship before they fired, as well as permit civilians to evacuate targeted ships. Instead, in February 1917, Germany intensified their use of submarines in an effort to end the war quickly before Great Britain's naval blockade starved them out of food and supplies.

The German high command wanted to continue unrestricted warfare on all Atlantic traffic, including unarmed American freighters, in order to cripple the British economy and secure a quick and decisive victory. Their goal: to bring an end to the war before the United States could intervene and tip the balance in this grueling war of attrition. In February 1917, a German U-boat sank the American merchant ship, the Laconia, killing two passengers, and, in late March, quickly sunk four more American ships. These attacks increased pressure on Wilson from all sides, as government officials, the general public, and both Democrats and Republicans urged him to declare war.

The final element that led to American involvement in World War I was the so-called **Zimmermann telegram**. British intelligence intercepted and decoded a top-secret telegram from German foreign minister Arthur Zimmermann to the German ambassador to Mexico, instructing the latter to invite Mexico to join the war effort on the German side, should the United States declare war on Germany. It further went on to encourage Mexico to invade the United States if such a declaration came to pass, as Mexico's invasion would create a diversion and permit Germany a clear path to victory. In exchange, Zimmermann offered to return to Mexico land that was previously lost to the United States in the Mexican-American War, including Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas (Image 1.5).

(a) (b)

Image 1.5 “The Temptation,” which appeared in the Dallas Morning News on March 2, 1917, shows Germany as the Devil, tempting Mexico to join their war effort against the United States in exchange for the return of land formerly belonging to Mexico. The prospect of such a move made it all but impossible for Wilson to avoid war. (credit: Library of Congress)

The likelihood that Mexico, weakened and torn by its own revolution and civil war, could wage war against the United States and recover territory lost in the Mexican-American war with Germany’s help was remote at best. But combined with Germany’s unrestricted use of submarine warfare and the sinking of American ships, the Zimmermann telegram made a powerful argument for a declaration of war. The outbreak of the Russian Revolution in February and abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in March raised the prospect of democracy in the Eurasian empire and removed an important moral objection to entering the war on the side of the Allies. On April 2, 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. Congress debated for four days, and several senators and congressmen expressed their concerns that the war was being fought over U.S. economic interests more than strategic need or democratic ideals. When Congress voted on April 6, fifty-six voted against the resolution, including the first woman ever elected to Congress, Representative Jeannette Rankin. This was the largest “no” vote against a war resolution in American history.

DEFINING AMERICAN

Wilson’s Peace without Victory Speech

Wilson’s last-ditch effort to avoid bringing the United States into World War I is captured in a speech he gave before the U.S. Senate on January 22, 1917. This speech, known as the “Peace without Victory” speech, extolled the country to be patient, as the countries involved in the war were nearing a peace. Wilson stated:

It must be a peace without victory. It is not pleasant to say this. I beg that I may be permitted to put my own interpretation upon it and that it may be understood that no other interpretation was in my thought. I am seeking only to face realities and to face them without soft concealments. Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor’s terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last, only a peace the very principle of which is equality and a common participation in a common benefit.

Not surprisingly, this speech was not well received by either side fighting the war. England resisted being put on the same moral ground as Germany, and France, whose country had been battered by years of warfare, had no desire to end the war without victory and its spoils. Still, the speech as a whole illustrates Wilson’s idealistic, if failed, attempt to create a more benign and high-minded foreign policy role for the United States. Unfortunately, the Zimmermann telegram and the sinking of the American merchant ships proved too provocative for Wilson to remain neutral. Little more than two months after this speech, he asked Congress to declare war on Germany.

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The lives of all Americans, whether they went abroad to fight or stayed on the home front, changed dramatically during the war. Restrictive laws censored dissent at home, and the armed forces demanded unconditional loyalty from millions of volunteers and conscripted soldiers. For organized labor, women, and African Americans in particular, the war brought changes to the prewar status quo. Some White women worked outside of the home for the first time, whereas others, like African American men, found that they were eligible for jobs that had previously been reserved for White men. African American women, too, were able to seek employment beyond the domestic servant jobs that had been their primary opportunity. These new options and freedoms were not easily erased after the war ended.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES BORN FROM WAR

After decades of limited involvement in the challenges between management and organized labor, the need for peaceful and productive industrial relations prompted the federal government during wartime to invite organized labor to the negotiating table. Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), sought to capitalize on these circumstances to better organize workers and secure for them better wages and working conditions. His efforts also solidified his own base of power. The increase in production that the war required exposed severe labor shortages in many states, a condition that was further exacerbated by the draft, which pulled millions of young men from the active labor force.

Wilson only briefly investigated the longstanding animosity between labor and management before ordering the creation of the National Labor War Board in April 1918. Quick negotiations with Gompers and the AFL resulted in a promise: Organized labor would make a “no-strike pledge” for the duration of the war, in exchange for the U.S. government’s protection of workers’ rights to organize and bargain collectively. The federal government kept its promise and promoted the adoption of an eight-hour workday (which had first been adopted by government employees in 1868), a living wage for all workers, and union membership. As a result, union membership skyrocketed during the war, from 2.6 million members in 1916 to 4.1 million in 1919. In short, American workers received better working conditions and wages, as a result of the country’s participation in the war. However, their economic gains were limited. While prosperity overall went up during the war, it was enjoyed more by business owners and corporations than by the workers themselves. Even though wages increased, inflation offset most of the gains. Prices in the United States increased an average of 15–20 percent annually between 1917 and 1920. Individual purchasing power actually declined during the war due to the substantially higher cost of living. Business profits, in contrast, increased by nearly a third during the war.

WOMEN IN WARTIME

For women, the economic situation was complicated by the war, with the departure of wage-earning men and the higher cost of living pushing many toward less comfortable lives. At the same time, however, wartime presented new opportunities for women in the workplace. More than one million women entered the workforce for the first time as a result of the war, while more than eight million working women found higher paying jobs, often in industry. Many women also found employment in what were typically considered male occupations, such as on the railroads (Image 1.6), where the number of women tripled, and on assembly lines. After the war ended and men returned home and searched for work, women were fired from their jobs, and expected to return home and care for their families. Furthermore, even when they were doing men’s jobs, women were typically paid lower wages than male workers, and unions were ambivalent at best—and hostile at worst—to women workers. Even under these circumstances, wartime employment familiarized women with an alternative to a life in domesticity and dependency, making a life of employment, even a career, plausible for women. When, a generation later, World War II arrived, this trend would increase dramatically.

Image 1.6 The war brought new opportunities to women, such as the training offered to those who joined the Land Army (a) or the opening up of traditionally male occupations. In 1918, Eva Abbott (b) was one of many new women workers on the Erie Railroad. However, once the war ended and veterans returned home, these opportunities largely disappeared. (credit b: modification of work by U.S. Department of Labor)

One notable group of women who exploited these new opportunities was the Women's Land Army of America. First during World War I, then again in World War II, these women stepped up to run farms and other agricultural enterprises, as men left for the armed forces (Image 1.6). Known as Farmerettes, some twenty thousand women—mostly college educated and from larger urban areas—served in this capacity. Their reasons for joining were manifold. For some, it was a way to serve their country during a time of war. Others hoped to capitalize on the efforts to further the fight for women's suffrage.

Also of special note were the approximately thirty thousand American women who served in the military, as well as a variety of humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross and YMCA, during the war. In addition to serving as military nurses (without rank), American women also served as telephone operators in France. Of this latter group, 230 of them, known as "Hello Girls," were bilingual and stationed in combat areas. Over eighteen thousand American women served as Red Cross nurses, providing much of the medical support available to American troops in France. Close to three hundred nurses died during service. Many of those who returned home continued to work in hospitals and home healthcare, helping wounded veterans heal both emotionally and physically from the scars of war.

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE CRUSADE FOR DEMOCRACY

African Americans also found that the war brought upheaval and opportunity. Blacks composed 13 percent of the enlisted military, with 350,000 men serving. Colonel Charles Young of the Tenth Cavalry division served as the highest-ranking African American officer. Blacks served in segregated units and suffered from widespread racism in the military hierarchy, often serving in menial or support roles. Some troops saw combat, however, and were commended for serving with valor. The 369th Infantry, for example, known as the **Harlem Hellfighters**, served on the frontline of France for six months, longer than any other American unit. One hundred seventy-one men from that regiment received the Legion of Merit for meritorious service in combat. The regiment marched in a homecoming parade in New York City, was remembered in paintings (Image 1.7), and was celebrated for bravery and leadership. The accolades given to them, however, in no way extended to the bulk of African Americans fighting in the war.

Image 1.7 African American soldiers suffered under segregation and second-class treatment in the military. Still, the 369th Infantry earned recognition and reward for its valor in service both in France and the United States.

On the home front, African Americans, like American women, saw economic opportunities increase during the war. During the so-called Great Migration (discussed in a previous chapter), nearly 350,000 African Americans had fled the post-Civil War South for opportunities in northern urban areas. From 1910–1920, they moved north and found work in the steel, mining, shipbuilding, and automotive industries, among others. African American women also sought better employment opportunities beyond their traditional roles as domestic servants. By 1920, over 100,000 women had found work in diverse manufacturing industries, up from 70,000 in 1910.

Despite these opportunities, racism continued to be a major force in both the North and South. Worried that Black veterans would feel empowered to change the status quo of White supremacy, many White people took political, economic, and violent action against them. In a speech on the Senate floor in 1917, Mississippi Senator James K. Vardaman said, "Impress the negro with the fact that he is defending the flag, inflate his untutored soul with military airs, teach him that it is his duty to keep the emblem of the Nation flying triumphantly in the air—it is but a short step to the conclusion that his political rights must be respected." Several municipalities passed residential codes designed to prohibit African Americans from settling in certain neighborhoods. Race riots also increased in frequency: In 1917 alone, there were race riots in twenty-five cities, including East Saint Louis, where thirty-nine Blacks were killed. In the South, White business and plantation owners feared that their cheap workforce was fleeing the region, and used violence to intimidate Blacks into staying. According to NAACP statistics, recorded incidences of lynching increased from thirty-eight in 1917 to eighty-three in 1919. Dozens of Black veterans were among the victims. The frequency of these

killings did not start to decrease until 1923, when the number of annual lynchings dropped below thirty-five for the first time since the Civil War.

THE LAST VESTIGES OF PROGRESSIVISM

Across the United States, the war intersected with the last lingering efforts of the Progressives who sought to use the war as motivation for their final push for change. It was in large part due to the war's influence that Progressives were able to lobby for the passage of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The Eighteenth Amendment, prohibiting alcohol, and the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote, received their final impetus due to the war effort.

**Prohibition**, as the anti-alcohol movement became known, had been a goal of many Progressives for decades. Organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League linked alcohol consumption with any number of societal problems, and they had worked tirelessly with municipalities and counties to limit or prohibit alcohol on a local scale. But with the war, prohibitionists saw an opportunity for federal action. One factor that helped their cause was the strong anti-German sentiment that gripped the country, which turned sympathy away from the largely German-descended immigrants who ran the breweries. Furthermore, the public cry to ration food and grain—the latter being a key ingredient in both beer and hard alcohol—made prohibition even more patriotic. Congress ratified the Eighteenth Amendment in January 1919, with provisions to take effect one year later. Specifically, the amendment prohibited the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquors. It did not prohibit the drinking of alcohol, as there was a widespread feeling that such language would be viewed as too intrusive on personal rights. However, by eliminating the manufacture, sale, and transport of such beverages, drinking was effectively outlawed. Shortly thereafter, Congress passed the Volstead Act, translating the Eighteenth Amendment into an enforceable ban on the consumption of alcoholic beverages, and regulating the scientific and industrial uses of alcohol. The act also specifically excluded from prohibition the use of alcohol for religious rituals (Image 1.8).

Image 1.8 Surrounded by prominent "dry workers," Governor James P. Goodrich of Indiana signs a statewide bill to prohibit alcohol.

Unfortunately for proponents of the amendment, the ban on alcohol did not take effect until one full year following the end of the war. Almost immediately following the war, the general public began to oppose—and clearly violate—the law, making it very difficult to enforce. Doctors and druggists, who could prescribe whisky for medicinal purposes, found themselves inundated with requests. In the 1920s, organized crime and gangsters like Al Capone would capitalize on the persistent demand for liquor, making fortunes in the illegal trade. A lack of enforcement, compounded by an overwhelming desire by the public to obtain alcohol at all costs, eventually resulted in the repeal of the law in 1933.

The First World War also provided the impetus for another longstanding goal of some reformers: universal suffrage. Supporters of equal rights for women pointed to Wilson's rallying cry of a war "to make the world safe for democracy," as hypocritical, saying he was sending American boys to die for such principles while simultaneously denying American women their democratic right to vote (Image 1.8). Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Women Suffrage Movement, capitalized on the

growing patriotic fervor to point out that every woman who gained the vote could exercise that right in a show of loyalty to the nation, thus offsetting the dangers of draft-dodgers or naturalized Germans who already had the right to vote.

Alice Paul, of the National Women's Party, organized more radical tactics, bringing national attention to the issue of women's suffrage by organizing protests outside the White House and, later, hunger strikes among arrested protesters.

African American suffragists, who had been active in the movement for decades, faced discrimination from their White counterparts. Some White leaders justified this treatment based on the concern that promoting Black women would erode public support. But overt racism played a significant role, as well. During the suffrage parade in 1913, Black members were told to march at the rear of the line. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a prominent voice for equality, first asked her local delegation to oppose this segregation; they refused. Not to be dismissed, Wells-Barnett waited in the crowd until the Illinois delegation passed by, then stepped onto the parade route and took her place among them. By the end of the war, the abusive treatment of suffragist hunger-strikers in prison, women's important contribution to the war effort, and the arguments of his suffragist daughter Jessie Woodrow Wilson Sayre moved President Wilson to understand women's right to vote as an ethical mandate for a true democracy. He began urging congressmen and senators to adopt the legislation. The amendment finally passed in June 1919, and the states ratified it by August 1920. Specifically, the Nineteenth Amendment prohibited all efforts to deny the right to vote on the basis of sex. It took effect in time for American women to vote in the presidential election of 1920.

Image 1.9 Suffragists picketed the White House in 1917, leveraging the war and America's stance on democracy to urge Woodrow Wilson to support an amendment giving women the right to vote.

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P. Scott Corbett (Ventura College), et al. U.S. History by OpenStax (Hardcover Version, Full Color). 1st ed., XanEdu Publishing Inc, 2014, openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/23-3-a-new-home-front. CC BY 4.0.

The American role in World War I was brief but decisive. While millions of soldiers went overseas, and many thousands paid with their lives, the country's involvement was limited to the very end of the war. In fact, the peace process, with the international conference and subsequent ratification process, took longer than the time U.S. soldiers were "in country" in France. For the Allies, American reinforcements came at a decisive moment in their defense of the western front, where a final offensive had exhausted German forces. For the United States, and for Wilson's vision of a peaceful future, the fighting was faster and more successful than what was to follow.

WINNING THE WAR

When the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, the Allied forces were close to exhaustion. Great Britain and France had already indebted themselves heavily in the procurement of vital American military supplies. Now, facing near-certain defeat, a British delegation to Washington, DC, requested immediate troop reinforcements to boost Allied spirits and help crush German fighting morale, which was already weakened by short supplies on the frontlines and hunger on the home front. Wilson

agreed and immediately sent 200,000 American troops in June 1917. These soldiers were placed in “quiet zones” while they trained and prepared for combat.

By March 1918, the Germans had won the war on the eastern front. The Russian Revolution of the previous year had not only toppled the hated regime of Tsar Nicholas II but also ushered in a civil war from which the Bolshevik faction of Communist revolutionaries under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin emerged victorious. Weakened by war and internal strife, and eager to build a new Soviet Union, Russian delegates agreed to a generous peace treaty with Germany. Thus emboldened, Germany quickly moved upon the Allied lines, causing both the French and British to ask Wilson to forestall extensive training to U.S. troops and instead commit them to the front immediately. Although wary of the move, Wilson complied, ordering the commander of the American Expeditionary Force, General John “Blackjack” Pershing, to offer U.S. troops as replacements for the Allied units in need of relief. By May 1918, Americans were fully engaged in the war (Image 1.10).

Image 1.10 U.S. soldiers run past fallen Germans on their way to a bunker. In World War I, for the first time, photographs of the battles brought the war vividly to life for those at home.

In a series of battles along the front that took place from May 28 through August 6, 1918, including the battles of Cantigny, Chateau Thierry, Belleau Wood, and the Second Battle of the Marne, American forces alongside the British and French armies succeeded in repelling the German offensive. The Battle of Cantigny, on May 28, was the first American offensive in the war: In less than two hours that morning, American troops overran the German headquarters in the village, thus convincing the French commanders of their ability to fight against the German line advancing towards Paris. The subsequent battles of Chateau Thierry and Belleau Wood proved to be the bloodiest of the war for American troops. At the latter, faced with a German onslaught of mustard gas, artillery fire, and mortar fire, U.S. Marines attacked German units in the woods on six occasions—at times meeting them in hand-to-hand and bayonet combat—before finally repelling the advance. The U.S. forces suffered 10,000 casualties in the three-week battle, with almost 2,000 killed in total and 1,087 on a single day. Brutal as they were, they amounted to small losses compared to the casualties suffered by France and Great Britain. Still, these summer battles turned the tide of the war, with the Germans in full retreat by the end of July 1918 (Image 1.11).

Image 1.11 This map shows the western front at the end of the war, as the Allied Forces decisively break the German line.

MY STORY

Sgt. Charles Leon Boucher: Life and Death in the Trenches of France

Wounded in his shoulder by enemy forces, George, a machine gunner posted on the right end of the American platoon, was taken prisoner at the Battle of Seicheprey in 1918. However, as darkness set in that evening, another American soldier, Charlie, heard a noise from a gully beside the trench in which he had hunkered down. “I figured it must be the enemy mop-up patrol,” Charlie later said.

I only had a couple of bullets left in the chamber of my forty-five. The noise stopped and a head popped into sight. When I was about to fire, I gave another look and a white and distorted face proved to be that of George, so I grabbed his shoulders and pulled him down into our trench beside me. He must have had about twenty bullet holes in him but not one of them was well placed enough to kill him. He made an effort to speak so I told him to keep quiet and conserve his energy. I had a few malted milk tablets left and, I forced them into his mouth. I also poured the last of the water I had left in my canteen into his mouth.

Following a harrowing night, they began to crawl along the road back to their platoon. As they crawled, George explained how he survived being captured. Charlie later told how George “was taken to an enemy First Aid Station where his wounds were dressed. Then the doctor motioned to have him taken to the rear of their lines. But, the Sergeant Major pushed him towards our side and ‘No Mans Land,’ pulled out his Luger Automatic and shot him down. Then, he began to crawl towards our lines little by little, being shot at consistently by the enemy snipers till, finally, he arrived in our position.”

The story of Charlie and George, related later in life by Sgt. Charles Leon Boucher to his grandson, was one replayed many times over in various forms during the American Expeditionary Force’s involvement in World War I. The industrial scale of death and destruction was as new to American soldiers as to their European counterparts, and the survivors brought home physical and psychological scars that influenced the United States long after the war was won (Image 1.12).

**Figure 7.37 | The Top of the Chrysler Building, New York City, NY**

Author: User "Leena Hietanen"

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Image 1.12 This photograph of U.S. soldiers in a trench hardly begins to capture the brutal conditions of trench warfare, where disease, rats, mud, and hunger plagued the men.

By the end of September 1918, over one million U.S. soldiers staged a full offensive into the Argonne Forest. By November—after nearly forty days of intense fighting—the German lines were broken, and their military command reported to German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II of the desperate need to end the war and enter into peace negotiations. Facing civil unrest from the German people in Berlin, as well as the loss of support from his military high command, Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated his throne on November 9, 1918, and immediately fled by train to the Netherlands. Two days later, on November 11, 1918, Germany and the Allies declared an immediate armistice, thus bring the fighting to a stop and signaling the beginning of the peace process.

When the armistice was declared, a total of 117,000 American soldiers had been killed and 206,000 wounded. The Allies as a whole suffered over 5.7 million military deaths, primarily Russian, British, and French men. The Central powers suffered four million military deaths, with half of them German soldiers. The total cost of the war to the United States alone was in excess of $32 billion, with interest expenses and veterans' benefits eventually bringing the cost to well over $100 billion. Economically, emotionally, and geopolitically, the war had taken an enormous toll.

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THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917 reshaped the country's political institutions and led to a century of conflict with the West. During the 1905 revolution, Russian liberals challenged the absolute authority of the Russian tsar, when a coalition of workers and middle-class Russians used economic and political means to demand democratic concessions. While their gains were temporary, they inspired the future Bolshevik revolutionaries.

In February 1917, during the height of World War I, a coalition of Russian liberals and socialists challenged Russia's autocratic government and organized a series of general strikes and political protests which forced Tsar Nicholas to abdicate. The leaders created a weak provisional national government, while socialist officials organized local soviets (political councils) of Russian's industrial workers. These factions soon came into conflict.

By October 1917, the Bolshevik Party, a communist organization led by Vladimir Lenin, staged a revolution against the provisional government and seized control of the state. The Bolsheviks used military force to consolidate power and establish control over the local soviets. Throughout the 1920s, Lenin and his successor Joseph Stalin used violence and political control to impose communism on Russia's political, economic, and social institutions. Communist leaders also tried to export the revolution by supporting communist political organizations in Europe and the United States.

Artistic innovation had smoldered before the revolution. Artists such as Lyubov Popova, Natalia Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, Alexander Rodchenko and David Burliuk had produced striking avant-garde works earlier than 1917, as had Wassily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich and Marc Chagall. Distracted by having to fight a world war and by domestic unrest, the Tsarist regime had let art slip the leash. The conflict had reduced Russia's contacts with the West and native talent had taken new directions. Several significant works by Malevich in the exhibition, including *Red Square*(below) – a red parallelogram, stark and challenging on a white ground – and *Dynamic Suprematism Supremus* (below), with its vortex of geometric shapes, date from the years before the revolution.

But it was 1917, with its promise of brave new worlds and liberation from the past, that set all the arts aflame. The poets Alexander Blok, Andrei Bely and Sergei Yesenin produced their most important work. Authors such as Mikhail Zoshchenko and Mikhail Bulgakov pushed at the bounds of satire and fantasy. The Futurist poets, chief among them Vladimir Mayakovsky, embraced the revolution while proclaiming the renewal of art. The *Poputchiki* or Fellow Travellers – writers nominally sympathetic to Bolshevism but nervous about commitment – clashed with the self-described Proletarian writers who brashly claimed the right to speak for the Party. Musical experimentalism broke through the barriers of harmony, overflowed into jazz and created orchestras without conductors. The watchwords were novelty and invention, with pre-revolutionary forms raucously jettisoned from the steamship of modernity.

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REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA: MARXIST THEORY AND AGRARIAN REALITIES

The Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917 reshaped the country's political institutions and led to a century of conflict with the West. During the 1905 revolution, Russian liberals challenged the absolute authority of the Russian tsar, when a coalition of workers and middle-class Russians used economic and political means to demand democratic concessions. While their gains were temporary, they inspired the future Bolshevik revolutionaries.

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# 1.3: The Freudian Revolution

1.3 The Freudian Revolution

Psychodynamic theory (sometimes called *psychoanalytic theory*) explains personality in terms of unconscious psychological processes (for example, wishes and fears of which we're not fully aware), and contends that childhood experiences are crucial in shaping adult personality. Psychodynamic theory is most closely associated with the work of Sigmund Freud, and with psychoanalysis, a type of psychotherapy that attempts to explore the patient's unconscious thoughts and emotions so that the person is better able to understand him- or herself.

Freud's work has been extremely influential, its impact extending far beyond psychology (several years ago *Time* magazine selected Freud as one of the most important thinkers of the 20th century). Freud's work has been not only influential, but quite controversial as well. As you might imagine, when Freud suggested in 1900 that much of our behavior is determined by psychological forces of which we're largely unaware—that we literally don't know what's going on in our own minds—people were (to put it mildly) displeased (Freud, 1900/1953a). When he suggested in 1905 that we humans have strong sexual feelings from a very early age, and that some of these sexual feelings are directed toward our parents, people were more than displeased—they were outraged (Freud, 1905/1953b). Few theories in psychology have evoked such strong reactions from other professionals and members of the public.

Controversy notwithstanding, no competent psychologist, or student of psychology, can ignore psychodynamic theory. It is simply too important for psychological science and practice, and continues to play an important role in a wide variety of disciplines within and outside psychology (for example, developmental psychology, social psychology, sociology, and neuroscience; see Bornstein, 2005, 2006; Solms & Turnbull, 2011). This module reviews the psychodynamic perspective on personality. We begin with a brief discussion of the core assumptions of psychodynamic theory, followed by an overview of the evolution of the theory from Freud's time to today. We then discuss the place of psychodynamic theory within contemporary psychology, and look toward the future as well.

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) is probably the most controversial and misunderstood psychological theorist. When reading Freud's theories, it is important to remember that he was a medical doctor, not a psychologist. There was no such thing as a degree in psychology at the time that he received his education, which can help us understand some of the controversy over his theories today. However, Freud was the first to systematically study and theorize the workings of the unconscious mind in the manner that we associate with modern psychology.

In the early years of his career, Freud worked with Josef Breuer, a Viennese physician. During this time, Freud became intrigued by the story of one of Breuer's patients, Bertha Pappenheim, who was referred to by the pseudonym Anna O. (Launer, 2005). Anna O. had been caring for her dying father when she began to experience symptoms such as partial paralysis, headaches, blurred vision, amnesia, and hallucinations (Launer, 2005). In Freud's day, these symptoms were commonly referred to as hysteria. Anna O. turned to Breuer for help. He spent 2 years (1880–1882) treating Anna O. and discovered that allowing her to talk about her experiences seemed to bring some relief of her symptoms. Anna O. called his treatment the "talking cure" (Launer, 2005). Despite the fact the Freud never met Anna O., her story served as the basis for the 1895 book, Studies on Hysteria, which he co-authored with Breuer. Based on Breuer's description of Anna O.'s treatment, Freud concluded that hysteria was the result of sexual abuse in childhood and that these traumatic experiences had been hidden from consciousness. Breuer disagreed with Freud, which soon ended their work together. However, Freud continued to work to refine talk therapy and build his theory on personality.

LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

To explain the concept of conscious versus unconscious experience, Freud compared the mind to an iceberg (Image 1.13). He said that only about one-tenth of our mind is conscious, and the rest of our mind is unconscious. Our unconscious refers to that mental activity of which we are unaware and are unable to access (Freud, 1923). According to Freud, unacceptable urges and desires are kept in our unconscious through a process called repression. For example, we sometimes say things that we don't intend to say by unintentionally substituting another word for the one we meant. You've probably heard of a Freudian slip, the term used to describe this. Freud suggested that slips of the tongue are actually sexual or aggressive urges, accidentally slipping out of our unconscious. Speech errors such as this are quite common. Seeing them as a reflection of unconscious desires, linguists today have found that slips of the tongue tend to occur when we are tired, nervous, or not at our optimal level of cognitive functioning.

Freud believed that we are only aware of a small amount of our mind's activities and that most of it remains hidden from us in our unconscious. The information in our unconscious affects our behavior, although we are unaware of it.

According to Freud, our personality develops from a conflict between two forces: our biological aggressive and pleasure-seeking drives versus our internal (socialized) control over these drives. Our personality is the result of our efforts to balance these two competing forces. Freud suggested that we can understand this by imagining three interacting systems within our minds. He called them the id, ego, and superego (Image 1.13).

Image 1.13

FREUD AND PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

Perhaps one of the most influential and well-known figures in psychology's history was Sigmund Freud. Freud (1856–1939) was an Austrian neurologist who was fascinated by patients suffering from "hysteria" and neurosis. Hysteria was an ancient diagnosis for disorders, primarily of women with a wide variety of symptoms, including physical symptoms and emotional disturbances, none of which had an apparent physical cause. Freud theorized that many of his patients' problems arose from the unconscious mind. In Freud's view, the unconscious mind was a repository of feelings and urges of which we have no awareness. Gaining access to the unconscious, then, was crucial to the successful resolution of the patient's problems. According to Freud, the unconscious mind could be accessed through dream analysis, by examinations of the first words that came to people's minds, and through seemingly innocent slips of the tongue. Psychoanalytic theory focuses on the role of a person's unconscious, as well as early childhood experiences, and this particular perspective dominated clinical psychology for several decades (Thorne & Henley, 2005).

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CARL JUNG'S PERSONALITY THEORY

Carl Jung brought an almost mystical approach to psychodynamic theory. An early associate and follower of Freud, Jung eventually disagreed with Freud on too many aspects of personality theory to remain within a strictly Freudian perspective. Subsequently, Jung developed his own theory, which applied concepts from natural laws (primarily in physics) to psychological functioning. Jung also introduced the concept of personality types, and began to address personality development throughout the lifespan. In his most unique contribution, at least from a Western perspective, Jung proposed that the human psyche contains within itself psychological constructs developed throughout the evolution of the human species.

Jung has always been controversial and confusing. His blending of psychology and religion, as well as his openness to different religious and spiritual philosophies, was not easy to accept for many psychiatrists and psychologists trying to pursue a purely scientific explanation of personality and mental illness. Perhaps no one was more upset than Freud, whose attitude toward Jung changed dramatically over just a few years. In 1907, Freud wrote a letter to Jung in which Freud offered high praise:

…I have already acknowledged…above all that your person has filled me with trust in the future, that I now know that I am dispensable like everyone else, and that I wish for no one other or better than you to continue and complete my work. (pg. 136; cited in Wehr, 1989)

In 1910, hoping that others would also support Jung, Freud wrote to Oskar Pfister:

I hope you will loyally support Jung, I want him to acquire the authority that will entitle him to leadership of the whole movement. (pg. 136; cited in Wehr, 1989)

However, in a dramatic shift just three years later, Freud wrote to Jung:

I suggest to you that we completely give up our private relationship. By this I lose nothing, since for a long time I have been bound to you emotionally only by the thin thread of previously experienced disappointments. … Spare me the supposed "duties of friendship." (pg. 136; cited in Wehr, 1989)

Later, in 1922, Freud thanked Oskar Pfister for his help in trying to eliminate Jung's influence on the psychoanalytic community:

With your ever more thorough and ever more clearly demonstrated dismissal of Jung and Adler, you have for a long time given me great satisfaction. (pg. 136; cited in Wehr, 1989)

Who was this man who inspired such profound confidence from Sigmund Freud, only to later inspire such contempt? And were his theories that difficult for the psychodynamic community, or psychology in general, to accept? Hopefully, this chapter will begin to answer those questions. As evidence of his character, and in contrast to Freud, Jung did not turn his back on his former mentor. Following Freud's death in 1939, and later in 1957, Jung wrote the following:

[Freud's work was]…surely the boldest attempt ever made on the apparently solid ground of empiricism to master the riddle of the unconscious psyche. For us young psychiatrists, it was a source of enlightenment… (pg. 29; cited in Wehr, 1989)

…Despite the resounding censure I suffered at the hands of Freud, I cannot, even despite my resentment toward him, fail to recognize his importance as a critical analyst of culture and as a pioneer in the field of psychology. (pg. 39; cited in Wehr, 1989)

In order to distinguish his own approach to psychology from others that had come before, Jung felt that he needed a unique name. Freud, of course, had chosen the term "psychoanalysis," whereas Alfred Adler had chosen "individual psychology." Since Jung admired both men and their theories, he chose a name intended to encompass not only their approaches, but others as well. Thus, he chose to call his approach **analytical psychology** (Jung, 1933).

Analytical psychology, as presented by Jung, addresses the question of the psyche in an open-minded way. He laments the overly scientific approach of the late 1800s and efforts to explain away the psyche as a mere epiphenomenon of brain function. Curiously, that debate remains with us today, and is still unanswered in any definitive way. Jung did not accept the suggestion that the psyche must come from the activity of the brain. This allowed him to consider the possibility of a collective unconscious, and fit well with his acceptance of the wisdom of Eastern philosophers. Indeed, Jung suggests that psychology will find truth only when it accepts both Eastern and Western, as well as both scientific and spiritual, perspectives on the psyche (Jung, 1933).

At the beginning of his autobiography, entitled *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung (1961) described his life as "a story of the self-realization of the unconscious." Jung believed that our personality begins with a collective unconscious, developed within our species throughout time, and that we have only limited ability to control the psychic process that is our own personality. Thus, our true personality arises from within as our collective unconscious comes forth into our personal unconscious and then our consciousness. It can be helpful to view these concepts from an Eastern perspective, and it is interesting to note that "self-realization" was used in the name of the first Yoga society established in America (in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda).

Carl Gustav Jung was born on July 26$^{th}$, 1875, in the small town of Kesswil, Switzerland, into an interesting and notable family. His grandfather of the same name had been a physician, and had established the psychiatric clinic at the University of Basel and the "Home of Good Hope" for mentally retarded children. At an early age he had been imprisoned for over a year, for the crime of having participated in a demonstration supporting democracy in Germany. Rumored to be an illegitimate son of the great Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, though there is no convincing evidence, the elder Carl Jung died before his namesake grandson ever knew him. Nonetheless, Jung was greatly influenced by stories he heard about his grandfather. His maternal grandfather, Samuel Preiswerk, was the dean of the Basel (Switzerland) clergy and pastor of a major church. He was one the first people in Europe to suggest a restoration of Palestine to the Jews, thus establishing himself as a forerunner to the Zionists. Samuel Preiswerk also

believed that he was regularly surrounded by spirits (or ghosts), something that likely had quite an influence on Jung's theories (Jaffe, 1979; Wehr, 1989).

| Common Archetypes in Jung's Theory of the Collective Unconscious | |
|---|---|
| Self | Integration and wholeness of the personality, the center of the totality of the psyche; symbolically represented by, e.g., the mandala, Christ, or by helpful animals (such as Rin Tin Tin and Lassie or the Hindu monkey god Hanuman) |
| Shadow | The dark, inferior, emotional, and immoral aspects of the psyche; symbolically represented by, e.g., the Devil (or an evil character such as Dracula), dragons, monsters (such as Godzilla) |
| Anima | Strange, wraithlike image of an idealized women, yet contrary to the masculinity of the man, draws the man into feminine (as defined by gender roles) behavior, always a supernatural element; symbolically represented by, e.g., personifications of witches, the Greek Sirens, a *femme fatale*, or in more positive ways as the Virgin Mary, a romanticized beauty (such as Helen of Troy) or a cherished car |
| Animus | A source of meaning and power for women, it can be opinionated, divisive, and create animosity toward men, but also creates a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self-knowledge; symbolically represented by, e.g., death, murderers (such as the pirate Bluebeard, who killed all his wives), a band of outlaws, a bewitched prince (such as the beast in "Beauty and the Beast") or a romantic actor (such as Rudolph Valentino) |
| Persona | A protective cover, or mask, that we present to the world to make a specific impression and to conceal our inner self; symbolically represented by, e.g., a coat or mantle |
| Hero | One who overcomes evil, destruction, and death, often has a miraculous but humble birth; symbolically represented by, e.g., angels, Christ the Redeemer, or a god-man (such as Hercules) |
| Wise Old Man | Typically a personification of the self, associated with saints, sages, and prophets; symbolically represented as, e.g., the magician Merlin or an Indian guru |
| Trickster | A childish character with pronounced physical appetites, seeks only gratification and can be cruel and unfeeling; symbolically represented by, e.g., animals (such as Brer Rabbit, Wile E. Coyote or, often, monkeys) or a mischievous god (such as the Norse god Loki) |

| Jung's Eight Personality Types | |
|---|---|
| Introverted Thinking | Focused on own internal thoughts and ideas, do not communicate well, can be highly conflicted and will lash out at critics, generally stubborn and do not get along well with others |
| Introverted Feeling | Tend to be silent, inaccessible, and melancholy, have deep emotions but hide them and appear cold and reserved on the surface, tend to be suspicious of others, most are women |

| | |
|---|---|
| Introverted Sensing | Guided by subjective impression of real-life objects, often express their sensations through artistic endeavors, the objective world may seem make-believe and comical |
| Introverted Intuitive | Tend to be peculiar and lack contact with reality, may be completely misunderstood even by those who are close to them, may seem like a mystical dreamer and seer on one hand but just a cranky person on the other, may have vision but lack convincing power of reason |
| Extraverted Thinking | Seek intellectual conclusions based on objective reality, seek to influence others, suppress emotion, can be rigid and dogmatic (tyrannical when others penetrate their power province) |
| Extraverted Feeling | Feelings harmonize with objective situations, can be highly emotional, will avoid thinking when it proves upsetting, most are women |
| Extraverted Sensing | Immersed in realism and seek new experiences, whole aim is concrete enjoyment, most are men |
| Extraverted Intuitive | Always seek new opportunities, may seize new opportunity with enthusiasm and just as quickly abandon it if not promising, has vision, often found among business tycoons and politicians, but have little regard for welfare of others |

REVIEW OF KEY POINTS

As a child, Jung was introduced to a wide variety of cultural and religious perspectives from around the world. As a result of these experiences, he was open to many different perspectives throughout his career.

Jung had extremely vivid dreams, many of which he interpreted as visions (or unconscious communications) intended to guide his actions.

Jung called his approach “analytical psychology” in order to distinguish it from Freud’s “psychoanalysis” and Adler’s “individual psychology.”

An important starting point for Jung’s theories was the concept of entropy, which proposes an eventual balance of all energy. Jung applied this concept to the psychic energy present in the conscious and unconscious psyches.

Jung proposed two distinct realms within the unconscious psyche, the personal and the collective.

According to Jung, the personal unconscious is revealed through its complexes.

Jung advanced the Word Association Test as a means of examining the complexes contained within the personal unconscious.

The collective unconscious communicates through archetypal images. Jung believed the most readily observed archetypes are the shadow, the anima, and the animus.

Another important archetype is the self, the representation of wholeness and the completed development of the personality. The self is often symbolically represented by mandalas.

Jung developed a framework for recognizing particular personality types. He proposed two attitudes, introversion and extraversion, and four functions, thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuition.

Jung’s type theory provided the basis for some practical personality tests. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Keirsey Temperament Sorter are both well-known in the field of psychology.

Jung believed that everyone’s ultimate goal is to fully develop the potential of their personality. Jung called this process individuation.

Development during the first half of life involves the natural aims of survival and procreation. The second half of life offers the opportunity to seek cultural development and the fulfillment of one's self.

Jungian analysis follows a basic series of stages, involving confession, elucidation, education, and transformation. However, Jung suggested it was better to avoid being locked into a rigid procedure. As a result, he utilized many different techniques, based on each individual patient.

As Freud had before him, Jung developed a grand vision of how analytical psychology might help society as a whole. One unique proposition was that the Western world had much to learn from Eastern cultures.

Jung's interest in topics such as alchemy and extrasensory perception did not sit well with colleagues seeking to establish psychology as a scientific discipline. This opposition to Jung remains quite strong today, though Western psychology is broadening its perspective.

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# 1.4: Modern Art

1.4 Modern Art

HOW TO ANALYZE AND INTERPRET ART: FORMAL OR CRITICAL ANALYSIS

While restricting our attention only to a description of the formal elements of an artwork may at first seem limited or even tedious, a careful and methodical examination of the physical components of an artwork is an important first step in “decoding” its meaning. It is useful, therefore, to begin at the beginning. There are four aspects of a formal analysis: description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.

Description: What can we notice at first glance about a work of art? Is it two-dimensional or three-dimensional? What is the medium? What kinds of actions were required in its production? How big is the work? What are the elements of design used within it? Starting with line: is it soft or hard, jagged or straight, expressive or mechanical? How is line being used to describe space? Considering shape: are the shapes large or small, hard-edged or soft? What is the relationship between shapes? Do they compete with one another for prominence? What shapes are in front? Which ones fade into the background? Indicating mass and volume: if two-dimensional, what means if any are used to give the illusion that the presented forms have weight and occupy space? If three-dimensional, what space is occupied or filled by the work? What is the mass of the work?

Organizing space: does the artist use perspective? If so, what kind? If the work uses linear perspective, where are the horizon line and vanishing point(s) located? On texture: how is texture being used? Is it actual or implied texture? In terms of color: what kinds of colors are used? Is there a color scheme? Is the image overall light, medium, or dark?

Analysis: Once the elements of the artwork have been identified, next come questions of how these elements are related. How are the elements arranged? In other words, how have principles of design been employed? What elements in the work were used to create unity and provide variety? How have the elements been used to do so? What is the scale of the work? Is it larger or smaller than what it represents (if it does depict someone or something)? Are the elements within the work in proportion to one another? Is the work symmetrically or asymmetrically balanced? What is used within the artwork to create emphasis? Where are the areas of emphasis? How has movement been conveyed in the work, for example, through line or placement of figures? Are there any elements within the work that create rhythm? Are any shapes or colors repeated?

Interpretation: Interpretation comes as much from the individual viewer as it does from the artwork. It derives from the intersection of what an object symbolizes to the artist and what it means to the viewer. It also often records how the meaning of objects has been changed by time and culture. Interpretation, then, is a process of unfolding. A work that may seem to mean one thing on first inspection may come to mean something more when studied further. Just as when re-reading a favorite book or re-watching a favorite movie, we often notice things not seen on the first viewing; interpretations of art objects can also reveal themselves slowly. Claims about meaning can be made but are better when they are backed up with supporting evidence. Interpretations can also change and some interpretations are better than others.

Evaluation: All this work of description, analysis, and interpretation, is done with one goal in mind: to make an evaluation about a work of art. Just as interpretations vary, so do evaluations. Your evaluation includes what you have discovered about the work during your examination as well as what you have learned, about the work, yourself, and others in the process. Your reaction to the artwork is an important component of your evaluation: what do you feel when you look at it? And, do you like the work? How and why do you find it visually pleasing, in some way disturbing, emotionally engaging? Evaluating and judging contemporary works of art is more difficult than works that are hundreds or thousands of years old because the verdict of history has not yet been passed on them. Museums are full of paintings by contemporary artists who were considered the next Michelangelo but who have since faded from the cultural forefront. The best art of a culture and period is that work which exemplifies the thought of the age from which it derives. What we think about our own culture is probably not what will be thought of it a century from now. The art that we believe best embodies our time may or may not last. As time moves on, our evaluations and judgments of our own time may not prove to be the most accurate ones. We live in a world full of art, and it is almost impossible to avoid making evaluations—possibly mistaken—about its value. Nonetheless, informed evaluations are still possible and useful even in the short term.

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CUBISM

Developed by Pablo Picasso and George Braque, Cubism is one of the most significant developments in the history of modern art.

Image 1.14 Picasso – “Cubism 1937" by oddsock is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Image 1.15

Pablo Picasso's route to Cubism began with the simplification of forms inspired by African masks and ancient sculpture. The painter George Braque, associated with the Fauves, was deeply interested in the work of Paul Cézanne, the Post-Impressionist who relied on pure areas of blocky color rather than clearly defined linear forms that he then organized within the canvas disregarding perspectival accuracy.

Image 1.16 Georges Braque, "Guitar and glass" by f_snarfel is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

The collaboration between Picasso and Braque in the development of Cubism is legendary in the history of art. Their intense working relationship lasted months in which the artists visited each other daily to discuss their work. Soon, they stopped signing their individual works and only declared a painting finished when both agreed. Recognizing that what they were doing was the creation of something wholly new and modern, Picasso and Braque referred to each other jokingly as Orville and Wilbur Wright, the American brothers who pioneered the development of flight a few years ahead of the development of Cubism.

(a) (b)

Image 1.17 *Bermuda No. 2, The Schooner* Cubist and Futurist art by Charles Demuth – 1917. WikiArt. CC0.

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NON-REPRESENTATIONAL OR NON-OBJECTIVE ART

Recurrent strains of abstraction appear throughout the history of art, when artists elected to streamline, suppress, or de-emphasize reference to the phenomenal world. In the twentieth century, though, this approach took on different character in some instances, with a stated rejection of the art as related to the natural world and concerned instead with the art itself, to the processes by which it was made, and with the product as referring to these processes and artistic qualities rather than to some outside phenomenon: the observed world. Still, the art is never completely independent of some reference: the viewer might respond to the color, painterly effect, line quality, or some other aspect that is not necessarily associated with recognition of a particular physical object or "thing" but that relates to the qualities of the art in some way, that is, to some recognition of reference—although this recognition may be ephemeral and may be nameless. The response might be quite visceral or intellectual, nonetheless.

The development of this idea was perhaps an inevitable phase of the abstraction and explorations of the formal means that had been conducted by various movements that evolved in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Stories abound about the era in art and the push from abstraction to non-representation, with several artists claiming to have led the breakthrough. The first artist to use the term nonobjective art, however, seems to have been Aleksandr Rodchenko (1890-1956, Russia), and its most active early theorist and writer was probably Vasily Kandinsky (1866-1944, Russia, lived Germany and France). The artistic climate fostered widespread experimentation, and the synergistic atmosphere was a seedbed for new ideas and modes of working. Rodchenko sought to affirm the independence of artistic process and the "constructive" approach to creating artworks that were self-referential, and he explored the possibilities in painting, drawing, photography, sculpture and graphic arts.

Kandinsky, also Russian but working in Germany, wrote an important treatise entitled Concerning the Spiritual in Art (1912) that was widely popular and soon translated from the original German into many languages. He explored color theory in relationship to music, logic, human emotion, and the spiritual underpinnings of the abstractions that for centuries had been viewed and absorbed through religious icons and popular folk prints in his native Russia. In the twentieth century Wassily Kandinsky is considered as the inventor of non-figurative art. Over a period of several years his paintings moved gradually away from figurative subjects. In 1910 he created the first completely abstract work of art - a watercolor - without any reference to reality. Wassily Kandinsky not only became the first abstract artist, he also promoted it as a theorist. In 1912 his book On the Spiritual in Art was published.

(a) (b)

Image 1.18 *On White II* by Vassily Kandinsky – 1923. WikiArt. CC0.

Image 1.19

Image 1.20 Image 1.21

Piet Mondrian is an excellent example of an artist who used geometric shapes almost exclusively. In his *Composition with Yellow, Blue and Red* (1937-42), Mondrian, uses straight vertical and horizontal black lines to divide his canvas into rectangles of primary colors.

Image 1.22 Piet Mondrian, Composition with Yellow, Blue and Red, 1937–42, oil on canvas, 72.7 x 69.2 cm (Tate, CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0)

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FUTURISM

Image 1.23 Giacomo Balla (Italian, 1871-1958), Velocity of an Automobile (also Automobile Assembly Line), 1913, oil and ink on paper on board, 74 x 104 cm. CC0.

Once Cubism was introduced into the vocabulary of modern art, its effect was immediate as it influenced many dynamic experiments in abstract art. Italian Futurism is one of the movements that developed as a result of Cubism. The painting's emphasis on dynamism is characteristic of Italian Futurism, as is the subject of modern urban life. The Futurists embraced the energy of the modern city, its crowds and electricity. They adopted Cubist techniques to convey the sense of movement in time, while rejecting what they considered the more static and analytic approach of Cubist painters. Whereas in Cubist paintings the use of multiple, fragmentary views of things suggests the viewer is moving around the object, in Futurist paintings it is the scene that is moving around the viewer.

This artistic experimentation was cut short with the outbreak of World War I, which begins in 1914, embroiling Europe in a cataclysmic conflict where the advancements of the modern industrial age are immediately shown to have devastating

consequences.

Because of the economic losses and loss of life resulting from the war, there was a revolution in Russia that overthrew the monarchy and ushered in Communism as a governmental system. Artists associated with this are called Russian Constructivists.

Italian Futurism developed at the same time as Analytic Cubism around 1907-1911, but with different goals. While Cubism was engaged with conceptual ideas about form and perception in the modern world and then translating these ideas into a formal visual vocabulary, Italian Futurism was politically and culturally engaged with modernizing Italy.

The Italian Futurists extolled the importance of masculinity and technology in an accelerated Cubist variation reliant on faceted forms, short jagged brushstrokes and diagonal lines to reflect the sensation of speed. Their founder, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, who divided his early years between Paris and Milan, published frequent manifestoes in leading newspapers that attempted to pull his fellow Italians aggressively and forcefully into the modern era.

In the "Futurist Manifesto," published on the front page of the French newspaper Le Figaro in 1909, Marinetti called for the demolition of museums and praised the beauty of industrial speed by describing a roaring car as more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace, one of the most famous sculptures from ancient Greece on view in the Louvre Museum.

Image 1.24 *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold* Cubist and Futurist art by Charles Demuth – 1928. WikiArt. CC0.

Charles Demuth (1883-1935, USA) painted The Figure 5 in Gold in 1928. (Figure 5.5) Demuth met poet and physician William Carlos Williams at the boarding house where they both lived in Philadelphia while studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Demuth's painting is one in a series of portraits of friends, paying homage to Williams and his 1916 poem "The Great Figure":

Among the rain

and lights

I saw the figure 5

in gold

on a red

firetruck

moving

tense

unheeded

to gong clangs

siren howls

and wheels rumbling

through the dark city.

Williams described the inspiration for his poem as an encounter with a fire truck as it noisily sped along the streets of New York, abruptly shaking him from his inner thoughts to a jarring awareness of what was going on around him. Demuth chose to paint his portrait of Williams not as a likeness but with references to his friend, the poet. The dark, shadowed diagonal lines radiating from the center of his painting, punctuated by bright white circles, capture the jolt of the charging truck accompanied by the clamor of its bells. The accelerating beat of the figure 5 echoes the pounding of Williams's heart as he was startled. It was the sight of the number in gold that Williams was first aware of at the scene, and Demuth uses the pulsing 5 to symbolically portray his friend, surrounded by the rush of red as bright as blood with his name, Bill, above as if flashing in red neon. For Demuth, that connection between his friend and his poetry told us far more about who Williams was than his physical appearance. A traditional portrait would show us what Williams looked like, but Demuth wanted to share with the viewer the experience of the poem the artist closely identified with his friend so that we would have an inner, deeper understanding of the poet. Demuth gave us his personal interpretation of Williams through the story, the narrative, that he tells us with the aid of "The Great Figure."

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"Week 9 / March 27: Italian Futurism and Russian Constructivism." Introduction to the History of Modern Art, CUNY Academic Commons, 3 Jan. 2019, arh141.commons.gc.cuny.edu/week-9. CC BY-NCSA 4.0.

FAUVISM "WILD BEASTS"

Image 1.25 Henri Matisse, The Green Line, 1905, oil on canvas, 40.5 x 32.5 cm (Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen). CC0 US only.

Fauvism developed in France to become the first new artistic style of the 20th century. In contrast to the dark, vaguely disturbing nature of much fin-de-siècle, or turn-of-the-century, Symbolist art, the Fauves produced bright cheery landscapes and figure paintings, characterized by pure vivid color and bold distinctive brushwork.

When shown at the 1905 Salon d'Automne (an exhibition organized by artists in response to the conservative policies of the official exhibitions, or salons) in Paris, the contrast to traditional art was so striking it led critic Louis Vauxcelles to describe the artists as "*Les Fauves*" or "wild beasts," and thus the name was born. One of several Expressionist movements to emerge in the early 20th century, Fauvism was short lived, and by 1910, artists in the group had diverged toward more individual interests. Nevertheless, Fauvism remains significant for it demonstrated modern art's ability to evoke intensely emotional reactions through radical visual form.

THE EXPRESSIVE POTENTIAL OF COLOR

The best known Fauve artists include Henri Matisse, André Derain, and Maurice Vlaminck who pioneered its distinctive style. Their early works reveal the influence of Post-Impressionist artists, especially Neo-Impressionists like Paul Signac, whose interest in color's optical effects had led to a divisionist method of juxtaposing pure hues on canvas. The Fauves, however, lacked such scientific intent. They emphasized the expressive potential of color, employing it arbitrarily, not based on an object's natural appearance.

In *Luxe, calm et volupté* (1904), for example, Matisse employed a pointillist style by applying paint in small dabs and dashes. Instead of the subtle blending of complimentary colors typical of Neo-Impressionism Seurat, for example, the combination of fiery oranges, yellows, greens and purple is almost overpowering in its vibrant impact.

Similarly, while paintings such as Vlaminck's *The River Seine at Chantou* (1906) appear to mimic the spontaneous, active brushwork of Impressionism, the Fauves adopted a painterly approach to enhance their work's emotional power, not to capture fleeting effects of color, light or atmosphere on their subjects. Their preference for landscapes, carefree figures and lighthearted subject matter reflects their desire to create an art that would appeal primarily to the viewers' senses.

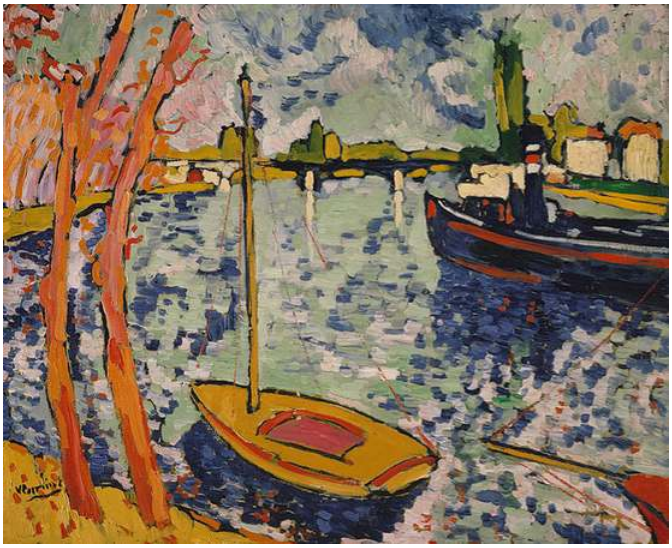

Image 1.26 Maurice de Vlaminck, *The River Seine at Chatou*, 1906, oil on canvas, 82.6 x 101.9 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). CC0.

Paintings such as Matisse's *Bonheur de Vivre* (1905-06) epitomize this goal. Bright colors and undulating lines pull our eye gently through the idyllic scene, encouraging us to imagine feeling the warmth of the sun, the cool of the grass, the soft touch of a caress, and the passion of a kiss. Like many modern artists, the Fauves also found inspiration in objects from Africa and other non-western cultures. Seen through a colonialist lens, the formal distinctions of African art reflected current notions of Primitivism–the belief that, lacking the corrupting influence of European civilization, non-western peoples were more in tune with the primal elements of nature.

**Figure 7.39 | Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, CA**
Author: John O'Neill
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Image 1.27 Henri Matisse, *Bonheur de Vivre (Joy of Life)*, 1905-6, oil on canvas, 176.5 x 240.7 cm (Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia). CC0 US only.

*Blue Nude (Souvenir of Biskra)* of 1907 shows how Matisse combined his traditional subject of the female nude with the influence of primitive sources. The woman's face appears mask-like in the use of strong outlines and harsh contrasts of light and dark, and the hard lines of her body recall the angled planar surfaces common to African sculpture. This distorted effect, further heightened by her contorted pose, clearly distinguishes the figure from the idealized odalisques of Ingres and painters of the past.

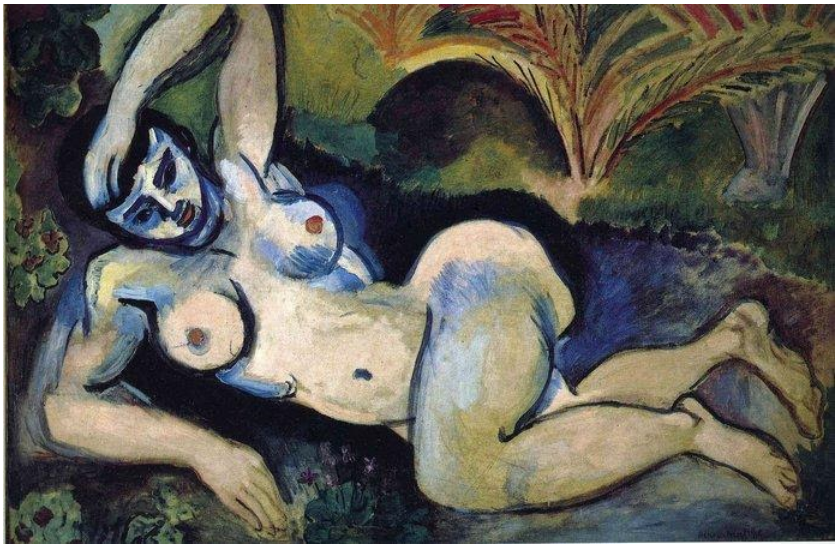

Image 1.28 Henri Matisse, *The Blue Nude (Souvenir de Biskra)*, 1907, oil on canvas, 92.1 x 140.3 cm (Baltimore Museum of Art). CC0 US only.

The Fauves' interest in Primitivism reinforced their reputation as “wild beasts” who sought new possibilities for art through their exploration of direct expression, impactful visual forms and instinctual appeal.

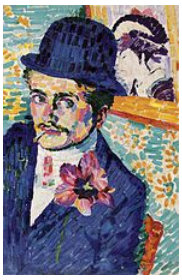

Image 1.29 *L'homme à la tulipe (Portrait de Jean Metzinger)* Fauvist painting by Jean Metzinger - 1906. WikiArt. CC0.

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“A Beginner’s Guide to Fauvism (Article).” Khan Academy, Khan Academy, www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/early-abstraction/fauvism-matisse/a/a-beginners-guide-to-fauvism. Accessed 6 May 2021. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 US.

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# 1.5: Modernist Poetry

1.5 Modernist Poetry

Writer Virginia Woolf stated that human nature underwent a fundamental change 'on or about December 1910.'

Understanding the context of literary modernism (specifically, modernist poetry) is important. What prompted such a “fundamental change” in human nature? The rise of cities; profound technological changes in transportation, architecture, and engineering; a rising population that engendered crowds and chaos in public spaces; factory life; and the aftermath of WWI. These influential factors contributed to making individuals feel less unique and more alienated, fragmented, and at a loss in their daily lives and larger worlds.

Indeed, the speaker of modernist poems characteristically wrestles with the fundamental question of “self,” often feeling fragmented and alienated from the world around him. In other words, a coherent speaker with a clear sense of himself/herself is hard to find in modernist poetry, often leaving readers confused and “lost.”

Such ontological feelings of fragmentation and alienation, which often led to a more pessimistic and bleak outlook on life as manifested in representative modernist poems such as T.S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1917), were prompted by fundamental and far-reaching historical, social, cultural, and economic changes in the early 1900s. These changes transformed the world from one that seemed ordered and stable to one that felt futile and chaotic.

For many, high modernism is perhaps best characterized by the emergence of a new kind of poetry. The battle cry of the modernists —"make it new"—is reflected in the experimental, difficult, highly allusive nature of much of the poetry written during this time.

Probably the easiest truism to make about the poetry of the early twentieth century, a time known by the name **Modernism**, is that it was boldly experimental. It was more experimental with regard to form and subject than poetry had been in any period in its English-language history. (The only time to rival it occurred in the late middle ages, when syllabic, alliterative verse gave way to meter and rhyme.) In the Modernist period, long-standing conventions of meter and rhyme were swept away, with nothing as definite as syllable or meter to determine the length of a line, and no definite pattern of sound. One of the most prominent and influential poets of the era, the American Ezra Pound, stated at one point that it was his task to “break the back of the iamb”—which, as you learned several weeks to, had been the most prominent feature of poetry since the time of Chaucer.

Pound and the Modernists had great success in freeing poetry from the straitjacket of meter. Although traditional forms and meters did not disappear, they no longer dominated poetry. It was a time when it seemed that almost anything was possible. Poems varied from the astonishingly simple verse written by William Carlos Williams, H.D., and Amy Lowell, to the highly allusive, imbricated verse of Pound and T.S. Eliot.

If twentieth- and twenty-first-century students in the English speaking world are quick to take the stand that a poem means whatever the reader thinks it means (a statement that would not have occurred to a living soul between Adam and about 1920), we probably have the Modernists to thank for it. Although there’s no evidence I know of to suggest that Modernists anticipated that state of affairs in which readers confronted with the difficulty of the text simply gave up and declared “It means whatever I want it to mean,”they perhaps unwittingly invited their readers to do so. The fact is that much of this poetry assumes a reader as adept in poetry and, in fact, in all of literature as the authors were themselves—and sometimes adept in other things as well (Ezra Pound now and then included Chinese characters in his poems even though he did not read or speak Chinese). Modernists often expected their readers to do the necessary research, to struggle through and find out what their writing was all about. (James Joyce, a writer of fiction, once suggested that to understand his work, a reader would have to devote his entire life to studying it.) These works do not imply the knowledge base or reading sophistication of the average 18-year old. And much of this poetry is too open or too associative in its logic to be easily restricted to any single, monolithic understanding.

Much of the literature of the time manifests a desire not to give up on reading but to change the way that we read. If you try to read Eliot’s poetry in the same way that you read Beowulf, Paradise Lost or Lyrical Ballads you will be frustrated. The hierarchy of value has been broken. In that hierarchy allusions support—are subject to—a singular, central meaning. In Modernist poetry, the element of meaning, while still absolutely present, is no longer king; it is limited, but no longer necessarily singular.

In fact, Modernist poetry takes advantage of an aspect of language which poetry would seem to have a natural affinity for: even the simplest, easiest-to-understand utterance is potentially infinite in its meaning—or in its ability to create and become involved with

meaning. There's nothing radical about that claim. For a word to be transferable from any one context to any other context it must be infinitely transferable. Most often actual uses of language—me talking to you, me writing this lecture to you, you talking on the phone to your mother, Shakespeare performing the ghost of Hamlet's father—work very hard to limit the ways that the words can be taken. But this does not affect the fact that language is in itself illimitable. It is like liquid which must be precisely held in a solid container or it goes everywhere. The container will give it measurable shape. In itself it has no shape but will conform for the moment to whatever shape it finds itself in. Modernist poetry still gives language shape, but it tends to give it a looser shape, shapes that let more of its inherently shapelessness appear.

That's not to say that all twentieth-century poetry or even all Modernist poetry is this way. In addition to Williams and Eliot and Pound, there is Robert Frost, and Elizabeth Bishop, and Edna St. Vincent Millay, and William Butler Yeats—and of course many many others—who work in traditional forms. Eliot himself often rhymes, often writes in iambic pentameter. So does Williams and sometimes even Pound. There's a lot of experiment going on in Modernist poetry; it involves every aspect of language. Early twentieth-century poetry is characterized more by this experimentation than by its frequent lack of meter or rhyme.

While not every poet of the mid- to late-twentieth century took Whitman as the model, the poetry of this Postmodern era generally became simpler, easier to read, while it retained the poetic movement away from traditional forms dominated by rhyme and meter. Indeed, during the sixties and seventies it would have been difficult to find a newly published poem that rhymed. At present poetry is doing nothing more profoundly than trying to figure out why it exists in a world in which more and more poetry is published by smaller and smaller presses for fewer and fewer readers, most of them academics, poets, or students. Poetry still has occasional high-profile moments, such as when Maya Angelou read a poem at Bill Clinton's second inaugural, or when a celebration of poetry was abruptly cancelled at the White House for fear the invited poets would use the platform to protest America's invasion of Iraq. But at present poetry in the English-speaking world, leads a mostly underground life. It is still everywhere, most people, most of the time, manage to ignore it.

There were those, like Wallace Stevens, who said that poetry did not need to have a meaning. But that's not the same as saying that poetry means whatever you want it to.

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MODERNIST POEMS

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

by TS Eliot

*S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse*

*A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,*

*Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.*

*Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo*

*Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,*

*Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.*

Let us go then, you and I,

When the evening is spread out against the sky

Like a patient etherized upon a table;

Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,

The muttering retreats

Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels

And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:

Streets that follow like a tedious argument

Of insidious intent

To lead you to an overwhelming question ...

Oh, do not ask, “What is it?”

Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go

Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,

The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,

Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,

Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,

Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,

Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,

And seeing that it was a soft October night,

Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time

For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,

Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;

There will be time, there will be time

To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;

There will be time to murder and create,

And time for all the works and days of hands

That lift and drop a question on your plate;

Time for you and time for me,

And time yet for a hundred indecisions,

And for a hundred visions and revisions,

Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go

Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time

To wonder, “Do I dare?” and, “Do I dare?”

Time to turn back and descend the stair,

With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—

(They will say: “How his hair is growing thin!”)

My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,

My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—

(They will say: “But how his arms and legs are thin!”)

Do I dare

Disturb the universe?

In a minute there is time

For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:

Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,

I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;

I know the voices dying with a dying fall

Beneath the music from a farther room.

So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—

The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,

And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,

When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,

Then how should I begin

To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?

And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—

Arms that are braceleted and white and bare

(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)

Is it perfume from a dress

That makes me so digress?

Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.

And should I then presume?

And how should I begin?

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets

And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes

Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? ...

I should have been a pair of ragged claws

Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!

Smoothed by long fingers,

Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers,

Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.

Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,

Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?

But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,

Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,

I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;

I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,

And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,

And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,

After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,

Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,

Would it have been worth while,

To have bitten off the matter with a smile,

To have squeezed the universe into a ball

To roll it toward some overwhelming question,

To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,

Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—

If one, settling a pillow by her head,

Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;

That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,

Would it have been worth while,

After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,

After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the

floor—

And this, and so much more?—

It is impossible to say just what I mean!

But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:

Would it have been worth while

If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,

And turning toward the window, should say:

"That is not it at all,

That is not what I meant, at all."

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;

Am an attendant lord, one that will do

To swell a progress, start a scene or two,

Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,

Deferential, glad to be of use,

Politic, cautious, and meticulous;

Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;

At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—

Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old ... I grow old ...

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?

I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.

I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves

Combing the white hair of the waves blown back

When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea

By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown

Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Remixed from:

Eloit, T.S.(1998) Prufrock and Other Observations. Urbana, Illinois: Project Gutenberg. Retrieved April 7, 2022, from www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1459. CC0.

DANSE RUSSE

By William Carlos Williams

If I when my wife is sleeping
and the baby and Kathleen
are sleeping
and the sun is a flame-white disc
in silken mists
above shining trees,—
if I in my north room
danse naked, grotesquely
before my mirror
waving my shirt round my head
and singing softly to myself:
“I am lonely, lonely.{45}
I was born to be lonely.
I am best so!”
If I admire my arms, my face
my shoulders, flanks, buttocks
against the yellow drawn shades,—

who shall say I am not
the happy genius of my household?

Remixed from:

Williams, Carlos Williams. (2016) Al Que Quiere! Urbana, Illinois: Project Gutenberg. Retrieved April 7, 2022, from www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/51997. CC0.

Personae

By Ezra Pound

Revolt

Against the crepuscular spirit in
modern poetry

Revolt

Against the crepuscular spirit in
modern poetry

I would shake off the lethargy of this our time,
and give
For shadows—shapes of power
For dreams—men.

"It is better to dream than do"?
Aye! and, No!

Aye! if we dream great deeds, strong men,
Hearts hot, thoughts mighty.

No! if we dream pale flowers,
Slow-moving pageantry of hours that languidly
Drop as o'er-ripened fruit from sallow trees.
If so we live and die not life but dreams,
Great God, grant life in dreams,
Not dalliance, but life!

Let us be men that dream,
Not cowards, dabblers, waiters
For dead Time to reawaken and grant balm
For ills unnamed.

Great God, if we be damn'd to be not men but only dreams,
Then let us be such dreams the world shall tremble at
And know we be its rulers though but dreams!
Then let us be such shadows as the world shall tremble at
And know we be its masters though but shadow!

Great God, if men are grown but pale sick phantoms
That must live only in these mists and tempered lights
And tremble for dim hours that knock o'er loud
Or tread too violent in passing them;

Great God, if these thy sons are grown such thin ephemera,
I bid thee grapple chaos and beget

Some new titanic spawn to pile the hills and stir
This earth again.

I would shake off the lethargy of this our time,
and give
For shadows—shapes of power
For dreams—men.

"It is better to dream than do"?
Aye! and, No!

Aye! if we dream great deeds, strong men,
Hearts hot, thoughts mighty.

No! if we dream pale flowers,
Slow-moving pageantry of hours that languidly
Drop as o'er-ripened fruit from sallow trees.
If so we live and die not life but dreams,
Great God, grant life in dreams,
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Not cowards, dabblers, waiters
For dead Time to reawaken and grant balm
For ills unnamed.

Great God, if we be damn'd to be not men but only dreams,
Then let us be such dreams the world shall tremble at
And know we be its rulers though but dreams!
Then let us be such shadows as the world shall tremble at
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Great God, if men are grown but pale sick phantoms
That must live only in these mists and tempered lights
And tremble for dim hours that knock o'er loud
Or tread too violent in passing them;

Great God, if these thy sons are grown such thin ephemera,
I bid thee grapple chaos and beget
Some new titanic spawn to pile the hills and stir
This earth again.

Remixed from:

Pound, Ezra. (2012). Personae. Urbana, Illinois: Project Gutenberg. Retrieved April 7, 2022, from www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/41162. CC0.

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# 1.6: The Birth of Film

1.6 The Birth of Film

THE BIRTH OF FILM

WHAT IS CIMEMA?

Is it the same as a *movie* or *film*? Does it include digital video, broadcast content, streaming media? Is it a highbrow term reserved only for European and art house feature films? Or is it a catch-all for any time a series of still images run together to produce the illusion of movement, whether in a multi-plex theater or the 5-inch screen of a smart phone?

Technically, the word itself derives from the ancient Greek, *kinema*, meaning movement. Historically, it's a shortened version of the French *cinematographe*, an invention of two brothers, Auguste and Louis Lumiere, that combined *kinema* with another Greek root, *graphien*, meaning to write or record.

The "recording of movement" seems as good a place as any to begin an exploration of the moving image. And *cinema* seems broad (or vague) enough to capture the essence of the form, whether we use it specifically in reference to that art house film, or to refer to the more commonplace production and consumption of *movies*, *TV*, *streaming series*, *videos*, *interactive gaming*, *VR*, *AR* or whatever new technology mediates our experience of the moving image. Because ultimately that's what all of the above have in common: the moving image. Cinema, in that sense, stands at the intersection of art and technology like nothing else. As an art form it would not exist without the technology required to capture the moving image. But the mere ability to record a moving image would be meaningless without the art required to capture our imagination.

But cinema is much more than the intersection of art and technology. It is also, and maybe more importantly, a powerful medium of communication. Like language itself, cinema is a surrounding and enveloping substance that carries with it what it means to be human in a specific time and place. That is to say, it *mediates* our experience of the world, helps us make sense of things, and in doing so, often helps shape the world itself. It's why we often find ourselves confronted by some extraordinary event and find the only way to describe it is: "It was like a movie."

In fact, for more than a century, filmmakers and audiences have collaborated on a massive, ongoing, largely unconscious social experiment: the development of a **cinematic language**, the fundamental and increasingly complex rules for how cinema communicates meaning. There is a syntax, a grammar, to cinema that has developed over time. And these rules, as with any language, are iterative, that is, they form and evolve through repetition, both within and between each generation. As children we are socialized into ways of seeing through children's programming, cartoons and YouTube videos. As adults we become more sophisticated in our understanding of the rules, able to innovate, re-combine, become creative with the language. And every generation or so, we are confronted with great leaps forward in technology that re-orient and often advance our understanding of how the language works.

And therein lies the critical difference between cinematic language and every other means of communication. The innovations and complexity of modern written languages have taken more than 5,000 years to develop. Multiply that by at least 10 for spoken language.

Cinematic language has taken just a little more than 100 years to come into its own.

In January 1896 those two brothers, Auguste and Louis Lumiere, set up their *cinematographe*, a combination motion picture camera and projector, at a café in Lyon, France and presented their short film, *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station) to a paying audience. It was a simple film, aptly titled, of a train pulling into a station. The static camera positioned near the tracks capturing a few would-be passengers milling about as the train arrived, growing larger and larger in the frame until it steamed past and slowed to a stop. There was no editing, just one continuous shot. A mere 50 seconds long… And it blew the minds of everyone who saw it.

Click here to watch the short film: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjtXXypztyw&t=3s

A scene from the film…

Image 1.30

Accounts vary as to the specifics of the audience reaction. Some claim the moving image of a train hurtling toward the screen struck fear among those in attendance, driving them from their seats in a panic. Others underplay the reaction, noting only that no one had seen anything like it. Which, of course, wasn't entirely true either. It wasn't the first motion picture. The Lumiere brothers had projected a series of 10 short films in Paris the year before. An American inventor, Woodville Latham, had developed his own projection system that same year. And Thomas Edison had invented a similar apparatus before that.

But one thing is certain: that early film, as simple as it was, changed the way we see the world and ourselves. From the early *actualite* documentary short films of the Lumieres, to the wild, theatrical flights of fancy of Georges Melies, to the epic narrative films of Lois Weber and D. W. Griffith, the new medium slowly but surely developed its own unique cinematic language. Primitive at first, limited in its visual vocabulary, but with unlimited potential. And as filmmakers learned how to use that language to re-create the world around them through moving pictures, we learned right along with them. Soon we were no longer awed (much less terrified) by a two-dimensional image of a train pulling into a station, but we were no less enchanted by the possibilities of the medium with the addition of narrative structure, editing, production design, and (eventually) sound and color cinematography.

Since that January day in Lyon, we have all been active participants in this ongoing development of a cinematic language. As the novelty short films of those early pioneers gave way to a global entertainment industry centered on Hollywood and its factory-like production of discrete, 90-minute narrative feature films. As the invention of broadcast technology in the first half of the 20th century gave way to the rise of television programming and serialized story-telling. And as the internet revolution at the end of the

20th century gave way to the streaming content of the 21st, from binge-worthy series lasting years on end to one-minute videos on social media platforms like Snapchat and TikTok. Each evolution of the form borrowed from and built on what came before, both in terms of how filmmakers tell their stories and how we experience them. And in as much as we may be mystified and even amused by the audience reaction to that simple depiction of a train pulling into a station back in 1896, imagine how that same audience would respond to the last Avengers film projected in IMAX 3D.

We've certainly come a long, long way.

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Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat (1896) – LOUIS LUMIERE – L'Arrivee d'un Train a La Ciotat by Change Before Going Productions. Standard YouTube License.

Sharman, Russell Leigh. Moving Pictures. University of Arkansas Press. May 20, 2020. CC BY-NC- SA 4.0.

A NEW HOPE

While much of this (very) brief history of cinema has focused on the media machine that is the Hollywood studio system, cinema – that is, the art of motion pictures – lives and breathes outside of that capital-intensive entertainment ecosystem. And it always has.

Alice Guy-Blachè, Georges Melies, Lois Weber, D.W. Griffith, and most of the very first cinema artists operated independently of any corporate studio. And during that great Golden Age of cinema, which was so dominated by Hollywood studios, independent producers like David O. Selznick were putting out massively popular films like Alfred Hitchcock's Rebecca (1940) and the perennially remade A Star is Born (1937). One of the most successful films of the era, Gone with the Wind (1939) was arguably an "indie" picture (Selznick produced it with MGM as distributor). In fact, the New Hollywood of the 60s and 70s could not have taken hold at the corporate level without visionary filmmakers like Mike Nichols, Dennis Hopper and Hal Ashby working outside of the studio system:

As the technology required to make motion pictures became easier and cheaper to acquire, more and more cinema artists chose to work outside of the studio system. Towering figures like Shirley Clarke in the 1960s, John Cassavetes in the 1970s and Jim Jarmusch in the 1980s put out provocative and engaging cinema with limited distribution to match their limited budgets but often with enormous cultural impact. That trend continued into the 1990s and 2000s, supported by new production and distribution companies like Miramax (founded by the now disgraced Harvey Weinstein) that insisted on working outside of the studio system and often outside of Los Angeles itself.

That independent spirit in American cinema also created space for women and people of color to have a voice in the art form. A quick scan of the history above and you'll notice there are not a lot of women's names. And almost all of the men are white. But filmmakers like Shirley Clarke, Julie Dash and Allison Anders didn't wait around for Hollywood to give them permission to make great cinema. Nor did the filmmakers of the early so-called Blaxploitation movement (though their success was eventually and sadly co-opted by white filmmakers).

And as the massive corporate consolidation of the American media landscape has created a narrowing of cinematic content from the big studios, that indie spirit – along with a healthy dose of investor interest – has lead to new innovations in production and distribution models. Whether it's pre-selling foreign rights to a script to fund its production, or turning to streaming services for funding in return for exclusive rights to content, filmmakers continue to find new ways to push the boundaries of what is possible in cinema. Just take a look at the nominees for best picture at any of the recent Academy Awards ceremonies. Once dominated by studio-financed pictures, almost all of them are now independent productions.

But perhaps the most exciting new direction in cinema is not found in theaters at all. For more than a century, cinema has been most closely associated with that roughly 90 minute, closed-ended feature film playing at a theater near you. And while that continues to be an important cinematic space, the rise of cable and streaming services in desperate need of content has created exciting new frontiers to explore for the medium. No longer restricted to those 90 or so minutes, cinema can sprawl over 100s of hours or even just a few cut into 30 minutes chunks. And while it's tempting to call this a new Golden Age of Television, even the term "television" no longer seems appropriate. We consume this content on all manner of devices, on our phones, laptops, even our wristwatches. Even theatrical content has picked up on the trend. What is the Fast and Furious, the Transformers or The Avengers franchises but multi-billion dollar episodic series distributed to theaters (and after a few months to our phones, laptops and wristwatches)?

Ultimately, regardless of how it's made or how we engage with it, all of the above still fits into one artistic medium: cinema, the art of the motion picture. The tools and techniques, the principals of form and content, are all exactly the same. And that will be true whatever comes next, whether it's VR, AR or a cinema-chip implanted in our visual cortex (heaven forbid…). Mise-en-scene, narrative, cinematography, editing, sound and acting will all still matter. And our understanding of how those tools and techniques not only shape the medium, but also shape our culture will also still matter. Maybe more than ever.

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# 1.7: Modern Architecture

1.7 Modern Architecture

Image 1.31 Frank Lloyd Wright, Fallingwater (aka Kaufmann Residence), Bear Run, Pennsylvania (photo: Carol M. Highsmith archive, Library of Congress #LC-DIG-highsm-04261). CC0.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

Perched above a mountain cataract on a rocky hillside deep in the rugged forest of Southwestern Pennsylvania, some 90 minutes from Pittsburgh, is America's most famous house. The commission for Fallingwater was a personal milestone for the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, since it clearly marked a turning point in his career. After this late-career triumph, the sixty-seven year old would go on to create a series of highly original designs that would validate his claim as "The world's greatest architect of the nineteenth-century."

The mid-1930s were among the darkest years for architecture and architects in American history; the country's financial system had collapsed with the failure of hundreds of banks. Almost no private homes were built. Many of the architectural projects started during the boom of the late 1920s were halted for lack of funds. Now in his sixties, Wright and his new wife Olgivanna were struggling to keep Taliesin, his Wisconsin home and studio, out of foreclosure. Worse still, his peers were beginning to regard Wright as an irrelevant anachronism whose time had passed.

In 1932 Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson opened the "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition" at the newly founded Museum of Modern Art in New York and simultaneously published the book *International Style*. This was, perhaps, the most influential architectural exhibit ever mounted in the United States and the book became a manifesto for modern architecture and would profoundly affect almost every major architectural project worldwide for the next 30 years. It focused on the work of four great "European functionalists"" Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier and J.J.P. Oud. Wright was largely snubbed.

Hitchcock had praise for his early work, for its "many innovations," but he condemned Wright for a "[l]ack of continuity in his development and his unwillingness to absorb the innovations of his contemporaries and his juniors in Europe." Hitchcock insulted Wright further by characterizing him as "a rebel by temperament… [who] refused even the discipline of his own theories." The catalogue calls Wright a "half-modern" throwback, one of the "last representatives of Romanticism." Wright responded by denigrating European Modernism as an "evil crusade," a manifestation of "totalitarianism."

A FELLOWSHIP AND A COMMISSION

The Wrights devised an architectural apprenticeship program that came to be known as the “fellowship.” And among the first candidates was Edgar Kaufmann Jr. who became enamored with Wright after reading his biography. Kaufmann was the son of Pittsburgh department store tycoon Edgar Kaufmann Sr.; whose thirteen story downtown Pittsburgh emporium was reported to be the largest in the world. Kaufmann senior was no stranger to architectural pursuits—he was involved in numerous public projects and built several stores and homes. Kaufmann let Wright know that he had several civic architectural projects in mind for him. He and his wife Liliane were invited to Taliesin and were duly impressed.

There are varying accounts regarding the circumstances that brought Kaufmann to offer Wright a chance to design a “weekend home” in the country; but we know that Wright made his first trip to the site on Bear Run, Pennsylvania in December, 1934. Wright’s apprentice Donald Hoppen has spoken of Wright’s “uncanny sense of...genius loci” (Latin for "spirit of the place") and from the very beginning, the architect rejected a site that presented a conventional view of the waterfall; instead, he audaciously offered to make the house part of it, stating that the “visit to the waterfall in the woods stays with me and a domicile takes shape in my mind to the music of the stream.” The South-southeast orientation gives the illusion that the stream flows, not alongside the house, but through it.

Image 1.32 Fallingwater Floorplan (Arsenalbubs: Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication), http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fallingwaterfloorplan.jpg

Image 1.33 Frank Lloyd Wright, Fallingwater, steps to stream (aka Kaufmann Residence), Bear Run, Pennsylvania (photo: Daderot, CC0 1.0) http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fallingwater_-_DSC05600.JPG

FASTEST DRAW IN THE MIDWEST

Perhaps the most famous tale to come out of the lore of Fallingwater is the improbable story that Wright, after receiving the commission procrastinated for nine months until he was forced to draw up the complete plans while his patron was driving the 140 miles from Milwaukee to Taliesin. However, the essential story is validated by several witnesses. Apprentice Edgar Taffel recalled that after talking with Kaufmann on the phone, Wright “briskly emerged from his office...sat down at the table set with the plot plan and started to draw…The design just poured out of him. 'Liliane and E.J. will have tea on the balcony…they’ll cross the bridge to walk in the woods…' Pencils being used up as fast as we could sharpen them....Erasures, overdrawing, modifying. Flipping sheets back and forth. Then, the bold title across the bottom ‘Fallingwater.’ A house has to have a name.” There seems to be agreement that the whole process took about two hours.

(a) (b)

Image 1.34 Frank Lloyd Wright, Fallingwater (Edgar J. Kaufmann House), Mill Run, Pennsylvania, 1935, Color pencil on tracing paper, 15-3/8 x 27-1/4 inches, , © The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation CC0.

ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE

Edgar Kaufmann Jr. pointed out that Wright’s famous concept of “Organic Architecture” stems from his Transcendentalist background. The belief that human life is part of nature. Wright even incorporated a rock outcropping that projected above the living room floor into his massive central hearth, further uniting the house with the earth. “Can you say” Wright challenged his apprentices “when your building is complete, that the landscape is more beautiful than it was before?”

In his book, *Fallingwater Rising: Frank Lloyd Wright, E. J. Kaufmann, and America's Most Extraordinary House*, Franklin Toker wrote that, ”this delicate synthesis of nature and the built environment probably counts as the main reason why Fallingwater is such a well-loved work. The contouring of the house into cantilevered ledges responds so sympathetically to the rock strata of the stream banks that it does make Bear Run a more wondrous landscape than it had been before.”

(a) (b)

Image 1.35 Frank Lloyd Wright, Fallingwater (Edgar Kauffmann House), Bear Run, Pennsylvannia, 1937 (photo: Lykantrop) http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frank_Lloyd_Wright_-_Fallingwater_interior_2.JPG CC0.

Wright further emphasizes the connection with nature by liberal use of glass; the house has no walls facing the falls, only a central stone core for the fireplaces and stone columns. This provides elongated vistas leading the eye out to the horizon and the woods. Vincent Scully has pointed out that this reflects “an image of Modern man caught up in constant change and flow, holding on…to whatever seems solid but no longer regarding himself as the center of the world.” The architect’s creative use of “corner turning windows” without mullions causes corners to vanish. Wright even bows to nature by bending a trellis beam to accommodate a pre-existing tree.

Image 1.36 Frank Lloyd Wright, Fallingwater, detail with tree (Edgar J. Kaufmann House), 1937 (photo: Daderot, CC0 1.0) http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fallingwater_detail_-_DSC05656.JPG

INFLUENCES

Although he denied it, Wright was influenced by every conceivable architectural style, but Fallingwater owes little to his previous designs (the only exceptions being perhaps the use of irregular stones that are also found on Taliesin and his interest in strong horizontal lines). At Fallingwater, he appears to be more concerned with responding to the European Modernist design that he had in part inspired—but that had since eclipsed him. In effect, he set out to beat the Europeans at their own game, using elements of their idiom.

Image 1.37 Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer, competition entry for the Chicago Tribune Tower, 1922, perspective drawing, 22.5 x 13.3cm, gelatin silver print sheet (Harvard Art Museums)

We see, for example, inspiration drawn from the balconies of Gropius' design for the Chicago Tribune Tower competition, though instead of the stark white of the International Style, he paints his balconies a warmer, earthen tone in deference to nature and perhaps the Adobe dwellings of the American Southwest.

FALLINGWATER FALLING DOWN?

The Kaufmanns loved Wright's radical proposal to literally suspend the house over the waterfall. But Edgar Kaufmann Sr., ever the pragmatic business man (who had also studied engineering for a year at Yale) prudently sent a copy of Wright's blueprints to his engineer; who found the ground unstable and did not recommend that he proceed with the house. Wright was not happy with his client's lack of faith, but permitted an increase in the number and diameter of the structure's steel reinforcements—Kaufmann agreed to proceed. Its worth noting that the engineer's warnings later proved valid, an issue that "haunted" Wright for the rest of his life.

Image 1.38 Historic American Buildings Survey Cervin Robinson, Photographer, 18 August 1963 EXTERIOR FROM SOUTHWEST - Frederick C. Robie House, 5757 Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, Cook County, IL 5 x 7 inches (Library of Congress HABS ILL,16-CHIG,33--3) CC0.

Wright is famous for pushing the architectural envelope for dramatic effect. We see this is in the vast cantilevered wooden roof of Robie House in Chicago. In Fallingwater he chose ferro-concrete for his cantilevers, this use of reinforced concrete for the long suspended balconies was revolutionary. He boldly extended the balcony of the second floor master bedroom soaring six feet beyond the living room below.

Image 1.39 Frank Lloyd Wright, Fallingwater, steps to stream (Edgar J. Kaufmann House), Bear Run, Pennsylvania (photo: Daderot, CC0 1.0) http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fallingwater_-_DSC05639.JPG

However, due to the lack of proper support, cracks began appearing in the balcony floors soon after they were poured. Over the years since, cracks have been repeatedly repaired as the cantilevers continued to sag. By 2001 some of the 15 foot cantilevers had fallen more than 7 inches. To avoid a complete collapse, an ingenious system was devised using tensioned cables to correct the problem and stabilize Wright's masterwork.

Almost from the day of its completion, Fallingwater was celebrated around the world. The house and its architect were featured in major publications including the cover of *Time Magazine*. Over the years its fame has only increased. According to Franklin Toker, Fallingwater's most important contribution to Modern Architecture is surely the "acceptance of Modern architecture itself."

Frank Lloyd Wright is regarded by many as the greatest American architect. In his effort to develop an American style of architecture, he designed over 1,100 buildings. Wright is most noted for developing the distinctive Prairie School style of architecture.

Born in Wisconsin in 1867 to a teacher and a minister/musician, Wright grew up feeling a strong connection to nature. He enrolled at the University of Wisconsin at Madison to study civil engineering but left school after two years to begin work as an architect. Early in his career, Wright had the chance to spend five years working for Louis Sullivan, who was highly regarded for his work designing skyscrapers. Sullivan's belief that form follows function was highly influential on Wright as well as other architects.

The Prairie School style developed by Wright focused on single-story homes made of local materials. Wood was an especially important element and was often left unpainted and natural. Key buildings designed by Wright included his own home and the Robie House in Chicago, Fallingwater near Pittsburgh, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. Wright passed away at age 91 in 1959.

COMMERCE

Buildings for commerce have appeared over time. Early systems of trade and barter in some places eventually became formalized in ways that required marketplaces and commercial establishments with temporary or permanent housing. While open-air markets with vendor stalls continue to be used in many places, in others shops or full buildings evolved for commercial and service transactions. Our modern provisions for shopping centers and department stores were designed with different ideas about merchandising, sales, and consumerism but, as we have seen with the rapid rise of on-line shopping for durable and perishable goods, this scenario will likely be ever evolving. Indeed, grocery and department stores may become completely passé. But their development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries presented new possibilities for architectural design. An example is the Carson, Pirie, Scott and Company Store in Chicago, designed by Louis Sullivan (1856-1924, USA) and built in 1904. One of the early applications for steel frame, or "skeleton frame," construction that made the development of skyscrapers possible, this sort of building also opened new possibilities for retail and office space. Here, the large ground-floor windows and corner entrance could provide a great deal of display space for attracting pedestrians while the expansive multistory interior offered shoppers a wide array of goods, especially compared to the sorts of small shops and markets that had been its predecessors. Not only the structure but also the decorative approach was innovative, as Sullivan combined Beaux Arts ideas with Art Nouveau motifs in the building's surface design. The elaborate, curvilinear, plant-based motifs central to the Art Nouveau movement, c. 1890-1910, in cast metal relief panels above the doors and ground floor windows added to visual appeal for potential customers. New designs emerged for other commercial firms in this era as well. The Austrian Postal Savings Bank in Vienna, Austria, designed by architect Otto Wagner (1841-1918, Austria) has a huge multi-story façade covering a broad open interior space on the ground level; its sleek and modern aesthetic was startlingly new and different when it was completed in 1905.

Image 1.40

One of Wagner's aims in the design was to create a sense of strength and solidity that engendered trust and a feeling of financial security in customers. The main banking customer area is filled with natural light. Wagner used marble, steel, and polished glass for the simplified decoration of the reinforced (Image 1.36) concrete building, turning away from the Art Nouveau aesthetic and replacing it with his sense of modernism.

The use of steel and reinforced concrete that facilitated the advent of the skyscraper truly revolutionized architecture and began a contest for height that continues today. Wealthy entrepreneurs and ambitious developers from around the world have joined in the competition for buildings of modern distinction. One example is the Chrysler Building in New York City, designed by William van Alen (1883-1954, USA). (Image 1.38) Its décor in the Art Deco style (c. 1920-1940), including the ribbed, sunburst pattern made of stainless steel in the building's terraced crown, celebrates American industrialism and the automobile. At 1,046 feet, the Chrysler Building was for eleven months after its completion in 1930 the tallest in the world. (It was surpassed in 1931 by the Empire State Building at 1,454 feet.) A more recent example is the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lampur, Malaysia, designed by César Pelli (b. 1926, Argentina, lives USA). (Image 1.37)

Image 1.41

Inaugurated in 1999, they were the tallest buildings for several years and remain the tallest twin towers to this day. The buildings' design motifs are inspired by Islamic art and culture; for example, the shape of each tower is the Muslim symbol of Rub el Hizb, or two overlapping squares that form an eight-pointed star. Both structures house commercial and business concerns and symbolize the architecture of modern business. In the late twentieth century, architectural ingenuity, new materials, and the potential of computer design led some architects to develop radically innovative approaches to structures that might house any number of different types of needs. Among the most innovative in this regard is Frank Gehry (b. 1929, Canada, lives USA), who has designed

buildings all over the world including museums, business towers, residences, and theaters. In Los Angeles, he created the Walt Disney Concert Hall, completed in 2003. (Image 1.39)

**Figure 7.37 | The Top of the Chrysler Building, New York City, NY**

Author: User "Leena Hietanen"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Image 1.42

Using titanium sheathing for multiform, swooping curvilinear forms and volumes, Figure 7.37 his buildings are sculptural in effect from a visual standpoint. Yet in each case, his buildings have proven effective and dynamic in creating spaces for the activities they house. The acoustics of the concert hall are widely praised as is the beauty of the architectural form in capturing the whimsical spirit of Walt Disney, the creator of so many American comics, cartoons, and movies.

**Figure 7.39 | Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, CA**
Author: John O'Neill
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Image 1.43

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Sachant, Pamela; Blood, Peggy; LeMieux, Jeffery; and Tekippe, Rita, "Introduction to Art: Design, Context, and Meaning" (2016). Fine Arts Open Textbooks. 3. https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/arts-textbooks/3 CC BY SA.

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# 1.8: Music and Dance

1.8 Music & Dance

STRAVINSKY

Trying to understand Stravinsky's compositional process is probably impossible, or, at least, improbable. The "Neo-classicism" of Stravinsky is, in my opinion, a musical parallel to the art world's explorations of Dada and Surrealism. If you look at Dali's bent watches and try to tell the time you are attempting to do the same thing as making sense of Stravinsky's triads (non triads). You are correct that the harmonic material in Pulcinella ranges everywhere from completely tonal to completely bent out of shape—kind of like walking past fun house mirrors. Remember, that you are trying to understand the mind of a great composer who was infinitely playful, comical, and a major troublemaker. This will not solve your technical problem but I hope it gives you some perspective as you try to sort out your data. By the time Pulcinella came along the diatonic tonal system was dead and buried. Stravinsky was using exhumed parts of this dead system in the same way that Dr. Frankenstein was trying to create new life from old parts. Got the picture? What made Stravinsky so great was the fact that no matter what he stole (and he stole a lot of different stuff throughout his long career) he processed it in his own unique way and it came out sounding like Stravinsky. You may come up with a lot of data and exquisite formulas but pinning down Stravinsky is much like herding cats. Late in his career, when Stravinsky finally adopted many of the serial techniques invented by Arnold Schoenberg he used them in a way that sounded nothing like his Viennese contemporary. His ballet Agon is as fresh and bright as his earlier Petrushka, only the harmonic materials of tonality have been replaced with the vertical byproducts of tone rows. What is amazing about Stravinsky was his ability to reinvent himself with great regularity much like his contemporary, Picasso, an equally dangerous provocateur who used distortion to great effect.

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# 2: THE ROARING TWENTIES and THE GREAT FALL (1920’s-1945)

CHAPTER 2: THE ROARING TWENTIES & THE GREAT FALL (1920’s-1945)

Albert Potter, Modern Music, 1933-1936, linoleum cut on paper, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Irving Potter, 1989. CC0.

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# 2.1: The Jazz Age

2.1 The Jazz Age

The 1920s was a time of dramatic change in the United States. Many young people, especially those living in big cities, embraced a new morality that was much more permissive than that of previous generations. They listened to jazz music, especially in the nightclubs of Harlem. Although prohibition outlawed alcohol, criminal bootlegging and importing businesses thrived. The decade was not a pleasure cruise for everyone, however; in the wake of the Great War, many were left awaiting the promise of a new generation.

A NEW MORALITY

Many Americans were disillusioned in the post-World War I era, and their reactions took many forms. Rebellious American youth, in particular, adjusted to the changes by embracing a new morality that was far more permissive than the social mores of their parents. Many young women of the era shed their mother's morality and adopted the dress and mannerisms of a flapper, the Jazz Age female stereotype, seeking the endless party. Flappers wore shorter skirts, shorter hair, and more makeup, and they drank and smoked with the boys. Flappers' dresses emphasized straight lines from the shoulders to the knees, minimizing breasts and curves while highlighting legs and ankles. The male equivalent of a flapper was a "sheik," although that term has not remained as strong in the American vernacular. At the time, however, many of these fads became a type of conformity, especially among college-aged youths, with the signature bob haircut of the flapper becoming almost universal—in both the United States and overseas.

Image 2.1 The flapper look, seen here in "Flapper" by Ellen Pyle for the cover of The Saturday Evening Post in February 1922, was a national craze in American cities during the 1920s.

As men and women pushed social and cultural boundaries in the Jazz Age, sexual mores changed and social customs grew more permissive. "Petting parties" or "necking parties" became the rage on college campuses. Psychologist Sigmund Freud and British "sexologist" Havelock Ellis emphasized that sex was a natural and pleasurable part of the human experience. Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, launched an information campaign on birth control to give women a choice in the realm in which suffrage had changed little—the family. The popularization of contraception and the private space that the automobile offered to teenagers and unwed couples also contributed to changes in sexual behavior.

Flappers and sheiks also took their cues from the high-flying romances they saw on movie screens and confessions in movie magazines of immorality on movie sets. Movie posters promised: "Brilliant men, beautiful jazz babies, champagne baths, midnight

revels, petting parties in the purple dawn, all ending in one terrific smashing climax that makes you gasp." And "neckers, petters, white kisses, red kisses, pleasure-mad daughters, sensation-craving mothers . . . the truth: bold, naked, sensational."

New dances and new music—especially jazz—also characterized the Jazz Age. Born out of the African American community, jazz was a uniquely American music. The innovative sound emerged from a number of different communities and from a number of different musical traditions such as blues and ragtime. By the 1920s, jazz had spread from African American clubs in New Orleans and Chicago to reach greater popularity in New York and abroad. One New York jazz establishment, the Cotton Club, became particularly famous and attracted large audiences of hip, young, and white flappers and sheiks to see black entertainers play jazz (Image 2.2).

Image 2.2 Black jazz bands such as the King and Carter Jazzing Orchestra, photographed in 1921 by Robert Runyon, were immensely popular among white urbanites in the 1920s.

THE "NEW WOMAN"

The Jazz Age and the proliferation of the flapper lifestyle of the 1920s should not be seen merely as the product of postwar disillusionment and newfound prosperity. Rather, the search for new styles of dress and new forms of entertainment like jazz was part of a larger women's rights movement. The early 1920s, especially with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteeing full voting rights to women, was a period that witnessed the expansion of women's political power. The public flaunting of social and sexual norms by flappers represented an attempt to match gains in political equality with gains in the social sphere. Women were increasingly leaving the Victorian era norms of the previous generation behind, as they broadened the concept of women's liberation to include new forms of social expression such as dance, fashion, women's clubs, and forays into college and the professions.

Nor did the struggle for women's rights through the promotion and passage of legislation cease in the 1920s. In 1921, Congress passed the Promotion of the Welfare and Hygiene of Maternity and Infancy Act, also known as the Sheppard-Towner Act, which earmarked $1.25 million for well-baby clinics and educational programs, as well as nursing. This funding dramatically reduced the rate of infant mortality. Two years later, in 1923, Alice Paul drafted and promoted an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) that promised to end all sex discrimination by guaranteeing that "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction."

Yet, ironically, at precisely the time when the Progressive movement was achieving its long-sought-after goals, the movement itself was losing steam and the Progressive Era was coming to a close. As the heat of Progressive politics grew less intense, voter

participation from both sexes declined over the course of the 1920s. After the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, many women believed that they had accomplished their goals and dropped out of the movement. As a result, the proposed ERA stalled (the ERA eventually passed Congress almost fifty years later in 1972, but then failed to win ratification by a sufficient number of states), and, by the end of the 1920s, Congress even allowed funding for the Sheppard-Towner Act to lapse.

The growing lethargy toward women's rights was happening at a time when an increasing number of women were working for wages in the U.S. economy—not only in domestic service, but in retail, healthcare and education, offices, and manufacturing. Beginning in the 1920s, women's participation in the labor force increased steadily. However, most were paid less than men for the same type of work based on the rationale that they did not have to support a family. While the employment of single and unmarried women had largely won social acceptance, married women often suffered the stigma that they were working for pin money—frivolous additional discretionary income.

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# 2.2: The Great Migration

2.2 The Great Migration

Image 2.3 Jacob Lawrence, The Migration series, Panel No. 1: During World War I there was a great migration north by Southern African Americans, 1940–41. Casein tempera on hardboard, 12 × 18” (30.5 × 45.7 cm). The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. (Photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the Great Depression, nearly two million African Americans fled the rural South to seek new opportunities elsewhere. While some moved west, the vast majority of this **Great Migration**, as the large exodus of African Americans leaving the South in the early twentieth century was called, traveled to the Northeast and Upper Midwest. The following cities were the primary destinations for these African Americans: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Indianapolis. These eight cities accounted for over two-thirds of the total population of the African American migration.

A combination of both “push” and “pull” factors played a role in this movement. Despite the end of the Civil War and the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution (ending slavery, ensuring equal protection under the law, and protecting the right to vote, respectively), African Americans were still subjected to intense racial hatred. The rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War led to increased death threats, violence, and a wave of lynchings. Even after the formal dismantling of the Klan in the late 1870s, racially motivated violence continued. According to researchers at the Tuskegee Institute, there were thirty-five hundred racially motivated lynchings and other murders committed in the South between 1865 and 1900. For African Americans fleeing this culture of violence, northern and midwestern cities offered an opportunity to escape the dangers of the South.

In addition to this “push” out of the South, African Americans were also “pulled” to the cities by factors that attracted them, including job opportunities, where they could earn a wage rather than be tied to a landlord, and the chance to vote (for men, at least), supposedly free from the threat of violence. Although many lacked the funds to move themselves north, factory owners and other businesses that sought cheap labor assisted the migration. Often, the men moved first then sent for their families once they were ensconced in their new city life. Racism and a lack of formal education relegated these African American workers to many of the lower-paying unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. More than 80 percent of African American men worked menial jobs in steel mills, mines, construction, and meat packing. In the railroad industry, they were often employed as porters or servants (Image 2.4). In other businesses, they worked as janitors, waiters, or cooks. African American women, who faced discrimination due to both

their race and gender, found a few job opportunities in the garment industry or laundries, but were more often employed as maids and domestic servants. Regardless of the status of their jobs, however, African Americans earned higher wages in the North than they did for the same occupations in the South, and typically found housing to be more available.

Image 2.4 African American men who moved north as part of the Great Migration were often consigned to menial employment, such as working in construction or as porters on the railways (a), such as in the celebrated Pullman dining and sleeping cars (b).

However, such economic gains were offset by the higher cost of living in the North, especially in terms of rent, food costs, and other essentials. As a result, African Americans often found themselves living in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions, much like the tenement slums in which European immigrants lived in the cities. For newly arrived African Americans, even those who sought out the cities for the opportunities they provided, life in these urban centers was exceedingly difficult. They quickly learned that racial discrimination did not end at the Mason-Dixon Line, but continued to flourish in the North as well as the South. European immigrants, also seeking a better life in the cities of the United States, resented the arrival of the African Americans, whom they feared would compete for the same jobs or offer to work at lower wages. Landlords frequently discriminated against them; their rapid influx into the cities created severe housing shortages and even more overcrowded tenements. Homeowners in traditionally White neighborhoods later entered into covenants in which they agreed not to sell to African American buyers; they also often fled neighborhoods into which African Americans had gained successful entry. In addition, some bankers practiced mortgage discrimination, later known as “redlining,” in order to deny home loans to qualified buyers. Such pervasive discrimination led to a concentration of African Americans in some of the worst slum areas of most major metropolitan cities, a problem that remained ongoing throughout most of the twentieth century.

So why move to the North, given that the economic challenges they faced were similar to those that African Americans encountered in the South? The answer lies in noneconomic gains. Greater educational opportunities and more expansive personal freedoms mattered greatly to the African Americans who made the trek northward during the Great Migration. State legislatures and local school districts allocated more funds for the education of both Blacks and Whites in the North, and also enforced compulsory school attendance laws more rigorously. Similarly, unlike the South where a simple gesture (or lack of a deferential one) could result in physical harm to the African American who committed it, life in larger, crowded northern urban centers permitted a degree of anonymity—and with it, personal freedom—that enabled African Americans to move, work, and speak without deferring to every White person with whom they crossed paths. Psychologically, these gains more than offset the continued economic challenges that Black migrants faced.

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# 2.3: The Harlem Renaissance

2.3 The Harlem Renaissance

It wasn't only women who found new forms of expression in the 1920s. African Americans were also expanding their horizons and embracing the concept of the "new Negro." The decade witnessed the continued Great Migration of African Americans to the North, with over half a million fleeing the strict Jim Crow laws of the South. Life in the northern states, as many African Americans discovered, was hardly free of discrimination and segregation. Even without Jim Crow, businesses, property owners, employers, and private citizens typically practiced *de facto* segregation, which could be quite stifling and oppressive. Nonetheless, many southern Blacks continued to move north into segregated neighborhoods that were already bursting at the seams, because the North, at the very least, offered two tickets toward Black progress: schools and the vote. The Black population of New York City doubled during the decade. As a result, Harlem, a neighborhood at the northern end of Manhattan, became a center for Afro-centric art, music, poetry, and politics. Political expression in the Harlem of the 1920s ran the gamut, as some leaders advocated a return to Africa, while others fought for inclusion and integration.

Revived by the wartime migration and fired up by the violence of the postwar riots, urban Blacks developed a strong cultural expression in the 1920s that came to be known as the Harlem Renaissance. In this rediscovery of Black culture, African American artists and writers formulated an independent Black culture and encouraged racial pride, rejecting any emulation of American culture. Claude McKay's poem "If We Must Die" called on African Americans to start fighting back in the wake of the Red Summer riots of 1919. Langston Hughes, often nicknamed the "poet laureate" of the movement, invoked sacrifice and the just cause of civil rights in "The Colored Soldier," while another author of the movement, Zora Neale Hurston, celebrated the life and dialect of rural Blacks in a fictional, all-Black town in Florida. Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was published in 1937.

Image 2.5 The Jamaican-born poet and novelist Claude McKay articulated the new sense of self and urban community of African Americans during the Harlem Renaissance. Although centered in the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan, this cultural movement emerged in urban centers throughout the Northeast and Midwest.

The new Negro found political expression in a political ideology that celebrated African Americans distinct national identity. This **Negro nationalism**, as some referred to it, proposed that African Americans had a distinct and separate national heritage that should inspire pride and a sense of community. An early proponent of such nationalism was W. E. B. Du Bois. One of the founders of the NAACP, a brilliant writer and scholar, and the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard, Du Bois openly rejected assumptions of White supremacy. His conception of Negro nationalism encouraged Africans to work together in support of their

own interests, promoted the elevation of Black literature and cultural expression, and, most famously, embraced the African continent as the true homeland of all ethnic Africans—a concept known as Pan-Africanism.

Taking Negro nationalism to a new level was Marcus Garvey. Like many Black Americans, the Jamaican immigrant had become utterly disillusioned with the prospect of overcoming racism in the United States in the wake of the postwar riots and promoted a "Back to Africa" movement. To return African Americans to a presumably more welcoming home in Africa, Garvey founded the **Black Star Steamship Line**. He also started the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which attracted thousands of primarily lower-income working people. UNIA members wore colorful uniforms and promoted the doctrine of a "negritude" that reversed the color hierarchy of White supremacy, prizing Blackness and identifying light skin as a mark of inferiority. Intellectual leaders like Du Bois, whose lighter skin put him low on Garvey's social order, considered the UNIA leader a charlatan. Garvey was eventually imprisoned for mail fraud and then deported, but his legacy set the stage for Malcolm X and the Black Power movement of the 1960s.

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# 2.4: Modern Art

2.4 Modern Art

DADA MOVEMENT

Image 2.6 Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, ready-made, replica of 1917 original, now lost, made in 1964. CC0.

Fountain was submitted to the Society of Independent Artists, one of the first venues for experimental art in the United States. It is a new form of art Duchamp called the “readymade”— a mass-produced or found object that the artist transformed into art by the operation of selection and naming. The readymades challenged the very idea of artistic production, and what constitutes art in a gallery or museum. Duchamp provoked his viewers—testing the the exhibition organizers’ liberal claim to accept all works with “no judge, no prize” without the conservative bias that made it difficult to exhibit modern art in most museums and galleries. Duchamp’s *Fountain* did more than test the validity of this claim: it prompted questions about what we mean by art altogether—and who gets to decide what art is.

Duchamp’s provocation characterized not only his art, but also the short-lived, enigmatic, and incredibly diverse transnational group of artists who constituted a movement known as Dada. These artists were so diverse that they could hardly be called a coherent group, and they themselves rejected the whole idea of an art movement. Instead, they proclaimed themselves an anti-movement in various journals, manifestos, poems, performances, and what would come to be known as artistic “gestures” such as Duchamp’s submission of Fountain.

Dada artists worked in a wide range of media, frequently using irreverent humor and wordplay to examine relationships between art and language and voice opposition to outdated and destructive social customs. Although it was a fleeting phenomenon, lasting only from about 1914-1918 (and coinciding with WWI), Dada succeeded in irrevocably changing the way we view art, opening it up to a variety of experimental media, themes, and practices that still inform art today. Duchamp’s idea of the readymade has been one of the most important legacies of Dada.

In a 1936 essay titled “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” the German philosopher and cultural theorist, Walter Benjamin, proclaimed that the industrial age had changed everything about the way we view art. He believed that new technologies for mass production and media (such as photography) would invalidate the remnants of classical artistic traditions that were still being promoted by institutions such as art academies and museums.

Duchamp's idea of the readymade, which he began exploring with works such as Bicycle Wheel and Bottle Rack as early as 1913, confronted these issues head on—subjecting the idea of art to intense scrutiny.

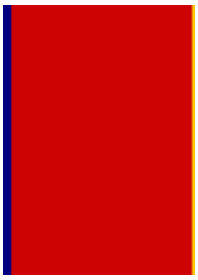

Image 2.7 Duchamp, "The Large Glass, detail with Bride" by profzucker is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Although Duchamp coined the term "readymade" and was the first to show mass produced objects as art, he drew inspiration from Braque, **Picasso**, and the other Cubists then working in Paris, who had already begun incorporating everyday items from mass culture (such as newspaper and wallpaper) into their abstracted collages.

Duchamp here notes several points of intervention by the artist that make even a "pure" readymade like Fountain different from an ordinary object:

(1) The readymade is chosen by the artist. Different objects have different associations and significance; an airplane propeller signifies something different than a high-heeled shoe. Readymades do not display an artist's technical skill, but a work of art based on choosing an object, rather than representing one, does not necessarily sacrifice a capacity for meaningful communication.

(2) The readymade is divorced from its ordinary context and use value, and re-presented in an art world context. This encourages us to encounter the object in a different way. A urinal encountered in a men's restroom is a simple matter of utilitarian fact; one encountered in a gallery becomes a focus for observation, cogitation, discussion, appreciation, and/or denunciation.

(3) The readymade is sometimes given an unexpected title. This also encourages us to think about the object anew: Why is Duchamp's urinal entitled "fountain"? What do urinals have in common with fountains? How are they different? Why is a fountain suitable for public display (and a common site for sculptural decoration), while a urinal is not?

World War I begins in 1914, embroiling Europe in a cataclysmic conflict where the advancements of the modern industrial age are immediately shown to have devastating consequences. The war cuts short the innovations in modern art of the pre-war period with citizens from France, Belgium, Russia, Italy, England (and later America) fighting against the Germans and the Austrians (later joined by the Ottoman Empire). The war lasts until 1918. Because of the technological advancements of the modern era, the war was one of the deadliest in human history, resulting in over 15 million dead and millions more grievously injured.

The *Dada* movement is formed in Zurich in 1914 as a protest against the war. So intent were members of Dada on opposing all norms of bourgeois culture that the group was barely in favor of itself: "Dada is anti-Dada," they often cried. In Berlin, Dada circles are soon established in reaction against the ongoing political instability and militarism that was responsible for the war, while New York Dada takes a more light-hearted approach using humor and irony to critique art and society. Dada artists are known for their use of readymades - everyday objects that could be bought and presented as art with little manipulation by the artist. In all three places, Dada develops as against different things (or 'anti') including anti-aesthetic, anti-art, anti-reason, anti-logic, anti-authority, and anti-tradition as a means of forcing a critique upon commonly held ideas and values. Tied closely to Dada irreverence was their interest in humor, typically in the form of irony. Artists like Hans Arp were intent on incorporating chance into the creation of works of art. This went against all norms of traditional art production whereby a work was meticulously planned and completed. The introduction of chance was a way for Dadaists to challenge artistic norms and to question the role of the artist in the artistic process. YES to everything as art.

Image 2.8 'Portrait', Man Ray, France, 1937" by Nesster is licensed under CC BY 2.0

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Dada and Surrealism (I). 9 Mar. 2021, https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/66932. CC BY-NC SA.

“Week 10 / April 3: DADA and De Stijl.” Introduction to the History of Modern Art, CUNY Academic Commons, 3 Jan. 2019, arh141.commons.gc.cuny.edu/week-10. CC BY-NC SA 4.0.

SURREALISM

(a) (b)

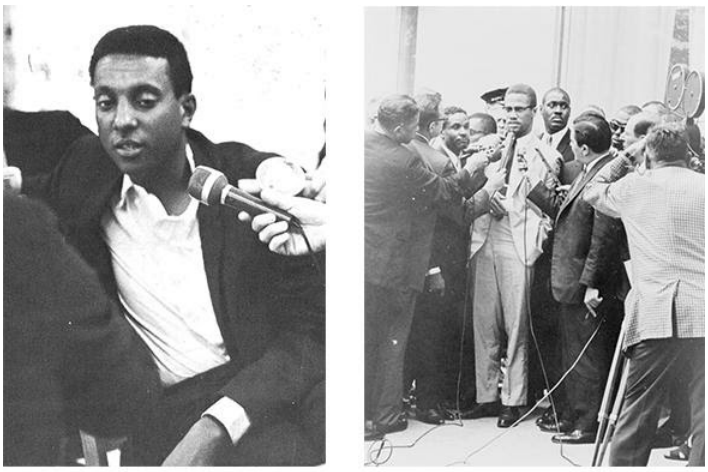
Image 2.9 Salvador Dali, "The Persistence of Memory" oil on Canvas. 1931. http://www.wikigallery.org/ CC0.

Surrealism is one of the most creative and influential art and literature movements of the 20th Century. Surrealism grew out of the Dada movement, which was also in rebellion against middle-class complacency. Surrealists sought to unlock the power of the unconscious mind in a rebellion against logic, morals and the values of the bourgeois and political establishments of the 1920s and ‘30s. A further development of Collage, Cubism, and Dada, this 20th-century movement stresses the weird, the fantastic, and the dreamworld of the subconscious. Certain general concepts associated with psychoanalysis are useful for considering Surrealist art. The most important of these is the notion of the unconscious as a repository for thoughts and feelings that are generally unavailable to consciousness. Freud considered dreams to be coded expressions of unconscious fears, desires, and conflicts that could be deciphered and potentially resolved through analysis.

Historians typically introduce Surrealism as an offshoot of Dada (Dada was an art movement of the early twentieth century that emerged in Europe and New York in response to the horrors of World War I—which killed an estimated 16 million people). In the early 1920s, writers such as André Breton and Louis Aragon became involved with Parisian Dada. Although they shared the group’s interest in anarchy and revolution, they felt Dada lacked clear direction for political action. So in late 1922, this growing group of radicals left Dada, and began looking to the mind as a source of social liberation. Influenced by French psychology and the work of Sigmund Freud, they experimented with practices that allowed them to explore subconscious thought and identity and

bypass restrictions placed on people by social convention. For example, societal norms mandate that suddenly screaming expletives at a group of strangers—unprovoked, is completely unacceptable.

The exquisite corpse is a technique (The name derives from the French term cadavre exquis and means rotating body), developed from a writing game the Surrealists created. First, a piece of paper is folded as many times as there are players. Each player takes one side of the folded sheet and, starting from the top, draws the head of a body, continuing the lines at the bottom of their fold to the other side of the fold, then handing that blank folded side to the next person to continue drawing the figure. Once everyone has drawn her or his "part" of the body, the last person unfolds the sheet to reveal a strange composite creature, made of unrelated forms that are now merged. A Surrealist Frankenstein's monster, of sorts.



(a) (b)

Image 2.10 Example of 'exquisite corpse' drawing by DIYLILCNC ink on paper, CC BY SA.

Surrealism is a broad style in painting, sculpture, photography, film and fashion. For our purposes, it can be organized into two main areas. Each area uses the power of dreams, memories and the unconscious mind to explore different attitudes, states of being and experiences, with the difference between these two areas of Surrealism being in the type of images and the techniques used to make art.

THE SURREALIST EXPERIENCE

Today, we tend to think of Surrealism primarily as a visual arts movement, but the group's activity stemmed from much larger aspirations. By teaching how to circumvent restrictions that society imposed, the Surrealists saw themselves as agents of social change. The desire for revolution was such a central tenet that through much of the late 1920s, the Surrealists attempted to ally their cause with the French Communist party, seeking to be the artistic and cultural arm. Unsurprisingly, the incompatibility of the two groups prevented any alliance, but the Surrealists' effort speaks to their political goals.

In its purest form, Surrealism was a way of life. Members advocated becoming flâneurs–urban explorers who traversed cities without plan or intent, and they sought moments of objective chance—seemingly random encounters actually fraught with import and meaning. They disrupted cultural norms with shocking actions, such as verbally assaulting priests in the street. They sought in their lives what Breton dubbed surreality, where one's internal reality merged with the external reality we all share. Such experiences, which could be represented by a painting, photograph, or sculpture, are the true core of Surrealism.

Image 2.11 Homage to Newton, a surrealist sculpture by Salvador Dali - 1985. CC0.

Remixed from:

Rose, John. “Surrealism, an Introduction. (Article).” Khan Academy, Khan Academy,https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/dada-and surrealism/xdc974a79:surrealism/a/surrealism-an-introduction. Accessed 6 May 2021. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 US.

“Week 11 / April 10: Surrealism.” Introduction to the History of Modern Art, CUNY Academic Commons, 3 Jan. 2019, arh141.commons.gc.cuny.edu/week-11. CC BY-NC SA 4.0.

FRIDA KAHLO

Image 2.12 Frida Kahlo, *The Two Fridas (Las dos Fridas)*, 1939, oil on canvas, 67-11/16 x 67-11/16" (Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City) CC0.

Sixty, more than a third, of the easel paintings known by Frida Kahlo are self-portraits. This huge number demonstrates the importance of this genre to her artistic oeuvre. *The Two Fridas*, like *Self-Portrait With Cropped Hair*, captures the artist’s turmoil after her 1939 divorce from the artist Diego Rivera. At the same time, issues of identity surface in both works. *The Two Fridas* speaks to cultural ambivalence and refers to her ancestral heritage. *Self-Portrait With Cropped Hair* suggests Kahlo’s interest in gender and sexuality as fluid concepts.

Image 2.13 Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair*, 1940, oil on canvas, 40 x 27.9 cm (Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico City) CC0.

Kahlo was famously known for her tumultuous marriage with Rivera, whom she wed in 1929 and remarried in 1941. The daughter of a German immigrant (of Hungarian descent) and a Mexican mother, Kahlo suffered from numerous medical setbacks including polio, which she contracted at the age of six, partial immobility—the result of a bus accident in 1925, and her several miscarriages. Kahlo began to paint largely in response to her accident and her limited mobility, taking on her own identity and her struggles as sources for her art. Despite the personal nature of her content, Kahlo's painting is always informed by her sophisticated understanding of art history, of Mexican culture, its politics, and its patriarchy.

THE TWO FRIDAS

Exhibited in 1940 at the International Surrealist Exhibition, *The Two Fridas* depicts a large-scale, double portrait of Kahlo, rare for the artist, since most of her canvases were small, reminiscent of colonial *retablos*, small devotional paintings. To the right Kahlo appears dressed in traditional Tehuana attire, different from the nineteenth century wedding dress she wears at left and similar to the one worn by her mother in *My Grandparents, My Parents, and I (Family Tree)* (1936).

Image 2.14 Frida Kahlo, *My Grandparents, My Parents, and I (Family Tree)*, 1936, oil and tempera on zinc, 30.7 x 34.5 cm (Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico City) CC0.

Whereas the white dress references the Euro-Mexican culture she was brought up in, in which women are “feminine” and fragile, the Tehuana dress evokes the opposite, a powerful figure within an indigenous culture described by some at the time as a matriarchy. This cultural contrast speaks to the larger issue of how adopting the distinctive costume of the indigenous people of Tehuantepec, known as the Tehuana, was considered not only “a gesture of nationalist cultural solidarity,” but also a reference to the gender stereotype of “*la india bonita*.” [1]

Against the backdrop of post-revolutionary Mexico, when debates about *indigenismo* (the ideology that upheld the Indian as an important marker of national identity) and *mestizaje* (the racial mixing that occurred as a result of the colonization of the Spanish-speaking Americas) were at stake, Kahlo’s work can be understood on both a national and personal level. While the Tehuana costume allowed for Kahlo to hide her misshapen body and right leg, a consequence of polio and the accident, it was also the attire most favored by Rivera, the man whose portrait the Tehuana Kahlo holds. Without Rivera, the Europeanized Kahlo not only bleeds to death, but her heart remains broken, both literally and metaphorically.

Image 2.15 Frida Kahlo, detail with hemostat, *The Two Fridas (Las dos Fridas)*, 1939, oil on canvas, 67-11/16 x 67-11/16″ (Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City) (photo: Dave Cooksey, CC: BY-NC-SA 4.0)

“I AM THE PERSON I KNOW BEST”

Photographs by artists within her milieu, like Manuel Alvarez Bravo and Imogen Cunningham, confirm that Kahlo's self portraits were largely accurate and that she avoided embellishing her features. The solitude produced by frequent bed rest—stemming from polio, her near-fatal bus accident, and a lifetime of operations—was one of the cruel constants in Kahlo’s life. Indeed, numerous

photographs feature Kahlo in bed, often painting despite restraints. Beginning in her youth, in order to cope with these long periods of recovery, Kahlo became a painter. Nevertheless, the isolation caused by her health problems was always present. She reflected, “I paint self-portraits because I am so often alone, because I am the person I know best.”

In opposition, the painting *Self-Portrait With Cropped Hair* boldly denounces the femininity of *Two Fridas*. In removing her iconic Tehuana dress, in favor of an oversized men’s suit, and in cutting off her braids in favor of a crew cut, Kahlo takes on the appearance of none other than Rivera himself. At the top of the canvas, Kahlo incorporates lyrics from a popular song, which read, “Look, if I loved you it was because of your hair. Now that you are without hair, I don't love you anymore.” In weaving personal and popular references, Kahlo creates multilayered self-portraits that while rooted in reality, as she so adamantly argued, nevertheless provoke the surrealist imagination. This can be seen in the visual disjunctions she employs such as the floating braids in *Self Portrait with Cropped Hair* and the severed artery in *Two Fridas*. As Kahlo asserted to Surrealist writer André Breton, she was simply painting her own reality.

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Dr. Maya Jiménez, "Frida Kahlo, introduction," in Smarthistory, October 31, 2019, accessed May 24, 2021, https://smarthistory.org/frida-kahlo-introduction/.CC BY-NC SA 4.0.

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# 2.5: The Lost Generation

2.5 The Lost Generation

As the country struggled with the effects and side-effects of prohibition, many young intellectuals endeavored to come to grips with a lingering sense of disillusionment. World War I, fundamentalism, and the Red Scare—a pervasive American fear of Communist infiltrators prompted by the success of the Bolshevik Revolution—all left their mark on these intellectuals. Known as the **Lost Generation**, writers like F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Sinclair Lewis, Edith Wharton, and John Dos Passos expressed their hopelessness and despair by skewering the middle class in their work. They felt alienated from society, so they tried to escape (some literally) to criticize it. Many lived an **expatriate** life in Paris for the decade, although others went to Rome or Berlin.

The Lost Generation writer that best exemplifies the mood of the 1920s was F. Scott Fitzgerald, now considered one of the most influential writers of the twentieth century. His debut novel, *This Side of Paradise*, describes a generation of youth "grown up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, all faith in man shaken." *The Great Gatsby*, published in 1925, exposed the doom that always follows the fun, fast-lived life. Fitzgerald depicted the modern millionaire Jay Gatsby living a profligate life: unscrupulous, coarse, and in love with another man's wife. Both Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda lived this life as well, squandering the money he made from his writing.

Equally idiosyncratic and disillusioned was writer Ernest Hemingway (Image 2.16). He lived a peripatetic and adventurous lifestyle in Europe, Cuba, and Africa, working as an ambulance driver in Italy during World War I and traveling to Spain in the 1930s to cover the civil war there. His experiences of war and tragedy stuck with him, emerging in colorful scenes in his novels *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). In 1952, his novella, *The Old Man and the Sea*, won the Pulitzer Prize. Two years later, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature for this book and his overall influence on contemporary style.

Image 2.16 Ernest Hemingway was one of the most prominent members of the Lost Generation who went to live as expatriates in Europe during the 1920s.

Not all Lost Generation writers were like Fitzgerald or Hemingway. The writing of Sinclair Lewis, rather than expressing a defined disillusionment, was more influenced by the Progressivism of the previous generation. In *Babbitt* (1922), he examined the "sheep following the herd" mentality that conformity promoted. He satirized American middle-class life as pleasure seeking and mindless. Similarly, writer Edith Wharton celebrated life in old New York, a vanished society, in *The Age of Innocence*, in 1920. Wharton

came from a very wealthy, socialite family in New York, where she was educated by tutors and never attended college. She lived for many years in Europe; during the Great War, she worked in Paris helping women establish businesses.

MY STORY

F. Scott Fitzgerald on the 1920s

In the 1920s, Fitzgerald was one of the most celebrated authors of his day, publishing *This Side of Paradise*, *The Beautiful and Damned*, and *The Great Gatsby* in quick succession. However, his profligate lifestyle with his wife Zelda sapped their funds, and Fitzgerald had to struggle to maintain their lavish lifestyle. Below is an excerpt from "The Crack-Up," a personal essay by Fitzgerald originally published in *Esquire* in which he describes his "good life" during the 1920s.

It seemed a romantic business to be a successful literary man—you were not ever going to be as famous as a movie star but what note you had was probably longer-lived; you were never going to have the power of a man of strong political or religious convictions but you were certainly more independent. Of course within the practice of your trade you were forever unsatisfied—but I, for one, would not have chosen any other.

As the Twenties passed, with my own twenties marching a little ahead of them, my two juvenile regrets—at not being big enough (or good enough) to play football in college, and at not getting overseas during the war—resolved themselves into childish waking dreams of imaginary heroism that were good enough to go to sleep on in restless nights. The big problems of life seemed to solve themselves, and if the business of fixing them was difficult, it made one too tired to think of more general problems.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Crack-Up," 1936

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# 2.6: The Great Depression

2.6 The Great Depression

The stock market crash of October 1929 set the **Great Depression** into motion, but other factors were at the root of the problem, propelled onward by a series of both human-made and natural catastrophes. Anticipating a short downturn and living under an ethos of free enterprise and individualism, Americans suffered mightily in the first years of the **Depression**. As conditions worsened and the government failed to act, they grew increasingly desperate for change. While Hoover could not be blamed for the **Great Depression**, his failure to address the nation's hardships would remain his legacy.

CHANGING VALUES, CHANGING CULTURE

In the decades before the **Great Depression**, and particularly in the 1920s, American culture largely reflected the values of individualism, self-reliance, and material success through competition. Novels like F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The **Great** Gatsby* and Sinclair Lewis's *Babbit* portrayed wealth and the self-made man in America, albeit in a critical fashion. In film, many silent movies, such as Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush*, depicted the rags-to-riches fable that Americans so loved. With the shift in U.S. fortunes, however, came a shift in values, and with it, a new cultural reflection. The arts revealed a new emphasis on the welfare of the whole and the importance of community in preserving family life. While box office sales briefly declined at the beginning of the **Depression**, they quickly rebounded. Movies offered a way for Americans to think of better times, and people were willing to pay twenty-five cents for a chance to escape, at least for a few hours.

Even more than escapism, other films at the close of the decade reflected on the sense of community and family values that Americans struggled to maintain throughout the entire Depression. John Ford's screen version of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* came out in 1940, portraying the haunting story of the Joad family's exodus from their Oklahoma farm to California in search of a better life. Their journey leads them to realize that they need to join a larger social movement—communism—dedicated to bettering the lives of all people. Tom Joad says, "Well, maybe it's like Casy says, a fella ain't got a soul of his own, but on'y a piece of a soul—the one big soul that belongs to ever'body." The greater lesson learned was one of the strength of community in the face of individual adversity.

Another trope was that of the hard-working everyman against greedy banks and corporations. This was perhaps best portrayed in the movies of Frank Capra, whose *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* was emblematic of his work. In this 1939 film, Jimmy Stewart plays a legislator sent to Washington to finish out the term of a deceased senator. While there, he fights corruption to ensure the construction of a boy's camp in his hometown rather than a dam project that would only serve to line the pockets of a few. He ultimately engages in a two-day filibuster, standing up to the power players to do what's right. The Depression era was a favorite of Capra's to depict in his films, including *It's a Wonderful Life*, released in 1946. In this film, Jimmy Stewart runs a family-owned savings and loan, which at one point faces a bank run similar to those seen in 1929–1930. In the end, community support helps Stewart retain his business and home against the unscrupulous actions of a wealthy banker who sought to bring ruin to his family.

AMERICANA

"Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?"

They used to tell me I was building a dream, and so I followed the mob

When there was earth to plow or guns to bear, I was always there, right on the job

They used to tell me I was building a dream, with peace and glory ahead

Why should I be standing in line, just waiting for bread?

Once I built a railroad, I made it run, made it race against time

Once I built a railroad, now it's done, Brother, can you spare a dime?

Once I built a tower up to the sun, brick and rivet and lime

Once I built a tower, now it's done, Brother, can you spare a dime?

—Jay Gorney and "Yip" Harburg

“Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” first appeared in 1932, written for the Broadway musical *New Americana* by Jay Gorney, a composer who based the song’s music on a Russian lullaby, and Edgar Yipsel “Yip” Harburg, a lyricist who would go on to win an Academy Award for the song “Over the Rainbow” from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939).

With its lyrics speaking to the plight of the common man during the **Great Depression** and the refrain appealing to the same sense of community later found in the films of Frank Capra, “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” quickly became the *de facto* anthem of the **Great Depression**. Recordings by Bing Crosby, Al Jolson, and Rudy Vallee all enjoyed tremendous popularity in the 1930s.

Finally, there was a **great** deal of pure escapism in the popular culture of the **Depression**. Even the songs found in films reminded many viewers of the bygone days of prosperity and happiness, from Al Dubin and Henry Warren’s hit “We’re in the Money” to the popular “Happy Days are Here Again.” The latter eventually became the theme song of Franklin Roosevelt’s 1932 presidential campaign. People wanted to forget their worries and enjoy the madcap antics of the Marx Brothers, the youthful charm of Shirley Temple, the dazzling dances of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers (Image 2.17), or the comforting morals of the *Andy Hardy* series. The Hardy series—nine films in all, produced by MGM from 1936 to 1940—starred Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney, and all followed the adventures of a small-town judge and his son. No matter what the challenge, it was never so big that it could not be solved with a musical production put on by the neighborhood kids, bringing together friends and family members in a warm display of community values.

Image 2.17 *Flying Down to Rio* (1933) was the first motion picture to feature the immensely popular dance duo of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The pair would go on to star in nine more Hollywood musicals throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

All of these movies reinforced traditional American values, which suffered during these hard times, in part due to declining marriage and birth rates, and increased domestic violence. At the same time, however, they reflected an increased interest in sex and sexuality. While the birth rate was dropping, surveys in *Fortune* magazine in 1936–1937 found that two-thirds of college students favored birth control, and that 50 percent of men and 25 percent of women admitted to premarital sex, continuing a trend among younger Americans that had begun to emerge in the 1920s. Contraceptive sales soared during the decade, and again, culture reflected this shift. Blonde bombshell Mae West was famous for her sexual innuendoes, and her flirtatious persona was hugely popular, although it got her banned on radio broadcasts throughout the Midwest. Whether West or Garland, Chaplin or Stewart, American film continued to be a barometer of American values, and their challenges, through the decade.

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# 2.7: The Mexican Muralist Movement

2.7 The Mexican Muralism Movement

Image 2.18 David Alfaro Siqueiros, Mexican History or the Right for Culture, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), 1952-56, (Mexico City, photo: Fausto Puga) CC BY-NC SA.

SIQUEIROS AND MEXICAN HISTORY

At the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City visitors enter the rectory (the main administration building), beneath an imposing three-dimensional arm emerging from a mural. Several hands, one with a pencil, charge towards a book, which lists critical dates in Mexico's history: 1520 (the Conquest by Spain); 1810 (Independence from Spain); 1857 (the Liberal Constitution which established individual rights); and 1910 (the start of the Revolution against the regime of Porfirio Díaz). David Alfaro Siqueiros left the final date blank in Dates in Mexican Histor y or the Right for Culture (1952-56), inspiring viewers to create Mexico's next great historic moment.

THE REVOLUTION

From 1910 to 1920 civil war ravaged the nation as citizens revolted against dictator Porfirio Díaz. At the heart of the Revolution was the belief—itself revolutionary—that the land should be in the hands of laborers, the very people who worked it. This demand for agrarian reform signaled a new age in Mexican society: issues concerning the popular masses—universal public education and health care, expanded civil liberties—were at the forefront of government policy.

MEXICAN MURALISM

At the end of the Revolution the government commissioned artists to create art that could educate the mostly illiterate masses about Mexican history. Celebrating the Mexican people's potential to craft the nation's history was a key theme in Mexican muralism, a movement led by Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, and José Clemente Orozco—known as Los tres grandes. Between the 1920s and 1950s, they cultivated a style that defined Mexican identity following the Revolution.

The muralists developed an iconography featuring atypical, non-European heroes from the nation's illustrious past, present, and future—Aztec warriors battling the Spanish, humble peasants fighting in the Revolution, common laborers of Mexico City, and the mixed-race people who will forge the next great epoch, like in Siqueiros' UNAM mural. Los tres grandes crafted epic murals on the walls of highly visible, public buildings using techniques like fresco, encaustic, mosaic, and sculpture-painting.

One of the earliest government commissions for a post-Revolution mural was for the National Preparatory School, a high school in Mexico City affiliated with UNAM. During the 1920s Los tres grandes and other artists completed works throughout the school's expansive exteriors and interiors.

MURALS FOR THE PALACE OF FINE ARTS

In 1934 the government inaugurated the Palace of Fine Arts Mexico City, which soon became the nation's most important cultural institution. The Palace's Museum, Mexico's first art museum, opened the same year with works by two of Los tres grandes: Rivera's Man, Controller of the Universe, 1934, a recreation of Man at the Crossroads (painted at Rockefeller Center and destroyed the year before), and Orozco's Catharsis, 1934.

Image 2.19 José Clemente Orozco, Catharsis (partial view), 1934 (Museum of the Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City, photo: ryan griffis) CC BY-NC.

The title of Orozco's painting dates to 1942, when an art historian speculated that the fire at the top of the composition symbolized catharsis, and thus "the only possibility of saving and purifying civilization" as it succumbed to the excesses of moral depravity. The laughing central figure jerks the viewer into an immoral world, where the malevolent aspects of modern life—senseless warfare, destructive technology, and prostitution—run rampant.

Image 2.20 David Alfaro Siqueiros, Torment and Apotheosis of Cuauhtémoc (detail), 1950-51 (Museum of the Palace of Fine Arts, photo: Jaontiveros) CC BY-NC.

In Torment and Apotheosis of Cuauhtémoc, 1950-51, another mural at the Museum of the Palace of Fine Arts, Siqueiros explores the violent period of the Conquest. In this mural Spanish soldiers torture the Mexican tribal leader for information on the location of the treasure they seek. The Mexican motherland, symbolized by the blood-stained female figure, stretches her arms protectively over his still figure. Siqueiros' penchant for sinewy limbs, showcased in the UNAM murals and exemplified here in the bodies of Cuauhtémoc and his praying companion, underscore the tension in this encounter.

The Mexican Revolution was a watershed moment in the twentieth century because it marked a true break from the past, ushering in a more egalitarian age. With its grand scale, innovative iconography, and socially relevant message, Mexican muralism remains a notable compliment to the Revolution. The way the muralists reoriented history, recovered lost stories, and drafted new narratives continues to stir audiences and inspire artists, like the Chicano muralists that emerged in the U.S. Southwest. The fact that their in-situ masterpieces can still be seen publicly in Mexico and beyond is a testament to their relevance, popularity, and the power of their didactic message.

Top of Form

Art in itself can be seen as a revolution and bring out intense emotions onto the artist and the viewer. During and after the Mexican Revolution, many artists in Mexico felt an inspiration to make their own revolution and reveal it to the world through murals. Murals were originally used as a way to spread visual messages to an illiterate population, which opened up new possibilities in the inclusion and sense of community within a people. These messages provided artists with the ability to share pride in their identities, historical traditions, or political beliefs. The work of "The Big Three" of Mexican muralists, Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, as well as artists Fernando Leal and Aurora Reyes Flores, all led to the normalization of public art and inclusion of the everyday person into the world of art.

Collectively, you will see artworks from "the big three", and two other artists who were very important to the movement but did not achieve the same status as the three most well-known Mexican muralists. Starting off with probably the most notorious of the artists in this exhibition, is Diego Rivera. The two selected murals for Rivera are La Historia de México and El Hombre Controlador del Universo. Rivera arrived back to Mexico in 1922, when the country was still struggling with the aftermath of the Revolution, and he took his murals as a venture to address the everyday person and tell stories of Mexican society. The next mural was made by Fernando Leal. Los Danzantes de Chalma was very pertinent to this art movement because it brought up the Indigenous peoples and roots of Mexico during a time when previous to that, the native people of Mexico were consistently repressed and taken out of the narrative in society. Fernando Leal is known to be one of the first muralists of this movement.

Jose Clemente Orozco told the darker side of the Revolution through his artwork. Having been the only one out of "the big three" to actually be in Mexico during the time of the war, he had a first hand experience of the bleakness of Mexican society at the time. His two chosen artworks, The Trench and El Hombre en Llamas, show his despondency and lack of hope caused by the horrors he had witnessed in his lifetime. Being the oldest of the great three, Orozco was able to see that there were always two sides of everything, and during a time where many were glorifying the war, he made sure to bring the focus back onto those who had to suffer for all to be confident in the state of the country Mexico was in at the time.

The next artist is Aurora Reyes Flores. She was the first female muralist of this movement as well as the first exponent of the movement. Unfortunately she does not receive the same fame as her male counterparts however she deserves so much more recognition than she gets. The mural Atentado a los Maestros Rurales, is one of her most famous works and she is known for being a trailblazer for Mexican women in art and transforming public art in Mexico. The final two artworks are made by the third great of Mexican muralism, David Alfaro Siqueiros. He focused a lot on the political aspects of art and the war and that is why his work the Birth of Fascism is included even though it is a painting and not one of his murals. His second work displayed is Portrait of the Bourgeoisie, which also reveals his socialist views through his art. His artworks became very famous in particular because Mexico had just gotten out of a dictatorship and he was able to speak and relate to the working class and lower-income people of Mexico without words.

Using murals as a way to spread visual messages to the people of Mexico, these artists created an identity all Mexicans could relate to. By promoting a sense of pride in cultural identity, a brotherhood in a shared grief, and providing a representation for populations that had been silenced, these muralists changed the way art was perceived, forever. The Mexican Muralism Movement, a movement born from the Mexican Revolution, created a revolution of its own in the art world.

Exhibition

(a) (b)

Image 2.21 Diego Rivera, *La historia de México*, Fresco 70 x 9 m 1929 – 1935 (National Palace, Mexico City, Mexico) CC BY SA.

Depicted is the large mural Diego Rivera made to portray the history of Mexico. The three panels all come together at the bottom where pre-colonial Mexico is shown to illustrate Mexico's indigenous roots and the wars and oppression they have been through. This was made to build a sense of pride for all Mexicans and to represent native people in a better light. Even though this is called The History of Mexico, there is also a part of the mural, specifically shown on the South Wall, where the artist adds in an optimistic view of the future of Mexico now that the revolution has come to a close.

(a) (b)

Image 2.22 Diego Rivera, *El hombre controlador del universe*, 4,80 x 11,45 m Fresco 1934 (Museo de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, Mexico) CC0 US.

Depicted here is a replica of the original work which was first commissioned to be placed in New York City's Rockefeller Center. However it was taken down when the artist, Diego Rivera, added in depictions of communist leaders. This version of the mural allowed Rivera to complete the finished work without restrictions in revealing his own ideologies. In the center is a man who is surrounded by the world and its many perspectives. On each side of the man are different beliefs. On the right, Lenin, Marx, and Freidrich Engles, and on the left is Charles Darwin and John Rockefeller Jr. This artwork has become culturally significant to show the relationship between politics, the economy, and creative freedom.

Image 2.23 Fernando Leal, *Los Danzantes de Chalma*, Fresco 1922. (San Ildefonso College, Mexico City, Mexico) CC BY-SA.

Displayed above is the artist's rendition of a real event that had happened during that time. Leal had overheard that during a ritualistic dance that was meant to worship the Virgin Mary, her statue had fallen over, revealing a statue that was carved into the wall of the native Mexican goddess of water, which had previously been hidden. Although Fernando Leal did not receive the same amount of fame as "The Big Three", he was one of the first to start off this movement, and bring indigenous Mexican culture into the limelight.

Image 2.24 Jose Clemente Orozco, *The Trench*, 4 x 2 m Fresco 1926. (Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York) CC BY-SA.

Depicted above are soldiers in the Mexican Revolution in a very somber presentation. While other artists focused on the hope the future after the war promised, Orozco was actually in Mexico during the war and saw all the struggles and fighting the people Mexico had to face. Orozco focused on the body language of the men in the mural, making sure that their sorrow, vulnerability, and suffering can be felt through the art. For many, Jose Clement Orozco was able to put humanity back into those affected by the war unto the public eye.

Image 2.25 Jose Clemente Orozco, *El hombre en llamas* 27 m Fresco 1939. (Hospicio Cabanas, Guadalajara, Mexico) CC BY-SA.

Depicted above is the fresco also known as “The Man of Fire”, in this surrounded by a series of arched panels, a self-sacrificing man is in the center of it all. Orozco was surrounded by the horrors of the world throughout his entire life and in this mural, we see his version of a glimmer of hope. Represented in this fresco is Mexico’s struggle with both indigenous and European forces, and trying to find a middle ground between it all.

Image 2.26 David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Birth of Fascism* 75x65cm, pyroxylin on masonite 1936. (Sala de Arte Publico Siqueiros, Mexico) CC0.

Shown above is a woman giving birth to a monster which represents fascism in this painting. Although known for his murals, Siqueiros also created many paintings during the Mexican Muralism movement. The woman depicted is said to be a whore who is having a painful birth to a monster during a storm who wishes to be saved. To have such an ominous and painful painting be called the “birth”, it sends a very clear message of his political beliefs to the viewer.

Image 2.27 David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Portrait of the Bourgeoisie* 92 m, Fresco 1939. (Electrical Workers Union Building, Mexico City, Mexico) CCO

Illustrated above was David Alfaro Siqueiros’ warning to the people of the dangers of intersecting the government, capitalism, and industry. On the left, we see the burning buildings that represent the order of the past while the rest of the walls depict his fears of nature and machine intertwining. In Marxist contexts, the bourgeoisie is the class who owns most of society’s wealth and means of production, this mural portrays the artists’ concerns with how society will unravel if they continue to be the ones in power and the lower classes are continued to be ignored.

Remixed by:

Bravo, Doris. “Mexican Muralism: Los Tres Grandes David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, and José Clemente Orozco (Article).” Khan Academy, Khan Academy,https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/later-europe-and-americas/modernity-ap/a/mexican-muralism-los-tres-grandes-david-alfaro-siqueiros-diego-rivera-and-jos-clemente-orozco Accessed 6 May 2021. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 US.

Fernandez, Nicole Fierro. “The Mexican Muralism Movement.” https://mexicanmural.commons.gc.cuny.edu/writings/ October 18, 2018. Accessed 6 May 2021. CC BY-NC SA 4.0.

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# 2.8: World War II

2.8 World War II

World War II awakened the sleeping giant of the United States from the lingering effects of the Great Depression. Although the country had not entirely disengaged itself from foreign affairs following World War I, it had remained largely divorced from events occurring in Europe until the late 1930s. World War II forced the United States to involve itself once again in European affairs. It also helped to relieve the unemployment of the 1930s and stir industrial growth. The propaganda poster above was part of a concerted effort to get Americans to see themselves as citizens of a strong, unified country, dedicated to the protection of freedom and democracy. However, the war that unified many Americans also brought to the fore many of the nation's racial and ethnic divisions, both on the frontlines—where military units, such as the one depicted in this poster, were segregated by race—and on the home front. Yet, the war also created new opportunities for ethnic minorities and women, which, in postwar America, would contribute to their demand for greater rights.

**Image 2.28**

The years between the First and Second World Wars were politically and economically tumultuous for the United States and especially for the world. The Russian Revolution of 1917, Germany's defeat in World War I, and the subsequent Treaty of Versailles had broken up the Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian empires and significantly redrew the map of Europe. President Woodrow Wilson had wished to make World War I the "war to end all wars" and hoped that his new paradigm of "collective security" in international relations, as actualized through the League of Nations, would limit power struggles among the nations of the world. However, during the next two decades, America's attention turned away from global politics and toward its own needs. At the same time, much of the world was dealing with economic and political crises, and different types of totalitarian regimes began to take hold in Europe. In Asia, an ascendant Japan began to expand its borders. Although the United States remained focused on the economic challenges of the Great Depression as World War II approached, ultimately it became clear that American involvement in the fight against Nazi Germany and Japan was in the nation's interest.

The Nazis gained numerous followers during the Great Depression, which hurt Germany tremendously, plunging it further into economic crisis. By 1932, nearly 30 percent of the German labor force was unemployed. Not surprisingly, the political mood was angry and sullen. Hitler, a World War I veteran, promised to return Germany to greatness. By the beginning of 1933, the Nazis had become the largest party in the German legislature. Germany's president, Paul von Hindenburg, at the urging of large industrialists who feared a Communist uprising, appointed Hitler to the position of chancellor in January 1933. In the elections that took place in

early March 1933, the Nazis gained the political power to pass the Enabling Act later that same month, which gave Hitler the power to make all laws for the next four years. Hitler thus effectively became the dictator of Germany and remained so long after the four-year term passed. Like Italy, Germany had become a one-party totalitarian state (Image 2.29). Nazi Germany was an anti-Semitic nation, and in 1935, the Nuremberg Laws deprived Jews, whom Hitler blamed for Germany's downfall, of German citizenship and the rights thereof.

Image 2.29 Italian Fascists under the dictatorial leadership of Benito Mussolini (a, center) and German National Socialist Party leader and dictator Adolf Hitler (b) systematically dismantled democratic institutions and pushed military buildups, racial supremacy, and an aggressive nationalism in the 1920s and early 1930s.

Once in power, Hitler began to rebuild German military might. He commenced his program by withdrawing Germany from the League of Nations in October 1933. In 1936, in accordance with his promise to restore German greatness, Hitler dispatched military units into the Rhineland, on the border with France, which was an act contrary to the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. In March 1938, claiming that he sought only to reunite ethnic Germans within the borders of one country, Hitler invaded Austria. At a conference in Munich later that year, Great Britain's prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, and France's prime minister, Édouard Daladier, agreed to the partial dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and the occupation of the Sudetenland (a region with a sizable German population) by German troops (Figure 27.4). This Munich Pact offered a policy of **appeasement**, in the hope that German expansionist appetites could be satisfied without war. But not long after the agreement, Germany occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia as well.

Image 2.30 Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain arrives home in England bearing the Munich Pact agreement. The jubilant Chamberlain proclaimed that the agreement meant “peace in our time.”

Leaders in the Soviet Union, which developed its own form of brutal totalitarianism through communism, paid close attention to Hitler’s actions and public pronouncements. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin realized that Poland, part of which had belonged to Germany before the First World War, was most likely next. Although fiercely opposed to Hitler, Stalin, sobered by the French and British betrayal of Czechoslovakia and unprepared for a major war, decided the best way to protect the Soviet Union, and gain additional territory, was to come to some accommodation with the German dictator. In August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union essentially agreed to divide Poland between them and not make war upon one another.

JAPAN

Militaristic politicians also took control of Japan in the 1930s. The Japanese had worked assiduously for decades to modernize, build their strength, and become a prosperous, respected nation. The sentiment in Japan was decidedly pro-capitalist, and the Japanese militarists were fiercely supportive of a capitalist economy. They viewed with great concern the rise of Communism in the Soviet Union and in particular China, where the issue was fueling a civil war, and feared that the Soviet Union would make inroads in Asia by assisting China’s Communists. The Japanese militarists thus found a common ideological enemy with Fascism and National Socialism, which had based their rise to power on anti-Communist sentiments. In 1936, Japan and Germany signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, pledging mutual assistance in defending themselves against the Comintern, the international agency created by the Soviet Union to promote worldwide Communist revolution. In 1937, Italy joined the pact, essentially creating the foundation of what became the military alliance of the Axis powers.

Like its European allies, Japan was intent upon creating an empire for itself. In 1931, it created a new nation, a puppet state called Manchukuo, which had been cobbled together from the three northernmost provinces of China. Although the League of Nations formally protested Japan’s seizure of Chinese territory in 1931 and 1932, it did nothing else. In 1937, a clash between Japanese and Chinese troops, known as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, led to a full-scale invasion of China by the Japanese. By the end of the year, the Chinese had suffered some serious defeats. In Nanjing, then called Nanking by Westerners, Japanese soldiers systematically raped Chinese women and massacred hundreds of thousands of civilians, leading to international outcry. Public sentiment against Japan in the United States reached new heights. Members of Protestant churches that were involved in missionary work in China were particularly outraged, as were Chinese Americans. A troop of Chinese American Boy Scouts in New York City’s Chinatown defied Boy Scout policy and marched in protest against Japanese aggression.

A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE IN INFAMY

By the second half of 1941, Japan was feeling the pressure of the American embargo. As it could no longer buy strategic material from the United States, the Japanese were determined to obtain a sufficient supply of oil by taking control of the Dutch East Indies. However, they realized that such an action might increase the possibility of American intervention, since the Philippines, a U.S. territory, lay on the direct route that oil tankers would have to take to reach Japan from Indonesia. Japanese leaders thus attempted to secure a diplomatic solution by negotiating with the United States while also authorizing the navy to plan for war. The Japanese government also decided that if no peaceful resolution could be reached by the end of November 1941, then the nation would have to go to war against the United States.

The American final counterproposal to various offers by Japan was for the Japanese to completely withdraw, without any conditions, from China and enter into nonaggression pacts with all the Pacific powers. Japan found that proposal unacceptable but delayed its rejection for as long as possible. Then, at 7:48 a.m. on Sunday, December 7, the Japanese attacked the U.S. Pacific fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii (Image 2.31). They launched two waves of attacks from six aircraft carriers that had snuck into the central Pacific without being detected. The attacks brought some 353 fighters, bombers, and torpedo bombers down on the unprepared fleet. The Japanese hit all eight battleships in the harbor and sank four of them. They also damaged several cruisers and destroyers. On the ground, nearly two hundred aircraft were destroyed, and twenty-four hundred servicemen were killed. Another eleven hundred were wounded. Japanese losses were minimal. The strike was part of a more concerted campaign by the Japanese to gain territory. They subsequently attacked Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Guam, Wake Island, and the Philippines.

(a) (b)

Image 2.31 This famous shot captured the explosion of the USS Shaw after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. While American losses were significant, the Japanese lost only twenty-nine planes and five miniature submarines.

Whatever reluctance to engage in conflict the American people had had before December 7, 1941, quickly evaporated. Americans' incredulity that Japan would take such a radical step quickly turned to a fiery anger, especially as the attack took place while Japanese diplomats in Washington were still negotiating a possible settlement. President Roosevelt, referring to the day of the attack as "a date which will live in infamy," asked Congress for a declaration of war, which it delivered to Japan on December 8. On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States in accordance with their alliance with Japan. Against its wishes, the United States had become part of the European conflict.

The impact of the war on the United States was nowhere near as devastating as it was in Europe and the Pacific, where the battles were waged, but it still profoundly changed everyday life for all Americans. On the positive side, the war effort finally and definitively ended the economic depression that had been plaguing the country since 1929. It also called upon Americans to unite behind the war effort and give of their money, their time, and their effort, as they sacrificed at home to assure success abroad. The upheaval caused by White men leaving for war meant that for many disenfranchised groups, such as women and African Americans, there were new opportunities in employment and wage earning. Still, fear and racism drove cracks in the nation's unified facade.

THE INVASION OF EUROPE

Preparing to engage the Nazis in Europe, the United States landed in North Africa in 1942. The Axis campaigns in North Africa had begun when Italy declared war on England in June 1940, and British forces had invaded the Italian colony of Libya. The Italians had responded with a counteroffensive that penetrated into Egypt, only to be defeated by the British again. In response, Hitler dispatched the Afrika Korps under General Erwin Rommel, and the outcome of the situation was in doubt until shortly before American forces joined the British.

Although the Allied campaign secured control of the southern Mediterranean and preserved Egypt and the Suez Canal for the British, Stalin and the Soviets were still engaging hundreds of German divisions in bitter struggles at Stalingrad and Leningrad. The invasion of North Africa did nothing to draw German troops away from the Soviet Union. An invasion of Europe by way of Italy, which is what the British and American campaign in North Africa laid the ground for, pulled a few German divisions away from their Russian targets. But while Stalin urged his allies to invade France, British and American troops pursued the defeat of Mussolini's Italy. This choice greatly frustrated Stalin, who felt that British interests were taking precedence over the agony that the Soviet Union was enduring at the hands of the invading German army. However, Churchill saw Italy as the vulnerable underbelly of Europe and believed that Italian support for Mussolini was waning, suggesting that victory there might be relatively easy. Moreover, Churchill pointed out that if Italy were taken out of the war, then the Allies would control the Mediterranean, offering the Allies easier shipping access to both the Soviet Union and the British Far Eastern colonies.

D-DAY

A direct assault on Nazi Germany's "Fortress Europe" was still necessary for final victory. On June 6, 1944, the second front became a reality when Allied forces stormed the beaches of northern France on **D-day**. Beginning at 6:30 a.m., some twenty-four thousand British, Canadian, and American troops waded ashore along a fifty-mile piece of the Normandy coast (Image 2.32) Well over a million troops would follow their lead. German forces on the hills and cliffs above shot at them, and once they reached the beach, they encountered barbed wire and land mines. More than ten thousand Allied soldiers were wounded or killed during the assault. Following the establishment of beachheads at Normandy, it took months of difficult fighting before Paris was liberated on August 20, 1944. The invasion did succeed in diverting German forces from the eastern front to the western front, relieving some of the pressure on Stalin's troops. By that time, however, Russian forces had already defeated the German army at Stalingrad, an event that many consider the turning point of the war in Europe, and begun to push the Germans out of the Soviet Union.

(a) (b)

Image 2.32 U.S. troops in a military landing craft approach the beach code-named "Omaha" on June 6, 1944. More than ten thousand soldiers were killed or wounded during the D-day assault along the coast of Normandy, France.

Nazi Germany was not ready to surrender, however. On December 16, in a surprise move, the Germans threw nearly a quarter-million men at the Western Allies in an attempt to divide their armies and encircle major elements of the American forces. The struggle, known as the Battle of the Bulge, raged until the end of January. Some ninety thousand Americans were killed, wounded, or lost in action. Nevertheless, the Germans were turned back, and Hitler's forces were so spent that they could never again mount offensive operations.

CONFRONTING THE HOLOCAUST

The Holocaust, Hitler's plan to kill the Jews of Europe, had begun as early as 1933, with the construction of Dachau, the first of more than forty thousand camps for incarcerating Jews, submitting them to forced labor, or exterminating them. Eventually, six extermination camps were established between 1941 and 1945 in Polish territory. Jewish men, women, and children from throughout Europe were transported to these camps in Germany and other areas under Nazi control. Although the majority of the people in the camps were Jews, the Nazis sent Roma (gypsies), gays and lesbians, Jehovah's Witnesses, and political opponents to the camps as well. Some prisoners were put to work at hard labor; many of them subsequently died of disease or starvation. Most of those sent to the extermination camps were killed upon arrival with poisoned gas. Ultimately, some eleven million people died in the camps. As Soviet troops began to advance from the east and U.S. forces from the west, camp guards attempted to hide the evidence of their crimes by destroying records and camp buildings, and marching surviving prisoners away from the sites (Image 2.33).

Image 2.33 A U.S. senator, and member of a congressional committee investigating Nazi atrocities, views the evidence first hand at Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar, Germany, in the summer of 1945.

MY STORY

Felix L. Sparks on the Liberation of Dachau

The horrors of the concentration camps remained with the soldiers who liberated them long after the war had ended. Below is an excerpt of the recollection of one soldier.

Our first experience with the camp came as a traumatic shock. The first evidence of the horrors to come was a string of forty railway cars on a railway spur leading into the camp. Each car was filled with emaciated human corpses, both men and women. A hasty search by the stunned infantry soldiers revealed no signs of life among the hundreds of still bodies, over two thousand in all.
It was in this atmosphere of human depravity, degradation and death that the soldiers of my battalion then entered the camp itself. Almost all of the SS command guarding the camp had fled before our arrival, leaving behind about two hundred lower ranking members of the command. There was some sporadic firing of weapons. As we approached the confinement area, the scene numbed my senses. Dante's Inferno seemed pale compared to the real hell of Dachau. A row of small cement structures near the prison entrance contained a coal-fired crematorium, a gas chamber, and rooms piled high with naked and emaciated corpses. As I turned to look over the prison yard with un-believing eyes, I saw a large number of dead inmates lying where they has fallen in the last few hours or days before our arrival. Since all of the bodies were in various stages of decomposition, the stench of death was overpowering. The men of the 45th Infantry Division were hardened combat veterans. We had been in combat almost two years at that point. While we were accustomed to death, we were not able to comprehend the type of death that we encountered at Dachau.
—Felix L. Sparks, remarks at the U.S. Holocaust Museum, May 8, 1995

YALTA AND PREPARING FOR VICTORY

The last time the Big Three met was in early February 1945 at Yalta in the Soviet Union. Roosevelt was sick, and Stalin's armies were pushing the German army back towards Berlin from the east. Churchill and Roosevelt thus had to accept a number of compromises that strengthened Stalin's position in eastern Europe. In particular, they agreed to allow the Communist government installed by the Soviet Union in Poland to remain in power until free elections took place. For his part, Stalin reaffirmed his commitment, first voiced at Tehran, to enter the war against Japan following the surrender of Germany (Image 2.34). He also agreed that the Soviet Union would participate in the United Nations, a new peacekeeping body intended to replace the League of Nations. The Big Three left Yalta with many details remaining unclear, planning to finalize plans for the treatment of Germany and the shape of postwar Europe at a later conference. However, Roosevelt did not live to attend the next meeting. He died on April 12, 1945, and Harry S. Truman became president.

Image 2.34 Prime Minister Winston Churchill, President Franklin Roosevelt, and Premier Joseph Stalin made final plans for the defeat of Nazi Germany at Yalta in February 1945.

By April 1945, Soviet forces had reached Berlin, and both the U.S. and British Allies were pushing up against Germany's last defenses in the western part of the nation. Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945. On May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered. The war in Europe was over, and the Allies and liberated regions celebrated the end of the long ordeal. Germany was thoroughly defeated; its industries and cities were badly damaged.

The victorious Allies set about determining what to do to rebuild Europe at the Potsdam Summit Conference in July 1945. Attending the conference were Stalin, Truman, and Churchill, now the outgoing prime minister, as well as the new British prime minister, Clement Atlee. Plans to divide Germany and Austria, and their capital cities, into four zones—to be occupied by the

British, French, Americans, and Soviets—a subject discussed at Yalta, were finalized. In addition, the Allies agreed to dismantle Germany's heavy industry in order to make it impossible for the country to produce more armaments.

DROPPING THE ATOMIC BOMB

All belligerents in World War II sought to develop powerful and devastating weaponry. As early as 1939, German scientists had discovered how to split uranium atoms, the technology that would ultimately allow for the creation of the atomic bomb. Albert Einstein, who had emigrated to the United States in 1933 to escape the Nazis, urged President Roosevelt to launch an American atomic research project, and Roosevelt agreed to do so, with reservations. In late 1941, the program received its code name: the **Manhattan Project**. Located at Los Alamos, New Mexico, the Manhattan Project ultimately employed 150,000 people and cost some $2 billion. In July 1945, the project's scientists successfully tested the first atomic bomb.

In the spring of 1945, the military began to prepare for the possible use of an atomic bomb by choosing appropriate targets. Suspecting that the immediate bomb blast would extend over one mile and secondary effects would include fire damage, a compact city of significant military value with densely built frame buildings seemed to be the best target. Eventually, the city of Hiroshima, the headquarters of the Japanese Second Army, and the communications and supply hub for all of southern Japan, was chosen. The city of Kokura was chosen as the primary target of the second bomb, and Nagasaki, an industrial center producing war materiel and the largest seaport in southern Japan, was selected as a secondary target.

The **Enola Gay**, a B-29 bomber named after its pilot's mother, dropped an atomic bomb known as "Little Boy" on Hiroshima at 8:15 a.m. Monday morning, August 6, 1945. A huge mushroom cloud rose above the city. Survivors sitting down for breakfast or preparing to go to school recalled seeing a bright light and then being blown across the room. The immense heat of the blast melted stone and metal, and ignited fires throughout the city. One man later recalled watching his mother and brother burn to death as fire consumed their home. A female survivor, a child at the time of the attack, remembered finding the body of her mother, which had been reduced to ashes and fell apart as she touched it. Two-thirds of the buildings in Hiroshima were destroyed. Within an hour after the bombing, radioactive "black rain" began to fall. Approximately seventy thousand people died in the original blast. The same number would later die of radiation poisoning. When Japan refused to surrender, a second atomic bomb, named Fat Man, was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. At least sixty thousand people were killed at Nagasaki. Kokura, the primary target, had been shrouded in clouds on that morning and thus had escaped destruction. It is impossible to say with certainty how many died in the two attacks; the heat of the bomb blasts incinerated or vaporized many of the victims (Image 2.35).

Image 2.35 According to estimates, the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (a) together killed anywhere from 125,000 to over 250,000 people. The so-called Genbaku (A-Bomb) Dome, now the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, was the only building left standing near the Hiroshima bomb's hypocenter (b).

The decision to use nuclear weapons is widely debated. Why exactly did the United States deploy an atomic bomb? The fierce resistance that the Japanese forces mounted during their early campaigns led American planners to believe that any invasion of the Japanese home islands would be exceedingly bloody. According to some estimates, as many as 250,000 Americans might die in securing a final victory. Such considerations undoubtedly influenced President Truman's decision. Truman, who had not known

about the Manhattan Project until Roosevelt's death, also may not have realized how truly destructive it was. Indeed, some of the scientists who had built the bomb were surprised by its power. One question that has not been fully answered is why the United States dropped the second bomb on Nagasaki. As some scholars have noted, if Truman's intention was to eliminate the need for a home island invasion, he could have given Japan more time to respond after bombing Hiroshima. He did not, however. The second bombing may have been intended to send a message to Stalin, who was becoming intransigent regarding postwar Europe. If it is indeed true that Truman had political motivations for using the bombs, then the destruction of Nagasaki might have been the first salvo of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. And yet, other historians have pointed out that the war had unleashed such massive atrocities against civilians by all belligerents—the United States included—that by the summer of 1945, the president no longer needed any particular reason to use his entire nuclear arsenal.

THE WAR ENDS

Whatever the true reasons for their use, the bombs had the desired effect of getting Japan to surrender. Even before the atomic attacks, the conventional bombings of Japan, the defeat of its forces in the field, and the entry of the Soviet Union into the war had convinced the Imperial Council that they had to end the war. They had hoped to negotiate the terms of the peace, but Emperor Hirohito intervened after the destruction of Nagasaki and accepted unconditional surrender. Although many Japanese shuddered at the humiliation of defeat, most were relieved that the war was over. Japan's industries and cities had been thoroughly destroyed, and the immediate future looked bleak as they awaited their fate at the hands of the American occupation forces.

The victors had yet another nation to rebuild and reform, but the war was finally over. Following the surrender, the Japanese colony of Korea was divided along the thirty-eighth parallel; the Soviet Union was given control of the northern half and the United States was given control of the southern portion. In Europe, as had been agreed upon at a meeting of the Allies in Potsdam in the summer of 1945, Germany was divided into four occupation zones that would be controlled by Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States, respectively. The city of Berlin was similarly split into four. Plans were made to prosecute war criminals in both Japan and Germany. In October 1945, the United Nations was created. People around the world celebrated the end of the conflict, but America's use of atomic bombs and disagreements between the United States and the Soviet Union at Yalta and Potsdam would contribute to ongoing instability in the postwar world.

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# 3: THE SEARCH FOR MEANING and BEGINNING OF GLOBALISM (1945-1950's)

CHAPTER 3: THE SEARCH FOR MEANING & BEGINNING OF GLOBALISM (1945-1950'S)

Paul Nash, Defense of Albion, 1942. Oil on Canvas. CC0.

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# 3.1: The Cold War

3.1 The Cold War

As World War II drew to a close, the alliance that had made the United States and the Soviet Union partners in their defeat of the Axis powers—Germany, Italy, and Japan—began to fall apart. Both sides realized that their visions for the future of Europe and the world were incompatible. Joseph Stalin, the premier of the Soviet Union, wished to retain hold of Eastern Europe and establish Communist, pro-Soviet governments there, in an effort to both expand Soviet influence and protect the Soviet Union from future invasions. He also sought to bring Communist revolution to Asia and to developing nations elsewhere in the world. The United States wanted to expand its influence as well by protecting or installing democratic governments throughout the world. It sought to combat the influence of the Soviet Union by forming alliances with Asian, African, and Latin American nations, and by helping these countries to establish or expand prosperous, free-market economies. The end of the war left the industrialized nations of Europe and Asia physically devastated and economically exhausted by years of invasion, battle, and bombardment. With Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and China reduced to shadows of their former selves, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the last two superpowers and quickly found themselves locked in a contest for military, economic, social, technological, and ideological supremacy.

FROM ISOLATION TO ENGAGEMENT

The United States had a long history of avoiding foreign alliances that might require the commitment of its troops abroad. However, in accepting the realities of the post-World War II world, in which traditional powers like Great Britain or France were no longer strong enough to police the globe, the United States realized that it would have to make a permanent change in its foreign policy, shifting from relative isolation to active engagement.

On assuming the office of president upon the death of Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman was already troubled by Soviet actions in Europe. He disliked the concessions made by Roosevelt at Yalta, which had allowed the Soviet Union to install a Communist government in Poland. At the Potsdam conference, held from July 17 to August 2, 1945, Truman also opposed Stalin's plans to demand large reparations from Germany. He feared the burden that this would impose on Germany might lead to another cycle of German rearmament and aggression—a fear based on that nation's development after World War I (IMAGE 3.1).

IMAGE 3.1 At the postwar conference in Potsdam, Germany, Harry Truman stands between Joseph Stalin (right) and Clement Atlee (left). Atlee became prime minister of Great Britain, replacing Winston Churchill, while the conference was taking place.

Although the United States and the Soviet Union did finally reach an agreement at Potsdam, this was the final occasion on which they cooperated for quite some time. Each remained convinced that its own economic and political systems were superior to the other's, and the two superpowers quickly found themselves drawn into conflict. The decades-long struggle between them for technological and ideological supremacy became known as the Cold War. So called because it did not include direct military confrontation between Soviet and U.S. troops, the Cold War was fought with a variety of other weapons: espionage and surveillance, political assassinations, propaganda, and the formation of alliances with other nations. It also became an arms race, as both countries competed to build the greatest stockpile of nuclear weapons, and also competed for influence in poorer nations, supporting opposite sides in wars in some of those nations, such as Korea and Vietnam.

CONTAINMENT ABROAD

In February 1946, George Kennan, a State Department official stationed at the U.S. embassy in Moscow, sent an eight-thousand-word message to Washington, DC. In what became known as the "**Long Telegram**," Kennan maintained that Soviet leaders believed that the only way to protect the Soviet Union was to destroy "rival" nations and their influence over weaker nations. According to Kennan, the Soviet Union was not so much a revolutionary regime as a totalitarian bureaucracy that was unable to accept the prospect of a peaceful coexistence of the United States and itself. He advised that the best way to thwart Soviet plans for the world was to contain Soviet influence—primarily through economic policy—to those places where it already existed and prevent its political expansion into new areas. This strategy, which came to be known as the policy of containment, formed the basis for U.S. foreign policy and military decision making for more than thirty years. As Communist governments came to power elsewhere in the world, American policymakers extended their strategy of containment to what became known as the domino theory under the Eisenhower administration: Neighbors to Communist nations, so was the assumption, were likely to succumb to the same allegedly dangerous and infectious ideology. Like dominoes toppling one another, entire regions would eventually be controlled by the Soviets. The demand for anti-Communist containment appeared as early as March 1946 in a speech by Winston Churchill, in which he referred to an Iron Curtain that divided Europe into the "free" West and the Communist East controlled by the Soviet Union. The commitment to containing Soviet expansion made necessary the ability to mount a strong military offense and defense. In pursuit of this goal, the U.S. military was reorganized under the National Security Act of 1947. This act streamlined the government in matters of security by creating the National Security Council and establishing the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to conduct surveillance and espionage in foreign nations. It also created the Department of the Air Force, which was combined with the Departments of the Army and Navy in 1949 to form one Department of Defense.

The Truman Doctrine in Europe, the end of World War II witnessed the rise of a number of internal struggles for control of countries that had been occupied by Nazi Germany. Great Britain occupied Greece as the Nazi regime there collapsed. The British aided the authoritarian government of Greece in its battles against Greek Communists. In March 1947, Great Britain announced that it could no longer afford the cost of supporting government military activities and withdrew from participation in the **Greek civil war**. Stepping into this power vacuum, the United States announced the Truman Doctrine, which offered support to Greece and Turkey in the form of financial assistance, weaponry, and troops to help train their militaries and bolster their governments against Communism. Eventually, the program was expanded to include any state trying to withstand a Communist takeover.

The Truman Doctrine thus became a hallmark of U.S. Cold War policy. In 1947, Great Britain, which had assumed responsibility for the disarming of German troops in Greece at the end of World War II, could no longer afford to provide financial support for the authoritarian Greek government, which was attempting to win a civil war against Greek leftist rebels. President Truman, unwilling to allow a Communist government to come to power there, requested Congress to provide funds for the government of Greece to continue its fight against the rebels. Truman also requested aid for the government of Turkey to fight the forces of Communism in that country. He said: At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East. The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive. The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation. Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events. I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.

By 1946, the American economy was growing significantly. At the same time, the economic situation in Europe was disastrous. The war had turned much of Western Europe into a battlefield, and the rebuilding of factories, public transportation systems, and

power stations progressed exceedingly slowly. Starvation loomed as a real possibility for many. As a result of these conditions, Communism was making significant inroads in both Italy and France. These concerns led Truman, along with Secretary of State George C. Marshall, to propose to Congress the European Recovery Program, popularly known as the Marshall Plan. Between its implantation in April 1948 and its termination in 1951, this program gave $13 billion in economic aid to European nations.

Truman's motivation was economic and political, as well as humanitarian. The plan stipulated that the European nations had to work together in order to receive aid, thus enforcing unity through enticement, while seeking to undercut the political popularity of French and Italian Communists and dissuading moderates from forming coalition governments with them. Likewise, much of the money had to be spent on American goods, boosting the postwar economy of the United States as well as the American cultural presence in Europe. Stalin regarded the program as a form of bribery. The Soviet Union refused to accept aid from the Marshall Plan, even though it could have done so, and forbade the Communist states of Eastern Europe to accept U.S. funds as well. Those states that did accept aid began to experience an economic recovery.

The youngest child of a Pennsylvania businessman and Democrat, George C. Marshall (IMAGE 3.2) chose a military career. He attended the Virginia Military Institute, was a veteran of World War I, and spent the rest of his life either in the military or otherwise in the service of his country, including as President Truman's Secretary of State. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953, the only soldier to ever receive that honor. Below is an excerpt of his remarks as he accepted the award. During World War II, George C. Marshall was responsible for expanding the 189,000-member U.S. Army into a modern, fighting force of eight million by 1942. As Secretary of State under Truman, he proposed the European Recovery Program to aid European economies struggling after the war

IMAGE 3.2 George Marshall

There has been considerable comment over the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to a soldier. I am afraid this does not seem as remarkable to me as it quite evidently appears to others. I know a great deal of the horrors and tragedies of war. Today, as chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission, it is my duty to supervise the construction and maintenance of military cemeteries in many countries overseas, particularly in Western Europe. The cost of war in human lives is constantly spread before me, written neatly in many ledgers whose columns are gravestones. I am deeply moved to find some means or method of avoiding another calamity of war. Almost daily I hear from the wives, or mothers, or families of the fallen. The tragedy of the aftermath is almost constantly before me. I share with you an active concern for some practical method for avoiding war. . . . A very strong military posture is vitally necessary today. How long it must continue I am not prepared to estimate, but I am sure that it is too narrow a

basis on which to build a dependable, long-enduring peace. The guarantee for a long continued peace will depend on other factors in addition to a moderated military strength, and no less important. Perhaps the most important single factor will be a spiritual regeneration to develop goodwill, faith, and understanding among nations. Economic factors will undoubtedly play an important part. Agreements to secure a balance of power, however disagreeable they may seem, must likewise be considered. And with all these there must be wisdom and the will to act on that wisdom.

SHOWDOWN IN EUROPE

The lack of consensus with the Soviets on the future of Germany led the United States, Great Britain, and France to support joining their respective occupation zones into a single, independent state. In December 1946, they took steps to do so, but the Soviet Union did not wish the western zones of the country to unify under a democratic, pro-capitalist government. The Soviet Union also feared the possibility of a unified West Berlin, located entirely within the Soviet sector. Three days after the western allies authorized the introduction of a new currency in Western Germany—the Deutsche Mark—Stalin ordered all land and water routes to the western zones of the city Berlin to be cut off in June 1948. Hoping to starve the western parts of the city into submission, the Berlin blockade was also a test of the emerging U.S. policy of containment.

Unwilling to abandon Berlin, the United States, Great Britain, and France began to deliver all needed supplies to West Berlin by air (IMAGE 3.3). In April 1949, the three countries joined Canada and eight Western European nations to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an alliance pledging its members to mutual defense in the event of attack. On May 12, 1949, a year and approximately two million tons of supplies later, the Soviets admitted defeat and ended the blockade of Berlin. On May 23, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), consisting of the unified western zones and commonly referred to as West Germany, was formed. The Soviets responded by creating the German Democratic Republic, or East Germany, in October 1949.American C-47 transport planes (a) are loaded with staged supplies at a French airport before taking off for Berlin. Residents of Berlin wait for a U.S. plane (b) carrying needed supplies to land at Tempelhof Airport in the American sector of the city.

CONTAINMENT AT HOME

In 1949, two incidents severely disrupted American confidence in the ability of the United States to contain the spread of Communism and limit Soviet power in the world. First, on August 29, 1949, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb—no longer did the United States have a monopoly on nuclear power. A few months later, on October 1, 1949, Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong announced the triumph of the Chinese Communists over their Nationalist foes in a civil war that had been raging since 1927. The Nationalist forces, under their leader Chiang Kai-shek, departed for Taiwan in December 1949.

IMAGE 3.3 United States, Great Britain, and France began to deliver all needed supplies to West Berlin by air

Immediately, there were suspicions that spies had passed bomb-making secrets to the Soviets and that Communist sympathizers in the U.S. State Department had hidden information that might have enabled the United States to ward off the Communist victory in China. Indeed, in February 1950, Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican, charged in a speech that the State Department was filled with Communists. Also in 1950, the imprisonment in Great Britain of Klaus Fuchs, a German-born physicist who had worked on the Manhattan Project and was then convicted of passing nuclear secrets to the Soviets, increased American fears. Information given by Fuchs to the British implicated a number of American citizens as well. The most infamous trial of suspected American spies was that of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed in June 1953 despite a lack of evidence against them. Several decades later, evidence was found that Julius, but not Ethel, had in fact given information to the Soviet Union.

Fears that Communists within the United States were jeopardizing the country's security had existed even before the victory of Mao Zedong and the arrest and conviction of the atomic spies. Roosevelt's New Deal and Truman's Fair Deal were often criticized as "socialist," which many mistakenly associated with Communism, and Democrats were often branded Communists by Republicans. In response, on March 21, 1947, Truman signed Executive Order 9835, which provided the Federal Bureau of Investigation with broad powers to investigate federal employees and identify potential security risks. State and municipal governments instituted their own loyalty boards to find and dismiss potentially disloyal workers.

In addition to loyalty review boards, the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), established in 1938 to investigate suspected Nazi sympathizers, after World War II also sought to root out suspected Communists in business, academia, and the media. HUAC was particularly interested in Hollywood because it feared that Communist sympathizers might use motion pictures as pro-Soviet propaganda. Witnesses were subpoenaed and required to testify before the committee; refusal could result in imprisonment. Those who invoked Fifth Amendment protections, or were otherwise suspected of Communist sympathies, often lost their jobs or found themselves on a blacklist, which prevented them from securing employment. Notable artists who were blacklisted in the 1940s and 1950s include composer Leonard Bernstein, novelist Dashiell Hammett, playwright and screenwriter Lillian Hellman, actor and singer Paul Robeson, and musician Artie Shaw.

TO THE TRENCHES AGAIN

Just as the U.S. government feared the possibility of Communist infiltration of the United States, so too was it alert for signs that Communist forces were on the move elsewhere. The Soviet Union had been granted control of the northern half of the Korean peninsula at the end of World War II, and the United States had control of the southern portion. The Soviets displayed little interest in extending its power into South Korea, and Stalin did not wish to risk confrontation with the United States over Korea. North Korea's leaders, however, wished to reunify the peninsula under Communist rule. In April 1950, Stalin finally gave permission to North Korea's leader Kim Il Sung to invade South Korea and provided the North Koreans with weapons and military advisors.

On June 25, 1950, troops of the North Korean People's Democratic Army crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, the border between North and South Korea. The first major test of the U.S. policy of containment in Asia had begun, for the domino theory held that a victory by North Korea might lead to further Communist expansion in Asia, in the virtual backyard of the United States' chief new ally in East Asia—Japan. The United Nations (UN), which had been established in 1945, was quick to react. On June 27, the UN Security Council denounced North Korea's actions and called upon UN members to help South Korea defeat the invading forces. As a permanent member of the Security Council, the Soviet Union could have vetoed the action, but it had boycotted UN meetings following the awarding of China's seat on the Security Council to Taiwan instead of to Mao Zedong's People's Republic of China.

On June 27, Truman ordered U.S. military forces into South Korea. They established a defensive line on the far southern part of the Korean peninsula near the town of Pusan. A U.S.-led invasion at Inchon on September 15 halted the North Korean advance and turned it into a retreat (IMAGE 3.4). As North Korean forces moved back across the thirty-eighth parallel, UN forces under the command of U.S. General Douglas MacArthur followed. MacArthur's goal was not only to drive the North Korean army out of South Korea but to destroy Communist North Korea as well. At this stage, he had the support of President Truman; however, as UN forces approached the Yalu River, the border between China and North Korea, MacArthur's and Truman's objectives diverged. Chinese premier Zhou Enlai, who had provided supplies and military advisors for North Korea before the conflict began, sent troops into battle to support North Korea and caught U.S. troops by surprise. Following a costly retreat from North Korea's Chosin Reservoir, a swift advance of Chinese and North Korean forces and another invasion of Seoul, MacArthur urged Truman to deploy nuclear weapons against China. Truman, however, did not wish to risk a broader war in Asia. MacArthur criticized Truman's decision and voiced his disagreement in a letter to a Republican congressman, who subsequently allowed the letter to become public. In April 1951, Truman accused MacArthur of insubordination and relieved him of his command. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed, calling the escalation MacArthur had called for "the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy." Nonetheless, the public gave MacArthur a hero's welcome in New York with the largest ticker tape parade in the nation's history.

After the initial invasion of South Korea by the North Korean People's Democratic Army, the United Nations established a defensive line in the southern part of the country. The landing at Inchon in September reversed the tide of the war and allowed UN forces under General Douglas MacArthur to retake the city of Seoul, which had fallen to North Korean troops in the early days of the war. By July 1951, the UN forces had recovered from the setbacks earlier in the year and pushed North Korean and Chinese forces back across the thirty-eighth parallel, and peace talks began. However, combat raged on for more than two additional years.

The primary source of contention was the fate of prisoners of war. The Chinese and North Koreans insisted that their prisoners be returned to them, but many of these men did not wish to be repatriated. Finally, an armistice agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. A border between North and South Korea, one quite close to the original thirty-eighth parallel line, was agreed upon. A demilitarized zone between the two nations was established, and both sides agreed that prisoners of war would be allowed to choose whether to be returned to their homelands. Five million people died in the three-year conflict. Of these, around 36,500 were U.S. soldiers; a majority were Korean civilians.

(a) (b)

IMAGE 3.4 North Korean forces moved back across the thirty-eighth parallel.

As the war in Korea came to an end, so did one of the most frightening anti-Communist campaigns in the United States. After charging the U.S. State Department with harboring Communists, Senator Joseph McCarthy had continued to make similar accusations against other government agencies. Prominent Republicans like Senator Robert Taft and Congressman Richard Nixon regarded McCarthy as an asset who targeted Democratic politicians, and they supported his actions. In 1953, as chair of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, McCarthy investigated the Voice of America, which broadcast news and pro-U.S. propaganda to foreign countries, and the State Department's overseas libraries. After an aborted effort to investigate Protestant clergy, McCarthy turned his attention to the U.S. Army. This proved to be the end of the senator's political career. From April to June 1954, the Army-McCarthy Hearings were televised, and the American public, able to witness his use of intimidation and innuendo firsthand, rejected McCarthy's approach to rooting out Communism in the United States (IMAGE 3.5). In December 1954, the U.S. Senate officially condemned his actions with a censure, ending his prospect for political leadership.

(a) (b)

IMAGE 3.5 Senator Joseph McCarthy (left) consults with Roy Cohn (right) during the Army-McCarthy hearings. Cohn, a lawyer who worked for McCarthy, was responsible for investigating State Department libraries overseas for "subversive" books.

One particularly heinous aspect of the hunt for Communists in the United States, likened by playwright Arthur Miller to the witch hunts of old, was its effort to root out gay men and lesbians employed by the government. Many anti-Communists, including McCarthy, believed that gay men, referred to by Senator Everett Dirksen as “lavender lads,” were morally weak and thus were particularly likely to betray their country. Many also believed that lesbians and gay men were prone to being blackmailed by Soviet agents because of their sexual orientation, which at the time was regarded by psychiatrists as a form of mental illness.

Joy at the ending of World War II was quickly replaced by fears of conflict with the Soviet Union. The Cold War heated up as both the United States and Soviet Union struggled for world dominance. Fearing Soviet expansion, the United States committed itself to assisting countries whose governments faced overthrow by Communist forces and gave billions of dollars to war-torn Europe to help it rebuild. While the United States achieved victory in its thwarting of Soviet attempts to cut Berlin off from the West, the nation was less successful in its attempts to prevent Communist expansion in Korea. The development of atomic weapons by the Soviet Union and the arrest of Soviet spies in the United States and Britain roused fears in the United States that Communist agents were seeking to destroy the nation from within. Loyalty board investigations and hearings before House and Senate committees attempted to root out Soviet sympathizers in the federal government and in other sectors of American society, including Hollywood and the military.

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# 3.2: Existentialism

3.2 Existentialism

Existentialism is a philosophical and literary movement that first was popularized in France soon after World War II by figures such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. The roots of this movement can be traced back to the religious writings of Blaise Pascal in the seventeenth century and those of Søren Kierkegaard in the nineteenth century. The common thread that unites existentialists is a focus on existence, particularly the concrete existence of individual human beings. Unlike rationalist thinkers such as René Descartes and G.W. F. Hegel, existentialists reject the premise that human beings are primarily rational creatures who live in an ordered, well-designed universe. They also do not believe that the answers to life's challenges can be solved through thoughtful consideration and reasoned deliberation. Instead, existentialists view human beings as creatures whose reason is subordinate to human passions and anxieties, and who exist in an irrational, absurd, and insignificant universe. In such a universe, existentialists argue, one struggles to become the best person one can be given one's religious, historical, cultural, economic, and personal circumstances.

Existentialists emphasize the human being's place in a complex set of circumstances in order to highlight the uniqueness and individuality within each of us. They stress the role of the human body in all of our acts and decisions, arguing that the mind cannot exist without the body (in contrast to the majority of rationalists, who assert that the mind is separate from the body). In addition, existentialists consider whether absolute individual freedom is possible; and if so, what the consequences of such freedom might be for our sense of responsibility to ourselves, to others, and to God. They also consider the consequences of the existence or nonexistence of God, and what either possibility means for our sense of freedom and responsibility. More than anything, existentialists reflect on human beings' anxiety over and dread of death, and consider the consequences to our individual lives of coming to terms with the inevitability of death.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) is the public face of existentialism. His works, both fictional and philosophical, resoundingly affirm the existentialist priority of concrete, situated, and historical human existence. He stresses the value of choice, responsibility, and authenticity in human self-fashioning. Sartre was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1964 – an honor he refused because he maintained that it conflicted with his professional, personal, and political commitments. This unit will introduce you to Sartre's contributions to existentialist philosophy while simultaneously highlighting Sartre's place in the movement's history. In particular, you will explore how Sartre expanded on existentialist themes dealt with by his predecessors – for example, the notions of authenticity, anxiety, and freedom.

Albert Camus (1913–1960) was an Algerian writer and intellectual who refused to be called a philosopher because he did not believe that human reason was capable of systematizing human experience in all of its nuances. He was a friend and, later, a critic of Sartre, and his works manifest concerns similar to those of Sartre. Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1957. In this unit, you will explore Camus' existentialism through an examination of his book *The Stranger* and his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" (both published in 1942), which highlight the absurdities of human existence and, interestingly enough, the absurdity of existentialism itself if the philosophy is taken to an extreme. You also will develop an appreciation of the manner in which Camus represents the synthesis of existentialist thinking since Pascal.

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# 3.3: Origins of Theater and Theater of the Absurd

3.3 Origins of Theater & Theater of the Absurd

IMAGE 3.6 45th Street, in the heart of the Broadway Theatre District, New York City

QUALITIES OF THEATER

Theatre, along with music and dance, has been labeled a fine art as well as a performing art; it can be found in performing arts centers and taught in colleges and departments of fine art. But these terms lead to larger issues. By the twentieth century, educational programs had been broken down into classifications, all of which were historically tied to economic class. In many cultures of the ancient world, work was done by slaves. Consequently, physical labor was imagined to be degrading and associated with a lack of nobility. The Romans, for example, called any activity where money changed hands the vulgar arts (*vulgares artes*) or sordid arts (*sordidæ artes*), also translated as “dirty arts.” By the Middle Ages, the designation changed. The term *mechanical arts* was adopted to mean skilled activities accomplished by manual labor. In the seventeenth century, **useful arts** appeared, and with the arrival of the machine age in the nineteenth century, it was replaced with *industrial arts*, a term still in use today.

In the ancient world and beyond, proof of high status was having lei- sure time to pursue self-improvement of the mind or to serve the public good. Therefore, philosophy, history, languages, math, and science were given the term **liberal arts** (“arts befitting a freeman”). Now the term simply means subjects separate from science and technology and implies an education that is not

particularly specialized. Therefore “liberal,” in this sense, is not a political term and is not meant to contrast any “conservative” mode of thought.

The third branch, separate from *useful* and *liberal*, was given the term *fine arts*. Coined in the eighteenth century, it was meant to include sculpture, painting, music, and poetry. Later, the performing arts were added along with disciplines such as printmaking, photography, and collage. “Fine” was not intended to suggest art that was “acceptable” or “delicate”—it was supposed to classify artistic endeavors that were beautiful for their own sake and not compromised by serving any practical function. In other words, a craftsman could make a stunningly beautiful cabinet, but once it stored clothes, it ceased to be art. An architect could design a building that was a pleasure to behold, but since it provided shelter, his work was considered only useful. Clearly, the ex-change of money and the association with leisure time has been abandoned as a dividing line between fine and useful art. However, the remaining concept of beauty for its own sake leaves us with a variety of conflicts, questions, and ambiguities. Many works communicate images or use material that we may not regard as beautiful. Still, we would not hesitate to label them as art. Theatre deals in conflict, sometimes using subject matter that can make some feel uncomfortable. Does it cease to be art when no pleasurable feeling is derived from it? Many would argue that even though the arts do not serve any domestic function, they can be extremely useful as a means of interpreting our world and spiritually nourishing our lives. Is that not useful? When does an object or performance stop being artistic and start being art? Are there rules that must be satisfied or is it simply in the eye of the beholder? Does the quality of something determine if it qualifies as art? To ask and engage with these sorts of questions is to practice **aesthetics**, a branch of philosophy that deals with beauty and taste.

So what separates theatre from the other arts? What are the qualities particular to theatre that, collectively, make it unique? Theatre certainly deals in the **imitation** of human action. We can trace the origins of theatrical practice in the Western world to the citizens of the Greek city-state of Athens in the fifth century BCE. Theatre began with *dithyrambs*, a chorus of fifty men with a leader who told stories about a fertility god named Dionysus through song and dance. Eventually, innovations were made such as performers imitating individual characters. In addition, the chorus was greatly reduced and changed to represent the men or women of a city where a play took place. Presented at festivals, this form became what we know today as Greek tragedy.

Sitting in the audience was Aristotle. The student of the philosopher Plato, he could be called our first drama critic. His collected notes form the basis for a treatise called *Poetics* (dated between 335 and 322 BCE), which described what he thought were the components of a good tragedy. He began by defining his subject, calling it “the imitation of an action that is good and also complete in itself and of some magnitude.” This could be interpreted as requiring that drama artfully depict the actions of someone; have a beginning, middle, and end; and be of an appropriate length. Independently, an Indian critic named Bharata came to a similar conclusion in a text called the *Natyashastra*. Written some- time between 300 BCE and 300 CE in a now-dead language called San- skrit, he defined drama as “an imitation of people’s demeanor, attitudes, conditions, and joys and sorrows.”

Here, both authors speak to a fundamental aspect of humanity. It is our nature to imitate the actions of others—psychological studies con- firm that imitation is a major part of our social development. Mimicry strengthens the bond between parent and child. Newborns copy the facial movements of their parents. Toddlers learn to speak by imitating and sifting through the sounds they hear. When we observe an action, it has been shown that the neurons in our brain respond as if we were performing the same action. Our capacity for empathy is based on this hardwired ability. In acting classes, one of the most common exercises to get scene partners to connect emotionally is called mirroring. Actors are paired, facing each other, and one performs all of the physical movements of the other until they are told to switch leaders. Duplicating actions is the fastest way to get two people to reach synchronicity.

Our skill in patterning behavior is also one of the reasons that actors—and the theatre in general—have often been greeted with suspicion throughout history. Even though psychologists have established that children as young as twelve months can recognize the concept of pretense, there has always been a belief that viewing or participating in fictional worlds can warp our moral core, regardless of age. In 1999, two teenagers entered Columbine High School in Colorado and killed twelve students and a teacher before ending their own lives. Soon after, many tried to tie their violent behavior to the playing of video games.

Theatre has other qualities that, collectively, make it distinct from other art forms. The economics of producing plays is one reason theatre is no longer a mass medium. Film and television can reach greater audiences because their product can be broadcast and played simultaneously on millions of screens. Additionally, computers can now stream the same con- tent on demand. Theatre can never be as profitable or match the scale of these mediums. However, its resistance to duplication is what makes it special. Live performance is **immediate**. When you read a novel or watch a recorded television program, you have total control over the

experience by varying your tempo of reading or stopping and starting altogether. The theatrical experience, however, is relentless. It pushes your focus from place to place, forcing you to reflect on the events on the fly, during intermissions, or after the show. That is the reason it is **ephemeral**. Performances can have no true reproduction. Anyone who has participated in the creation of theatre can attest to the strange, emotional moment when the run of a show has ended, sets are removed, and nothing remains but an empty stage. In dressing rooms and backstage walls of many theatres, you will find lines from shows scribbled by actors, a poignant attempt to live beyond the temporary world of a production run. While it is true that performances can be captured on film or video, the true experience of live theatre cannot be truly duplicated. Once it is finished, it lives only in memory.

This transitory quality of theatre is due to the **dynamic between the actor and the audience**. There is a feedback loop—energy is exchanged. Each produces signals that are perceived by the other, which, in turn, can profoundly affect how the performance evolves. This is more difficult to perceive in serious drama but is especially evident in comedy, where laughter influences the delivery and timing of lines or the intensity of an individual performance. Actors complain of tough or dead audiences and celebrate the ones that seem to take an emotional journey with them, inspiring them to make bolder choices.

The idea of pretending that the audience is not present is a relatively new one. In many theatrical traditions, actors commonly spoke directly to their audiences. Readers of Shakespeare often ignore that his famous soliloquys, monologues in which a single character shares his or her innermost thoughts, are direct appeals to the audience. The audience members become characters in the play, confidants who can seemingly solve the problems they are being asked to hear.

This relationship between actors and audiences has changed over the centuries. In many theatrical traditions, the audience has been a much more influential “actor” in the performance. In eighteenth- century France and England, wealthy patrons could sit right on the stage in full view. As much as we complain about the annoyances of cell phone use and texting during performances today, to a nineteenth-century audience, our behavior would seem downright passive. It was common practice for people to vocalize their criticism by booing and hissing at villains during their entrances or heckling actors when it was thought a performance was subpar. Vocal reactions to onstage action built to such a crescendo that newspapers often complained of theatrical rowdyism.

Other cultures have a more casual relationship between actor and audience. For example, in some puppet theatre traditions like the *wayang kulit* in Indonesia, shows are played from evening until dawn, and it is common practice for spectators to move about, talk, and feast during the show. Nevertheless, actors and audiences are ultimately partners. Theatre’s primary strength comes from the fact that it is a medium of imagination that depends on the *suggestion* of reality rather than slavish photorealism.

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THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

The plays of Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, and Eugene Ionesco have been performed with astonishing success in France, Germany, Scandinavia, and the English-speaking countries. This reception is all the more puzzling when one considers that the audiences concerned were amused by and applauded these plays fully aware that they could not understand what they meant or what their authors were driving at.

At first sight these plays do, indeed, confront their public with a bewildering experience, a veritable barrage of wildly irrational, often nonsensical goings-on that seem to go counter to all accepted standards of stage convention. In these plays, some of which are labeled “anti-plays,” neither the time nor the place of the action are ever clearly stated. (At the beginning of Ionesco’s *The Bald Soprano* the clock strikes seventeen.) The characters hardly have any individuality and often even lack a name; moreover, halfway through the action they tend to change their nature completely. Pozzo and Lucky in Beckett’s *Waiting* for *Godot*, for example, appear as master and slave at one moment only to return after a while with their respective positions mysteriously reversed. The laws of probability as well as those of physics are suspended when we meet young ladies with two or even three noses (Ionesco’s *Jack or the Submission*, or a corpse that has been hidden in the next room that suddenly begins to grow to monstrous size until a giant foot crashes through the door onto the stage (Ionesco’s *Amédée).* As a result, it is often unclear whether the action is meant to represent a dream world of nightmares or real happenings. Within the same scene the action may switch from the night- marish poetry of high emotions to pure knock-about farce or cabaret, and above all, the dialogue tends to get out of hand so that at times the words seem to go counter to the actions of the characters on the stage, to degenerate into lists of words and phrases from a dictionary or traveler’s conversation book, or to get bogged down in endless repetitions like a phonograph record stuck in one

groove. Only in this kind of demented world can strangers meet and discover, after a long and polite conversation and close cross-questioning, that, to their immense surprise, they must be man and wife as they are living on the same street, in the same house, apartment, room, and bed (Ionesco's The *Bald Soprano).* Only here can the whole life of a group of characters revolve around the passionate discussion of the aesthetics and economics of pinball machines (Adamov's *Ping-Pong).* Above all, everything that happens seems to be beyond rational motivation, happening at random or through the demented caprice of an unaccountable idiot fate. Yet, these wildly extravagant tragic farces and farcical tragedies, although they have suffered their share of protests and scandals, do arouse interest and are received with laughter and thoughtful respect. What is the explanation for this curious phenomenon?

The most obvious, but perhaps too facile answer that suggests itself is that these plays are prime examples of "pure theatre." They are living proof that the magic of the stage can persist even outside, and divorced from, any framework of conceptual rationality. They prove that exits and entrances, light and shadow, contrasts in costume, voice, gait and behavior, pratfalls and embraces, all the manifold mechanical interactions of human puppets in groupings that suggest tension, conflict, or the relaxation of tensions, can arouse laughter or gloom and conjure up an atmosphere of poetry even if devoid of logical motivation and unrelated to recognizable human characters, emotions, and objectives.

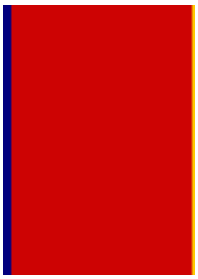

IMAGE 3.7 Actors performing a scene from Samuel Beckett's WAITING FOR GODOT.

But this is only a partial explanation. While the element of "pure theatre" and abstract stagecraft is certainly at work in the plays concerned, they also have a much more substantial content and meaning. Not only *do* all these plays make sense, though perhaps not obvious or conventional sense, they also give expression to some of the basic issues and problems of our age, in a uniquely efficient and meaningful manner, so that they meet some of the deepest needs and unexpressed yearnings of their audience.

The three dramatists that have been grouped together here would probably most energetically deny that they form anything like a school or movement. Each of them, in fact, has his own roots and sources, his own very personal approach to both form and subject matter. Yet they also clearly have a good deal in common. This common denominator that characterizes their works might well be described as the element of *the absurd.* ("Absurd is that which has no purpose, or goal, or objective"), the definition given by Ionesco in a note on Kafka, certainly applies to the plays of Beckett and Ionesco as well as those of Arthur Adamov up to his latest play, *Paolo Paoli*, when he returned to a more traditional form of social drama.

Each of these writers, however, has his own special type of absurdity: in Beckett it is melancholic, colored by a feeling of futility born from the disillusionment of old age and chronic hopelessness; Adamov's is more active, aggressive, earthy, and tinged with social and political overtones; while Ionesco's absurdity has its own fantastic knock-about flavor of tragical clowning. But they all share the same deep sense of human isolation and of the irremediable character of the human condition.

As Arthur Adamov put it in describing how he came to write his first play, *la Parodie* (1947):

I began to discover stage scenes in the most commonplace everyday events. [One day I saw] a blind man begging; two girls went by without seeing him, singing: "I closed my eyes; it was marvelous!" This gave me the idea of showing on stage, as crudely and as visibly as possible, the loneliness of man, the absence of communication among human beings.

Looking back at his earliest effort (which he now regards as unsuccessful) Adamov defines his basic idea in it, and a number of subsequent plays, as the idea "that the destinies of all human beings are of equal futility, that the refusal to live (of the character called N.) and the joyful acceptance of life (by the employee) both lead, by the same path, to inevitable failure, total destruction. "It is the same futility and pointlessness of human effort, the same impossibility of human communication which Ionesco expresses in ever new and ingenious variations. The two old people making conversation with the empty air and living in the expectation of an orator who is to pronounce profound truths about life, but turns out to be deaf and dumb (*The Chairs*), are as sardonically cruel a

symbol of this fundamentally tragic view of human existence as Jack (*Jack or the Submission*), who stubbornly resists the concerted urgings of his entire family to subscribe to the most sacred principle of his clan-which, when his resistance finally yields to their entreaties, turns out to be the profound truth: "I love potatoes with bacon" ("J'adore les pommes de terre au lard").

The Theatre of the Absurd shows the world as an incomprehensible place. The spectators see the happenings on the stage entirely from the outside, without ever understanding the full meaning of these strange patterns of events, as newly arrived visitors might watch life in a country of which they have not yet mastered the language. The confrontation of the audience with characters and happenings which they are not quite able to comprehend makes it impossible for them to share the aspirations and emotions depicted in the play. Brecht's famous "Verfremdungseffekt" (alienation effect), the inhibition of any identification between spectator and actor, which Brecht could never successfully achieve in his own highly rational theatre, really comes into its own in the Theatre of the Absurd. It is impossible to identify oneself with characters one does not understand or whose motives remain a closed book, and so the distance between the public and the happenings on the stage can be maintained. Emotional identification with the characters is replaced by a puzzled, critical attention. For while the happenings on the stage are absurd, they yet remain recognizable as somehow related to real life with its absurdity, so that eventually the spectators are brought face to face with the irrational side of their existence. Thus, the absurd and fantastic goings-on of the Theatre of the Absurd will, in the end, be found to reveal the irrationality of the human condition and the illusion of what we thought was its apparent logical structure

If the dialogue in these plays consists of meaningless clichés and the mechanical, circular repetition of stereotyped phrases--how many meaningless clichés and stereotyped phrases do we use in our day-to-day conversation? If the characters change their personality halfway through the action, how consistent and truly integrated are the people we meet in our real life? And if people in these plays appear as mere marionettes, helpless puppets without any will of their own, passively at the mercy of blind fate and meaningless circumstance, do we, in fact, in our over organized world, still possess any genuine initiative or power to decide our own destiny? The spectators of the Theatre of the Absurd are thus confronted with a grotesquely heightened picture of their own world: a world without faith, meaning, and genuine freedom of will. In this sense, the Theatre of the Absurd is the true theatre of our time

The theatre of most previous epochs reflected an accepted moral order, a world whose aims and objectives were clearly present to the minds of all its public, whether it was the audience of the medieval mystery plays with their solidly accepted faith in the Christian world order or the audience of the drama of Ibsen, Shaw, or Hauptmann with their unquestioned belief in evolution and progress. To such audiences, right and wrong were never in doubt, nor did they question the then accepted goals of human endeavor. Our own time, at least in the Western world, wholly lacks such a generally accepted and completely integrated world picture. The decline of religious faith, the destruction of the belief in automatic social and biological progress, the discovery of vast areas of irrational and unconscious forces within the human psyche, the loss of a sense of control over rational human development in an age of totalitarianism and weapons of mass destruction, have all contributed to the erosion of the basis for a dramatic convention in which the action proceeds within a fixed and self-evident framework of generally accepted values. Faced with the vacuum left by the destruction of a universally accepted and unified set of beliefs, most serious playwrights have felt the need to fit their work into the frame of values and objectives expressed in one of the contemporary ideologies: Marxism, psychoanalysis, aestheticism, or nature worship. But these, in the eyes of a writer like Adamov, are nothing but superficial rationalizations which try to hide the depth of man's predicament, his loneliness and his anxiety. Or, as Ionesco puts it:

As far as I am concerned, I believe sincerely in the poverty of the poor, I deplore it; it is real; it can become a subject for the theatre; I also believe in the anxieties and serious troubles the rich may suffer from; but it is neither in the misery of the former nor in the melancholic of the latter, that I, for one, find my dramatic subject matter. Theatre is for me the outward projection onto the stage of an inner world; it is in my dreams, in my anxieties, in my obscure desires, in my internal contradictions that I, for one, reserve for myself the right of finding my dramatic subject matter. As I am not alone in the world, as each of us, in the depth of his being, is at the same time part and parcel of all others, my dreams, my desires, my anxieties, my obsessions do not belong to me alone. They form part of an ancestral heritage, a very ancient storehouse which is a portion of the common property of all mankind. It is this, which, transcending their outward diversity, reunites all human beings and constitutes our profound common patrimony, the universal language.

In other words, the commonly acceptable framework of beliefs and values of former epochs which has now been shattered is to be replaced by the community of dreams and desires of a collective unconscious. And, to quote Ionesco again:

...the new dramatist is one ... who tried to link up with what is most ancient: new language and subject matter in a dramatic structure which aims at being clearer, more stripped of inessentials and more purely theatrical; the rejection of traditionalism to rediscover tradition; a synthesis of knowledge and invention, of the real and imaginary, of the particular and the universal, or as they say now, of the individual and the collective...by expressing my deepest obsessions, I express deepest humanity. I become one with all others, spontaneously, over and above all the barriers of caste and different psychologies. I express my solitude and become one with all other solitudes.

What is the tradition with which the Theatre of the Absurd-at first sight the most revolutionary and radically new movement-is trying to link itself? It is in fact a very ancient and a very rich tradition, nourished from many and varied sources: the verbal exuberance and extravagant inventions of Rabelais, the age-old clowning of the Roman mimes and the Italian Commedia dell'Arte, the knock-about humor of circus clowns like Grock; the wild, archetypal symbolism of English nonsense verse, the baroque horror of Jacobean dramatists like Webster or Tourneur, the harsh, incisive and often brutal tones of the German drama of Grabbe, Biichner, Kleist, and Wedekind with its delirious language and grotesque inventiveness; and the Nordic paranoia of the dreams and persecution fantasies of Strindberg.

All these streams, however, first came together and crystallized in the more direct ancestors of the present Theatre of the Absurd. Of these, undoubtedly the first and foremost is Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), the creator of *Ubu Roi*, the first play which clearly belongs in the category of the Theatre of the Absurd. *Ubu Roi*, first performed in Paris on December 10, 1896, is a Rabelaisian nonsense drama about the fantastic adventures of a fat, cowardly, and brutal figure, *le père* Ubu, who makes himself King of Poland, fights a series of Falstaffian battles, and is finally routed. As if to challenge all accepted codes of propriety and thus to open a new era of irreverence, the play opens with the defiant expletive, "*Merdre*!" which immediately provoked a scandal. This, of course, was what Jarry had intended. *Ubu*, in its rollicking Rabelaisian parody of a Shakespearean history play, was meant to confront the Parisian bourgeois with a monstrous portrait of his own greed, selfishness, and philistinism: "As the curtain went up I wanted to confront the public with a theatre in which, as in the magic mirror. . . of the fairy tales... the vicious man sees his reflection with bulls' horns and the body of a dragon, the projections of his viciousness...." But Ubu is more than a mere monstrous exaggeration of the selfishness and crude sensuality of the French bourgeois. He is at the same time the personification of the grossness of human nature, an enormous belly walking on two legs. That is why Jarry put him on the stage as a monstrous potbellied figure in a highly stylized costume and mask-a mythical, archetypal externalization of human instincts of the lowest kind. Thus, Ubu, the false king of Poland, pretended doctor of the pseudoscience of Pataphysics, clearly anticipates one of the main characteristics of the Theatre of the Absurd, its tendency to externalize and project outwards what is happening in the deeper recesses of the mind. Examples of this tendency are: the disembodied voices of "monitors" shouting commands at the hero of Adamov's *La Grande et la Petite Manoeuvre* which concretizes his neurotic compulsions; the mutilated trunks of the parents in Beckett's *Endgame* emerging from ashcans-the ashcans of the main character's subconscious to which he has banished his past and his conscience; or the proliferations of fungi that invade the married couple's apartment in Ionesco's *Amédée* and express the rottenness and decay of their relationship. All these psychological factors are not only projected outwards, they are also, as in Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, grotesquely magnified and exaggerated. This scornful rejection of all subtleties is a reaction against the supposed finesse of the psychology of the naturalistic theatre in which everything was to be inferred between the lines. The Theatre of the Absurd, from Jarry onwards, stands for explicitness as against implicit psychology, and in this resembles the highly explicit theatre of the Expressionists or the political theatre of Piscator or Brecht.

IMAGE 3.8 A scene from LES MAMELLES DE TIRESIAS.

To be larger and more real than life was also the aim of Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), the great poet who was one of the seminal forces in the rise of Cubism and who had close personal and artistic links with Jarry. If Apollinaire labeled his play *Les Mamelles de Tiresias* a *"drame surrealiste,"* he did not intend that term, of which he was one of the earliest users, in the sense in which it later became famous. He wanted it to describe a play in which everything was larger than life, for he believed in an art which was to be "modern, simple, rapid, with the shortcuts and enlargements that are needed to shock the spectator.'" In the prologue to *Les Mamelles de Tiresias*, a grotesque pamphlet purportedly advocating an immense rise in the French birth rate, Apollinaire makes the Director of the Company of Actors who perform the play, define his ideas:

For the theatre should not be an imitation of reality

It is right that the dramatist should use

All the illusions at his disposal...

It is right that he should let crowds speak, or inanimate objects

If he so pleases

And that he no longer has to reckon

With time and space

His universe is the play

Within which he is God the Creator

Who disposes at will

Of sounds gestures movements masses colors

Not merely in order

To photograph what is called a slice of life

But to bring forth life itself and all its truth…

Accordingly, in *Les Mamelles de Tiresias* the whole population of Zanzibar, where the scene is laid, is represented by a single actor; and the heroine, Thérèse, changes herself into a man by letting her breasts float upwards like a pair of toy balloons. Although *Les Mamelles de Tiresias* was not a surrealist work in the strictest sense of the term, it clearly foreshadowed the ideas of the movement led by André Breton. Surrealism in that narrower, technical sense found little expression in the theatre. But Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), another major influence in the development of the Theatre of the Absurd, did at one time belong to the Surrealist group, although his main activity in the theatre took place after he had broken with Breton. Artaud was one of the most unhappy men of genius of his age, an artist consumed by the most intense passions; poet, actor, director, designer, immensely fertile and original in his inventions and ideas, yet always living on the borders of sanity and never able to realize his ambitions, plans, and projects.

Artaud, who had been an actor in Charles Dullin's company at the Atelier, began his venture into the realm of experimental theatre in a series of productions characteristically sailing under the label *Théâtre Alfred Jarry* (1927-29). But his theories of a new and revolutionary theatre only crystallized after he had been deeply stirred by a performance of Balinese dancers at the Colonial Exhibition of 1931. He formulated his ideas in a series of impassioned manifestoes later collected in the volume *The Theatre and Its Double* (1938), which continues to exercise an important influence on contemporary French theatre. Artaud named the theatre of his dreams *Théâtre de la Cruauté*, a theatre of cruelty, which, he said, "means a theatre difficult and cruel above all for myself." "Everything that is really active is cruelty. It is around this idea of action carried to the extreme that the theatre must renew itself." Here too the idea of action larger and more real than life is the dominant theme. "Every performance will contain a physical and objective element that will be felt by all. Cries, Wails, Apparitions, Surprises, *Coups de Théâtre* of all kinds, the magical beauty of costumes inspired by the model of certain rituals...." The language of the drama must also undergo a change: "It is not a matter of suppressing articulate speech but of giving to the words something like the importance they have in dreams." In Artaud's new theatre "not only the obverse side of man will appear but also the reverse side of the coin: the reality of imagination and of dreams will here be seen on an equal footing with everyday life."

IMAGE 3.9 A scene from Artaud’s adaptation of CENCI.

Artaud's only attempt at putting these theories to the test on the stage took place on May 6, 1935 at the Folies-Wagram. Artaud had made his own adaptation ("after Shelley and Stendhal") of the story of the *Cenci*, that sombre Renaissance story of incest and patricide. It was in many ways a beautiful and memorable performance, but full of imperfections and a financial disaster which marked the beginning of Artaud's eventual descent into despair, insanity, and abject poverty. Jean-Louis Barrault had some small part in this venture and Roger Blin, the actor and director who later played an important part in bringing Adamov, Beckett, and Ionesco to the stage, appeared in the small role of one of the hired assassins

Jean-Louis Barrault, one of the most creative figures in the theatre of our time, was in turn, responsible for another venture which played an important part in the development of the Theatre of the Absurd. He staged André Gide's adaptation of Franz Kafka's novel, *The Trial*, in 1947 and played the part of the hero K. himself. Undoubtedly this performance which brought the dreamworld of Kafka to a triumphant unfolding on the stage and demonstrated the effectiveness of this particular brand of fantasy in practical theatrical terms exercised a profound influence on the practitioners of the new movement. For here, too, they saw the externalization of mental processes, the acting out of nightmarish dreams by schematized figures in a world of torment and absurdity. The dream element in the Theatre of the Absurd can also be traced, in the case of Adamov, to Strindberg, acknowledged by him as his inspiration at the time when he began to think of writing for the theatre. This is the Strindberg of *The Ghost Sonata*, *The Dream Play* and of *To Damascus.* (Adamov is the author of an excellent brief monograph on Strindberg.)

But if Jarry, Artaud, Kafka, and Strindberg can be regarded as the decisive influences in the development of the Theatre of the Absurd, there is another giant of European literature that must not be omitted from the list-James Joyce, for whom Beckett at one time is supposed to have acted as helper and secretary. Not only is the Nighttown episode of *Ulysses* one of the earliest examples of the Theatre of the Absurd-with its exuberant mingling of the real and the nightmarish, its wild fantasies and externalizations of subconscious yearnings and fears, but Joyce's experimentation with language, his attempt to smash the limitations of conventional vocabulary and syntax has probably exercised an even more powerful impact on all the writers concerned it is in its attitude to language that the Theatre of the Absurd is most revolutionary.

(a) (b)

IMAGE 3.9 A French promotional poster for a Jean Louis Barrault performance.

It deliberately attempts to renew the language of drama and to expose the barrenness of conventional stage dialogue. Ionesco once described how he came to write his first play. (Cf. his "The Tragedy of Language," TDR, Spring, 1960.) He had decided to take English lessons and began to study at the Berlitz school. When he read and repeated the sentences in his phrase book, those petrified corpses of once living speech, he was suddenly overcome by their tragic quality. From them he composed his first play, *The Bald Soprano*. The absurdity of its dialogue and its fantastic quality springs directly from its basic ordinariness. It exposes the emptiness of stereotyped language; "what is sometimes labeled the absurd," Ionesco says, "is only the denunciation of the ridiculous nature of a language which is empty of substance, made up of clichés and slogans ... .'" Such a language has atrophied; it has ceased to be the expression of anything alive or vital and has been degraded into a mere conventional token of human intercourse, a mask for genuine meaning and emotion.

That is why so often in the Theatre of the Absurd the dialogue becomes divorced from the real happenings in the play and is even put into direct contradiction with the action. The Professor and the Pupil in Ionesco's *The Lesson* "seem" to be going through a repetition of conventional school book phrases, but behind this smoke screen of language the real action of the play pursues an entirely different course with the Professor, vampire-like, draining the vitality from the young girl up to the final moment when he plunges his knife into her body. In Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* Lucky's much vaunted philosophical wisdom is revealed to be a flood of completely meaningless gibberish that vaguely resembles the language of philosophical argument. And in Adamov's remarkable play, *Ping-Pong*, a good deal of the dramatic power lies in the contrapuntal contrast between the triviality of the theme-the improvement of pinball machines-and the almost religious fervor with which it is discussed. Here, in order to bring out the full meaning of the play, the actors have to act against the dialogue rather than with it, the fervor of the delivery must stand in a dialectical contrast to the pointlessness of the meaning of the lines. In the same way, the author implies that most of the fervent and passionate discussion of real life (of political controversy, to give but one example) also turns around empty and meaningless clichés. Or, as Ionesco says in an essay on Antonin Artaud:

As our knowledge becomes increasingly divorced from real life, our culture no longer contains ourselves (or only contains an insignificant part of ourselves) and forms a "social" context in which we are not integrated. The problem thus becomes that of again reconciling our culture with our life by making our culture a living culture once more. But to achieve this end we shall first have to kill the "respect for that which is written"... it becomes necessary to break up our language so that it may become possible to put it together again and to reestablish contact with the absolute, or as I should prefer to call it, with multiple realities.

This quest for the multiple reality of the world which is real because it exists on many planes simultaneously and is more than a mere unidirectional abstraction is not only in itself a search for a reestablished poetical reality (poetry in its essence expressing reality in its ambiguity and multidimensional depth); it is also in close accord with important movements of our age in what appear to be entirely different fields: psychology and philosophy. The dissolution, devaluation, and relativization of language is, after all, also the theme of much of present-day psychology, which has shown what in former times was regarded as a rational expression of logically arrived at conclusions to be the mere rationalization of subconscious emotional impulses. Not everything we say means what we intend it to mean. And likewise, in present-day Logical Positivism a large proportion of all statements is regarded as devoid of conceptual meaning and merely emotive. A philosopher like Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his later phases, even tried to break through what he regarded as the opacity, the misleading nature of language and grammar; for if all our thinking is in terms of language, and language obeys what after all are the arbitrary conventions of grammar, we must strive to penetrate to the real content of thought that is masked by grammatical rules and conventions. Here, too, then is a matter of getting behind the surface of linguistic clichés and of finding reality through the break-up of language.

In the Theatre of the Absurd, therefore, the real content of the play lies in the action. Language may be discarded altogether, as in Beckett's *Act Without Words* or in Ionesco's *The New Tenant*, in which the whole sense of the play is contained in the incessant arrival of more and more furniture so that the occupant of the room is, in the end, literally drowned in it. Here the movement of objects alone carries the dramatic action, the language has become purely incidental, less important than the contribution of the property department. In this, the Theatre of the Absurd also reveals its anti-literary character, its endeavor to link up with the pre-literary strata of stage history: the circus, the performances of itinerant jugglers and mountebanks, the music hall, fairground barkers, acrobats, and also the robust world of the silent film. Ionesco, in particular, clearly owes a great deal to Chaplin, Buster Keaton, the Keystone Cops, Laurel and Hardy, and the Marx Brothers. And it is surely significant that so much of successful popular entertainment in our age shows affinities with the subject matter and preoccupation of the avant garde Theatre of the Absurd. A sophisticated, but nevertheless highly popular, film comedian like Jacques Tati uses dialogue merely as a barely

comprehensible babble of noises, and also dwells on the loneliness of man in our age, the horror of over mechanization and over organization gone mad. Danny Kaye excels in streams of gibberish closely akin to Lucky's oration in *Waiting for Godot.* The brilliant and greatly liked team of British radio (and occasionally television) comedians, the Goons, have a sense of the absurd that resembles Kafka's or Ionesco's and a team of grotesque singers like "Les Freres Jacques" seems more closely in line with the Theatre of the Absurd than with the conventional cabaret.

Yet the defiant rejection of language as the main vehicle of the dramatic action, the onslaught on conventional logic and unilinear conceptual thinking in the Theatre of the Absurd is by no means equivalent to a total rejection of all meaning. On the contrary, it constitutes an earnest endeavor to penetrate deeper layers of meaning and to give a truer, more complex, picture of reality in avoiding the simplification which results from leaving out all the undertones, overtones, and inherent absurdities and contradictions of any human situation. In the conventional drama every word means what it says, the situations are clearcut, and at the end all conflicts are tidily resolved. But reality, as Ionesco points out in the passage we have quoted, is never like that; it is multiple, complex, many-dimensional and exists on a number of different levels at one and the same time. Language is far too straightforward an instrument to express all this by itself. Reality can only be conveyed by being acted out in all its complexity. Hence, it is the theatre, which is multidimensional and more than merely language or literature, which is the only instrument to express the bewildering complexity of the human condition. The human condition being what it is, with man small, helpless, insecure, and unable ever to fathom the world in all its hopelessness, death, and absurdity, the theatre has to confront him with the bitter truth that most human endeavor is irrational and senseless, that communication between human beings is well-nigh impossible, and that the world will forever remain an impenetrable mystery. At the same time, the recognition of all these bitter truths will have a liberating effect: if we realize the basic absurdity of most of our objectives we are freed from being obsessed with them and this release expresses itself in laughter.

Moreover, while the world is being shown as complex, harsh, and absurd and as difficult to interpret as reality itself, the audience is yet spurred on to attempt their own interpretation, to wonder what it is all about. In that sense they are being invited to school their critical faculties, to train themselves in adjusting to reality. As the world is being represented as highly complex and devoid of a clear-cut purpose or design, there will always be an infinite number of possible interpretations. As Apollinaire points out in his Preface to *Les Mamelles de Tiresias*: "None of the symbols in my play is very clear, but one is at liberty to see in it all the symbols one desires and to find in it a thousand senses-as in the Sibylline oracles." Thus, it may be that the pinball machines in Adamov's *Ping-Pong* and the ideology which is developed around them stand for the futility of political or religious ideologies that are pursued with equal fervor and equal futility in the final result. Others have interpreted the play as a parable on the greed and sordidness of the profit motive. Others again may give it quite different meanings. The mysterious transformation of human beings into rhinos in Ionesco's latest play, *The Rhinoceros*, was felt by the audience of its world premiere at Duesseldorf (November 6, 1959) to depict the transformation of human beings into Nazis. It is known that Ionesco himself intended the play to express his feelings at the time when more and more of his friends in Rumania joined the Fascist Iron Guard and, in effect, left the ranks of thin skinned humans to turn themselves into moral pachyderms. But to spectators less intimately aware of the moral climate of such a situation than the German audience, other interpretations might impose themselves: if the hero, Bérenger, is at the end left alone as the only human being in his native town, now entirely inhabited by rhinos, they might regard this as a poetic symbol of the gradual isolation of man growing old and imprisoned in the strait jacket of his own habits and memories. Does Godot, so fervently and vainly awaited by Vladimir and Estragon, stand for God? Or does he merely represent the ever elusive tomorrow, man's hope that one day something will happen that will render his existence meaningful? The force and poetic power of the play lie precisely in the impossibility of ever reaching a conclusive answer to this question.

Here we touch the essential point of difference between the conventional theatre and the Theatre of the Absurd. The former, based as it is on a known framework of accepted values and a rational view of life, always starts out by indicating a fixed objective towards which the action will be moving or by posing a definite problem to which it will supply an answer. Will Hamlet revenge the murder of his father? Will Iago succeed in destroying Othello? Will Nora leave her husband? In the conventional theatre the action always proceeds towards a definable end. The spectators do not know whether that end will be reached and how it will be reached. Hence, they are in suspense, eager to find out what will happen. In the Theatre of the Absurd, on the other hand, the action does not proceed in the manner of a logical syllogism. It does not go from A to B but travels from an unknown premise X towards an unknowable conclusion Y. The spectators, not knowing what their author is driving at, cannot be in suspense as to how or whether an expected objective is going to be reached. They are not, therefore, so much in suspense as to what is going to happen next (although the most unexpected and unpredictable things do happen) as they are in suspense about what the next event to take

place will add to their understanding of what is happening. The action supplies an increasing number of contradictory and bewildering clues on a number of different levels, but the final question is never wholly answered. Thus, instead of being in suspense as to what will happen next, the spectators are, in the Theatre of the Absurd, put into suspense as to what the play may mean. This suspense continues even after the curtain has come down. Here again the Theatre of the Absurd fulfills Brecht's postulate of a critical, detached audience, who will have to sharpen their wits on the play and be stimulated by it to think for themselves, far more effectively than Brecht's own theatre. Not only are the members of the audience unable to identify with the characters, they are compelled to puzzle out the meaning of what they have seen. Each of them will probably find his own, personal meaning, which will differ from the solution found by most others. But he will have been forced to make a mental effort and to evaluate an experience he has undergone. In this sense, the Theatre of the Absurd is the most demanding, the most intellectual theatre. It may be riotously funny, wildly exaggerated and oversimplified, vulgar and garish, but it will always confront the spectator with a genuine intellectual problem, a philosophical paradox, which he will have to try to solve even if he knows that it is most probably insoluble.

In this respect, the Theatre of the Absurd links up with an older tradition which has almost completely disappeared from Western culture: the tradition of allegory and the symbolical representation of abstract concepts personified by characters whose costumes and accoutrements subtly suggested whether they represented Time, Chastity, Winter, Fortune, the World, etc. This is the tradition which stretches from the Italian *Trionfo* of the Renaissance to the English Masque, the elaborate allegorical constructions of the Spanish *Auto sacramenta*l down to Goethe's allegorical processions and masques written for the court of Weimar at the turn of the eighteenth century. Although the living riddles the characters represented in these entertainments were by no means difficult to solve, as everyone knew that a character with a scythe and an hourglass represented Time, and although the characters soon revealed their identity and explained their attributes, there was an element of intellectual challenge which stimulated the audience in the moments between the appearance of the riddle and its solution and which provided them with the pleasure of having solved a puzzle. And what is more, in the elaborate allegorical dramas like Calder6n's *El Gran Teatro del Mundo* the subtle interplay of allegorical characters itself presented the audience with a great deal to think out for themselves. They had, as it were, to translate the abstractly presented action into terms of their everyday experience; they could ponder on the deeper meaning of such facts as death having taken the characters representing Riches or Poverty in a Dance of Death equally quickly and equally harshly, or that Mammon had deserted his master Everyman in the hour of death. The dramatic riddles of our time present no such clear-cut solutions. All they can show is that while the solutions have evaporated the riddle of our existence remains-complex, unfathomable, and paradoxical.

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Esslin, Martin. The Theatre of the Absurd. New York: Vintage Books, 2004. CC0.

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# 3.4: Abstract Expressionism

3.4 Abstract Expressionism

Abstract Expressionism is a school of painting that flourished after World War II until the early 1960s, characterized by the view that art is nonrepresentational and chiefly improvisational. Abstract Expressionism develops out of many different ideas and influences. Some of these influences come from contact between the New York based artists who meet leading European artists who have escaped from war-torn Europe arriving in New York. World War II begins in Europe in the late-1930s lasting until 1945. Other major ideas and influences that result in Abstract Expressionism are due to uniquely American traits, ideas, and circumstances in the United States. Many Abstract Expressionists of the time used both Color Field and Action Painting to complete their work.

Abstract Expressionism included works of drawing, painting, print, and sculpture that were focused on the physical properties of the medium used as opposed to pictorial narrative, although not all of them were without reference to the figure or the phenomenal world altogether. Other artists associated with Abstract Expressionism used less sense of representation in their work. Included in the category were Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. Abstract Expressionist artists were more concerned with artistic process and formal means than with the creation of narrative pictures. In examining a small cross section of work by the Abstract Expressionist artists, we can see that it may not be appropriate, after all, to call this a stylistic category, as there is not really a stream of visual similarities among them; rather, they are characterized as much by their freedom from the constraints of stylistic rules and their lack of unifying visual features.

Each of the leading Abstract Expressionist artists has individual ideas, influences, concerns, and techniques in making their artworks. We should analyze their individual motivations and influences as well as understanding what larger ideas associated with Abstract Expressionism as a broader style is evident in their work. It shaped their understanding of painting itself as a struggle between self-expression and the chaos of the subconscious. Surrealism was an original influence on the themes and concepts of the Abstract Expressionists. Although the American painters were uneasy with the overt Freudian symbolism of the European movement, they were still inspired by its interests in the unconscious, as well as its strain of primitivism and preoccupation with mythology. Many were particularly interested in the ideas of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, who believed that elements of a collective unconscious had been handed down through the ages by means of archetypal symbols, or primordial images, which had become recurrent motifs.

A movement of abstract painting that emerged in New York City during the mid-1940s and attained singular prominence in American art in the following decade; also called action painting and the New York school. Jackson Pollock 's turbulent yet elegant abstract paintings, which were created by spattering paint on huge canvases placed on the floor, brought abstract expressionism before a hostile public. Willem de Kooning 's first one-man show in 1948 established him as a highly influential artist. Other important artists involved with the movement included Hans Hofmann , Robert Motherwell , and Mark Rothko ; among other major abstract expressionists were such painters as Clyfford Still , Theodoros Stamos, Adolph Gottlieb, Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, and Esteban Vicente.

Many works of art come out of a personal decision to put a feeling, idea, or concept into visual form. Since feelings vary widely, the resulting art takes a wide range of forms. This approach to art comes from the individual’s delight in the experience. Doodling comes to mind as one very basic example of such delight. Pollock’s Abstract Expressionist works, also known as action paintings, are much more than doodles, though they may resemble such on the surface. They were the result of many levels of artistic thought but on a basic level were a combination of delight in the act of painting and in the personal discovery that act enabled.

IMAGE 3.10 Jackson Pollock (American, 1912-1956), Autumn Rhythm, 1950, enamel paint on canvas, 105 x 207 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art CC0.

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“Abstract Expressionism.” Art History, 20th Century. OER Commons. https://www.oercommons.org/courses/art-history/view 9 March 2021. Accessed 6 May 2021. CC BY SA.

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PERFORMANCE ART: WHEN ART INTERSECTS WITH LIFE

Many people associate performance art with highly publicized controversies over government funding of the arts, censorship, and standards of public decency. Indeed, at its worst, performance art can seem gratuitous, boring or just plain weird. But, at its best, it taps into our most basic shared instincts: our physical and psychological needs for food, shelter, sex, and human interaction; our individual fears and self-consciousness; our concerns about life, the future, and the world we live in. It often forces us to think about issues in a way that can be disturbing and uncomfortable, but it can also make us laugh by calling attention to the absurdities in life and the idiosyncrasies of human behavior.

IMAGE 3.11 Roman Ondák, Measuring the Universe, 2007, shown enacted at MoMA, 2009 CC BY-SA.

Performance art differs from traditional theater in its rejection of a clear narrative, use of random or chance-based structures, and direct appeal to the audience. The art historian RoseLee Goldberg writes:

Historically, performance art has been a medium that challenges and violates borders between disciplines and genders, between private and public, and between everyday life and art, and that follows no rules.

Although the term encompasses a broad range of artistic practices that involve bodily experience and live action, its radical connotations derive from this challenge to conventional social mores and artistic values of the past.

HISTORICAL SOURCES

While performance art is a relatively new area of art history, it has roots in experimental art of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Echoing utopian ideas of the period's avant-garde, these earliest examples found influences in theatrical and music performance, art, poetry, burlesque and other popular entertainment. Modern artists used live events to promote extremist beliefs, often through deliberate provocation and attempts to offend bourgeois tastes or expectations. In Italy, the anarchist group of Futurist artists insulted and hurled profanity at their middle-class audiences in hopes of inciting political action.

Following World War II, performance emerged as a useful way for artists to explore philosophical and psychological questions about human existence. For this generation, who had witnessed destruction caused by the Holocaust and atomic bomb, the body offered a powerful medium to communicate shared physical and emotional experience. Whereas painting and sculpture relied on expressive form and content to convey meaning, performance art forced viewers to engage with a real person who could feel cold and hunger, fear and pain, excitement and embarrassment—just like them.

ACTION & CONTINGENCY

Some artists, inspired largely by Abstract Expressionism, used performance to emphasize the body's role in artistic production. Working before a live audience, Kazuo Shiraga of the Japanese Gutai Group made sculpture by crawling through a pile of mud. Georges Mathieu staged similar performances in Paris where he violently threw paint at his canvas. These performative approaches to making art built on philosophical interpretations of Abstract Expressionism, which held the gestural markings of action painters as visible evidence of the artist's own existence. Bolstered by Hans Namuth's photographs of Jackson Pollock in his studio, moving dance-like around a canvas on the floor, artists like Shiraga and Mathieu began to see the artist's creative act as equally important,

if not more so, to the artwork produced. In this light, Pollock's distinctive drips, spills and splatters appeared as a mere remnant, a visible trace left over from the moment of creation.

Shifting attention from the art object to the artist's action further suggested that art existed in real space and real time. In New York, visual artists combined their interest in action painting with ideas of the avant-garde composer John Cage to blur the line between art and life. Cage employed chance procedures to create musical compositions such as 4'33". In this (in)famous piece, Cage used the time frame specified in the title to bracket ambient noises that occurred randomly during the performance. By effectively calling attention to the hum of fluorescent lights, people moving in their seats, coughs, whispers, and other ordinary sounds, Cage transformed them into a unique musical composition.

THE PRIVATE MADE POLITICAL

Drawing on these influences, new artistic formats emerged in the late 1950s. Environments and Happenings physically placed viewers in commonplace surroundings, often forcing them to participate in a series of loosely structured actions. Fluxus artists, poets, and musicians likewise challenged viewers by presenting the most mundane events—brushing teeth, making a salad, exiting the theater—as forms of art. A well-known example is the "bed-in" that Fluxus artist Yoko Ono staged in 1969 in Amsterdam with her husband John Lennon. Typical of much performance art, Ono and Lennon made ordinary human activity a public spectacle, which demanded personal interaction and raised popular awareness of their pacifist beliefs.

In the politicized environment of the 1960s, many artists employed performance to address emerging social concerns. For feminist artists in particular, using their body in live performance proved effective in challenging historical representations of women, made mostly by male artists for male patrons. In keeping with past tradition, artists such as Carolee Schneemann, Hannah Wilke and Valie Export displayed their nude bodies for the viewer's gaze; but, they resisted the idealized notion of women as passive objects of beauty and desire. Through their words and actions, they confronted their audiences and raised issues about the relationship of female experience to cultural beliefs and institutions, physical appearance, and bodily functions including menstruation and childbearing. Their ground-breaking work paved the way for male and female artists in the 1980s and 1990s, who similarly used body and performance art to explore issues of gender, race and sexual identity.

WHERE IS IT?

Throughout the mid-twentieth century, performance has been closely tied to the search for alternatives to established art forms, which many artists felt had become fetishized as objects of economic and cultural value. Because performance art emphasized the artist's action and the viewer's experience in real space and time, it rarely yielded a final object to be sold, collected, or exhibited. Artists of the 1960 and 70s also experimented with other "dematerialized" formats including Earthworks and Conceptual Art that resisted commodification and traditional modes of museum display. The simultaneous rise of photography and video, however, offered artists a viable way to document and widely distribute this new work.

Performance art's acceptance into the mainstream over the past 30 years has led to new trends in its practice and understanding. Ironically, the need to position performance within art's history has led museums and scholars to focus heavily on photographs and videos that were intended only as documents of live events. In this context, such archival materials assume the art status of the original performance. This practice runs counter to the goal of many artists, who first turned to performance as an alternative to object-based forms of art. Alternatively, some artists and institutions now stage re-enactments of earlier performances in order to recapture the experience of a live event. In a 2010 retrospective exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, for example, performers in the galleries staged live reenactments of works by the pioneering performance artist Marina Abramovic, alongside photographs and video documentation of the original performances.

DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

New strategies, variously described as situations, relational aesthetics, and interventionist art, have recently begun to appear. Interested in the social role of the artist, Rirkrit Tiravanija stages performances that encourage interpersonal exchange and shared conversation among individuals who might not otherwise meet. His performances have included cooking traditional Thai dinners in museums for viewers to share, and relocating the entire contents of a gallery's offices and storage rooms, including the director at his desk, into public areas used to exhibit art. Similar to performance art of the past, such approaches engage the viewer and encourage their active participation in artistic production; however, they also speak to a cultural shift toward interactive modes of communication and social exchange that characterize the 21st century.

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Dr. Virginia B. Spivey. “Performance Art an Introduction.” (Article).” Khan Academy, Khan Academy, https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/conceptual-and-performance-art/performanceart/a/performance-art-an introduction. Accessed 6 May 2021. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 US.

GUTAI JAPANESE MODERNISM

From early on, originality was the buzzword and motto of Gutai art. As the group’s leader, Yoshihara Jirō, repeated time and again: “Create what has not been done before!” At the same time, originality is also a fundamental notion in the conventional division of creative labor between center and periphery, according to which “innovation takes place in the center and is disseminated to the periphery.” Hence, to decenter modernism, as Tiampo puts it, “we must first decenter originality.”

Despite its outlandish results in the eyes of its contemporaries, Gutai’s relentless search for originality, as Tiampo demonstrates, must be understood within the context of the pressing issues that affected Japanese cultural politics after the country’s defeat in the Second World War. Having lived through the fascist militarization that accompanied Japan’s imperialistic expansion in East Asia, Yoshihara embraced postwar values of individuality and subjective autonomy as antidotes to the prewar ideology of *kokutai*, or the national body: “Radically subverting the wartime image of the nation’s body (*kokutai*) in the immediate postwar period, the carnal body (*nikutai*) emerged as a site of expression and as the root source of desire and subjective autonomy (*shutaisei*).” As Tiampo argues, Gutai’s emphasis on creative originality cannot be dissociated from this embrace of subjective autonomy and individuality as fundamental political values in postwar Japan. Nonetheless, it is also worth noting that Yoshihara’s embrace of individual creativity—not to mention Gutai’s distance from the social struggles of 1950s and 1960s Japan—simultaneously set the group apart from a more collective, class-based understanding of *shutaisei* as well as from the leftist politics of their contemporaries in Tokyo and elsewhere in Japan.

I . Introduction

Japan's postwar artists have hated what they see as Western cultural imperialism. They've also fallen in love with the vulgarity and excess of American culture. Since the Gutai explosion, Japan's contemporary art has run fender with just about everyone else's. In the 1960's there were social protest works and obsessions with the human body, raucous figurative paintings in the 1980s and elaborate video installations in the 1990s. And this emulation business has been a two-way street. The Guggenheim Museum SoHo survey of Japanese Art After 1945 : Scream Against the Sky" (1994-1995) aroused intense curiosity and some controversy. This first-ever major exhibition of Japanese modern art in the U.S. shows that many of today's art movements had their origins in japan. The purpose here is to explore a little further into the first avant-garde movement, the Gutai group after World War II in japan. "Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky" Whether those who are aficionados of modern art or merely curious beginners, this exhibition is a milestone. Such blockbuster exhibitions as "Japan des avant-gardes 1910-1970" in Paris, and “Against Nature : Japanese Art in the Eighties" which toured the U.S., were essential for grasping the fundamental elements of Japanese avant-garde art, movement offered information about artwork that gave rise to extraordinary phenomena. In impact and importance, the exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum SoHo might be compared with the New York Armory Show in 1913 : modern art's first major show in the U.S. The American art world got their first look at artwork by Picasso, Braque, Kandinsky and Matisse. Furthermore, Duchamp' s renowned Nude Descending a Staircase created a commotion. In the catalog essay for the Japanese Art After 1945, the curator Alexandra Munroe said that "Modernism and the concept of avant garde art are Western ideas that Japan received from abroad.” But just before the exhibition opened, she stated, “A lot of the work in the show might seem to look like American abstract expressionism and conceptual art, but it really comes out of another culture." In fact, she is of two minds about this show. In other words, "this exhibition presents a significant argument that world-class art has been wrongly over-looked.” This exhibition engages me in dialogue. First, it asks what the originality of art is. In general, Zen, Wabi-Sabi, calligraphy and elements of Buddhism have been taken to explain Japanese art or to show relationships with more or less large areas of these artworks. Japanese art and these words might just be one of the partially successful approaches, but they might also bring in misleading analyses for Japanese art. Now we must reconsider the originality of Japanese modern art. The Gutai and Japanese Modernism "Anyone who regarded Japanese contemporary art as a watered-down version of Western modernism has a surprise in store." Many of the artists in the exhibition, especially the Gutai artists had been pioneers in styles, for example “conceptual art, performance art and body art, all of which ·America and Europe tend to claim as their own”. Especially, the Gutai group was frequently cited as the first truly radical postwar art movement in Japan. Its performance centered works, theatrical events and multimedia environments had enormous influence on both Japan and other countries, primarily through photo-documentation in a periodical that was the

group's first production and gave the Gutai group its name. The Gutai Japanese-English magazine, which ran for twelve issues between 1955 and 1965, helped to introduce their artworks abroad and led to a series of their exhibitions. There was no doubt that in Europe, the periodical was instrumental in initiating an exchange between the Japanese and European avant-gardes. The effect of Japanese modernism was "a bit more than a time-lag appropriation of Western art works. This was a real tense time period as they tried to resolve itself here." In the early 1950' s, a boom of international loan exhibitions began in Japan. According to Munroe, until 1954, "the Salon de mai survey of contemporary French painting and one-person shows of works by Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, George Rouault, and Ossip Zadkine all traveled to Japan. Rapid, successive exposure to contemporary art was also facilitated by a deluge of international and domestic art magazines that were available after years of censorship." Munroe quoted a comment by a Japanese critic, Shuzo Takiguchi in order to indicate the japanese artists had been starved of Western modern art: Perhaps we haven't completely digested the movements and principles of Western art.

Japanese contemporary art must exist in our guts and bones. This is where everything begins. Is it possible that we do not yet understand our very own substance? As Takig uchi stated above, "starting from zero" was no academic theory, but everyday imperative. A traumatic shock was seared into the consciousness of the people of Japan by two atomic bombs. At the same time, "Japanese postwar artists hated what they saw in Western cultural imperialism. They also fell in love with the vulgarity and excess of American culture." Consequently, they veered between trying to revive and make art, for instance : traditional ceramics, and "art with dripped paint or Coca Cola logos." Munroe stated that Jiro Yoshiwara, founder of the 1950's ground-breaking Gutai movement, "promoted a bold and spirited anti-academicism." Yoshiwara exhorted its followers to "Create what has never existed before!" Yoshiwara, also stated this vision in the first issue of the Gutai magazine, "The art of the present represents freedom for those living in this severe time .... Our profound wish is to concretely prove that our spirits are free." He defined art-making as the symbolization of freedom, an individual soul, a destructive rite to create something new. The group was founded in 1954 by artists proclaiming their freedom from the oppressive Japanese government during World War II. It was based in Nishinomiya city (Hyogo prefecture) in the western region of Japan. "The noun gutai literally means 'concreteness· ... Using this name, Gutai signified concrete enactments of individual character, emotion, and thought in opposition to cerebral and abstract aesthetics. The Gutai artists sought radical new means for expressing the historical crisis. Some artists took abstract expressionism and pushed it further into space. They applied paint with their bare feet, broke bottles on canvas and even painted with remote-control devices. "As apolitical and anarchic, they melded Western and Eastern thinking and set both gently askew,"said the critic Holland Cotter in the New York Times. The artworks of Kazuo Shiraga remind us of both Zen notions of chance and action paintings when he threw away his brushes and began to paint Pollock-like abstractions with his feet. On the other hand, he anticipates postmodernist preoccupation with bizarre media in his painting incorporating bore hide in his canvas. Atsuko Tanaka's Electric dress (1956), a kind of ritual wear made of colored electric lights and bells, which includes an electronic switching system to control the individual bulbs and "seems to be a witty emblem of both the lure and the danger of technology." Cotter said, in his review, that the wearer looked fantastic and very sophisticated but risked electrocution. The Gutai as an Influential Pioneer of Contemporary Art The Gutai group was an influential pioneer to late 1950's happenings and performance arts of the 1960's, a fact acknowledged by Allan Kaprow. Kaprow wrote that "did not know of the Gutai movement until 1959 and did not see photographs of events until 1963." The Gutai group anticipated the Happenings and performance art of New York. ""Their activities were staed in an article entitled "Japanese Innovators" by Ray Falk, which reported how the Gutai artists brought action into their artwork, turning it into theater. Eighteen members of the Gutai group exhibited twenty-eight paintings as the sixth Gutai exhibition at Martha jackson Gallery, New York in the fall of 1958, and these Gutai exhibitions traveled to other American venues. The seventh Gutai exhibition in 1959 was held in Turin, initiating a long-lasting appreciation of Gutai work in Italy. The Gutai exhibitions were consequently held in Austria, France, Holland and Germany during the 1960's as late as 1965-67, the Museum of Modern Art in New York organized "The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture": which included many Gutai artists and the show toured seven other U.S. museums.

By not just framing personal body gestures, but going beyond them; painting with their feet for example. Setting down his canvas of dribbles and drips, Kanayama went beyond Jackson Pollock not through wrist flicks, but by attaching his brush to a small toy robot. Murakami hurled glass jars of paint against rocks in front of canvas : we can see shards of glass embedded in the paint. Shozo Shimamoto was inspired by an early encounter with artworks of Zen artist-monk Nantenbo Toju ( 1839- 1926) Yoshiwara often took fellow members of the Gutai group to see Nantenbo"s famous fusuma paintings at the Kaisei Temple in Nishinomiya. Shimamoto was shocked by Nantenbo"s large works which had been executed with an oversize, heavy brush that required all the artist's energy to act. Since Nantenbo had completed the sequence of strokes in each ideogram, the weight of black ink and his energy caused huge splashes of ink to be thrown across the surface, making a visible record of his physical struggle with his

materials. Shimamoto attempted to incorporate the factors of time, space and their interaction-the idea of the artwork as a locus of the movement of the body- into his artwork in various ways. His early artwork such as Hole of ca. 1950 represents a record of the powerful motions of the artist : he pierced the surface of the paper with a pencil again and again. His later paintings, such as work of 1960, and some related photo-documented events took this action orientation a stage further by underlining a random painting process. Like Mura-kami, Shimamoto flung a bottle filled with enamel paint against a rock located in the center of a large sheet of canvas : the resulting painting involved impact-generated sprays of viscous paint in which glass fragments were embedded. The founder of the Gutai group, Yoshiwara Nantcnbo. Ink Paintings of Danmw was the most conventional abstract painter in it. Munroe said of Yoshiwara, “his interests remained more formal and spiritual. Besides his abiding interest in modern European abstraction, he was actively involved with Shiryu Morita and the avant-garde calligraphy movement.” Shiryu Morita was also influenced by Nantenbo whom mentioned before. After 1962, Yoshiwara tended to concentrate on executing a series of circle paintings stimulated by Zen notion for ten years. This artwork “represents void and substance, emptiness and completion, and the union of painting, calligraphy, and meditation.” ln the tradition of Zen monk-artists, Yoshiwara repeatedly practiced his circle paintings as a form of spiritual discipline while pursuing the realization of a perfect form of modern abstract painting. “I am grateful that however big the space know that one circle can fill it, will complete the picture. It save me from having to think what to draw on every canvas. I am only left with dealing with what kind of circle will be made. Or, with what kind of circle I will make .... It is up to me as to whether I have come to an understanding with my circles and myself.” A primary motive behind the Gutai group's assimilation of Eastern and Western ideas, as well as behind the group's earnest recognition of the theory of l"informe l that Tapie championed for them, was the desire to be seen as energetic participants in an international art world. On the other hand, most of postwar Japanese artists often followed the Western art styles. “The Japanese themselves were worried about being provincial, at the same time, were looking for their own identity as artists : some ambitious artists, such as On Kawara chose to live outside Japan.” But this is not the whole story. "Japanese culture also equipped artists with means to infuse certain general themes of international postwar art with great conviction.” Some art critics commented that Japanese art just followed Western art until now. But, perhaps we can say that the Gutai group's ideas were simultaneous with Western avant-garde movements and that the Gutai artists were drawing from their own culture rather than adopting foreign modes of art movements. During 1950's and early 60's, many Japanese artists and critics discussed the relationship between Western contemporary art and Japanese art. After some survey blockbuster exhibitions of Western contemporary art were held in japan, the debate appeared prominently.

We should notice that Japanese art has parallels Western contemporary art of the time. Under these conditions, the Gutai follows: While debates about the nature of Gutai art are far from resolved, Gutai's radical achievements in the context of Japanese modernism are now recognized as historical fact. Not coincidentally, Gutai's overdue recognition as Japan's primary 'original avant-garde movement' has occurred as part of a national revisionist effort to establish a history of Japanese modernism independent from the Euro-American narrative. Conclusion After World War II , the prominence of the Gutai group helped other Japanese artists find "fresh and rough-hewn ways of working.” In the 1960's and 70's, there were expressions of "anti-art, inter-media, conceptual, and metaphysical art forms." In addition, there were new paintings and sculptures in the 1980's and video installations and computer-generated artworks in the 1990's. The Gutai artists broke their conventional identity and established their own identity as international an art movement. The Gutai artists left clues for followers to set up a vital exchange between Japan and the West. While searching for a contemporary identity, the Gutai artists, by inspiring Western avant-garde ideas into Japanese notion, turned theory artists were able to grasp and develop it. The curator, Munroe identified the Gutai group as wasteland into a rich field in the art world.

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# 4: LIBERATION AND EQUALITY (1960-ONWARD)

CHAPTER 4: LIBERATION AND EQUALITY (1960-ONWARD)

Charles Henry Alston, Walking, 1958. oil on canvas. CC BY-NC-ND.

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# 4.1: Quest for Equality

4.1 Quest for Equality

The 1960s was a decade of hope, change, and war that witnessed an important shift in American culture. Citizens from all walks of life sought to expand the meaning of the American promise. Their efforts helped unravel the national consensus and laid bare a far more fragmented society. As a result, men and women from all ethnic groups attempted to reform American society to make it more equitable. The United States also began to take unprecedented steps to exert what it believed to be a positive influence on the world. At the same time, the country's role in Vietnam revealed the limits of military power and the contradictions of U.S. foreign policy. The posthumous portrait of John F. Kennedy captures this mix of the era's promise and defeat. His election encouraged many to work for a better future, for both the middle class and the marginalized. Kennedy's running mate, Lyndon B. Johnson, also envisioned a country characterized by the social and economic freedoms established during the New Deal years. Kennedy's assassination in 1963, and the assassinations five years later of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, made it dramatically clear that not all Americans shared this vision of a more inclusive democracy.

1960'S AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Against the backdrop of the Cold War, Americans dedicated themselves to building a peaceful and prosperous society after the deprivation and instability of the Great Depression and World War II. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the general who led the United States to victory in Europe in 1945, proved to be the perfect president for the new era. Lacking strong conservative positions, he steered a middle path between conservatism and liberalism, and presided over a peacetime decade of economic growth and social conformity. In foreign affairs, Eisenhower's New Look policy simultaneously expanded the nation's nuclear arsenal and prevented the expansion of the defense budget for conventional forces.

WE LIKE IKE

After Harry Truman declined to run again for the presidency, the election of 1952 emerged as a contest between the Democratic nominee, Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson, and Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had directed American forces in Europe during World War II (Image 4.1). Eisenhower campaigned largely on a promise to end the war in Korea, a conflict the public had grown weary of fighting. He also vowed to fight Communism both at home and abroad, a commitment he demonstrated by choosing as his running mate Richard M. Nixon, a congressman who had made a name for himself by pursuing Communists, notably former State Department employee and suspected Soviet agent Alger Hiss.

IMAGE 4.1 Dwight D. Eisenhower was the perfect presidential candidate in 1952. He had never before run for office or even cast a vote, and thus had no political record to be challenged or criticized.

In 1952, Eisenhower supporters enthusiastically proclaimed “We Like Ike,” and Eisenhower defeated Stevenson by winning 54 percent of the popular vote and 87 percent of the electoral vote. When he assumed office in 1953, Eisenhower employed a leadership style he had developed during his years of military service. He was calm and willing to delegate authority regarding domestic affairs to his cabinet members, allowing him to focus his own efforts on foreign policy. Unlike many earlier presidents, such as Harry Truman, Eisenhower was largely nonpartisan and consistently sought a middle ground between liberalism and conservatism. He strove to balance the federal budget, which appealed to conservative Republicans, but retained much of the New Deal and even expanded Social Security. He maintained high levels of defense spending but, in his farewell speech in 1961, warned about the growth of the military-industrial complex, the matrix of relationships between officials in the Department of Defense and executives in the defense industry who all benefited from increases in defense spending. He disliked the tactics of Joseph McCarthy but did not oppose him directly, preferring to remain above the fray. He saw himself as a leader called upon to do his best for his country, not as a politician engaged in a contest for advantage over rivals.

IMAGE 4.2 The above map shows the resounding victory of Dwight D. Eisenhower over Adlai Stevenson in the 1952 election. Stevenson carried only the South, where Whites had voted for Democratic Party candidates since the time of the Civil War.

In keeping with his goal of a balanced budget, Eisenhower switched the emphasis in defense from larger conventional forces to greater stockpiles of nuclear weapons. His New Look strategy embraced nuclear “massive retaliation,” a plan for nuclear response to a first Soviet strike so devastating that the attackers would not be able to respond. Some labeled this approach “Mutually Assured Destruction” or MAD.

Part of preparing for a possible war with the Soviet Union was informing the American public what to do in the event of a nuclear attack. The government provided instructions for building and equipping bomb shelters in the basement or backyard, and some cities constructed municipal shelters. Schools purchased dog tags to help identify students in the aftermath of an attack and showed children instructional films telling them what to do if atomic bombs were dropped on the city where they lived.

AMERICANA

“A Guide for Surviving Nuclear War”

To prepare its citizens for the possibility of nuclear war, in 1950, the U.S. government published and distributed informative pamphlets such as “A Guide for Surviving Nuclear War” excerpted here.

*Just like fire bombs and ordinary high explosives, atomic weapons cause most of their death and damage by blast and heat. So first let’s look at a few things you can do to escape these two dangers. Even if you have only a second’s warning, there is one important thing you can do to lessen your chances of injury by blast: Fall flat on your face. More than half of all wounds are the result of being bodily tossed about or being struck by falling and flying objects. If you lie down flat, you are least likely to be thrown about. If you have time to pick a good spot, there is less chance of your being struck by flying glass and other things. If you are inside a building, the best place to flatten out is close against the cellar wall. If you haven’t time to get down there, lie down along an inside wall, or duck under a bed or table. . . .If caught out-of-doors, either drop down alongside the base of a good substantial building—avoid flimsy, wooden ones likely to be blown over on top of you—or else jump in any handy ditch or gutter. When you fall flat to protect yourself from a bombing, don’t look up to see what is coming. Even during the daylight hours, the flash from a bursting A-bomb can cause several moments of blindness, if you’re facing that way. To prevent it, bury your face in your arms and hold it there for 10 to 12 seconds after the explosion. . . .If you work in the open, always wear full-length, loose-fitting, light-colored clothes in time of emergency. Never go around with your sleeves rolled up. Always wear a hat—the brim could save you a serious face burn.*

Government and industry allocated enormous amounts of money to the research and development of more powerful weapons. This investment generated rapid strides in missile technology as well as increasingly sensitive radar. Computers that could react more quickly than humans and thereby shoot down speeding missiles were also investigated. Many scientists on both sides of the Cold War, including captured Germans such as rocket engineer Werner von Braun, worked on these devices. An early success for the West came in 1950, when Alan Turing, a British mathematician who had broken Germany’s Enigma code during World War II, created a machine that mimicked human thought. His discoveries led scientists to consider the possibility of developing true artificial intelligence.

However, the United States often feared that the Soviets were making greater strides in developing technology with potential military applications. This was especially true following the Soviet Union’s launch of Sputnik (IMAGE 4.3 ), the first manmade satellite, in October 1957. In September 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act, which pumped over $775 million into educational programs over four years, especially those programs that focused on math and science. Congressional appropriations to the National Science Foundation also increased by $100 million in a single year, from $34 million in 1958 to $134 million in 1959. One consequence of this increased funding was the growth of science and engineering programs at American universities.

IMAGE 4.3 The launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik frightened many in the United States, who feared that Soviet technology had surpassed their own. To calm these fears, Americans domesticated Sputnik, creating children’s games based on it and using its shape as a decorative motif.

In the diplomatic sphere, Eisenhower pushed Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to take a firmer stance against the Soviets to reassure European allies of continued American support. At the same time, keenly sensing that the stalemate in Korea had cost Truman his popularity, Eisenhower worked to avoid being drawn into foreign wars. Thus, when the French found themselves fighting Vietnamese Communists for control of France’s former colony of Indochina, Eisenhower provided money but not troops. Likewise, the United States took no steps when Hungary attempted to break away from Soviet domination in 1956. The United States also refused to be drawn in when Great Britain, France, and Israel invaded the Suez Canal Zone following Egypt’s

nationalization of the canal in 1956. Indeed, Eisenhower, wishing to avoid conflict with the Soviet Union, threatened to impose economic sanctions on the invading countries if they did not withdraw.

SUBURBANIZATION

Although the Eisenhower years were marked by fear of the Soviet Union and its military might, they were also a time of peace and prosperity. Even as many Americans remained mired in poverty, many others with limited economic opportunities, like African Americans or union workers, were better off financially in the 1950s and rose into the ranks of the middle class. Wishing to build the secure life that the Great Depression had deprived their parents of, young men and women married in record numbers and purchased homes where they could start families of their own. In 1940, the rate of homeownership in the United States was 43.6 percent. By 1960, it was almost 62 percent. Many of these newly purchased homes had been built in the new suburban areas that began to encircle American cities after the war. Although middle-class families had begun to move to the suburbs beginning in the nineteenth century, suburban growth accelerated rapidly after World War II.

Several factors contributed to this development. During World War II, the United States had suffered from a housing shortage, especially in cities with shipyards or large defense plants. Now that the war was over, real estate developers and contractors rushed to alleviate the scarcity. Unused land on the fringes of American cities provided the perfect place for new housing, which attracted not only the middle class, which had long sought homes outside the crowded cities, but also blue-collar workers who took advantage of the low-interest mortgages offered by the GI Bill.

An additional factor was the use of prefabricated construction techniques pioneered during World War II, which allowed houses complete with plumbing, electrical wiring, and appliances to be built and painted in a day. Employing these methods, developers built acres of inexpensive tract housing throughout the country. One of the first developers to take advantage of this method was William Levitt, who purchased farmland in Nassau County, Long Island, in 1947 and built thousands of prefabricated houses. The new community was named Levittown.

Levitt's houses cost only $8,000 and could be bought with little or no down payment. The first day they were offered for sale, more than one thousand were purchased. Levitt went on to build similar developments, also called Levittown, in New Jersey and Pennsylvania (IMAGE 4.4). As developers around the country rushed to emulate him, the name Levittown became synonymous with suburban tract housing, in which entire neighborhoods were built to either a single plan or a mere handful of designs. The houses were so similar that workers told of coming home late at night and walking into the wrong one. Levittown homes were similar in other ways as well; most were owned by White families. Levitt used restrictive language in his agreements with potential homeowners to ensure that only Whites would live in his communities.

(a) (b)

IMAGE 4.4 This aerial view of Levittown, Pennsylvania, reveals acres of standardized homes. The roads were curved to prevent cars from speeding through the residential community that was home to many young families.

In the decade between 1950 and 1960, the suburbs grew by 46 percent. The transition from urban to suburban life exerted profound effects on both the economy and society. For example, fifteen of the largest U.S. cities saw their tax bases shrink significantly in

the postwar period, and the apportionment of seats in the House of Representatives shifted to the suburbs and away from urban areas.

The development of the suburbs also increased reliance on the automobile for transportation. Suburban men drove to work in nearby cities or, when possible, were driven to commuter rail stations by their wives. In the early years of suburban development, before schools, parks, and supermarkets were built, access to an automobile was crucial, and the pressure on families to purchase a second one was strong. As families rushed to purchase them, the annual production of passenger cars leaped from 2.2 million to 8 million between 1946 and 1955, and by 1960, about 20 percent of suburban families owned two cars. The growing number of cars on the road changed consumption patterns, and drive-in and drive-through convenience stores, restaurants, and movie theaters began to dot the landscape. The first McDonalds opened in San Bernardino, California, in 1954 to cater to drivers in a hurry.

As drivers jammed highways and small streets in record numbers, cities and states rushed to build additional roadways and ease congestion. To help finance these massive construction efforts, states began taxing gasoline, and the federal government provided hundreds of thousands of dollars for the construction of the interstate highway system (IMAGE 4.5). The resulting construction projects, designed to make it easier for suburbanites to commute to and from cities, often destroyed urban working-class neighborhoods. Increased funding for highway construction also left less money for public transportation, making it impossible for those who could not afford automobiles to live in the suburbs.

(a) (b)

IMAGE 4.5 In the late 1940s, a network of newly constructed highways connected suburban Long Island with Manhattan. The nation's new road network also served a military purpose; interstate highways made it easier to deploy troops in the event of a national emergency.

THE ORGANIZATION MAN

As the government poured money into the defense industry and into universities that conducted research for the government, the economy boomed. The construction and automobile industries employed thousands, as did the industries they relied upon: steel, oil and gasoline refining, rubber, and lumber. As people moved into new homes, their purchases of appliances, carpeting, furniture, and home decorations spurred growth in other industries. The building of miles of roads also employed thousands. Unemployment was low, and wages for members of both the working and middle classes were high.

Following World War II, the majority of White Americans were members of the middle class, based on such criteria as education, income, and home ownership. Even most blue-collar families could afford such elements of a middle-class lifestyle as new cars, suburban homes, and regular vacations. Most African Americans, however, were not members of the middle class. In 1950, the median income for White families was $20,656, whereas for Black families it was $11,203. By 1960, when the average White family earned $28,485 a year, Black people still lagged behind at $15,786; nevertheless, this represented a more than 40 percent increase in African American income in the space of a decade.

While working-class men found jobs in factories and on construction crews, those in the middle class often worked for corporations that, as a result of government spending, had grown substantially during World War II and were still getting larger. Such

corporations, far too large to allow managers to form personal relationships with all of their subordinates, valued conformity to company rules and standards above all else. In his best-selling book The Organization Man, however, William H. Whyte criticized the notion that conformity was the best path to success and self-fulfillment.

Conformity was still the watchword of suburban life: Many neighborhoods had rules mandating what types of clotheslines could be used and prohibited residents from parking their cars on the street. Above all, conforming to societal norms meant marrying young and having children. In the post-World War II period, marriage rates rose; the average age at first marriage dropped to twenty-three for men and twenty for women. Between 1946 and 1964, married couples also gave birth to the largest generation in U.S. history to date; this baby boom resulted in the cohort known as the baby boomers. Conformity also required that the wives of both working- and middle-class men stay home and raise children instead of working for wages outside the home. Most conformed to this norm, at least while their children were young. Nevertheless, 40 percent of women with young children and half of women with older children sought at least part-time employment. They did so partly out of necessity and partly to pay for the new elements of "the good life"—second cars, vacations, and college education for their children.

The children born during the baby boom were members of a more privileged generation than their parents had been. Entire industries sprang up to cater to their need for clothing, toys, games, books, and breakfast cereals. For the first time in U.S. history, attending high school was an experience shared by the majority, regardless of race or region. As the baby boomers grew into adolescence, marketers realized that they not only controlled large amounts of disposable income earned at part-time jobs, but they exerted a great deal of influence over their parents' purchases as well. Madison Avenue began to appeal to teenage interests. Boys yearned for cars, and girls of all ethnicities wanted boyfriends who had them. New fashion magazines for adolescent girls, such as Seventeen, advertised the latest clothing and cosmetics, and teen romance magazines, like Copper Romance, a publication for young African American women, filled drugstore racks. The music and movie industries also altered their products to appeal to affluent adolescents who were growing tired of parental constraints.

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# 4.2: The Civil Rights Movement

4.2 The Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement (1955–1968) refers to the social movements led by African Americans in the United States aimed at exposing rampant (and often legalized) racial discrimination and achieving equal rights and liberation for African Americans. While Congress played a role by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, the actions of numerous civil rights groups were instrumental in forging new paths, pioneering new protest techniques and strategies, and achieving breakthrough successes for equal rights among the races.

The movement was characterized by major campaigns of civil resistance. During the 1960s, acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience produced crisis situations between activists and government authorities. Federal, state, and local governments, not to mention local businesses and communities, often responded immediately and violently to these situations in ways that highlighted the inequities faced by African Americans.

Perhaps the most famous of the civil rights-era demonstrations was the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, held in August 1963, on the 100th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Its purpose was to pressure President Kennedy to act on his promises regarding civil rights. The date was also the 8th anniversary of the brutal racist murder of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi. As the enormous crowd gathered outside the Lincoln Memorial and spilled across the National Mall, Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his most famous speech. In "I Have a Dream," King called for an end to racial injustice in the United States and envisioned a harmonious, integrated society. The speech marked a high point of the civil rights movement and established the legitimacy of its goals. However, it did not prevent white terrorism or dismantle white supremacy, nor did it permanently sustain the tactics of nonviolent civil disobedience.

The passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination based on "race, color, religion, or national origin" in employment practices and public accommodations. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 restored and protected voting rights for African Americans that had been imposed upon since the Civil War, and the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965 dramatically opened up entry into the U.S. for immigrants outside of traditional European groups. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 banned discrimination in the sale or rental of housing. African Americans re-entered politics in the South, and across the country young people were inspired to action.

Between 1964 and 1968, there were 329 protests in 257 cities across the nation. In 1965, a traffic stop set in motion a chain of events that culminated in violence in Watts, an African American neighborhood in Los Angeles. Thousands of businesses were destroyed, and, by the time the violence ended, 34 people were dead, most of them African Americans killed by the Los Angeles police and the National Guard.

Frustration and anger lay at the heart of these protests. Despite the programs of the Great Society, essentials such as good healthcare, job opportunities, and safe housing were abysmally lacking in urban African American neighborhoods in cities throughout the country, including in the North and West, where discrimination was less overt but just as crippling. In the eyes of many protesters, the federal government either could not or would not end their suffering, and most existing civil rights groups and their leaders had been unable to achieve significant results toward racial justice and equality. Disillusioned, many African Americans turned to those with more radical ideas about how best to obtain equality and justice.

Black Power was made most public by the Black Panther Party, which was founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California, in 1966 . This group followed the ideology of Malcolm X using a "by-any-means necessary" approach to stopping inequality. Unlike Carmichael and the Nation of Islam, most Black Power advocates did not believe African Americans needed to separate themselves from white society. The Black Panther Party believed African Americans were as much the victims of capitalism as of white racism. Accordingly, the group espoused Marxist teachings and called for jobs, housing, and education, as well as protection from police brutality and exemption from military service in their Ten Point Program. Their militant attitude and advocacy of armed self-defense attracted many young men but also led to many encounters with the police, which sometimes included arrests and even shootouts

During the 1960s, the federal government, encouraged by both genuine concern for the dispossessed and the realities of the Cold War, had increased its efforts to protect civil rights and ensure equal economic and educational opportunities for all. However, most of the credit for progress toward racial equality in the United States lies with grassroots activists. Indeed, it was campaigns and

demonstrations by ordinary people that spurred the federal government to action. Although the African American civil rights movement was the most prominent of the crusades for racial justice, other ethnic minorities also worked to seize their piece of the American dream during the promising years of the 1960s. Many were influenced by the African American cause and often used similar tactics.

CHANGE FROM THE BOTTOM UP

For many people inspired by the victories of Brown v. Board of Education and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the glacial pace of progress in the segregated South was frustrating if not intolerable. In some places, such as Greensboro, North Carolina, local NAACP chapters had been influenced by Whites who provided financing for the organization. This aid, together with the belief that more forceful efforts at reform would only increase White resistance, had persuaded some African American organizations to pursue a "politics of moderation" instead of attempting to radically alter the status quo. Martin Luther King Jr.'s inspirational appeal for peaceful change in the city of Greensboro in 1958, however, planted the seed for a more assertive civil rights movement.

On February 1, 1960, four sophomores at the North Carolina Agricultural & Technical College in Greensboro—Ezell Blair, Jr., Joseph McNeil, David Richmond, and Franklin McCain—entered the local Woolworth's and sat at the lunch counter. The lunch counter was segregated, and they were refused service as they knew they would be. They had specifically chosen Woolworth's, because it was a national chain and was thus believed to be especially vulnerable to negative publicity. Over the next few days, more protesters joined the four sophomores. Hostile Whites responded with threats and taunted the students by pouring sugar and ketchup on their heads. The successful six-month-long Greensboro sit-in initiated the student phase of the African American civil rights movement and, within two months, the sit-in movement had spread to fifty-four cities in nine states (IMAGE 4.6 ).

IMAGE 4.6 Businesses such as this one were among those that became targets of activists protesting segregation. Segregated businesses could be found throughout the United States; this one was located in Ohio. (credit: Library of Congress)

In the words of grassroots civil rights activist Ella Baker, the students at Woolworth's wanted more than a hamburger; the movement they helped launch was about empowerment. Baker pushed for a "participatory Democracy" that built on the grassroots campaigns of active citizens instead of deferring to the leadership of educated elites and experts. As a result of her actions, in April 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) formed to carry the battle forward. Within a year, more than one hundred cities had desegregated at least some public accommodations in response to student-led demonstrations. The sit-ins inspired other forms of nonviolent protest intended to desegregate public spaces. "Sleep-ins" occupied motel lobbies, "read-ins" filled public libraries, and churches became the sites of "pray-ins."

Students also took part in the 1961 “freedom rides” sponsored by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and SNCC. The intent of the African American and White volunteers who undertook these bus rides south was to test enforcement of a U.S. Supreme Court decision prohibiting segregation on interstate transportation and to protest segregated waiting rooms in southern terminals. Departing Washington, DC, on May 4, the volunteers headed south on buses that challenged the seating order of Jim Crow segregation. Whites would ride in the back, African-Americans would sit in the front, and on other occasions, riders of different races would share the same bench seat. The freedom riders encountered little difficulty until they reached Rock Hill, South Carolina, where a mob severely beat John Lewis, a freedom rider who later became chairman of SNCC (IMAGE 4.7). The danger increased as the riders continued through Georgia into Alabama, where one of the two buses was firebombed outside the town of Anniston. The second group continued to Birmingham, where the riders were attacked by the Ku Klux Klan as they attempted to disembark at the city bus station. The remaining volunteers continued to Mississippi, where they were arrested when they attempted to desegregate the waiting rooms in the Jackson bus terminal.

IMAGE 4.7 Civil rights activists Bayard Rustin, Andrew Young, Rep. William Fitts Ryan, James Farmer, and John Lewis (l to r) in a newspaper photograph from 1965.

FREE BY ’63 (OR ’64 OR ’65)

The grassroots efforts of people like the Freedom Riders to change discriminatory laws and longstanding racist traditions grew more widely known in the mid-1960s. The approaching centennial of Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation spawned the slogan “Free by ’63” among civil rights activists. As African Americans increased their calls for full rights for all Americans, many civil rights groups changed their tactics to reflect this new urgency.

Perhaps the most famous of the civil rights-era demonstrations was the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, held in August 1963, on the one hundredth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Its purpose was to pressure President Kennedy to act on his promises regarding civil rights. The date was the eighth anniversary of the brutal racist murder of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi. As the crowd gathered outside the Lincoln Memorial and spilled across the National Mall (IMAGE 4.8), Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his most famous speech. In “I Have a Dream,” King called for an end to racial injustice in the United States and envisioned a harmonious, integrated society. The speech marked the high point of the civil rights movement and established the legitimacy of its goals. However, it did not prevent White terrorism in the South, nor did it permanently sustain the tactics of nonviolent civil disobedience.

IMAGE 4.8 During the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (a), a huge crowd gathered on the National Mall (b) to hear the speakers. Although thousands attended, many of the march's organizers had hoped that enough people would come to Washington to shut down the city.

Other gatherings of civil rights activists ended tragically, and some demonstrations were intended to provoke a hostile response from Whites and thus reveal the inhumanity of the Jim Crow laws and their supporters. In 1963, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) led by Martin Luther King, Jr. mounted protests in some 186 cities throughout the South. The campaign in Birmingham that began in April and extended into the fall of 1963 attracted the most notice, however, when a peaceful protest was met with violence by police, who attacked demonstrators, including children, with fire hoses and dogs. The world looked on in horror as innocent people were assaulted and thousands arrested. King himself was jailed on Easter Sunday, 1963, and, in response to the pleas of White clergymen for peace and patience, he penned one of the most significant documents of the struggle—"Letter from a Birmingham Jail." In the letter, King argued that African Americans had waited patiently for more than three hundred years to be given the rights that all human beings deserved; the time for waiting was over.

DEFINING AMERICAN

Letter from a Birmingham Jail

By 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. had become one of the most prominent leaders of the civil rights movement, and he continued to espouse nonviolent civil disobedience as a way of registering African American resistance against unfair, discriminatory, and racist laws and behaviors. While the campaign in Birmingham began with an African American boycott of White businesses to end discrimination in employment practices and public segregation, it became a fight over free speech when King was arrested for violating a local injunction against demonstrations. King wrote his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" in response to an op-ed by eight White Alabama clergymen who complained about the SCLC's fiery tactics and argued that social change needed to be pursued gradually. The letter criticizes those who did not support the cause of civil rights:

*In spite of my shattered dreams of the past, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the White religious leadership in the community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, serve as the channel through which our just grievances could get to the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed. I have heard numerous religious leaders of the South call upon their worshippers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear White ministers say follow this decree because integration is morally right and the Negro is your brother. In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched White churches stand on the sideline and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, "Those are social issues with which the Gospel has no real concern," and I have watched so many churches commit themselves to a completely other-worldly religion which made a strange distinction between body and soul, the sacred and the secular.*

Since its publication, the "Letter" has become one of the most cogent, impassioned, and succinct statements of the aspirations of the civil rights movement and the frustration over the glacial pace of progress in achieving justice and equality for all Americans.

Some of the greatest violence during this era was aimed at those who attempted to register African Americans to vote. In 1964, SNCC, working with other civil rights groups, initiated its Mississippi Summer Project, also known as Freedom Summer. The purpose was to register African American voters in one of the most racist states in the nation. Volunteers also built "freedom

schools” and community centers. SNCC invited hundreds of White middle-class students, mostly from the North, to help in the task. Many volunteers were harassed, beaten, and arrested, and African American homes and churches were burned. Three civil rights workers, James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman, were killed by the Ku Klux Klan. That summer, civil rights activists Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, and Robert Parris Moses formally organized the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) as an alternative to the all-White Mississippi Democratic Party. The Democratic National Convention’s organizers, however, would allow only two MFDP delegates to be seated, and they were confined to the roles of nonvoting observers.

The vision of Whites and African Americans working together peacefully to end racial injustice suffered a severe blow with the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee, in April 1968. King had gone there to support sanitation workers trying to unionize. In the city, he found a divided civil rights movement; older activists who supported his policy of nonviolence were being challenged by younger African Americans who advocated a more militant approach. On April 4, King was shot and killed while standing on the balcony of his motel. Within hours, the nation’s cities exploded with violence as angry African Americans, shocked by his murder, burned and looted inner-city neighborhoods across the country (IMAGE 4.9). While Whites recoiled from news about the riots in fear and dismay, they also criticized African Americans for destroying their own neighborhoods; they did not realize that most of the violence was directed against businesses that were not owned by Black people and that treated African American customers with suspicion and hostility.

(a) (b)

IMAGE 4.9 Many businesses, such as those in this neighborhood at the intersection of 7th and N Streets in NW, Washington, DC, were destroyed in riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

BLACK FRUSTRATION, BLACK POWER

The episodes of violence that accompanied Martin Luther King Jr.’s murder were but the latest in a string of urban riots that had shaken the United States since the mid-1960s. Between 1964 and 1968, there were 329 riots in 257 cities across the nation. In 1964, riots broke out in Harlem and other African American neighborhoods. In 1965, a traffic stop set in motion a chain of events that culminated in riots in Watts, an African American neighborhood in Los Angeles. Thousands of businesses were destroyed, and, by the time the violence ended, thirty-four people were dead, most of them African Americans killed by the Los Angeles police and the National Guard. More riots took place in 1966 and 1967.

Frustration and anger lay at the heart of these disruptions. Despite the programs of the Great Society, good healthcare, job opportunities, and safe housing were abysmally lacking in urban African American neighborhoods in cities throughout the country, including in the North and West, where discrimination was less overt but just as crippling. In the eyes of many rioters, the federal government either could not or would not end their suffering, and most existing civil rights groups and their leaders had been unable to achieve significant results toward racial justice and equality. Disillusioned, many African Americans turned to those with more radical ideas about how best to obtain equality and justice.

Within the chorus of voices calling for integration and legal equality were many that more stridently demanded empowerment and thus supported Black Power. Black Power meant a variety of things. One of the most famous users of the term was Stokely Carmichael, the chairman of SNCC, who later changed his name to Kwame Ture. For Carmichael, Black Power was the power of

African Americans to unite as a political force and create their own institutions apart from White-dominated ones, an idea also espoused in the 1920s by political leader and orator Marcus Garvey. Like Garvey, Carmichael became an advocate of Black separatism, arguing that African Americans should live apart from Whites and solve their problems for themselves. In keeping with this philosophy, Carmichael expelled SNCC's White members. He left SNCC in 1967 and later joined the Black Panthers (see below).

Long before Carmichael began to call for separatism, the Nation of Islam, founded in 1930, had advocated the same thing. In the 1960s, its most famous member was Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little (IMAGE 4.10).The Nation of Islam advocated the separation of White Americans and African Americans because of a belief that African Americans could not thrive in an atmosphere of White racism. Indeed, in a 1963 interview, Malcolm X, discussing the teachings of the head of the Nation of Islam in America, Elijah Muhammad, referred to White people as "devils" more than a dozen times. Rejecting the nonviolent strategy of other civil rights activists, he maintained that violence in the face of violence was appropriate.

(a) (b)

IMAGE 4.10 Stokely Carmichael (a), one of the most famous and outspoken advocates of Black Power, is surrounded by members of the media after speaking at Michigan State University in 1967. Malcolm X (b) was raised in a family influenced by Marcus Garvey and persecuted for its outspoken support of civil rights. While serving a stint in prison for armed robbery, he was introduced to and committed himself to the Nation of Islam. (credit b: modification of work by Library of Congress)

In 1964, after a trip to Africa, Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam to found the Organization of Afro-American Unity with the goal of achieving freedom, justice, and equality "by any means necessary." His views regarding Black-White relations changed somewhat thereafter, but he remained fiercely committed to the cause of African American empowerment. On February 21, 1965, he was killed by members of the Nation of Islam. Stokely Carmichael later recalled that Malcolm X had provided an intellectual basis for Black Nationalism and given legitimacy to the use of violence in achieving the goals of Black Power.

DEFINING AMERICAN

The New Negro

In a roundtable conversation in October 1961, Malcolm X suggested that a "New Negro" was coming to the fore. The term and concept of a "New Negro" arose during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and was revived during the civil rights movements of the 1960s.

"I think there is a new so-called Negro. We don't recognize the term 'Negro' but I really believe that there's a new so-called Negro here in America. He not only is impatient. Not only is he dissatisfied, not only is he disillusioned, but he's getting very angry. And whereas the so-called Negro in the past was willing to sit around and wait for someone else to change his condition or correct his condition, there's a growing tendency on the part of a vast number of so-called Negroes today to take action themselves, not to sit and wait for someone else to correct the situation. This, in my opinion, is primarily what has produced this new Negro. He is not willing to wait. He thinks that what he wants is right, what he wants is just, and since these things are just and right, it's wrong to sit around and wait for someone else to correct a nasty condition when they get ready."

Unlike Stokely Carmichael and the Nation of Islam, most Black Power advocates did not believe African Americans needed to separate themselves from White society. The Black Panther Party, founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, believed African Americans were as much the victims of capitalism as of White racism. Accordingly, the group espoused Marxist teachings, and called for jobs, housing, and education, as well as protection from police brutality and exemption from military service in their Ten Point Program. The Black Panthers also patrolled the streets of African American neighborhoods to protect residents from police brutality, yet sometimes beat and murdered those who did not agree with their cause and tactics. Their militant attitude and advocacy of armed self-defense attracted many young men but also led to many encounters with the police, which sometimes included arrests and even shootouts, such as those that took place in Los Angeles, Chicago and Carbondale, Illinois.

The self-empowerment philosophy of Black Power influenced mainstream civil rights groups such as the National Economic Growth Reconstruction Organization (NEGRO), which sold bonds and operated a clothing factory and construction company in New York, and the Opportunities Industrialization Center in Philadelphia, which provided job training and placement—by 1969, it had branches in seventy cities. Black Power was also part of a much larger process of cultural change. The 1960s composed a decade not only of Black Power but also of Black Pride. African American abolitionist John S. Rock had coined the phrase “Black Is Beautiful” in 1858, but in the 1960s, it became an important part of efforts within the African American community to raise self-esteem and encourage pride in African ancestry. Black Pride urged African Americans to reclaim their African heritage and, to promote group solidarity, to substitute African and African-inspired cultural practices, such as handshakes, hairstyles, and dress, for White practices. One of the many cultural products of this movement was the popular television music program Soul Train, created by Don Cornelius in 1969, which celebrated Black culture and aesthetics (IMAGE 4.11).

IMAGE 4.11 When the Jackson Five appeared on Soul Train, each of the five brothers sported a large afro, a symbol of Black Pride in the 1960s and 70s.

THE MEXICAN AMERICAN FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

The African American bid for full citizenship was surely the most visible of the battles for civil rights taking place in the United States. However, other minority groups that had been legally discriminated against or otherwise denied access to economic and educational opportunities began to increase efforts to secure their rights in the 1960s. Like the African American movement, the Mexican American civil rights movement won its earliest victories in the federal courts. In 1947, in Mendez v. Westminster, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that segregating children of Hispanic descent was unconstitutional. In 1954, the same year as Brown v. Board of Education, Mexican Americans prevailed in Hernandez v. Texas, when the U.S. Supreme Court extended the protections of the Fourteenth Amendment to all ethnic groups in the United States.

The highest-profile struggle of the Mexican American civil rights movement was the fight that Cesar Chavez (IMAGE 4.12) and Dolores Huerta waged in the fields of California to organize migrant farm workers. In 1962, Chavez and Huerta founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). In 1965, when Filipino grape pickers led by Filipino American Larry Itliong went on strike to call attention to their plight, Chavez lent his support. Workers organized by the NFWA also went on strike, and the two organizations merged to form the United Farm Workers. When Chavez asked American consumers to boycott grapes, politically conscious people around the country heeded his call, and many unionized longshoremen refused to unload grape shipments. In 1966, Chavez led striking workers to the state capitol in Sacramento, further publicizing the cause. Martin Luther King, Jr. telegraphed words of encouragement to Chavez, whom he called a “brother.” The strike ended in 1970 when California farmers recognized the right of farm workers to unionize. However, the farm workers did not gain all they sought, and the larger struggle did not end.

IMAGE 4.12 Cesar Chavez was influenced by the nonviolent philosophy of Indian nationalist Mahatma Gandhi. In 1968, he emulated Gandhi by engaging in a hunger strike.

The equivalent of the Black Power movement among Mexican Americans was the Chicano Movement. Proudly adopting a derogatory term for Mexican Americans, Chicano activists demanded increased political power for Mexican Americans, education that recognized their cultural heritage, and the restoration of lands taken from them at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848. One of the founding members, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, launched the Crusade for Justice in Denver in 1965, to provide jobs, legal services, and healthcare for Mexican Americans. From this movement arose La Raza Unida, a political party that attracted many Mexican American college students. Elsewhere, Reies López Tijerina fought for years to reclaim lost and illegally expropriated ancestral lands in New Mexico; he was one of the co-sponsors of the Poor People's March on Washington in 1967.

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# 4.3: The Women’s Rights Movement

4.3 The Women’s Rights Movement

Second-wave feminism distinguished itself from earlier women's movements in that it expanded to include issues of sexuality, family, and reproductive rights. In contrast to earlier women's movements, the second wave of feminism in the 1960s broadened the debate of women's rights to encompass a wider range of issues, including sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, de facto inequalities, and official legal inequalities. Second-wave feminism radically changed the face of western culture, leading to marital rape laws, the establishment of rape crisis and battered women's shelters, significant changes in custody and divorce law, and widespread integration of women into sports activities and the workplace.

In 1963, President Kennedy selected a special committee to research and release a report detailing discrimination against women in every aspect of American life, and outlined plans to achieve equality among genders. Specific recommendations for women in the workplace included fair hiring practices, paid maternity leave, and affordable childcare. The Equal Pay Act at this time proposed, but had no way of enforcing, equality of pay for men and women performing equal work.

Not all were young women engaged in social protest. Many were older, married women who found the traditional roles of housewife and mother unfulfilling. In 1963, writer and feminist Betty Friedan published The Feminine Mystique in which she contested the post-World War II belief that it was women’s destiny to marry and bear children. The perfect nuclear family image depicted and strongly marketed at the time, she wrote, did not reflect happiness and was rather degrading for women. Friedan’s book was a best-seller and began to raise the consciousness of many women who agreed that homemaking in the suburbs sapped them of their individualism and left them unsatisfied.

On the national scene, the civil rights movement was creating a climate of protest and claiming rights and new roles in society for people of color. Women played significant roles in organizations fighting for civil rights like SNCC and SDS. However, they often found that those organizations, enlightened as they might be about racial issues or the war in Vietnam, could still be influenced by patriarchal ideas of male superiority. Two members of SNCC, Casey Hayden and Mary King, presented some of their concerns about their organization’s treatment of women in a document entitled “On the Position of Women in SNCC.” Stokely Carmichael responded that the appropriate position for women in SNCC was “prone.”

Just as the abolitionist movement made nineteenth-century women more aware of their lack of power and encouraged them to form the first women’s rights movement, the protest movements of the 1960s inspired many White and middle-class women to create their own organized movement for greater rights. Not all were young women engaged in social protest. Many were older, married women who found the traditional roles of housewife and mother unfulfilling. In 1963, writer and feminist Betty Friedan published The Feminine Mystique in which she contested the post-World War II belief that it was women’s destiny to marry and bear children. Friedan’s book was a best-seller and began to raise the consciousness of many women who agreed that homemaking in the suburbs sapped them of their individualism and left them unsatisfied.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, and religion, also prohibited, in Title VII, discrimination on the basis of sex. Ironically, protection for women had been included at the suggestion of a Virginia congressman in an attempt to prevent the act’s passage; his reasoning seemed to be that, while a White man might accept that African Americans needed and deserved protection from discrimination, the idea that women deserved equality with men would be far too radical for any of his male colleagues to contemplate. Nevertheless, the act passed, although the struggle to achieve equal pay for equal work continues today.

Medical science also contributed a tool to assist women in their liberation. In 1960, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the birth control pill, freeing women from the restrictions of pregnancy and childbearing. Women who were able to limit, delay, and prevent reproduction were freer to work, attend college, and delay marriage. Within five years of the pill’s approval, some six million women were using it.

The pill was the first medicine ever intended to be taken by people who were not sick. Even conservatives saw it as a possible means of making marriages stronger by removing the fear of an unwanted pregnancy and improving the health of women. Its opponents, however, argued that it would promote sexual promiscuity, undermine the institutions of marriage and the family, and destroy the moral code of the nation. By the early 1960s, thirty states had made it a criminal offense to sell contraceptive devices.

In 1966, the National Organization for Women (NOW) formed and proceeded to set an agenda for the feminist movement (IMAGE 4.13). Framed by a statement of purpose written by Friedan, the agenda began by proclaiming NOW's goal to make possible women's participation in all aspects of American life and to gain for them all the rights enjoyed by men. Among the specific goals was the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (yet to be adopted).

IMAGE 4.13 Early members of NOW discuss the problems faced by American women. Betty Friedan is second from the left. (credit: Smithsonian Institution Archives)

More radical feminists, like their colleagues in other movements, were dissatisfied with merely redressing economic issues and devised their own brand of consciousness-raising events and symbolic attacks on women's oppression. The most famous of these was an event staged in September 1968 by New York Radical Women. Protesting stereotypical notions of femininity and rejecting traditional gender expectations, the group demonstrated at the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey, to bring attention to the contest's—and society's—exploitation of women. The protestors crowned a sheep Miss America and then tossed instruments of women's oppression, including high-heeled shoes, curlers, girdles, and bras, into a "freedom trash can." News accounts famously, and incorrectly, described the protest as a "bra burning."

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# 4.4: LGBTQIA+ History

4.4 LGBTQIA+ History

Combined with the sexual revolution and the feminist movement of the 1960s, the counterculture helped establish a climate that fostered the struggle for gay and lesbian rights. Many gay rights groups were founded in Los Angeles and San Francisco, cities that were administrative centers in the network of U.S. military installations and the places where many gay men suffered dishonorable discharges. The first postwar organization for homosexual civil rights, the Mattachine Society, was launched in Los Angeles in 1950. The first national organization for lesbians, the Daughters of Bilitis, was founded in San Francisco five years later. In 1966, the city became home to the world's first organization for transsexual people, the National Transsexual Counseling Unit, and in 1967, the Sexual Freedom League of San Francisco was born. Through these organizations and others, gay and lesbian activists fought against the criminalization and discrimination of their sexual identities on a number of occasions throughout the 1960s, employing strategies of both protests and litigation.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In the 1970s, gay replaced homosexual as the term of choice from within the community. Initially, gay was predominantly used as an umbrella term meaning both gay and lesbian people. When the phrases gay rights movement and gay liberation movement are used, it refers to the fight for gay and lesbian rights. As the 1970s progressed, lesbian activists preferred to be identified as lesbians, rather than gay or gay women. Outside of the broader meaning of the term gay in "gay rights movement" and "gay liberation movement" or in organizational names from the 1970s (such as the Gay Liberation Front and National Gay Task Force), when the term gay is used in this text it refers specifically to gay men. Although the term LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) has been used throughout the text, it is not a term people used in 1970s. Transgender and bisexual activism emerged in the 1970s, but each functioned on the outskirts of the gay liberation movement. In fact, in this era, transgender and bisexual activists often faced discrimination from gay and lesbian communities. Transgender is used in this text as an umbrella term that covers all people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior differs from those typically associated with the sex they were at birth. Queer was considered a derogatory term in the 1970s, unlike the positive all-inclusive meaning it has today. (page 60)

LGBTQ REPRESENTATION

LGBTQ Representation dates back to the earliest human civilizations. However, gay and lesbian communities only started to gain visibility in America with the development of industrialized urban centers in the late 1800s, most notably in New York. In 1903, New York police, under pressure from religious morality groups, conducted the first known raid targeting gay men. The Armed Services launched its first known investigation of homosexual behavior in 1919, with a probe into the activities of its cadets in Newport, Rhode Island. Although the military had a long history of persecuting homosexual activity dating back to the Revolutionary War, the Armed Services only officially made consensual sodomy a criminal offense in 1920. Alcohol prohibition from 1920 to 1933 saw a period of greater freedom for LGBTQ people. Illegal speakeasies allowed LGBTQ people relatively safe places to congregate away from police intervention. Performers such as Gene Malin, Ma Rainey (IMAGE 4.14), and Bessie Smith openly espoused gay and lesbian identities, while female impersonators such as Julian Eltinge became popular international performers. Books with gay, lesbian, and transgender themes such as Virginia Woolf's Orlando and Radclyffe Hall's Well of Loneliness garnered wide popularity. Annual drag-queen balls drew thousands of participants in New York, while smaller balls gained popularity across the nation.

IMAGE 4.14 Ma Rainey

STONEWALL REBELLION 1969

During the 1960s, police departments across the nation enforced state bans on serving alcohol to LGBTQ people by raiding bars suspected of serving LGBTQ patrons. So when New York City police entered the LGBTQ-serving Stonewall Inn in the early hours of June 28, 1969, they expected the typical routine of shutting down the bar and arresting selected patrons. But when arrested patrons resisted and a threatening crowd gathered, police retreated back into the bar for protection. By the time that police reinforcements arrived, a riot had erupted in the streets that would continue for nights to follow. The moment would come to symbolize the beginning of the gay liberation movement. The next year, commemorative marches and “gay-ins” were organized in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles to coincide with the anniversary of the riot. New York’s march, which started small with tens of people, grew to hundreds then to thousands as it entered Central Park. A Los Angeles contingent enlisted the help of the American Civil Liberties Union to acquire a city permit; it became the first LGBTQ march sanctioned by a city government. These marches developed into an annual event, grew in size and participation, and soon spread across the nation and the world in cities small and large as a reminder and celebration of the Stonewall Riots of 1969.

AIDS ACTIVISM

The first cases of what would later be termed Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) were reported in 1981 when young men in three major United States cities were hospitalized with cases of extremely rare, deadly opportunistic infections. Within

fifteen years, AIDS would become the leading cause of death for Americans aged 25-44. Now it is known that the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS, is a blood-borne, sexually transmitted disease that cannot be acquired via casual contact. But in the early 1980s, all anyone knew was that this new illness was fatal. The ambiguity was a recipe for panic and blame. Because the first reported cases of disease were among gay men, public opinion pigeonholed the burgeoning epidemic as a “gay plague.” The stigma of homosexuality remained strong in the 1980s, a decade which began with no federal or statewide anti-discrimination laws in place to protect the civil rights of LGBTQ people. This prejudice seemed to be a primary cause of the relative inaction of the federal government to address the epidemic. From June 1981 to June 1982, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) spent $1 million on AIDS, which by October 1982, had stricken 634 Americans and killed 260. Across the same time frame, the CDC spent $9 million on Legionnaires' disease, which had caused fewer than 50 deaths. Even more troubling, because of the long incubation period, it was estimated that a quarter of a million Americans were infected by the time of the first deaths. Some gay men reacted to the sudden appearance of AIDS in the community with denial. Scant public health warnings and virtually absent media attention gave rise to theories that the new disease didn’t actually exist or couldn’t be spread by sexual contact. The early inability of scientists to find the cause of the disease contributed to the confusion. Doctors and activists who spoke of a coming cataclysm were distrusted and dismissed for exaggerating the threat. Many gay men felt that authorities were trying to put them back in the closet and reverse the hard-won battles for acceptance and visibility.

IMAGE 4.15 A still image from the 1989 documentary entitled “Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt” – a documentary that gave an account of the early days of AIDS activism in America.

The text on the bottom of the poster reads: “Why is Reagan silent about AIDS? What is really going on with the Center for Disease Control, the Federal Drug Administration, and the Vatican? Gays and lesbians are not expendable... Use your power...Vote...Boycott...Defend yourselves...Turn anger, fear, pain into action.” A pink triangle was the symbol used to mark gays in Nazi concentration camps.

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Morgan, Kyle and Rodriguez, Meg, "The American LGBTQ Rights Movement: An Introduction" (2020). Textbooks Series (imprint). 2. https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/textbooks/2. CC BY-NC.

ACT UP and the AIDS Crisis

In 1981, doctors began to identify the disease that would come to be known as HIV/AIDS in young gay men in Los Angeles, New York City, and San Francisco. Because of high rates of infection in gay communities and misconceptions about the disease’s origin and transmission, public perception conceived of AIDS as a “gay plague.” By the end of 1986, 11,932 AIDS-related deaths had

been reported in the United States and the disease was spreading rapidly across demographics and through multiple forms of transmission. However, the US government had done little to advance education and prevention.

In March 1987, gay rights advocate Larry Kramer and an initial group of approximately 300 activists formed the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT UP) in meetings at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in New York. Angered by US government homophobia that led to inaction and mismanagement of the AIDS Crisis, ACT UP sought to improve the quality of medical and social services for persons with HIV/AIDS and raise international awareness about the disease and its devastating impact. Tactics included non-violent protests, targeted demands, and poster campaigns. Major urban areas with large LGBTQ populations, like New York and San Francisco, became centers of ACT UP work, but active chapters organized in a loose network appeared in cities across the country in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Working alongside—and sometimes in tension with—other AIDS-awareness projects like the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, ACT UP was known for its radical protest strategies. Targets of these protests included numerous politicians, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

By the early 1990s, the original ACT UP network was splintered by internal political conflict, but its impact was clear. Through its advocacy, the organization had helped to lower the price of drugs, transform the FDA's approval process for them, include patients with AIDS in new drug trials, diminish the social stigma of AIDS, and educate people about prevention. This work supported medical advances that, by the mid-1990s, helped reduce the number of AIDS-related deaths for persons infected with HIV. This primary source set uses documents, photographs, posters, and other promotional materials to tell the story of ACT UP during the AIDS Crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

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Franky Abbott. Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America. https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/ac...he-aids-crisis. CC BY 3.0.

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# 4.5: The Vietnam War

4.5 The Vietnam War

As early as 1967, critics of the war in Vietnam had begun to call for the repeal of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which gave President Johnson the authority to conduct military operations in Vietnam in defense of an ally, South Vietnam. Nixon initially opposed the repeal efforts, claiming that doing so might have consequences that reached far beyond Vietnam. Nevertheless, by 1969, he was beginning troop withdrawals from Vietnam while simultaneously looking for a “knockout blow” against the North Vietnamese. In sum, the Nixon administration was in need of an exit strategy.

The escalation of the war, however, made an easy withdrawal increasingly difficult. Officially, the United States was the ally and partner of the South Vietnamese, whose “hearts and minds” it was trying to win through a combination of military assistance and economic development. In reality, however, U.S. soldiers, who found themselves fighting in an inhospitable environment thousands of miles from home to protect people who often resented their presence and aided their enemies, came to regard the Vietnamese as backward, cowardly people and the government of South Vietnam as hopelessly inefficient and corrupt. Instead of winning “hearts and minds,” U.S. warfare in Vietnam cost the lives and limbs of U.S. troops and millions of Vietnamese combatants and civilians (IMAGE 4.16).

IMAGE 4.16 U.S. soldiers in Hue in 1968 during the Tet Offensive. The frustrating experience of fighting the seemingly unwinnable war left many soldiers, and the public in general, disillusioned with the government.

For their part, the North Vietnamese forces and the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam also used brutal tactics to terrorize and kill their opponents or effectively control their territory. Political assassinations and forced indoctrination were common. Captured U.S. soldiers frequently endured torture and imprisonment.

MY LAI

Racism on the part of some U.S. soldiers and a desire to retaliate against those they perceived to be responsible for harming U.S. troops affected the conduct of the war. A war correspondent who served in Vietnam noted, “In motivating the GI to fight by appealing to his racist feelings, the United States military discovered that it had liberated an emotion over which it was to lose control.” It was not unusual for U.S. soldiers to evacuate and burn villages suspected of shielding Viet Cong fighters, both to deprive the enemy of potential support and to enact revenge for enemy brutality. Troops shot at farmers’ water buffalo for target practice. American and South Vietnamese use of napalm, a jellied gasoline that sticks to the objects it burns, was common.

Originally developed to burn down structures during World War II, in Vietnam, it was directed against human beings as well, as had occurred during the Korean War.

DEFINING AMERICAN: VETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

Many U.S. soldiers disapproved of the actions of their fellow troops. Indeed, a group of Vietnam veterans formed the organization Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). Small at first, it grew to perhaps as many as twenty thousand members. In April 1971, John Kerry, a former lieutenant in the U.S. Navy and a member of VVAW, testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations about conditions in Vietnam based on his personal observations:

*I would like to talk on behalf of all those veterans and say that several months ago in Detroit we had an investigation at which over 150 honorably discharged, and many very highly decorated, veterans testified to war crimes committed in Southeast Asia. These were not isolated incidents but crimes committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command. . . . They relived the absolute horror of what this country, in a sense, made them do. They told stories that at times they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads . . . randomly shot at civilians, razed villages . . . and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war and the normal and very particular ravaging which is done by the applied bombing power of this country. . . . We could come back to this country, we could be quiet, we could hold our silence, we could not tell what went on in Vietnam, but we feel because of what threatens this country, not the reds [Communists], but the crimes which we are committing that threaten it, that we have to speak out.*
*—John Kerry, April 23, 1971*

On March 16, 1968, men from the U.S. Army's Twenty-Third Infantry Division committed one of the most notorious atrocities of the war. About one hundred soldiers commanded by Captain Ernest Medina were sent to destroy the village of My Lai, which was suspected of hiding Viet Cong fighters. Although there was later disagreement regarding the captain's exact words, the platoon leaders believed the order to destroy the enemy included killing women and children. Having suffered twenty-eight casualties in the past three months, the men of Charlie Company were under severe stress and extremely apprehensive as they approached the village. Two platoons entered it, shooting randomly. A group of seventy to eighty unarmed people, including children and infants, were forced into an irrigation ditch by members of the First Platoon under the command of Lt. William L. Calley, Jr. Despite their proclamations of innocence, the villagers were shot (IMAGE 4.17). Houses were set on fire, and as the inhabitants tried to flee, they were killed with rifles, machine guns, and grenades. The U.S. troops were never fired upon, and one soldier later testified that he did not see any man who looked like a Viet Cong fighter.

IMAGE 4.17 Vietnamese civilians in My Lai await their fate. They were shot a few minutes after this 1968 photograph was taken.

The precise number of civilians killed that day is unclear: The numbers range from 347 to 504. None were armed. Although not all the soldiers in My Lai took part in the killings, no one attempted to stop the massacre before the arrival by helicopter of Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson, who, along with his crew, attempted to evacuate women and children. Upon returning to his base, Thompson immediately reported the events taking place at My Lai. Shortly thereafter, Medina ordered Charlie Company to cease fire. Although Thompson's crewmembers confirmed his account, none of the men from Charlie Company gave a report, and a cover-up began almost immediately. The army first claimed that 150 people, the majority of them Viet Cong, had been killed during a firefight with Charlie Company.

Hearing details from friends in Charlie Company, a helicopter gunner by the name of Ron Ridenhour began to conduct his own investigation and, in April 1969, wrote to thirty members of Congress, demanding an investigation. By September 1969, the army charged Lt. Calley with premeditated murder. Many Americans were horrified at the graphic footage of the massacre; the incident confirmed their belief that the war was unjust and not being fought on behalf of the Vietnamese people. However, nearly half of the respondents to a Minnesota poll did not believe that the incident at My Lai had actually happened. U.S. soldiers could not possibly do such horrible things, they felt; they were certain that American goals in Vietnam were honorable and speculated that the antiwar movement had concocted the story to generate sympathy for the enemy.

Calley was found guilty in March 1971, and sentenced to life in prison. Nationwide, hundreds of thousands of Americans joined a "Free Calley" campaign. Two days later, President Nixon released him from custody and placed him under him house arrest at Fort Benning, Georgia. In August of that same year, Calley's sentence was reduced to twenty years, and in September 1974, he was paroled. The only soldier convicted in the massacre, he spent a total of three-and-a-half years under house arrest for his crimes.

BATTLES AT HOME

As the conflict wore on and reports of brutalities increased, the antiwar movement grew in strength. To take the political pressure off himself and his administration, and find a way to exit Vietnam "with honor," Nixon began the process of Vietnamization, turning more responsibility for the war over to South Vietnamese forces by training them and providing American weaponry, while withdrawing U.S. troops from the field. At the same time, however, Nixon authorized the bombing of neighboring Cambodia, which had declared its neutrality, in an effort to destroy North Vietnamese and Viet Cong bases within that country and cut off supply routes between North and South Vietnam. The bombing was kept secret from both Congress and the American public. In April 1970, Nixon decided to follow up with an invasion of Cambodia.

The invasion could not be kept secret, and when Nixon announced it on television on April 30, 1970, protests sprang up across the country. The most tragic and politically damaging occurred on May 1, 1970, at Kent State University in Ohio. Violence erupted in the town of Kent after an initial student demonstration on campus, and the next day, the mayor asked Ohio's governor to send in the National Guard. Troops were sent to the university's campus, where students had set fire to the ROTC building and were fighting off firemen and policemen trying to extinguish it. The National Guard used teargas to break up the demonstration, and several students were arrested (IMAGE 4.18).

IMAGE 4.18 On April 30, 1970, Richard Nixon announces plans for the Cambodia Campaign (a), provoking protests on college campuses across the country. Within days, the governor of Ohio had called in the National Guard in response to student demonstrations at Kent State University. Bill Whitbeck, who was a student majoring in photo illustration at Kent State University

in May 1970, captured this image (b) on campus on May 3, one day before the shootings that would result in four student deaths. (credit b: modification of work by Bill Whitbeck)

Tensions came to a head on May 4. Although campus officials had called off a planned demonstration, some fifteen hundred to two thousand students assembled, throwing rocks at a security officer who ordered them to leave. Seventy-seven members of the National Guard, with bayonets attached to their rifles, approached the students. After forcing most of them to retreat, the troops seemed to depart. Then, for reasons that are still unknown, they halted and turned; many began to fire at the students. Nine students were wounded; four were killed. Two of the dead had simply been crossing campus on their way to class. Peace was finally restored when a faculty member pleaded with the remaining students to leave.

News of the Kent State shootings shocked students around the country. Millions refused to attend class, as strikes were held at hundreds of colleges and high schools across the United States. On May 8, an antiwar protest took place in New York City, and the next day, 100,000 protesters assembled in Washington, DC. Not everyone sympathized with the slain students, however. Nixon had earlier referred to student demonstrators as “bums,” and construction workers attacked the New York City protestors. A Gallup poll revealed that most Americans blamed the students for the tragic events at Kent State.

On May 15, a similar tragedy took place at Jackson State College, an African American college in Jackson, Mississippi. Once again, students gathered on campus to protest the invasion of Cambodia, setting fires and throwing rocks. The police arrived to disperse the protesters, who had gathered outside a women’s dormitory. Shortly after midnight, the police opened fire with shotguns. The dormitory windows shattered, showering people with broken glass. Twelve were wounded, and two young men, one a student at the college and the other a local high school student, were killed.

PULLING OUT OF THE QUAGMIRE

Ongoing protests, campus violence, and the expansion of the war into Cambodia deeply disillusioned Americans about their role in Vietnam. Understanding the nation’s mood, Nixon dropped his opposition to a repeal of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution of 1964. In January 1971, he signed Congress’s revocation of the notorious blanket military authorization. Gallup polls taken in May of that year revealed that only 28 percent of the respondents supported the war; many felt it was not only a mistake but also immoral.

Just as influential as antiwar protests and campus violence in turning people against the war was the publication of documents the media dubbed the Pentagon Papers in June 1971. These were excerpts from a study prepared during the Johnson administration that revealed the true nature of the conflict in Vietnam. The public learned for the first time that the United States had been planning to oust Ngo Dinh Diem from the South Vietnamese government, that Johnson meant to expand the U.S. role in Vietnam and bomb North Vietnam even as he stated publicly that he had no intentions of doing so, and that his administration had sought to deliberately provoke North Vietnamese attacks in order to justify escalating American involvement. Copies of the study had been given to the New York Times and other newspapers by Daniel Ellsberg, one of the military analysts who had contributed to it. To avoid setting a precedent by allowing the press to publish confidential documents, Nixon’s attorney general, John Mitchell, sought an injunction against the New York Times to prevent its publication of future articles based on the Pentagon Papers. The newspaper appealed. On June 30, 1971, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the government could not prevent the publication of the articles.

Realizing that he must end the war but reluctant to make it look as though the United States was admitting its failure to subdue a small Asian nation, Nixon began maneuvering to secure favorable peace terms from the North Vietnamese. Thanks to his diplomatic efforts in China and the Soviet Union, those two nations cautioned North Vietnam to use restraint. The loss of strong support by their patrons, together with intensive bombing of Hanoi and the mining of crucial North Vietnamese harbors by U.S. forces, made the North Vietnamese more willing to negotiate.

Nixon’s actions had also won him popular support at home. By the 1972 election, voters again favored his Vietnam policy by a ratio of two to one. On January 27, 1973, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger signed an accord with Le Duc Tho, the chief negotiator for the North Vietnamese, ending American participation in the war. The United States was given sixty days to withdraw its troops, and North Vietnam was allowed to keep its forces in places it currently occupied. This meant that over 100,000 northern soldiers would remain in the South—ideally situated to continue the war with South Vietnam. The United States left behind a small number of military advisors as well as equipment, and Congress continued to approve funds for South Vietnam, but considerably less than in earlier years. So the war continued, but it was clear the South could not hope to defeat the North.

As the end was nearing, the United States conducted several operations to evacuate children from the South. On the morning of April 29, 1975, as North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces moved through the outskirts of Saigon, orders were given to evacuate Americans and South Vietnamese who had supported the United States. Unable to use the airport, helicopters ferried Americans and Vietnamese refugees who had fled to the American embassy to ships off the coast. North Vietnamese forces entered Saigon the next day, and the South surrendered.

The war had cost the lives of more than 1.5 million Vietnamese combatants and civilians, as well as over 58,000 U.S. troops. But the war had caused another, more intangible casualty: the loss of consensus, confidence, and a sense of moral high ground in the American political culture.

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# 4.6: Hippies and Counter Culture

4.6 Hippies and Counter Culture

By the 1960s, a generation of White Americans raised in prosperity and steeped in the culture of conformity of the 1950s had come of age. However, many of these baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) rejected the conformity and luxuries that their parents had provided. These young, middle-class Americans, especially those fortunate enough to attend college when many of their working-class and African American contemporaries were being sent to Vietnam, began to organize to fight for their own rights and end the war that was claiming the lives of so many.

THE NEW LEFT

By 1960, about one-third of the U.S. population was living in the suburbs; during the 1960s, the average family income rose by 33 percent. Material culture blossomed, and at the end of the decade, 70 percent of American families owned washing machines, 83 percent had refrigerators or freezers, and almost 80 percent had at least one car. Entertainment occupied a larger part of both working- and middle-class leisure hours. By 1960, American consumers were spending $85 billion a year on entertainment, double the spending of the preceding decade; by 1969, about 79 percent of American households had black-and-white televisions, and 31 percent could afford color sets. Movies and sports were regular aspects of the weekly routine, and the family vacation became an annual custom for both the middle and working class.

Meanwhile, baby boomers, many raised in this environment of affluence, streamed into universities across the nation in unprecedented numbers looking to “find” themselves. Instead, they found traditional systems that forced them to take required courses, confined them to rigid programs of study, and surrounded them with rules limiting what they could do in their free time. These young people were only too willing to take up Kennedy’s call to action, and many did so by joining the civil rights movement. To them, it seemed only right for the children of the “greatest generation” to help those less privileged to fight battles for justice and equality. The more radical aligned themselves with the New Left, activists of the 1960s who rejected the staid liberalism of the Democratic Party. New Left organizations sought reform in areas such as civil rights and women’s rights, campaigned for free speech and more liberal policies toward drug use, and condemned the war in Vietnam.

One of the most prominent New Left groups was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Organized in 1960, SDS held its first meeting at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Its philosophy was expressed in its manifesto, the Port Huron Statement, written by Tom Hayden and adopted in 1962, affirming the group’s dedication to fighting economic inequality and discrimination. It called for greater participation in the democratic process by ordinary people, advocated civil disobedience, and rejected the anti-Communist position held by most other groups committed to social reform in the United States.

SDS members demanded that universities allow more student participation in university governance and shed their entanglements with the military-industrial complex. They sought to rouse the poor to political action to defeat poverty and racism. In the summer of 1964, a small group of SDS members moved into the uptown district of Chicago and tried to take on racism and poverty through community organization. Under the umbrella of their Economic Research and Action Project, they created JOIN (Jobs or Income Now) to address problems of urban poverty and resisted plans to displace the poor under the guise of urban renewal. They also called for police review boards to end police brutality, organized free breakfast programs, and started social and recreational clubs for neighborhood youth. Eventually, the movement fissured over whether to remain a campus-based student organization or a community-based development organization.

During the same time that SDS became active in Chicago, another student movement emerged on the West Coast, when actions by student activists at the University of California, Berkeley, led to the formation of Berkeley’s Free Speech Movement in 1964. University rules prohibited the solicitation of funds for political causes by anyone other than members of the student Democratic and Republican organizations, and restricted advocacy of political causes on campus. In October 1964, when a student handing out literature for CORE refused to show campus police officers his student ID card, he was promptly arrested. Instantly, the campus police car was surrounded by angry students, who refused to let the vehicle move for thirty-two hours until the student was released. In December, students organized a massive sit-in to resolve the issue of political activities on campus. While unsuccessful in the short term, the movement inspired student activism on campuses throughout the country.

A target of many student groups was the war in Vietnam (IMAGE 4.19). In April 1965, SDS organized a march on Washington for peace; about twenty thousand people attended. That same week, the faculty at the University of Michigan suspended classes and

conducted a 24-hour “teach-in” on the war. The idea quickly spread, and on May 15, the first national “teach-in” was held at 122 colleges and universities across the nation. Originally designed to be a debate on the pros and cons of the war, at Berkeley, the teach-ins became massive antiwar rallies. By the end of that year, there had been antiwar rallies in some sixty cities.

IMAGE 4.19 Students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison protested the war in Vietnam in 1965. Their actions were typical of many on college campuses across the country during the 1960s. (credit: “Yarnalgo”/Flickr)

AMERICANA BLUE JEANS: THE UNIFORM OF NONCONFORMIST RADICALISM

Overwhelmingly, young cultural warriors and social activists of the 1960s, trying to escape the shackles of what they perceived to be limits on their freedoms, adopted blue jeans as the uniform of their generation. Originally worn by manual laborers because of their near-indestructibility, blue jeans were commonly associated with cowboys, the quintessential icon of American independence. During the 1930s, jeans were adopted by a broader customer base as a result of the popularity of cowboy movies and dude ranch vacations. After World War II, Levi Strauss, their original manufacturer, began to market them east of the Mississippi, and competitors such as Wrangler and Lee fought for a share of the market. In the 1950s, youths testing the limits of middle-class conformity adopted them in imitation of movie stars like James Dean. By the 1960s, jeans became even more closely associated with youthful rebellion against tradition, a symbol available to everyone, rich and poor, Black and White, men and women.

The counterculture developed in the United States in the late 1960’s, coinciding with America's involvement in Vietnam. It was characterized by the rejection of conventional social norms, in this case, the social and gender norms of the Eisenhower era 1950’s. The counterculture youth rejected the cultural standards of their parents, specifically regarding racial segregation, gender roles, marital relationships, and initial widespread support for the Vietnam War.

As the 1960s progressed, widespread tensions developed in American society that tended to flow along generational lines regarding the war in Vietnam, race relations, sexual mores, women's rights, traditional modes of authority, and a materialist interpretation of the American Dream. Unconventional appearance, music, drugs, communitarian experiments, and sexual liberation were hallmarks of the sixties counterculture.

Hippies became the largest countercultural group in the United States. The counterculture reached its peak in the 1967 "Summer of Love," when thousands of young people flocked to the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. The counterculture lifestyle integrated many of the ideals of the time, including peace, love, harmony, music, and mysticism. Meditation, yoga, and psychedelic drugs were often embraced as routes to expanding one's consciousness.

Musicians who exemplified this era include The Beatles, The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Jimi Hendrix, The Doors, The Rolling Stones, Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, and Pink Floyd. New forms of musical presentation also played a key role in spreading the counterculture, mainly large outdoor rock festivals. The occurred from August 15–18, 1969, with the Woodstock Music Festival held in Bethel, New York. During this weekend festival, 32 of rock and psychedelic rock's most popular acts performed live outdoors to an audience of half a million people.

The counterculture movement divided the country. To some Americans, the movement reflected American ideals of free speech, equality, world peace, and the pursuit of happiness. To others, it reflected a destructive assault on America's traditional moral order. In an effort to quash the movement, government authorities banned the psychedelic drug LSD, restricted political gatherings, and tried to enforce bans on what they considered obscenity in books, music, theater, and other media.

IMAGE 4.20 The political divisions that plagued the United States in the 1960s were reflected in the rise of identity politics in the 1970s. As people lost hope of reuniting as a society with common interests and goals, many focused on issues of significance to the subgroups to which they belonged, based on culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and religion.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many young people came to embrace a new wave of cultural dissent. The counterculture offered an alternative to the bland homogeneity of American middle-class life, patriarchal family structures, self-discipline, unquestioning patriotism, and the acquisition of property. In fact, there were many alternative cultures.

“Hippies” rejected the conventions of traditional society. Men sported beards and grew their hair long; both men and women wore clothing from non-Western cultures, defied their parents, rejected social etiquettes and manners, and turned to music as an expression of their sense of self. Casual sex between unmarried men and women was acceptable. Drug use, especially of marijuana and psychedelic drugs like LSD and peyote, was common. Most hippies were also deeply attracted to the ideas of peace and freedom. They protested the war in Vietnam and preached a doctrine of personal freedom to be and act as one wished.

Some hippies dropped out of mainstream society altogether and expressed their disillusionment with the cultural and spiritual limitations of American freedom. They joined communes, usually in rural areas, to share a desire to live closer to nature, respect for the earth, a dislike of modern life, and a disdain for wealth and material goods. Many communes grew their own organic food. Others abolished the concept of private property, and all members shared willingly with one another. Some sought to abolish traditional ideas regarding love and marriage, and free love was practiced openly. One of the most famous communes was The Farm, established in Tennessee in 1971. Residents adopted a blend of Christian and Asian beliefs. They shared housing, owned no private property except tools and clothing, advocated nonviolence, and tried to live as one with nature, becoming vegetarians and

avoiding the use of animal products. They smoked marijuana in an effort to reach a higher state of consciousness and to achieve a feeling of oneness and harmony.

Music, especially rock and folk music, occupied an important place in the counterculture. Concerts provided the opportunity to form seemingly impromptu communities to celebrate youth, rebellion, and individuality. In mid-August 1969, nearly 400,000 people attended a music festival in rural Bethel, New York, many for free (IMAGE 4.21). They jammed roads throughout the state, and thousands had to be turned around and sent home. Thirty-two acts performed for a crowd that partook freely of marijuana, LSD, and alcohol during the rainy three-day event that became known as Woodstock (after the nearby town) and became the cultural touchstone of a generation. No other event better symbolized the cultural independence and freedom of Americans coming of age in the 1960s.

IMAGE 4.21 The crowd at Woodstock greatly exceeded the fifty thousand expected. Mark Goff covered Woodstock as a young freelance reporter for Kaleidoscope, a Milwaukee-based alternative newspaper, and captured this image of Swami Satchidananda, who declared music “'the celestial sound that controls the whole universe” at the opening ceremony.

MY STORY: GLENN WEISER ON ATTENDING WOODSTOCK

On the way to Woodstock, Glenn Weiser remembers that the crowds were so large they essentially turned it into a free concert:

*As we got closer to the site [on Thursday, August 14, 1969] we heard that so many people had already arrived that the crowd had torn down the fences enclosing the festival grounds (in fact they were never put up to begin with). Everyone was being allowed in for free. . . . Early on Friday afternoon about a dozen of us got together and spread out some blankets on the grass at a spot about a third of the way up the hill on stage right and then dropped LSD. I took Orange Sunshine, a strong, clean dose in an orange tab that was perhaps the best street acid ever. Underground chemists in southern California had made millions of doses, and the nation was flooded with it that summer. We smoked some tasty black hashish to amuse ourselves while waiting for the acid to hit, and sat back to groove along with Richie Havens. In two hours we were all soaring, and everything was just fine. In fact, it couldn't have been better—there I was with my beautiful hometown friends, higher than a church steeple and listening to wonderful music in the cool summer weather of the Catskills. After all, the dirty little secret of the late '60s was that psychedelic drugs taken in a pleasant setting could be completely exhilarating.*
*—Glenn Weiser, “Woodstock 1969 Remembered”*

AMERICAN INDIAN PROTEST

As the young, primarily white men and women who became hippies strove to create new identities for themselves, they borrowed liberally from other cultures, including that of Native Americans. At the same time, many Native Americans were themselves seeking to maintain their culture or retrieve elements that had been lost. In 1968, a group of American Indian activists, including Dennis Banks, George Mitchell, and Clyde Bellecourt, convened a gathering of two hundred people in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and formed the American Indian Movement (AIM) (IMAGE 4.22). The organizers were urban dwellers frustrated by decades of poverty and discrimination. In 1970, the average life expectancy of Native Americans was forty-six years compared to the national average of sixty-nine. The suicide rate was twice that of the general population, and the infant mortality rate was the highest in the country. Half of all Native Americans lived on reservations, where unemployment reached 50 percent. Among those in cities, 20 percent lived below the poverty line.

(a) (b)

IMAGE 4.22 This teepee was erected on the National Mall near the Washington Monument as part of an AIM demonstration (a). Note that the AIM flag (b) combines a Native American silhouette with the peace sign, the ubiquitous symbol of the 1960s and ‘70s.

On November 20, 1969, a small group of Native American activists landed on Alcatraz Island (the former site of a notorious federal prison) in San Francisco Bay. They announced plans to build an American Indian cultural center, including a history museum, an ecology center, and a spiritual sanctuary. People on the mainland provided supplies by boat, and celebrities visited Alcatraz to publicize the cause. More people joined the occupiers until, at one point, they numbered about four hundred. From the beginning, the federal government negotiated with them to persuade them to leave. They were reluctant to accede, but over time, the occupiers began to drift away of their own accord. Government forces removed the final holdouts on June 11, 1971, nineteen months after the occupation began.

DEFINING AMERICAN: PROCLAMATION TO THE GREAT WHITE FATHER AND ALL HIS PEOPLE

In occupying Alcatraz Island, American Indian activists sought to call attention to their grievances and expectations about what America should mean. At the beginning of the nineteen-month occupation, Mohawk Richard Oakes delivered the following proclamation:

We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery. We wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with the Caucasian inhabitants of this land, and hereby offer the following treaty: We will purchase said Alcatraz Island for twenty-four dollars ($24) in glass beads and red cloth, a precedent set by the White man’s purchase of a similar island about 300 years ago. . . . We feel that this so-called Alcatraz Island is more than suitable for an Indian Reservation, as determined by the White man’s own standards. By this we mean that this place resembles most Indian reservations in that: 1. It is isolated from modern facilities, and without adequate means of transportation. 2. It has no fresh running water. 3. It has inadequate sanitation facilities. 4. There are no oil or mineral rights. 5. There is no industry and so unemployment is very great. 6. There are no health care facilities. 7. The soil is rocky and non-productive; and the land does not support game. 8. There are no educational facilities. 9. The population has always exceeded the land base. 10. The population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent upon others. Further, it would be fitting and symbolic that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land, and thus be reminded of the true history of this nation. This tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.

The next major demonstration came in 1972 when AIM members and others marched on Washington, DC—a journey they called the “Trail of Broken Treaties”—and occupied the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The group presented a list of demands, which included improved housing, education, and economic opportunities in Native American communities; the drafting of new treaties; the return of Native lands; and protections for Native religions and culture.

The most dramatic event staged by AIM was the occupation of the community of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in February 1973. Wounded Knee, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, had historical significance: It was the site of an 1890 massacre of members of the Lakota tribe by the U.S. Army. AIM went to the reservation following the failure of a group of Oglala to impeach the tribal

president Dick Wilson, whom they accused of corruption and the use of strong-arm tactics to silence critics. AIM used the occasion to criticize the U.S. government for failing to live up to its treaties with native peoples.

The federal government surrounded the area with U.S. marshals, FBI agents, and other law enforcement forces. A siege ensued that lasted seventy-one days, with frequent gunfire from both sides, wounding a U.S. marshal as well as an FBI agent, and killing two Native Americans. The government did very little to meet the protesters' demands. Two AIM leaders, Dennis Banks and Russell Means, were arrested, but charges were later dismissed. The Nixon administration had already halted the federal policy of termination and restored millions of acres to tribes. Increased funding for Native American education, healthcare, legal services, housing, and economic development followed, along with the hiring of more Native American employees in the BIA.

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# 4.7: Birth of Rock n' Roll, Pop Culture and Mass Media

4.7 Birth of Rock n' Roll, Pop Culture & Mass Media

With a greater generational consciousness than previous generations, the baby boomers sought to define and redefine their identities in numerous ways. Music, especially rock and roll, reflected their desire to rebel against adult authority. Other forms of popular culture, such as movies and television, sought to entertain, while reinforcing values such as religious faith, patriotism, and conformity to societal norms.

ROCKING AROUND THE CLOCK

In the late 1940s, some White country musicians began to experiment with the rhythms of the blues, a decades-old musical genre of rural southern Black people. This experimentation led to the creation of a new musical form known as rockabilly, and by the 1950s, rockabilly had developed into rock and roll. Rock and roll music celebrated themes such as young love and freedom from the oppression of middle-class society. It quickly grew in favor among American teens, thanks largely to the efforts of disc jockey Alan Freed, who named and popularized the music by playing it on the radio in Cleveland, where he also organized the first rock and roll concert, and later in New York.

The theme of rebellion against authority, present in many rock and roll songs, appealed to teens. In 1954, Bill Haley and His Comets provided youth with an anthem for their rebellion—"Rock Around the Clock" (IMAGE 4.23). The song, used in the 1955 movie Blackboard Jungle about a White teacher at a troubled inner-city high school, seemed to be calling for teens to declare their independence from adult control.

IMAGE 4.23 The band Bill Haley and His Comets (a) was among the first to launch the new genre of rock and roll. Their hit song "Rock Around the Clock" supposedly caused some teens to break into violent behavior when they heard it. Chuck Berry (b) was a performer who combined rhythm and blues and rock and roll. He dazzled crowds with guitar solos and electrifying performances.

Haley illustrated how White artists could take musical motifs from the African American community and achieve mainstream success. Teen heartthrob Elvis Presley rose to stardom doing the same. Thus, besides encouraging a feeling of youthful rebellion, rock and roll also began to tear down color barriers, as White youths sought out African American musicians such as Chuck Berry and Little Richard (IMAGE 4.23).

While youth had found an outlet for their feelings and concerns, parents were much less enthused about rock and roll and the values it seemed to promote. Many regarded the music as a threat to American values. When Elvis Presley appeared on The Ed

Sullivan Show, a popular television variety program, the camera deliberately focused on his torso and did not show his swiveling hips or legs shaking in time to the music. Despite adults' dislike of the genre, or perhaps because of it, more than 68 percent of the music played on the radio in 1956 was rock and roll.

HOLLYWOOD ON THE DEFENSIVE

At first, Hollywood encountered difficulties in adjusting to the post-World War II environment. Although domestic audiences reached a record high in 1946 and the war's end meant expanding international markets too, the groundwork for the eventual dismantling of the traditional studio system was laid in 1948, with a landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. Previously, film studios had owned their own movie theater chains in which they exhibited the films they produced; however, in United States v. Paramount Pictures, Inc., this vertical integration of the industry—the complete control by one firm of the production, distribution, and exhibition of motion pictures—was deemed a violation of antitrust laws.

The HUAC hearings also targeted Hollywood. When eleven "unfriendly witnesses" were called to testify before Congress about Communism in the film industry in October 1947, only playwright Bertolt Brecht answered questions. The other ten, who refused to testify, were cited for contempt of Congress on November 24. The next day, film executives declared that the so-called "Hollywood Ten" would no longer be employed in the industry until they had sworn they were not Communists (IMAGE 4.24). Eventually, more than three hundred actors, screenwriters, directors, musicians, and other entertainment professionals were placed on the industry blacklist. Some never worked in Hollywood again; others directed films or wrote screenplays under assumed names.

IMAGE 4.24 One of the original Hollywood Ten, director Edward Dmytryk publicly announced he had once been a Communist and, in April 1951, answered questions and "named names" before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

Hollywood reacted aggressively to these various challenges. Filmmakers tried new techniques, like CinemaScope and Cinerama, which allowed movies to be shown on large screens and in 3-D. Audiences were drawn to movies not because of gimmicks, however, but because of the stories they told. Dramas and romantic comedies continued to be popular fare for adults, and, to appeal to teens, studios produced large numbers of horror films and movies starring music idols such as Elvis. Many films took espionage, a timely topic, as their subject matter, and science fiction hits such as Invasion of the Body Snatchers, about a small town whose inhabitants fall prey to space aliens, played on audience fears of both Communist invasion and nuclear technology.

THE TRIUMPH OF TELEVISION

By far the greatest challenge to Hollywood, however, came from the relatively new medium of television. Although the technology had been developed in the late 1920s, through much of the 1940s, only a fairly small audience of the wealthy had access to it. As a result, programming was limited. With the post-World War II economic boom, all this changed. In 1950, there were just under 4 million households with a television set, or 9 percent of all U.S. households. Five years later, that number had grown to over 30 million, or nearly 65 percent of all U.S. households (IMAGE 4.25).

IMAGE 4.25 An American family relaxes in front of their television set in 1958. Many gathered not only to watch the programming but also to eat dinner. The marketing of small folding tray tables and frozen “TV dinners” encouraged such behavior.

Various types of programs were broadcast on the handful of major networks: situation comedies, variety programs, game shows, soap operas, talk shows, medical dramas, adventure series, cartoons, and police procedurals. Many comedies presented an idealized image of White suburban family life: Happy housewife mothers, wise fathers, and mischievous but not dangerously rebellious children were constants on shows like Leave It to Beaver and Father Knows Best in the late 1950s. These shows also reinforced certain perspectives on the values of individualism and family—values that came to be redefined as “American” in opposition to alleged Communist collectivism. Westerns, which stressed unity in the face of danger and the ability to survive in hostile environments, were popular too. Programming for children began to emerge with shows such as Captain Kangaroo, Romper Room, and The Mickey Mouse Club designed to appeal to members of the baby boom.

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# 4.8: New Modern Art Movements

4.8 New Modern Art Movements

Pop art and Minimalism follow Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s and ‘60s. Both styles develop as a reaction against the subjective intensity and physical aspects associated with Abstract Expressionism. Pop art responds by celebrating recognizable subject matter drawn from the everyday, the commercial, and the commonplace and rejecting the emphasis on abstraction. Minimalism responds by focusing on the formal aspects of the artwork, rejecting the idea of the individual gesture of the artist and the subjective expressionistic focus of Abstract Expressionism in favor of establishing a different relationship between art, its viewer and the space both occupy.

IMAGE 4.26 James Rosenquist, House of Fire, 1981, oil on canvas, 78 inches x 17 feet, 6 inches. Met Museum of Art CC0.

Both styles push the language of modernism to its conclusion meaning that with them, the language of modern art has now been completely and successfully explored. With Pop art, we see the merging of the realms of art and popular culture, art and technology, and art and commercialism that began with the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists and that continued to define modern art in different ways over the 20th Century. With Minimalism, we see the final explorations of the possibilities of strict geometric and non-representational abstraction that here harnesses the space beyond the gallery’s wall or sculptural pedestal to re-define the boundaries of art beyond the two and three-dimensional.

What follows these two styles in the 1970s is called Post-Modern because it comes after modernism and uses the visual languages of modernism as seen in the various art styles we have studied but in different ways or for different reasons.

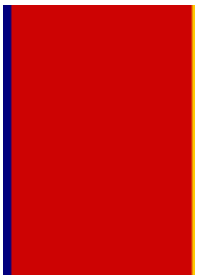

IMAGE 4.27 Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue I Minimalist artwork by Barnett Newman - 1966. CC0.

IMAGE 4.28 Andy Warhol's "Campbell's Soup Cans"

At first glance, Pop Art might seem to glorify popular culture by elevating soup cans, comic strips and hamburgers to the status of fine art on the walls of museums. But, then again, a second look may suggest a critique of the mass marketing practices and consumer culture that emerged in the United States after World War II. Andy Warhol's Gold Marilyn Monroe (1962) clearly reflects this inherent irony of Pop. The central image on a gold background evokes a religious tradition of painted icons, transforming the Hollywood starlet into a Byzantine Madonna that reflects our obsession with celebrity. Notably, Warhol's spiritual reference was especially poignant given Monroe's suicide a few months earlier. Like religious fanatics, the actress's fans worshipped their idol; yet, Warhol's sloppy silk-screening calls attention to the artifice of Marilyn's glamorous façade and places her alongside other mass-marketed commodities like a can of soup or a box of Brillo pads.

"Pop Art" first emerged in Great Britain, which suffered great economic hardship after the war. In the late 1940s, artists of the "Independent Group," first began to appropriate idealized images of the American lifestyle they found in popular magazines as part of their critique of British society.

Pop Art's origins, however, can be traced back even further. In 1917, Marcel Duchamp asserted that any object could be art, as long as the artist intended it as such. Artists of the 1950s built on this notion to challenge boundaries distinguishing art from real life, in disciplines of music and dance, as well as visual art. Robert Rauschenberg's desire to "work in the gap between art and life," for example, led him to incorporate such objects as bed pillows, tires and even a stuffed goat in his "combine paintings" that merged features of painting and sculpture. Likewise, Claes Oldenberg created The Store, an installation in a vacant storefront where he sold crudely fashioned sculptures of brand-name consumer goods. These "Proto-pop" artists were, in part, reacting against the rigid critical structure and lofty philosophies surrounding Abstract Expressionism, the dominant art movement of the time; but their work also reflected the numerous social changes taking place around them.

The years following World War II saw enormous growth in the American economy, which, combined with innovations in technology and the media, spawned a consumer culture with more leisure time and expendable income than ever before. The manufacturing industry that had expanded during the war now began to mass-produce everything from hairspray and washing machines to shiny new convertibles, which advertisers claimed all would bring ultimate joy to their owners. Significantly, the development of television, as well as changes in print advertising, placed new emphasis on graphic images and recognizable brand logos.

As the decade progressed, artists shifted away from painting towards the use of industrial techniques. Warhol began making silkscreens, before removing himself further from the process by having others do the actual printing in his studio, aptly named "The Factory." Similarly, Oldenburg abandoned his early installations and performances, to produce the large-scale sculptures of cake slices, lipsticks, and clothespins that he is best known for today.

The influence that TV exerted on increasing numbers of people was a major subject for the pop artists of the early sixties. For a brief time John F. Kennedy raised the spirits of America and Europe. He was the first TV President, and the public identified with him because of TV. His "New Frontier" culture also became a popular priority. And his establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts and Jackie Kennedy united fashion and culture with her media image.

Pop artists typically worked in a passive detachment from the spiritual. They commented on everyday life in a very morbid sense, not connecting emotionally with their art.

Andy Warhol is probably the most famous figure in Pop Art. Warhol attempted to take Pop beyond an artistic style to a lifestyle, and his work often displays a lack of human affectation that dispenses with the irony and parody of many of his peers. Warhol's artwork ranges in many forms of media including hand drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, silk screening, sculpture, film, and music. New York's Museum of Modern Art hosted a Symposium on Pop Art in December 1962 during which artists like Warhol were attacked for giving in to consumerism. Throughout the decade it became increasingly clear that there had been a profound change in the culture of the art world, and that Warhol was at the center of that shift. Eventually, he moved from hand painting to silk-screen printing, removing the handmade element altogether. The element of detachment reached such an extent at the height of Warhol's fame that he had several assistants producing his silk-screen multiples.

IMAGE 4.29 Andy Warhol – “Marilyn Pop Art" by Kelly DeLay is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Of equal importance to American pop art is Roy Lichtenstein. His work defines the basic premise of pop art better than any other through parody. Selecting the old-fashioned comic strip as subject matter, Lichtenstein produced hard-edged, precise compositions that documented mass culture while simultaneously creating soft parodies. Lichtenstein used oil and Magna paint in his best known works, such as Drowning Girl (1963), which was appropriated from the lead story in DC Comics’ Secret Hearts #83. His characteristic style featured thick outlines, bold colors and Ben-Day dots to represent certain colors, as if created by photographic reproduction. Lichtenstein’s contribution to Pop Art merged popular and mass culture with the techniques of fine art while injecting humor, irony, and recognizable imagery and content into the final product. The paintings of Lichtenstein, like the works of many other pop artists, shared a direct attachment to the commonplace image of American popular culture while treating the subject matter in a cool, impersonal manner. This detached style illustrated the idealization of mass production and its inherent anonymity.

Minimalism in art and music was an effort to create a form with a minimum of material and process. That means that one of Donald Judd’s cube-shaped sculptures was reduced to the simple form of a cube, and nothing more. Minimal Music was similar in that an entire musical work could be composed from a very simple tune with only three notes, as opposed to lush and rich orchestrated songs.

Artists in the 1960s and 1970s who explored reductive notions found a new way to embody their ideas in visual form. These artists explored the reductive tradition with highly experimental three dimensional work. This new approach to art was eventually called Minimal Art. A diverse group of artists were at one point or another during their careers classified as minimalists.

The name Minimal was applied to this style because the art seemed to have a minimal amount of art content. It certainly did not represent objects and people as Pop Art did nor did it seem to have any of the emotional or expressive characteristics of Abstract Expressionism. In fact, it was usually so simple that it seemed to lack complexities even under the surface. The minimal artists were more interested in pure shape, color, and texture of the object and how it related to the viewer in space. The work was often placed on the floor, instead of a pedestal, to occupy the visitor’s space and ensure that their attention was captured.

The Minimalists created work which drew in the viewer to participate and contemplate what its meaning or purpose was to themselves. They were interested in how a space could be transformed or altered by their art. The artists also went so far as to dismiss themselves from the art making process itself and sometimes the physical piece was made by technicians in factories, who followed a set of instructions or diagrams with precision.

Overall, the Minimalists were interested in continuity and order. They were interested in what comes next and what the final piece was as a whole. Their work did not refer to any other subject matter, because that would designate it as inferior to what it represented. This belief is the basis of why their work was often titled as “Untitled.” For these artists, the meaning of the art could

no longer be found within the piece they made, and was defined instead by its surroundings. This was a cool, cerebral approach to art that often implied that the idea was more important than the object, a line of thinking that eventually led to Conceptual Art.

Minimal Music is composed with a bare minimum of structure. These composers have produced a collective body of work that relies heavily on simplified progressions and melodies. Filled with repetitiveness in rhythms, these musicians worked to reduce the excesses of expression and historical reference they found to be overly abundant in much contemporary classical music. A key element of the minimalist music being showcased in this unit is the development of hypnotic rhythms. While this also occurred in the music of the 19th century composers, Laurie Anderson, Steve Reich and Phillip Glass had modern technology to conjure up mesmerizing rhythms in new ways.

CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS

Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977, USA) is a contemporary portrait painter. In his work, he refers back to poses and other compositional elements used by earlier masters in much the same way that Trumbull did in his portrait of George Washington. Wiley means for his viewers to recognize the earlier work he has borrowed from in creating his painting, to make comparisons between the two, and to layer meaning from the earlier work into his own. Due to the strong contrasts between the sitters in Wiley's paintings and those who posed for the earlier portraitists, however, this comparison often makes for a complex interweaving of meanings. It is based upon an 1847 marble work of the same name by French sculptor Auguste Clésinger (1814-1883, France). When Clésinger's flagrantly sensual nude was exhibited, the public and critics alike were scandalized, and fascinated. It was not uncommon in European and American art of the nineteenth century to use the subject of the work as justification for depicting the female nude.

For example, if the subject was a moral tale or a scene from classical mythology, that was an acceptable reason for showing a nude figure. In Clésinger's sculpture, the pretext for the woman's indecent writhing was the snake bite, which, coupled with the roses surrounding the woman, was meant to suggest an allegory of love or beauty lost in its prime rather than simply a salacious depiction of a nude. Unfortunately, the model was easily recognized as a real person, Apollonie Sabatier, a courtesan who was the writer Charles Baudelaire's mistress and well known among artists and writers of the day. Clésinger defended his sculpture as an artful study of the human form but, having used the features and body of a contemporary woman, his sculpture's viewers objected to the image as too real. Wiley's painting is the opposite: it is clearly intended to be a portrait of one individual, but he is clothed and inexplicably lying with his back to the viewer while turning to look over his shoulder. In his painting, Wiley retains the extended arms, and twisted legs and torso of Clésinger's figure, but the sculpted woman's thrown back head and closed eyes are replaced by the man's turned head and mildly quizzical gaze.

Wiley takes that pose and its meanings—indecency, exposure, vulnerability, powerlessness— and uses them in a context that seemingly makes no sense when the subject is a fully clothed black male. Or does it? By using the conventions for depicting the female nude, Wiley asks us to examine the following: what happens when the figure is clothed—with a suggestion of eroticism in the glimpse of brown skin and white briefs above his low-riding jeans; what happens when a young man gazes at the viewer with an unguarded expression of open inquisitiveness; and what happens when a black male presents his body in a posture of weakness, potentially open to attack? The artist uses these juxtapositions of meaning to challenge our notions of identity and masculinity. By expanding his visual vocabulary to include traditions in portraiture going back hundreds of years, Wiley paints a young black man at odds with contemporary conventions of (male) physicality and sexuality.

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ASSEMBLAGE ART

Assemblage Art is a process whereby compositions are created in two and three dimensional representations by combining found objects. These found objects were often considered to be trivial, with no prescribed meaning, though once assembled together, the artist creates new meaning while evoking wholly new sensations and feelings. While similar to the process of collage, it is distinct in its deliberate inclusion of non-art materials.

The origin of the term assemblage can be traced back to the early 1950s, when French artist Jean Dubuffet created a series of collages of butterfly wings titled “assemblages d’empreintes.” However, the origin of the artistic practice dates to the early 20th century, as both Marcel Duchamp and Pablo Picasso, as well as others, worked with found objects for many years prior to it becoming an accepted artistic medium in the mid 20th century.

In 1961, the exhibition “The Art of Assemblage” was featured at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The exhibition showcased the work of early 20th century European artists such as Braque, Dubuffet, Marcel Duchamp, Picasso, and Kurt Schwitters alongside Americans Man Ray, Joseph Cornell, Robert Mallary, and Robert Rauschenberg. It also included lesser-known American West Coast assemblage artists such as George Herms, Bruce Conner, and Edward Kienholz. William C. Seitz, the curator of the exhibition, described assemblages as preformed natural or manufactured materials, objects, or fragments not originally intended as art.

Robert Rauschenberg is a significant proponent of assemblage art. Rauschenberg picked up trash and found objects that interested him on the streets of New York City and brought these back to his studio where they could become integrated into his work. These works, which he called “combines,” served as instances in which the delineated boundaries between art, sculpture, and the everyday were broken down so that all were present in a single work of art. Technically “combines” refers to Rauschenberg’s work from 1954 to 1962, but the impetus to combine both painting materials and everyday objects such as clothing, urban debris, and taxidermied animals continued throughout his artistic life.

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PHOTOREALISM

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Photorealism or super-realism is a genre of art that began in the late 1960s, encompassing painting, drawing, and other graphic media in which an artist studies a photograph and then attempts to reproduce the image as realistically as possible.

Photorealism, also known as super-realism or hyper-realism, is a genre of art that makes use of photography to create a highly realistic art work in another medium. The term was first applied in America during the late 1960s. Like pop art, photorealism was a reactionary movement that stemmed from the overwhelming abundance of photographic media, which by the mid 20th century had grown into such a massive phenomenon that it threatened to lessen the value of imagery in art. While pop artists were primarily pointing out the absurdity of the imagery that dominated mass culture—such as advertising, comic books, and mass-produced cultural objects—photorealists aimed to reclaim and exalt the value of the image.

Photorealist painters gather imagery and visual information through photographs, which are transferred onto canvas either by slide projection or the traditional grid. The resulting images are often direct copies of the photograph, usually on an increased scale. Stylistically, this results in painted compositions that are tight and precise, often with an emphasis on imagery that requires a high level of technical prowess and virtuosity to simulate; for example, reflections in surfaces and embellished, man-made environments.

The first generation of American photorealists included such painters as Richard Estes, Ralph Goings, Chuck Close, Charles Bell, Audrey Flack, Don Eddy, Robert Bechte, and Tom Blackwell.

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HIP-HOP

The development of Rock and Roll music in the 1950s and aspects of Rock music in the 1960s can be compared to the emergence and development of Rap and Hip Hop music in the 1980s, certainly in relation to the African American communities.

In the 1950s, white radio stations and record companies wanted to capitalize on and manipulate the a so-called “Black sound” without actually having African Americans perform the music. In the 1960s, record companies including Motown, which was owned and managed by African Americans, tried to capitalize on the appeal that Black music had to the White audience and tailored their music to a largely White group of fans. But by the time that Rap and Hip Hop developed, things in the music world had changed dramatically.

In the 1980s, the Hip Hop music industry wanted to have a sound that was entirely their own with no appropriations or limitations. Hip Hop music was produced by African Americans. Unlike Motown, record labels like Def Jam, Bad Boy, and Death Row did not cater to a White audience at all, although the music eventually found a large audience among White people, and has become one of the most popular types of music in recent years.

The influence of Hip Hop on Rock has been intense and some of the most interesting music of the early twenty-first century is either rap, based on rap, or influenced by rap. Although we use the terms “Rap” and “Hip Hop” interchangeably, Rap is strictly a form of rhythmic speaking in rhyme, which in the world of music goes all the way back to the rhyming “jive talk” of the Bebop Jazz musicians. But in Hip Hop, the backing music for “Rapping” is often collaged from samples of other recorded songs. Hip-Hop deconstructs familiar sounds and songs from earlier music, and builds those sounds into entirely new, often unpredictable songs. James Brown, Sly Stone, and George Clinton of Parliament/ Funkadelic are early influences on Hip-Hop.

Rap began in 1971, in the Bronx, with Kool Herc, who was from Jamaica. At block parties, Kool Herc appropriated two turntables as an electronic instrument, actually moving two turntables by hand and mixing samples from two records to create an entirely new sound, while he rapped the lyrics. The “break”, or instrumental part of the record was played repeatedly and this became his background music. Since he did not think that Americans would receive Reggae widely, he used the break from American Funk musicians, like James Brown. He also employed dancers, who became known as Break Dancers or b-boys.

When another early Rap artist, Grandmaster Flash, heard Kool Herc perform, he set out to prove he was better and he started stretching the break, created new sounds by scratching the records and sometimes playing them backwards. Like John Cage and

Jimi Hendrix, he pushed the sounds that a turntable, a needle and a record could make. He could not Rap, so he got together a group called the Furious Five to Rap to his scratching. Eventually, the first Rap group to have a hit record was the Sugarhill Gang.

Afrika Bambaadaa (IMAGE 4.31) from the South Bronx was an important influence in Hip Hop, as well. In his youth, Bambaadaa was a founding member of the Bronx River Projects area street gang, known later as the Black Spades. Bambaadaa's life would soon change after a trip to Africa and after seeing the Michael Caine film Zulu. He changed his name to Afrika Bambaadaa Aasim and set out to redirect the energy of street gangs towards positive community roles, which became known as The Zulu Nation.

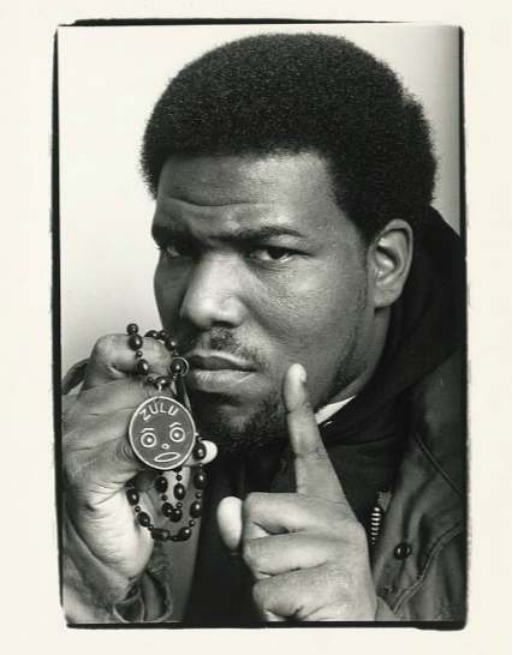


IMAGE 4.31 Afrika Bambaadaa. Photo taken by artist Laura Levine. Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery

These early Rap groups are now called "Old School." As Rap developed, elements from Rock music such as electric guitars and intense drumbeats were introduced by Run-D.M.C., which was the first hardcore Rap group, and the earlier scratching was replaced by sampling, an electronic pulling of sounds from earlier music. Public Enemy developed a very sophisticated sampling technique, which often was based on a blend of white noise, strong beats, and unrecognizable samples. Just as importantly, or more so, they introduced social and political elements from the Black community into their music.

Remixed from:

Funk, Clayton. A Quick an Dirty Guide to Art, Music, and Culture. The Ohio State University, 2016. 36-38. https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/artandmusicbiographies/ CC BY.

STREET ART

An international art star, Keith Haring and his work have often been characterized as quintessentially of the eighties—an embodiment of the decade's street art, hip hop, and urban energy in New York. While his career involved a diverse range of art making—painting, drawing, performance, video, murals, and art merchandising—his subway drawings stand among his most well-known and celebrated work.

Haring drew over 5,000 chalk drawings over a five-year period, from 1980 to 1985, in New York City subway stations (visit the Keith Haring Foundation website to see his work year by year). Since the beginning of his career, Haring was determined to create art that could be for everyone, both through an accessible style and by locating his work in easily reachable, public locations. Creating art on the street meant that a bigger audience could see his work, outside of the more insular space of an art gallery.

PREVIOUS STREET ART

Haring's subway drawings were not his first intervention into public, urban space. In New York City, early in 1980, he began to subtly alter street advertisements, such as one for Chardón Jeans, in which he blocked out letters, so the ad read "hard on Jeans."

He also posted small collages on street lamps made up of images appropriated from print media and bits of painted paper. In the summer of 1980, Haring made more overtly political collages by cutting and rearranging headlines from the New York Post, to say things like "REAGAN SLAIN BY HERO COP" and "POPE KILLED FOR FREED HOSTAGE." He xeroxed these works by the hundreds and posted them all over the city in an effort to undermine the political conservatism of the period. These early experiments helped set the stage for Haring's subway drawings.

In late 1980, Haring noticed that New York City subway's blank advertising spaces were covered with black matte paper when advertising subscriptions expired. He immediately purchased some chalk, and started drawing. Over the next five years, this became a daily, repetitive obsession: he would ride the subway, look for these empty spaces of black paper, and draw quickly—without any preparation—and then leave on the next train. Through incessant repetition,Haring's subway drawings allowed him to perfect his highly recognizable reduced linear vocabulary, and to create an inventory of images. Simplification was practical: he needed to complete his drawings as fast as possible to avoid being arrested. He created characters, such as the barking dog and the radiating baby, which he drew on flat planes with no spatial depth, often with only a horizon line or a staircase to suggest space. Drawn close to the surface like cartoons, his images had immediacy and impact, and could carry multiple meanings through various combinations.

The radiant baby, for example, could represent birth or purity, but could also be read as a symbol of nuclear energy or bodily corruption depending on what he drew around it. Haring intentionally sanitized the subject matter of his subway drawings, leaving out any explicit sexual and political imagery. He wanted his audience, which included children, to enjoy his works. This made his drawings more ambiguous to an extent, but also more outwardly positive and universal in theme. This work, though, while seemingly straightforward, did incorporate some darker references, including generalized themes of oppression and the abuse of power (image below left), but these were often simplified to such an extent that they remained open to multiple interpretations.

Image 4.32 Keith Haring, *Untitled (Subway Drawing)*, 1982, chalk on paper @ Keith Haring Foundation

GRAFFITI SCENE

Haring's arrival in New York coincided with graffiti's peak in 1978-79, when artists covered subway cars, walls, and storefront gates throughout the city. Haring's well-defined style benefited from graffiti, which offered lessons in how to make graphic images visible in a cluttered urban environment and stressed the importance of motion, speed, and improvisation. Haring never considered himself to be a graffiti artist however. His subway drawings significantly differed from graffiti in location, timing, and medium. Haring often used white chalk and worked during the day so that he could interact with his audience. In contrast, graffiti artists usually used spray paint or markers, working at night. Graffiti encompassed a subculture at the social margins of New York City that excluded artists like Haring both racially and socio-economically.

DOWNTOWN ARTS SCENE

Other artists of Haring's generation worked within the public spaces of New York City to create and display art including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Kenny Scharf, Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, and Richard Hambleton. In addition the artist collectives Colab, Fashion Moda, Gran Fury, and Group Material used the street as canvas. Like Haring, these artists experimented with alternate distribution systems to expand their reach outside of the commercial art world. Through posters, billboards, or small sculptures, or by engaging the community through artist-run events, pop-up exhibition spaces, or activist demonstrations, these downtown artists (like Haring) regularly put their art and ideas on the street to be enjoyed, and to inform and involve the public. Their intention was inclusion, rather than to alienate or confuse.

BURGOENING CELEBRITY

Haring drew several works of art every day, over many years in the New York City subway, a system used by millions of people. While he made his subway drawings for free, they proved to be a promotional tool that catapulted him into the public spotlight and helped launch his gallery career. In effect, he co-opted spots meant for advertising and campaigned for himself. His drawing was also performative—often attracting an audience captivated by his quick actions and improvisation. He promoted his subway work in other media, including one instance in which a friend taped one of his arrests by the MTA police, which was then featured on CBS News on a nationwide special. He also designed buttons illustrating his characters and gave away thousands to subway riders. Attached to shirts and bags, these buttons enhanced the visibility of his work.

In 1982, Haring joined the Tony Shafrazi gallery, but continued to work in the subway. This was a strategy he used throughout his career: operating in both the contemporary art world and in public spaces. His gallery career helped to fund his time making street art for free, and they both reinforced his public presence. Eventually, Haring's popularity meant that his work in the subways became so valuable that people began to steal panels as soon as he drew them, ending this phase of his work. He continued to create art for all through posters and prints, merchandising, and large scale public murals in cities around the world.

Before Haring became a worldwide celebrity, however, he was a local celebrity—generating his first fame through his subway drawings.

ACT UP used "Silence=Death" as a slogan for the movement starting in 1987. A pink triangle was the symbol used to mark gays in Nazi concentration camps. Keith Haring, an artist and advocate for AIDS awareness, died of AIDS-related complications on February 16, 1990 at the age of thirty-one.

Remixed from:

Dr. Amy Raffel, "Keith Haring, Subway Drawings," in Smarthistory, February 24, 2017, accessed June 30, 2022, https://smarthistory.org/keith-haring-subway-drawings/. CC BY NC SA.

JEAN MICHAEL BASQUAIT

Image 4.33 Jean-Michel Basquiat, Horn Players, 1983, acrylic and oilstick on three canvas panels mounted on wood supports, 243.8 x 190.5 cm (The Broad Art Foundation) © The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat

Jean-Michel Basquiat's 1983 painting Horn Players shows us all the main stylistic features we have come to expect from this renowned American artist. In addition to half-length portraits on the left and right panels of this triptych (a painting consisting of three joined panels), the artist has included several drawings and words—many of which Basquiat drew and then crossed out. On each panel we also notice large swaths of white paint, which seem to simultaneously highlight the black background and obscure the drawings and/or words beneath. Most notable perhaps is the preponderance of repeated words like "DIZZY," "ORNITHOLOGY," "PREE" and "TEETH" that the artist has scattered across all three panels of this work.

CHARLIE PARKER AND DIZZY GILLESPIE

Despite the seeming disorder of the composition, however, it is clear that the main subjects of Horn Players are two famous jazz musicians—the saxophonist Charlie Parker and the trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, who Basquiat has depicted in both linguistic and

visual portraits. On the left of the canvas, the artist has drawn the figure of Parker, holding his saxophone which emits several hot pink musical notes and distorted waves of sound. We see Dizzy Gillespie in the right panel, who holds a silent instrument alongside his torso. The words “DOH SHOO DE OBEE” that float to the left of the figure’s head call to mind the scat (wordless improvisational) singing Gillespie often performed onstage.

Many of the words Basquiat has written on the canvas relate specifically to Charlie Parker, but they make sense only for those viewers with some knowledge of the musician’s life. For example, the literal meaning of “ORNITHOLOGY” is “the study of birds,” but this is also the title of a famous composition by Parker, who named the tune (first recorded in 1946) in reference to his own nickname “Bird.” The words “PREE” and “CHAN” that we see written above and below the saxophonist’s portrait refer to Parker’s infant daughter and common-law wife, respectively.

BASQUIAT AND WORD PLAY

Image 4.34 Jean-Michel Basquiat posing next to SAMO graffiti

This kind of wordplay is a characteristic that extends across most of Jean-Michel Basquiat’s work. One of the most recognizable features of the artist’s more than 2000 paintings and drawings is the overwhelming abundance of written words on the canvas. The art historian Robert Farris Thompson once declared: “It’s as if he were dripping letters.” Before his success as a painter, Basquiat was famous for writing on the walls of lower Manhattan as a teenager when he and a high school friend, Al Diaz, left cryptic messages in spray paint under the name “SAMO” (an acronym for “Same Old Shit”) from 1977 until 1979.

As SAMO, Basquiat and Diaz wrote maxims, jokes, and prophecies in marker and spray paint on subway trains throughout New York City (particularly the “D” train, which ran between downtown Manhattan and Basquiat’s home in Brooklyn), as well as on the walls and sidewalks in the SoHo and Tribeca neighborhoods. Many of the locations where SAMO writings were to be found were in close proximity to prominent art galleries. Combined with these strategic positions, phrases like “SAMO AS AN END TO PLAYING ART” or “SAMO FOR THE SO-CALLED AVANT-GARDE” presented the “SAMO” persona as outside the commercial art world and critical of it. In fact, even after relinquishing the SAMO persona and emerging to the art world as Jean-Michel Basquiat, the artist remained an outsider to the mainstream art world, despite his meteoric rise on the art auction block.

THE BLACK PICASSO

Basquiat went from SAMO”to commercial success at warp speed in the early 1980s. He first exhibited (still under the name SAMO) at the Times Square Show—an exhibition in June 1980 that marked the genesis of the eighties art movement. He was later invited to exhibit in New York/New Wave, a group show of sixteen hundred works by 119 artists that opened at P.S. 1 on Valentine’s Day. The show was affectionately called “The Armory Show” of the 1980s (the original Armory Show in 1913 was the first large exhibition of international modern art in America).

Almost immediately afterward, the young Basquiat (at this point just 20 years old) was invited to exhibit in his first solo show in Modena, Italy. The gallerist Annina Nosei, who showed more established artists like David Salle and Richard Prince, agreed to represent Basquiat, who had a one-man show at her gallery the next year. That same year, Basquiat had exhibitions in Los Angeles,

Zurich, Rome, and Rotterdam and became the youngest artist invited to participate in Documenta 7 (an international contemporary art exhibition that takes place every five years). By 1983 the average sale price of Basquiat's work had increased by 600 percent, and his popularity (both in the auction house and in popular culture) persists even today. You can buy his images on shirts and hats from popular retail outlets and his large paintings sell at auction for more than $20 million.

Based on his meteoric success, critics referred to Jean-Michel Basquiat as "the black Picasso." The nickname was complicated for Basquiat, who never embraced it, but was nevertheless concerned with his own place within art history. He often relied on textbooks and other sources for his visual material; most biographies of the artist note his reliance on the medical textbook Gray's Anatomy (a gift from the artist's mother when Basquiat was hospitalized as a child) for the anatomical drawings and references we see on many of his surfaces. Basquiat also appropriated the work of Leonardo, Edouard Manet, and Pablo Picasso into his own compositions. These appropriations were in part an homage to the great painters Basquiat admired, but they also were a way for Basquiat to rewrite art history and insert himself into the canon.

Image 4.35 Pablo Picasso, Three Musicians, 1921, oil on canvas, 200.7 x 222.9 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

Looking again at Horn Players, for example, reveals several connections to Picasso's Three Musicians. Basquiat's use of the triptych format—a popular device for the artist in this period—echoes the triple subjects of the Picasso image. The figure of Parker in Basquiat's composition is also reproduced in the same position as the standing figure (playing the clarinet) in Picasso's work.

Image 4.36 Right: Jean-Michel Basquiat, Horn Players (detail), 1983, acrylic and oilstick on three canvas panels mounted on wood supports, 243.8 x 190.5 cm (The Broad Art Foundation) © The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat; left: Pablo Picasso, Three Musicians (detail), 1921, oil on canvas, 200.7 x 222.9 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

The central panel of Basquiat's canvas, which does not show a portrait of an identifiable musician like the other two panels, but instead a distorted head with roughly outlined features, suddenly comes into focus via its comparison with Three Musicians. Here

Picasso references in paint, his earlier experiments with paper collage especially in rendering the face and head of his central figure, whose jawline dramatically extends beyond what is anatomically possible to create an abstract, bulbous shape. Basquiat's central figure bears a similar protrusion—this time from the top of the head—which he fills in with hatch marks that are suggestive of the patterning of Picasso's "collaged" paper. Once again, Basquiat seems to be speaking in code. This time, we are being asked not only to draw upon our knowledge of music history but of modern painting to fully understand his work.

BASQUIAT'S MUSICIANS

Musicians were a popular subject for Basquiat, who himself played briefly in a noise band called Gray—likely a reference to the Gray's Anatomy textbook. Jazz musicians began to appear in the artist's paintings around 1982; references to jazz musicians or recordings appear in more than thirty large-format paintings and twenty works on paper. Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie are the two musicians who appear most frequently, both as figures in the paintings and through linguistic references to their work. The artist painted canvases with figures playing the trumpet, the saxophone, and the drums. He also devoted several canvases to replicating the labels of jazz records or the discographies of musicians.

Many scholars have connected Basquiat's interest in jazz to a larger investment in African American popular culture (for example, he also painted famous African American athletes) but an alternative explanation is that the young Basquiat looked to jazz music for inspiration and for instruction, much in the same way that he looked to the modern masters of painting. Parker, Gillespie, and the other musicians of the bebop era infamously appropriated both the harmonic structures of jazz standards, using them as a structure for their own songs, and repeated similar note patterns across several improvisations. Basquiat used similar techniques of appropriation throughout his career as a painter.

Remixed from:

Dr. Jordana Moore Saggese, "Jean-Michel Basquiat, Horn Players," in Smarthistory, November 28, 2015, accessed June 30, 2022, https://smarthistory.org/jean-michel-basquiat-horn-players/.CC BY NC SA.

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# 4.9: Metamodernism

4.9 Metamodernism

On social media platforms and discussion forums today, you're likely to encounter many memes. The term meme has been colloquially adopted by internet culture to refer to a variety of media, such as images, videos, and gifs, that most typically express some kind of joke referencing culture at large. While internet memes had rather simple beginnings, they have evolved to become increasingly more self-referential, self-conscious, and complex. More recently, our memes have begun to express nihilistic, absurdist truths about human experience, while maintaining the humorous nature of the medium. Memes have become a language of humor through which we can relate to each other; they represent the prevailing structure of feeling of our time, which is characterized by the oscillation between ironic expression and the quest for optimism. In this essay, I will analyze the medium of memes through the lens of metamodernism – the name proposed for the overarching cultural movement of the moment – and within this analysis, I will consider the positive and negative implications of meme culture as it is evolving today.

DEFINING METAMODERNISM

In order to explain the cultural movement of today, metamodernism, we first need to understand what came before it: modernism and postmodernism. From what I've learned throughout my research, it is extremely difficult to try to define the prevailing mode of thought for a period of time. Modernism and postmodernism are notoriously difficult to define, and the exact beginnings and ends of modernism and postmodernism are not agreed upon unanimously by theorists. The descriptions of modernism and postmodernism that I offer in this section are simplified, and they capture merely the general aspects of each movement.

Modernism is generally considered to have begun following WWI. This time represented a period of immense loss and violence, and essentially hopelessness. Notions of faith and tradition were being undermined by all of the death that occurred in the war. People were left feeling alienated and were unable to find meaning or resonance in the prevailing philosophies, which were generally optimistic. During this time, literature, art, and philosophy centered around creating a new way to find resonance and meaning in the world. This manifested in art and literary movements such as surrealism and cubism, which sought to see the world from perspectives of honest experience (Modernism). Additionally, a new value was given to reason and science, as they were seen to offer definitive and objective meaning to everything. Modernists thought that science led to the truth of all experience and that it would bring cultures together because of its universality (Modernism vs. Postmodernism). To characterize modernism succinctly, during the period there was a high level of sincerity and conviction in how people understood truth in the world.

By contrast, postmodernism, which began in the mid-1900s, emphasized skepticism and thought of truth as subjective and not at all definitive. Postmodernism rejected the idea that objective reality was universal and thought that the sentiments of modernism represented a very naïve way to view truth the world. To postmodernists, the narratives and philosophies of the modern period were "myths" created by humanity, and while these myths were not discounted entirely, they were no longer seen as absolute truth. Additionally, art, television, and literature tended to be characterized by parody and irony (Modernism vs. Postmodernism).

Postmodernism has been criticized by many as being self-defeating and purposeless at a certain point. Author David Foster Wallace criticized postmodernism for its overuse of irony in his essay "E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction:"

'Irony has only emergency use. Carried over time, it is the voice of the trapped who have come to enjoy their cage.' This is because irony, entertaining as it is, serves an almost exclusively negative function. It's critical and destructive, a ground-clearing. […] I find gifted ironists sort of wickedly fun to listen to at parties, but I always walk away feeling like I've had several radical surgical procedures. And as for actually driving cross-country with a gifted ironist, or sitting through a 300-page novel full of nothing but trendy sardonic exhaustion, one ends up feeling not only empty but somehow…oppressed." (Wallace 67)

Wallace characterizes overuse of irony as hollowing and ultimately purposeless, as it pokes fun at sincerity and definitive meaning, and thus ends up eschewing it altogether. It follows from Wallace's analysis of the effects of postmodernism that eventually, we will need to escape from the echo chamber of irony and meaninglessness, and many theorists think we have begun to emerge from this through metamodernism.

The term metamodernism was coined by Mas'ud Zavarzadeh in 1975, but it has been adopted by many theorists to describe the current mode of thought, beginning in the 1990s. The prefix "meta" refers to notions of being "with," "between," and "beyond," and this prefix is employed in this term because metamodernism is largely defined by its relation to modernism and postmodernism. Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker, in "Notes on Metamodernism," explain the structure of feeling of

metamodern thought, particularly in terms of the art it produces: "[metamodernism] is characterized by the oscillation between a typically modern commitment and a markedly postmodern detachment" (2). In other words, metamodern thought oscillates between sincerity and irony, simultaneously striking a sort of balance between modern and postmodern thought and transcending the two movements to become its own period. One of the epigraphs at the beginning of "Notes on Metamodernism," from art critic Jerry Saltz, captures the essence of the structure of thought that characterizes metamodernism:

I'm noticing a new approach to artmaking in recent museum and gallery shows. […] It's an attitude that says, I know that the art I'm creating may seem silly, even stupid, or that it might have been done before, but that doesn't mean this isn't serious. At once knowingly self-conscious about art, unafraid, and unashamed, these young artists not only see the distinction between earnestness and detachment as artificial; they grasp that they can be ironic and sincere at the same time, and they are making art from this compound-complex state of mind. (Saltz, in Vermeulen & van den Akker 2)

Although Saltz's observations are in direct reference to fine art, his commentary upon the outlook that comes with metamodern thought and discourse is precise, and, I think, applicable to the attitude of the movement in general. Metamodernism is self-referential and wholly self conscious. It is a way of thinking that pokes fun at itself while still embracing the idea that there is meaning to things. Like modernism, metamodernism does not lose track of the idea that there may be meaning in the world, but unlike modernism, it does not try to definitively state what that meaning may be. Then, much like postmodernism, metamodernism embraces a level of cynicism about the world, but, again, it does not abandon the idea that there may be some greater meaning somewhere. Metamodernism is reminiscent of absurdist philosophy in the way it embraces a seeming lack of meaning, but then finds meaning within the very lack of it. Emerging from a period of postmodernism, when irony and cynicism prevailed, metamodernism makes sense because it indirectly seeks to reconstruct the philosophies of sincerity of the modern period (Abramson). With this understanding of the sentiments of metamodernism, we can move into defining memes and understanding how they reflect structures of feeling.

NEW SINCEREITY AND MODERNISM

Interest in sincerity has fluctuated over the past few decades, and its presence or absence has been taken as one of the defining features of different periods and of poetic styles. Tracing some of these fluctuations will help untangle the implications of the term "New" Sincerity. In general, sincerity has been described as "a congruence between avowal and actual feeling", as Lionel Trilling wrote, adding that with reference to art, sincerity came to be viewed as less than desirable in the modern period. Sincerity is about speaking truthful words and impressions, and it is seemingly unmediated, but can be viewed as performative. For Trilling, it differs from authenticity in that authenticity is about being true to the self and can be traced back to identity. We might recall that for J. L. Austin, sincerity was a prime condition for a "performative utterance". Performativity comes to us through Austin but also, of course, Judith Butler who described it as "reiterative and citational", an effect that produces what it names. Performativity works by repetition. In a poem, sincerity is performed and repeated as an impression that defies our inability to conclude whether, for example, the sadness associated with mice is genuine.

In literary and cultural criticism at large, the fluctuation between irony and sincerity as a contemporary phenomenon is captured in the term metamodernism which, like Konstantinou's postirony, seeks to understand what happens beyond postmodernism. Metamodernism has been discussed as an umbrella term for New Sincerity, among other "developments" and "social registers". A particularly pivotal definition of metamodernism is offered by Van den Akker and Vermeulen, who describe it as "a structure of feeling that emerges from, and reacts to, the postmodern as much as it is a cultural logic that corresponds to today's stage of global capitalism." According to Van den Akker and Vermeulen,

[m]etamodernism oscillates between what we may call – but what of course cannot be reduced to – postmodern and pre-postmodern (and often modern) predilections: between irony and enthusiasm, between sarcasm and sincerity, between eclecticism and purity, between deconstruction and construction and so forth.

The focus of the concept, then, is constantly in motion, without settling in one end or the other. In this understanding, metamodernism is a periodizing term, but it also points to particular tonal tensions, like those between the related term pairs of irony/enthusiasm and sarcasm/sincerity.

Metamodernism, Van den Akker and Vermeulen propose, focuses on cultivating "a sense of earnestness and hope" as opposed to the "cynical attitude towards reality" that dominated the 1990s. They situate metamodernism between modernism and postmodernism instead of positing it as a direct descendant of these periods. More recently, in a conference keynote delivered at the

AHRC Metamodernism Network Conference in 2019, Van den Akker pointed out the need to keep reconsidering the concept of metamodernism, instead of treating existing definitions as fixed. Metamodernism is, indeed, a fluid term. Nick Bentley, for his part, argues that metamodernism as many critics have discussed it is not so much a fully-fledged "literary category" that could stake claim on a post-postmodernism that differs significantly from postmodernism. Rather, according to Bentley, metamodernism can be associated with literary works that take a step away from the "fragmentation and deconstruction and the implied disassociation and factional disruptions" that have burdened postmodernism, although it does not fully denounce these aspects. Several accounts of metamodernism agree in maintaining that postmodernism involved a disillusionment which easily manifested in irony, and that we are now, in a certain sense, past this, turning instead towards exploring earnestness amidst lingering irony. Building on Bentley's argument, then, I take metamodernism as a concept that does not quite show a radical break with postmodernist uncertainty, but flirts with such a move, prone to sincerity while compelled to live with an awareness of irony's pervasiveness.

New Sincerity has often been viewed as a subcategory of metamodernism, and its relation to modernism/postmodernism is a contentious issue, like that of metamodernism itself. In line with accounts that associate metamodernism with modernism, Robin Vogelzang suggests that "we might read the New Sincerity as a new take on modernism". For Konstantinou, New Sincerity is a subcategory of "relational art" which, in turn, is a subcategory of the aforementioned metamodernist concept "postirony". Relational art, he argues, "draws attention to the gap between reader and writer, showing the difficulty of deciding whether an utterance is ironic or sincere in the absence of tonal or affective cues, staging the author's failure to communicate". Indeed, as Lasky's poems fluctuate between sincerity and irony, they emphasise the gap between reader and writer, along with the poem's speaker, through focussing on the power relations between them.

DEFINING CULTURAL MEMES

The term meme was first introduced by Richard Dawkins, an ethologist and evolutionary biologist, in 1976, in his book The Selfish Gene (Dawkins). Finding himself dissatisfied with proposed explanations for human behavior, as he believed that they relied too much upon genes to explain the evolution of culture, Dawkins decided to use the gene as an analogy for explaining culture, and not as an explanation itself. The genetic principle that Dawkins's analysis of culture rests upon is "the law that all life evolves by the differential survival of replicating entities" (Dawkins). Dawkins believes that this law is observable in a sense other than genetic evolution in our world:

I think that a new replicator has recently emerged on this very planet. It is staring us in the face. It is still in its infancy, still drifting clumsily about in its primeval soup, but already it is achieving evolutionary change at a rate that leaves the old gene panting far behind. (Dawkins)

Dawkins clarifies that this "soup" is human culture, and the replicating entities within it are to be called memes, rather than genes. The word meme is an abbreviation of the Greek word "mimeme," meaning "something imitated," or "something copied" (Hiskey). According to Dawkins, memes can refer to "tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches." From how I've learned to understand them, memes can refer to almost anything within culture: any kind of concept, idea, or family of ideas, but not to physical entities. Physical entities can be vehicles for memes and can have memes that revolve around them, however. Memes can refer to the ideas that circulate around popular culture phenomena, such as movies, books, and items advertised on television. To return to Dawkins's more simplistic examples, memes can also refer simply to units of cultural knowledge, such as the best way to construct a sturdy table.

Dawkins employs the example of the idea of God to examine how memes mirror genes. The idea of God is ancient, and "we don't know how it arose in the meme pool. Probably it originated many times by independent 'mutation'" (Dawkins). Memes parallel genes in the sense that they can come into existence randomly, and then spread from person to person within a culture through various media. The meme of God originally replicated through forms of art, such as music and stories, and the reason for its high survival value as a meme is its psychological appeal; the idea of God is comforting in the face of existential anguish, injustice, and hopelessness (Dawkins). Other memes survive for different reasons, but ultimately their survival comes down to their advantageousness within a culture.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERNET MEMES

It has been difficult to determine the first instance of the word meme used in reference to the internet, but the first two that I could find are from 1998: the first is in a paper titled "The Internet and Memetics" by Garry Marshall, and the second is a website called Memepool, a community forum. In "The Internet and Memetics," Marshall proposes that memetics and memes are an effective tool

of analysis of the workings of the internet. Marshall uses the word meme to describe units of information that are communicated across the internet. Marshall writes “The consequence of the availability of both e-mail and the World Wide Web is that the Internet is, for its users, an ideal medium for the spread, replication and storage of memes” (Marshall). Although Marshall may not have been referring to internet memes in the image- and humor based way that we understand them today, this paper could be what served to popularize the term and its use in reference to the internet. Conversely, the website Memepool used the term meme to refer to interesting, obscure, or humorous articles and images, which is very similar to how the term is used colloquially today (Nagy).

Today, internet memes refer to a specific medium through which information is conveyed, primarily on the internet. Internet memes, because of their wide scope, are difficult to define, but in “The Language of Internet Memes,” Patrick Davison offers a definition: “An Internet meme is a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission” (Davison). That internet memes are most often humorous in nature is what most clearly differentiates the definition from Dawkins’ original definition of memes. Although it is not specified in Davison’s definition, I think that internet memes also differ from cultural memes in the sense that they tend to take the form of specific media, such as text, videos, gifs, and most frequently, images. Whereas cultural memes are noncorporeal, amorphous ideas that are transmitted through culture, internet memes are very closely tied to the media through which they are transmitted and could thus be said to be more “tangible” than cultural memes. Of course, internet memes can also refer to intangible ideas themselves but used colloquially, the term typically refers to pieces of media.

THE EVOLUTION OF MEMES AND MEME PLATFORMS

Although internet memes can take the form of many different media, I will focus on image-based memes in this analysis. The base images that internet memes consist of are most often taken from some element of popular culture, such as TV shows, YouTube videos, movies, advertisements, books, comics, and illustrations. Most often, and toward the beginning of meme culture, these images reference something commonly recognized or understood in popular culture. These images can stand alone, but they most often incorporate text in some way. The text can be a direct reference to the image itself; for example, a meme that is a still from a music video might have lyrics included as text, but the text can also be a commentary upon the image, so that the image serves as a “reaction” to whatever is expressed through the text. Most image based memes are based on meme “formats,” which are templates that users employ to make new memes that branch off of an original meme. As meme formats are used, the joke of the original meme evolves, and memes made with the format become more self-referential and therefore more niche. Meme formats can combine and evolve together, and they can become a commentary upon the medium itself, resulting in a meme that would likely be incomprehensible to someone unaware of the meme’s evolutionary history. The Drake meme in Image 4.37 is an example of a self-conscious meme that makes fun of itself, and it is an amalgamation of three different references to meme formats. The most obvious reference is to the Drake meme template, which is typically just the first two boxes of this meme, but it also imitates the meme format of the expanding brain, which is used to indicate some kind of transcendence of understanding. At the very end, it references Elon Musk, whose supposed elusive presence on the internet has become a meme. The meme is complex and absurd, and it would be extremely difficult to understand the joke that it is making without having a prior understanding of the culture’s evolution.

Image 4.37 Self-referential meme posted to Reddit, titled “Drake has a big brain.”

While most of today’s memes emerge from some reference to popular culture, some of the earliest internet memes existed mostly on their own: they arose from the mind of one person, and according to Dawkins’s analysis, are independent mutations. For example, the Hampster [sic] Dance and its accompanying song, popularized in 1999, is a single-serving website created by Deidre LeCarte called Hampton’s Hamster House (Hampster Dance). LeCarte made the website in honor of her pet hamster, so the website and its meaning really only made sense to her, and perhaps people who knew her. Despite not referencing anything known to the general public, the meme rose in popularity as it was spread largely through e-mail, and it is widely known now because of artists who remixed the song that played on the website (Hampster Dance). Although a few early internet memes arose this way, it is not the norm for the memes of today.

Most internet memes, current and past, have evolved from memes circulating in the general popular culture for many years. For instance, concepts and ideas surrounding Star Wars have been cultural memes since the first film of the franchise was released in 1977. It is speculated that the first internet meme referencing Star Wars is an image of Admiral Ackbar with the text “It’s a Trap!” overlaying it, posted in the early 2000s. The image was popularly used as a reaction “to warn others of a potential bait-and-switch prank ahead” (It’s A Trap!). Since this Admiral Ackbar internet meme, if it was the first to reference the franchise, Star Wars images, concepts, and lore are used to create thousands of memes. On Reddit, there are communities devoted solely to Star Wars memes, such as r/PrequelMemes. Star Wars is just one example of an element of popular culture that has evolved to have a significant presence within meme culture online, and it would be near impossible to detail them all. Many other movies, television

shows, and music have also contributed significantly to the meme pool online and have subcultures and communities that center around them exclusively.

One of the earliest genres of memes that have retained their popularity over the years can be classified as “relatable” memes. These memes are deemed relatable because they speak to something many people can identify with, and these memes are popular because, as Dawkins wrote about the meme of God, they are psychologically comforting in a sense. When you see other people making memes about experiences you can relate to, you feel less alone.

While the earliest internet memes spread primarily through email forwarding and sites like Memepool, their presence is ubiquitous today due to the multitude of platforms through which they can be disseminated. Some of these platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, 4chan, Reddit, iFunny, and 9GAG. Each platform has its own “rules” for the types of memes that are typically posted, and subsequently, each platform has a different reputation surrounding its meme culture. Platforms like Reddit, iFunny, and 9GAG allow users to preserve anonymity, as usernames typically do not include any personal details. This anonymity also applies to Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to an extent, but it is more typical for users of these platforms to include personal details. 4chan is unique in that it is a platform that eschews profiles and usernames entirely; all posts are made anonymously, and posts are only identified by numbers. 4chan’s complete anonymity allows users to be less cautious about the content they post, and as a result, the platform is infamous for offensive and shocking content. The reputations of each platform differ, and these reputations are largely determined by what users of one platform think about other platforms. For instance, Reddit users have made a meme out of Instagram users “stealing” memes from Reddit. Redditors will occasionally overtly make memes

in sizes or in files not conducive to Instagram so that Instagram users cannot repost them on the platform, and the central humor of these memes comes from poking fun at Instagram users. As memes evolve, new subcultures and subdivisions of memes develop. Some of these subdivisions include Dank memes, Deep-Fried memes, Wholesome memes, Political memes, Normie memes, and many more, all of which have their own associations and “rules” regarding what constitutes their content. Divisions of memes can narrow even further; an example is a community on Reddit called r/bonehurtingjuice, which stemmed from a Winnie the Pooh meme and centers around making memes that deliberately misunderstand the intended use of a format (bonehurtingjuice).

“THE MEDIUM IS NOT THE MESSAGE”

In this book, Postman contemplates the medium of television. His central thesis is that the medium of television is inherently one of entertainment, and then, using Marshall McLuhan’s aphorism “the medium is the message,” Postman explains that everything that is conveyed through television is automatically received by people as entertainment. This becomes problematic when people receive information about politics, world events, and other pressing matters through the medium of television. Because people watch television for entertainment purposes, news broadcasters are incentivized to sensationalize the news to make it more entertaining, and politicians are incentivized to make themselves and their ideas come across in a favorable light on television. Honesty and rationality are thus sacrificed in the name of good television and ratings (Postman).

If we are to apply Postman’s analysis of the medium of television to memes, we might come to a similar conclusion – that memes are inherently a medium of entertainment, of humor. Memes are bite-sized and need to convey something that entertains people quickly and that encourages people to show the meme to others, to increase its popularity and to get more upvotes on a given platform. This means that memes that are relatable or provocative are likely to get a lot of attention. It makes sense, then, that memes that traverse controversial subject matter are so popular, it is because of their shock value. Either way, if the meme is received positively or negatively, it will get a reaction out of people, either of which brings more attention to the meme. Additionally, memes are hard to trace, especially on platforms that give users anonymity, such as Reddit, 4Chan, and even Instagram, Twitter and Facebook if the meme creator chooses not to disclose their personal information. Memes are constantly reposted on different platforms, which makes it extremely difficult to trace who made the original meme. This disconnection from the meme creator’s identity makes it a lot easier to post memes that are controversial since anonymity largely prevents any real risk to the individual.

There is an inherent contradiction when memes traverse controversial subject matter: the seriousness of the content of the memes conflicts with the medium itself. Because of this inherent contradiction, I think that many genres of memes represent a metamodern mode of discourse. Memes that make a statement about something larger oscillate between sincerity and irony: they are poking fun at something, but still acknowledging that the object of humor is something serious. The meaning of the meme becomes this strange interstitial entity, then, existing between truth and satire. In one sense, memes can bring attention to serious topics that

should be discussed, like mental illness, but in another, memes can be seen to minimize the seriousness of things and can potentially be harmful in this way. This is especially so if memes are used to advance a political agenda because most people will not take the time to check facts to know if the information presented in the meme is correct. Social media platforms do not encourage critical thinking, as they, too, are ultimately media of entertainment and are usually accessed during idle time.

MEMES, METAMODERNISM AND THE 2016 PRESENIDENTIAL ELECTION

Donald Trump's 2016 campaign to become the President of the United States of America rests upon principles of metamodernism and relates to meme culture in multiple ways. In Michael Moore's documentary Fahrenheit 11/9, an interpretation of the processes leading up to Trump's presidential run, nomination as the Republican Party's candidate, and eventual election to office is detailed. Moore argues that Trump's initial run for president was a joke – a farce to get back at NBC for paying Gwen Stefani, a judge on the television show The Voice, more than they were paying him for his involvement with the show The Apprentice. Moore states that Trump paid extras fifty dollars to be his supporters and that Trump hoped NBC would acknowledge his improvisational skills in faking a presidential announcement (Moore). After this, Moore plays a montage of racist and politically ignorant lines that Trump delivered at this first, and according to Moore, artificial rally, and we are informed that NBC cut ties with Donald Trump due to his comments. Moore says,

[Trump's] plan backfired. He was now out of a job. Though he had no real plans to run for president, his sons encouraged him to go ahead with the two rallies that he had booked and paid for. As he looked around at the adoring masses, a crowd the size of which he'd never seen before, he had his epiphany. Maybe running for president wasn't such a bad idea after all. (Moore)

After Moore presents his argument, he plays a clip from an ABC Newscast during the presidential race: a pundit says, "We be better be ready for the fact that [Trump] might be leading the Republican ticket" and George Stephanopoulos replies, laughing along with everyone else, "I know you don't believe that." TV news programs and American citizens dismissed the legitimacy of Trump's campaign, passing it off as a joke that would never lead to his election.

Of course, the interpretation of Donald Trump's election that Moore sets forth in the documentary is merely speculative, and it rests on supposed premises that only Trump can confirm or deny. However, Moore's argument presents a view of Trump's campaign as one of ambiguity, of the public's (and perhaps Trump's) inability to discern whether the campaign was real or not. Based upon Moore's view that Trump orchestrated the rallies for publicity purposes, it can be argued that Trump himself was unsure about his intentions as he garnered more support and the possibility of actually running seemed more feasible. Thus, if we are to take Moore's lens, Trump's campaign began as a metamodern joke: to American citizens and the media, his campaign oscillated between the absurdity of the star of The Apprentice vying for a seat of political power and the seeming legitimacy that comes with a campaign rally. It was a contradictory situation. Even without the lens of Moore's interpretation, the mere facts of Trump's campaign – that he is not a politician, but a reality TV star, and that he held campaign rallies – is metamodern in essence because the public was unsure of his sincerity in running.

Beyond the metamodern oscillation that was at the core of Trump's campaign, Trump's election to the office of the President of the United States is tied to meme culture. The "Make America Great Again" slogan became a political statement and a meme itself, but further, one of the reasons Trump was elected may very well have been memes. In 2018, the Senate Intelligence Committee found that Russian online operators created accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to undermine Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton's campaign, and to strengthen Republican candidate Donald Trump's. Some of the groups targeted were Bernie Sanders supporters, Black Lives Matter supporters, veterans, LGBTQ supporters, and conservatives (Keating. The accounts first posted mostly truthful videos, images, and memes of relevant political and social issues and values, such as police brutality and homelessness. The reason for this was to make the accounts appear legitimate and trustworthy and to appeal to values and beliefs of certain groups of people (Keating). After establishing a semblance of credibility and a following, the accounts posted memes to encourage division in the country and encouraged people to take sides on issues and to view political issues as inherently dichotomous. The accounts took advantage of people's trust via extremely consumable propaganda that had been tailored to fit their specific views.

This instance of propaganda being used to manipulate American politics is an extreme example of how memes can influence people, but it is also an example of why media literacy is more important now than ever. We must be aware of how our media can be used against us without our knowledge, and this is why understanding memes as an interstitial, metamodern medium is crucial.

Despite this risk, it is possible that memes can also operate in the opposite way: that rather than being used to divide people, memes can unite communities.

MEMES AS COMMUNITIES OF SUPPORT

Since the 1970s, a nationally representative survey called Monitoring the Future has been conducted to analyze the "behaviors, attitudes, and values" of teenagers. In 2012 and 2013, there was a significant increase in teenagers who experienced symptoms of depression, feelings of hopelessness, and loneliness, and there was also a decrease in overall happiness. It is not a coincidence that also in 2012, the percentage of Americans who owned smartphones rose above 50%. (Twenge).

The ubiquity of smartphones and social media has led to an increase in the fragmentation of social interaction. Teens, and people in general, on average, spend far more time on social media than they do interacting with people and building in-person relationships (Fottrell). This applies especially to Millennials and Gen Zers, who grew up with social media as it has evolved. Social media urges us to compare our lives to idealized pictures, to feel we are missing out, we're too poor, or we're not attractive enough. Social media encourages dissatisfaction with one's life, and when this is compounded with less actual social interaction, it's not surprising that rates of depression have increased. This is why it is interesting that memes that deal with mental illness are so popular. Mental illness memes are ultimately just a subset of relatable memes, which are popular because they connect us with other people. Thus, memes that deal with mental illness have that same popularity – they speak to emotions people feel, but ones that they might not feel comfortable talking about openly with their friends. At this point in my research, I thought that the best approach would be to look to the Millennials and Gen Zers who are immersed in meme culture to consider how memes can facilitate community. An Instagram meme creator, Cori Hartwig, who goes by the username manicpixiememequeen, explained how making memes became a creative outlet that helped her deal with depression at a Stanford University panel:

Over time, I wove a narrative around my own mental health issues and personal life through creating memes, and I shared my content with an audience who, shockingly, understood my narrative in their own personal ways. Currently, I have over 97,000 followers on Instagram, which is absolutely wild. Clearly, I'm not the only person in the world struggling with mental health issues or having some difficulty navigating our weird and absurd world. While my brain loves to tell me

that no one else really understands and then I perceive isolation, the evidence against this is in the numbers – my audience, the engagement on the posts, the hundreds of messages I receive from people across the globe telling me that they relate so much to my page and they're grateful for the content I make. (Hartwig)

Amato continues, explaining that she witnesses conversations in the comments sections on her posts, where people discuss their personal issues and offer mental health resources to each other. She insists that mental illness memes are not detrimental and that using humor as a way to convey one's emotion generates the awareness and conversation that needs to happen.

I also decided to interview my younger brother, Glen, who is a seasoned memer, about what he thinks memes do for his generation. I have witnessed Glen go through difficult periods as a result of mental health issues, and I wanted to know how meme culture may have affected him. Glen explained to me that he knows his generation has the worst mental health in history, that because of the lack of social interaction, and because of growing up during a period of constant war, heavily divided politics, an unprecedented wealth disparity, and an environmental crisis, he feels his generation doesn't know what to do with their lives. He said "comedy is deeply rooted in fear and sadness," and his generation "laughs to make themselves feel better." He went on, "with this huge partisan divide, with our memes we're creating a pseudo-union. The state of our union is more united online than it is in reality." He told me he likes memes because they don't force you to pick a side, unlike the politics of our day – "memes are funny and that's my only stance," he said (Nevling). Memes represent a welcome interstitial medium in a society characterized by division – the sincere and ironic poles of memes transcend division and create a new type of meaning that resonates with Millennials and Gen Zers. Glen went on to say that memes helped him get things off his chest. When he wasn't seeing a therapist, he made memes about mental health and consumed a lot of them, as well, and he knows that a lot of his friends do the same (Nevling).

MEMES AS A REFLECTION OF A STRUCTURE OF FEELING

I think it is clear that in a generation dominated by the internet, it is important to form community where one can, given that smartphones and social media are not likely to disappear. Hearing the words of my brother, I was saddened to learn that he feels his generation is characterized by hopelessness and apathy – but I think they're transcending this through the language of memes that has developed. The memes Millennials and Gen Zers are making may be humorous, but they also speak to collective observations,

conclusions, and emotions. Even though they are often nihilistic and dark, there is something undeniably sincere and ultimately hopeful about the way these younger generations make memes and about how they express themselves through the medium.

I think that the only times we have to worry about memes are when we begin to disregard their interstitial, metamodern nature, and when we start to use them to inform us about current events. Internet literacy and critical thinking in the age of the Internet are incredibly important, and we need to be conscious of the implications of the medium of memes when we consume them. If we consume and create memes responsibly, they have the power to speak to truths about our culture, to unite us in a socially fragmented society, and ultimately, to transcend the irony and cynicism of postmodernism.

Memes are a metamodern medium, and metamodernism is an inherently optimistic movement. It celebrates absurdity and never lets go of the idea that our lives are meaningful, regardless of whether or not we ever truly discover that meaning. Through shared sentiments of nihilism, absurdity, and hopelessness, Millennials and Gen Zers are creating new ways to relate to one another, to build community. Xela Quintana, in a piece for Logos, beautifully explains metamodernism's connection to the younger generations' prevailing mode of thought:

"[Metamodernism] is the acceptance that we have a limited control over our fate, loved ones [and] career, but [it] does not lead to despondence. It guides to liberation."

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# 4.10: Punk Rock Revolution

4.10 Punk Rock Revolution

Image 4.38 Punk stencil. AlbertRA 6 june 2020. CC BY SA 4.0.

Modernism vs. Postmodernism

What began as a reaction, not a rejection, to the modernist dogma, the postmodern movement erased the idea that graphic design needed to follow the rules in order to be successful (Keedy, 1998). Modernism focused on functionality and order, while postmodernism became the poster child of deconstruction. Modernism reflected an organized, no-nonsense art of design while postmodernism came along to destroy modernist values (Keedy, 1998). What modernism lacked was personal expression and resulted in designs that lacked humanization (Outhouse, 2013). Feelings of being stifled by rules, such as Gestalt theory, is what led a new generation of designers to express themselves in unique ways. There are No Rules Postmodernism does not cover a "coherent theory or ideology, a specific set of social institutions, a bounded collectivity or any other clear-cut part of reality" (Wilterdink, 2002). Instead, it becomes a conceptual experience (Outhouse, 2013). The authenticity and deconstruction of postmodernism makes it accessible to those unfamiliar with the rules that most graphic designers follow. Postmodernism seeks to destabilize concepts such as presence and identity and diminish the univocity of meaning (Aylesworth, 2015). The design movement comprises the use of multiple weights in typography, popular culture imagery that has been deconstructed and no clear form of unity.

Anti-Establishment: The New Counterculture

With this newfound creative movement, another movement was forming in the underground music scene; punk. Postmodernism and the punk subculture of the 20th century philosophies are tied in many ways. Both movements believe in authenticity, whether it be of art or social behavior and the Punk DIY aesthetic is represented in much of the postmodern graphic design movement's artists and work. The timelines of each movement also line up nearly perfectly. Beginning in the late 1960s, blooming by the late 1970s and evolving throughout the 1980s and 1990s, both postmodernism and punk established themselves in their respective cultures (Wilterdink, 2002).

The Punk Movement No Future

The disenfranchised youth of the late 1970s sought to express themselves in a way that derived them from conformity (Chantry, 2015). The punk movement formed as a rejection of modern ideals and the acceptance of individuals who were deemed different

from society (Smith, Dines & Parkinson, 2018). Punk values stem from individual freedoms and authenticity. This subculture was true to their values and philosophies of anti-establishment and anti-authoritarianism, basically the youth did not want to be suppressed by authority, they wanted to express themselves in ways that were not always socially acceptable (Errickson, 1999). Punks were individualists who refused to follow along to modern traditional values. They rejected authority and were strongly anti-establishment. Their dismissal of tradition is comparable to postmodernism's desire to go against the rules. The punk cultural rebellion had a large impact in the design world that critics did not believe would occur (Chantry, 2015). DIY Art Every part of punk culture is meant to be a statement and represent their philosophies, whether that be commentary on government, religion or other traditional values, punks had something to say and in the most offensive way possible. "Clothing and the use of horrific symbols as jewelry speak to their philosophy. Punks wear the sign of the anarchists (an "A" surrounded by a circle), not to necessarily say they are anarchists, but to imply that they hate the idea of organized government" (Errickson, 1999, p.13). Punk design is similar in the sense that it aims to challenge traditional forms. Fanzines became increasingly popular in the punk subculture and also faced the criticism of having ugly design. The punk aesthetic relished in having repelling visuals in their art, clothing and music (Errickson, 1999) in order to prove that they were not conformists to the traditional ideals of beauty.

Impact in the Art World

The punk culture centered around the music, it was loud, aggressive and offensive, the music is what united punks around the world. Bands like, The Ramones, the Sex Pistols and Siouxie Sous and the Banshies established the punk culture in the art world. It was against everything mainstream, but their impact on the art and music world cannot be denied. To this day, musicians emulate these artists and have pushed the punk music scene in new directions. The punk aesthetic had been adopted into late postmodern designs of the 90s thanks to designers such as Jamie Reid and David Carson. These designers adopted the no rules aesthetic of punk culture and bridged the gap between punk and postmodern (Chantry, 2015).

The distorted guitar sounds, rough recording techniques, and simple song structures of early 1970's punk bands like the Clash and the Sex Pistols have become iconic. What was once a subculture condemned by political figures like Margret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, and occupied the dark, dingy basements of outcast friend groups, has become hugely popular with cultural relics now being sold alongside tea towels of the royal family. Now in the twentyfirst century, it remains difficult to define punk culture because of the differences in music and styles associated with the term. However, combined with its politically polarizing and anti-establishment lyrics, performances, and acts of rebellion, punk culture has become ripe for the academic spotlight subjecting it to various forms of analysis and critique. This has resulted in a whole discourse of postmodern interpretations of punk music, style, language, performance, art, and politics.

Despite this, little research is critical of linking punk's key actors, characteristics, and ideas to world politics through a postmodern lens. This article will serve to problematize postmodern attributes of punk to argue that it never really was the anti-racist, counter-hegemonic, and socio-politically resistant force many academics and participants claimed it to be. It has been found that some bands which do not have the same history of structural whiteness as those frequently spotlighted in postmodern interpretations, appear to form a counter-hegemonic culture based on lived experiences and real discourse, however, as this article will show, they too do not fit postmodern categorizations.

This article contains three sections (or verses). The first verse will introduce the concept of postmodernism and how it has been applied to not just punk, but also world politics, cultural studies, and music. Second, the connection between punk culture, music and world politics will serve to problematize attributes of punk deemed postmodern, specifically how different readings of punk culture either support or contradict the postmodern canon. Third, aspects of punk that contradict its previously ascribed postmodern attributes will be expanded upon, focusing on the culture's anti-racist mythos and individualized agency to further make the connection to world politics. This article has included quotes from punk figures under section titles so that they remain central to the argument. As oftentimes in academic punk studies, punks seem far removed from the discussion and are not treated as integral components. The quotes still serve to embody the key points made in each section and will continue to guide the reader throughout.

First Verse: Postmodern Interpretations Abound

Questioning anything and everything, to me, is punk rock. – Henry Rollins, former vocalist of Black Flag, no date. This section will introduce key concepts of postmodernism originating in the 1970s. It will specifically show how postmodernism has been applied to the concepts of world politics, cultural studies, and music. The purpose of this section is not to debate the merits of postmodernism and whether it accurately describes the contemporary state of the world. Rather, this section will serve to create a

more nuanced understanding of postmodernism as a theory and cultural practice that is important and far-reaching, but nonetheless still in debate. Although this article seeks to problematize scholarship that views punk as a postmodern phenomenon (see Moore 2004; Patton, 2018), it cannot be refuted that like punk, postmodernism remains contentious in debates around world politics and popular culture. This is an important quality shared by both postmodernism and punk which will be touched upon at the end of this section. In this article, the term “postmodern” is understood from two key tendencies.

First, it suggests a deconstruction of boundaries between “high” and “low” culture, using a practice called “bricolage” to recombine formerly incompatible styles. In cultural studies, this collapse of cultural distinctions has been attributed to the commodification of all cultural products under global capitalism (Harvey, 1989). In the music and art scene, postmodernism can be characterized by its intertextuality, or its ability to (re)create with objects and images from the past by allocating aspects from previous texts within both the modern and “original” (Jameson, 1991: 280-285).

Second, it indicates the rejection of universal vantage points for understanding the world. This is especially useful in the social sciences, where postmodernism represents the deconstruction of metanarratives found in the previous modernist canon replaced with localized, self-reflexive, and contingent analyses in the search for truth (Lyotard et al., 1984: 11-23). Furthermore, in politics, postmodernism can signify a sense of revolutionary socio-political agency based not in class politics, but in the fragmented collection of identities and differences of new social movements (Melucci et al., 1989; Gitlin, 1995). While the merits of postmodernism and its contributions to the wider social sciences and humanities are still debated upon, its defining characteristics are important for understanding why it has been applied to punk in past scholarship.

From these two central tendencies, it is clear why scholars have touched upon the seemingly intrinsic qualities that punk, a culture defined by questioning the status-quo with acts of rebellion and resistance, shares with postmodernism. In fact, they gained increasing popularity and were developed in tandem throughout much of the 1970s and 1980s (Patton: 2018, 3). However, like the concept of postmodernism itself, there has been considerable debate about punk’s postmodern attributes. Moore (2004) argues that competing tendencies within punk (e.g. nihilism, cynicism, sincerity, independence) are all reactions to the same crises of postmodern society. While others have only found partial evidence for deeming punk as postmodern because the realities of its participants are subjective and difficult to categorize as postmodern (Muggleton, 2000). The Subcultures Network, based at the University of Reading, argues that punk is best understood from its inherent points of tension like avant-gardism and popularism, artificiality and realism, or individualism and collectivism (Worley et al., 2016: 7).

From past work, it should be clear that punk does not fit neatly into a postmodern categorization. However, what makes something “postmodern” is still debated amongst the theory’s leading figures, especially for matters concerning culture and music. Kramer (2002: 13-14) argues that postmodern theory contains “a maddeningly imprecise musical concept”. To better understand what makes music “postmodern”, he suggests viewing postmodernism not as a historical period, but as an attitude that influences not only contemporary musical practices but also how we use music of past generations . Furthermore, in punk scholarship, it is similarly argued that the culture is best defined as an ongoing attitude and not a scene that temporarily occupied a certain space in time before dissolving (Furness, 2012).

Postmodernism and punk viewed as ongoing attitudes reveals a path forward to more nuanced interpretations of how the two relate. This is especially important moving forward because while definitions of postmodernism and punk remain elusive, their connection remains persistent throughout academia.

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