

Literary Movements

Major Literary and Artistic
Movements in Western Civilization

Artistic Movements

Artistic movements are the tendency for leading artist and intellectuals to be concerned with:

- Dominant ideas or **new ideas** or attitudes
 - Like Newton's discoveries of gravity and orbit and the decline of the influence of the church
 - The expansion of the middle class
- **New styles** of or methods of expression
 - Like the French Impressionist

Artistic Movements

Artistic Movements can be associated with:

- **Time periods**
 - Such as The Enlightenment in the 1700s
- **Places** during a certain time period
 - Such as the French School or the Italian Renaissance
- **Groups of People**
 - Such as the Lost Generation or the American ex-patriots

Literary and Artistic Movements

Literary Movements tend to develop as:

- An expansion of a previous movement
- A reaction against a previous movement
- A reaction to a political, technological, or scientific development

Literary Movements

- Greek Art and Architecture – 600 B.C.
- Roman Art and Architecture – 200 B.C.
- Medieval Europe (age of faith) – 500 A.D.
- Humanism – 1300 – 1400s
- Renaissance – (1300s in Italy) 1500 – 1600s
- Neoclassicism – 1700s
- Age of Enlightenment 1660 – 1798
- Romanticism – 1750 – 1870
- Realism 1840 – 1890s
- Naturalism 1890s – 1930s
- Harlem Renaissance – 1920s to mid-1930s
- Magical Realism – 1940s to the Present
- Modernism – early 1900s to the Present
- Post-Modernism – late 1960s to the Present

Ancient Greece ~ 600 B.C.

- Greek civilization is the fountainhead of Western culture
- It establishes the disciplines of history, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, poetry, drama, music, and beauty

Ancient Greece

- Greeks start the Olympic games
- Greek city-states begin democratic systems of government
- Stories involve heroic characters and gods

- Literature includes the Iliad, the Odyssey, Oedipus Rex, Antigone

Ancient Rome ~ 200 B.C.

- Rome annexes Greece, Syria, Egypt
- The Roman Republic becomes an imperial dictatorship
- Rome develops principles of law, history, map-making

Ancient Rome

- Roman literature includes the Aeneid and Metamorphoses
- The Greek pantheon is adopted by Rome
- Roman writing becomes less mythological and more historical, hero epic
- Architecture has more grandeur

Europe in The Middle Ages ~ 500
A.D. (the Age of Faith) – 1500 A.D.

- Europe dominated by Christianity and the Church
- Illiterate population depends on imagery
- Feudalism and religion structures an authoritarian society
- The Dark Ages marked by a lack of advancement

Medieval Europe ~500 – 1500
A.D.

- Church architecture grows in complexity and size (the Age of Cathedrals)
- Art and creativity focuses on faith and is preoccupied with death (the life after this harsh existence)

Humanism: 1300 - 1400s

- Classical manuscripts reenter Western culture and influence society as Humanism

Humanism: 1300 - 1400s

- Humanism begins the emergence from the Dark Ages
- Humanism emphasizes the dignity and worth of the individual

Humanism: 1300 – 1400s

- Humanism promotes the belief that people are rational beings and are capable of goodness

Note: Printing of the Gutenberg Bible ~1454

The Renaissance (1300s in Italy) 1500 – 1600s

- Cities developed into more secure places allowing the development of more comfortable ways of life
- Wealthy families (like the Medici) become powerful

The Renaissance (1300s in Italy)
1500 – 1600s

- More secular education
- More central political institutions
- Society is less dominated by the Church
- Martin Luther sparks the Reformation

The Renaissance (1300s in Italy)
1500 – 1600s

- Beginnings of modern humanity and consciousness
- Renaissance means rebirth
- The Age of Exploration; the Age of Scientific Rebirth; the Golden Age

Neoclassicism: 1700s

- Inspired by Greco-Roman antiquities, Neoclassical art follows ancient models
- Literature uses character types (rather than individual characteristics)
- Tries to reflect 'nature' in the use of regular order

Neoclassicism: 1700s

- Architecture such as Jefferson's Monticello is influenced

The Enlightenment: 1660 - 1798

- A time of optimism
- New discoveries in science creates new self-confidence
- Global exploration leads to development of the idea of cultural relativism

The Age of Enlightenment: 1660 - 1798

- Belief that progress would come from knowledge
- Belief that improvements in men's lives and morals are possible
- Values and beliefs of the past are questioned
- Major figures include Jefferson, Ben Franklin, Voltaire, Newton, Kant, Adam Smith, Descarte

The Enlightenment ends in 1798 with the excesses of the French Revolution: The Terror

Romanticism: 1750 - 1870

- Idealization of nature
- Reliance on the imagination, expression, freedom of thought
- Emotional dependence on passion and feeling over logic, reason, or science

The Romantic Period: 1750 - 1870

- Literature has idealized heroes, complex characters, complex plots
- Tales of the supernatural
- Melancholy worry about impending change
- Belief that society corrupts nature

Romanticism 1750 - 1870

- Major figures include: Wordsworth, Poe, Coleridge, Sir Walter Scott, Anne Radcliff, Keats, Blake

Libertarianism: late 1700s - 1830

- Influenced by the abolitionist movements
- Placed emphasis on the rights and dignity of the individual
- Themes reflected political and social causes
- Criticized urban society

- Major figures: Henry Ward Beecher, Susan B. Anthony

Existentialism: 1800s – 1900s

- Philosophical movement that emphasized the desire to make rational decisions in an irrational universe

- Stresses individual freedom

- The freedom to choose is essential to human beings

Existentialism: 1800s – 1900s

- Individuals decide questions of morality and truth based on personal experiences
- Humans are solitary and life lacks meaning and purpose
- Major figures include: Albert Camus, Franz Kafka, Jean-Paul Sartre, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard

Realism: 1840 – 1890s

- Realism (social realism) begins as descriptions of 'local color', dialect, and manners
- Attempts to describe human behavior and surroundings exactly as they are

Realism: 1840s - 1890

- Realism rejects idealized characters
- Characters are not all good or all bad
- Tries to observe impartially
- Portrays middle-class life, not extremes
- Psychological novel develops
- Mark Twain, Chekhov, Henry James

Realism: 1840s - 1890

- 1847 The Communist Manifesto
- 1859 On Liberty
- 1859 Origin of Species

Naturalism: 1890s - 1930

- A harsher realism
- Naturalism tries to apply scientific theories to its view of the individual
- The individual is part of nature that is bound by scientific laws and without free will
- Literature reflects an amoral attitude to people

Naturalism: 1890s - 1930

- People are controlled by instinct, emotion, social and economic conditions
- Naturalism depicts low social classes
- It deals with abnormal characters, extremes of life, criminals, mental illness, frank sexuality

Naturalism

- Religious truth is an illusion
- Human beings live in misery ending in oblivion
- Naturalism shaped by war
- 1865 Civil War
- 1917 World War I

Naturalism

- Major figures:
Emile Zola,
Stephen Crane,
Jack London,
William Faulkner,
John Dos Passos,
Theodore Dreiser

Neohumanism: 1915

- Tried to reaffirm human institutions
- Saw human beings as moral, responsible individuals

The Harlem Renaissance: 1920s– mid 1930s

- Incredible outburst of art as Blacks migrated from the South to Northern cities (especially NYC) following World War II
- Rise of radical Black intellectuals, educational enlightenment, African-American identity, and racial consciousness

The Harlem Renaissance: 1920s - 1935

- Also called The New Negro Movement
- Social revolt against racism and celebration of African-American heritage
- Themes concern alienation, marginality, pride, rage, and opposition to poverty, oppression and fate

The Harlem Renaissance: 1920 - 1935

- Notion of “two-ness”, a divided awareness of one’s identity as American and Negro: “two souls, two thoughts, two warring ideals in one dark body”
- Ended by the Depression
- Major figures include: Marcus Garvey, Langston Hughes, Ida B. Wells, Countee Cullen, Arna Bontemps, Jean Toomer

Magical Realism: 1940s to the Present

- Developed initially as a Latin American literary form
- Fantastic, dream-like, or mythic elements fuse with realistic, everyday stories with ordinary events

Magical Realism: 1940s to the Present

- A new way to show reality
- Major figures include Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Gunter Grass, Franz Kafka, John Fowles, Toni Morrison

Modernism: 1920 to Now

- Rejects traditional doctrine
- Dramatizes discontinuity
- Very concerned with language

Modernism

- Europe crushed by war

Post-Modernism: late 1960s to Now

- America becomes politically, culturally, and economically dominant in the world
- Modern artists engaged in redefining art
- Materialistic, youthful culture

Post-Modernism: late 1960s to Now

- Saturation of mass media: movies, television, magazine, radio
- Concept of 'anti-functionalism' develops in art

Post-Modernism: late 1960s to
Now

- Tendency to 'push the limits,' blurring the boundaries of art

End of Literary Movements
Lecture
