The Modern Theatre 1850-1914

1866-1890   Meiningen Players, directed and managed by Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, revolutionizes historical staging and tours to 38 cities in 9 countries between 1874 and 1890.

1873   Emile Zola issues naturalist manifesto in the preface to his dramatization of <u>Therese Raguin</u>. Also wrote *Naturalism in the Theatre* (1881) and *The Experimental Novel* (1881)

1876   Wagner's Festival Theatre at Bayreuth opens. Employs many of his ideas about architecture and staging

1879   <u>A Doll's House</u> (Ibsen) shocks conservative readers and audiences while serving as a rallying point for those promoting a Theatre of Ideas. <u>Ghosts</u> (1881) and <u>An Enemy of the People</u> further his reputation as the Father of Modern Realism.

1887   Strindberg establishes his naturalist reputation with <u>The Father</u> and <u>Miss Julie</u> (1888). Turns towards symbolism with <u>To Damascus</u> (1898-1 901)

1887-1894   Andre Antoine founds Le Theatre Libre in Paris

1889-1894   Freie Buhne founded in Berlin under the direction of Otto B rah m

1891-1897   Independent Theatre founded in London. Headed by J.T. Grein

1892   <u>Widower's Houses</u> (Shaw) written for the Independent Theatre. Launches Shaw's career as a social critic and creator of comedy of ideas.

   Theatre de l'Oeuvre founded and headed by Aurelien-Marie Lugne-Poe. Champions symbolism.

1895   Adolph Appia begins publishing his non-illusionistic design ideas with The Staging of Wagner's Musical Dramas. Followed by Music and Stage Setting (1899) and The Work of Living Art (1921)

1898   Moscow Arts Theatre founded by Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko

1902-1938   Vsevelod Meyerhold begins work as leading experimental director on the Russian stage

1904   Irish National Theatre Society reforms into The Abbey Theatre in Dublin.

1905   Gordon Craig publishes first book The Art of Theatre with his controversial ideas on design. Followed by On the Art of the Theatre (1911), Towards a New Theatre (1913), The Theatre Advancing (1919) and *The Mask* (a periodical 1908-1929)

1905-1933   Max Reinhardt begins work as leading experimental director of the German stage

1913-1934   Theatre du Vieux Colombier founded by Jacques Copeau. Begins work as leading experimental director of the French Theatre.

Revolt against the commercial stage sends theatre reformers in two different directions:

(1)   Increasingly graphic and more sophisticated forms of realism

(2)   Flight into symbolism and non-illusionistic forms of theatre

Both involve considerable change and experimentation in aesthetic (criticism, playwriting) and technical (costuming, stage design, acting, directing, theatre management) aspects of the theatre.

I   Dominant Themes and Concerns

(1)   Realism

      A.   Dominant Philosophic Influences

      Charles Darwin - *The Origin of Species* (1859)

      Concept of man as a natural animal whose nature is shaped by forces of heredity and environment beyond his individual command. Subject to same "survival of the fittest" laws as any other species adrift in an amoral environment and as fit a subject for objective scientific scrutiny as any other natural specimen.

      Karl Marx - Das Kapital

      Concept of man as a political and economic unit involved in class warfare. Glorifies the plight and struggles of the common man engaged in class warfare with a greedy, oppressive bourgeois.

      - positive to the extent that both evolution and proletariat revolution assume change and perfectibility in the human condition, but more than ever they also promote a view of man as a creature determined by social, political, economic and hereditary forces beyond his control rather than as a self-determining being in a moral universe.

      B.   Dominant Social and Material Influences

      - Spirit of scientific materialism and investigation. Faith in improved technology, material progress, and scientific inquiry to improve man's world and his lot within it. Encourages technical experimentation within the theatre and "slice of life" aesthetics.
      - Invention of photography (1839) and early experiments with moving pictures sharpens interest in realism and realistic effects. Realization that "a picture is worth a thousand words" leads to greater interest in using the theatre's non-verbal, visual elements to convey meanings formerly conveyed only by words.
      - Turn of the novel towards psychological realism, social concerns and detailed sordid portrayals of the lives of the poor and disadvantaged leads theatre reformers towards wanting to implement similar changes in the dramatic genre.
      - Great age of imperialism and rising nationalism. Leads some reformers to reject broad, international focus of commercial drama in favor of a literate drama that accurately reflects the lives, habits, fears, faults and aspirations of a given people - in theatre houses centered within those communities and by actors and playwrights drawn
      from the people.

(2)   Symbolism

      A.   Dominant Philosophical Influences

      Sigmund Freud - *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900)

      Concept of man as an irrational being driven by subconscious forces, impulses and desires beyond the knowledge and control of the conscious.

      - concept of collective consciousness leads to new universalism and an aesthetic that sees man as a primitive, tribal being connected to the elemental forces within himself and his universe through myth, ritual, mask, mime and dance

      - scientific validation of the existence of the subconscious realm justifies the exploration of new ways of portraying dream states and the symbolic, associative, non-linear world of the subconscious on stage.

B.   Dominant Social and Material Influences

                - discovery and interest in the Oriental theatre and that of Japan in particular. Spirit of contemplation, portrayal of myth and use of strongly formalized, representational use of movement, mask, costuming, make-up and music appeal to many stylistic innovators.

II   Aesthetics and Staging

A.   Playwriting

        Leads to new genres of drama

        (1) Realism
                Naturalism - (Zola, Strindberg, Becque, Hauptmann),
                Realism - the play of social criticism and ideas (Shaw, Ibsen), detailed psychological and social portraiture of a given society (Synge, Chekhov), folk play (Lady Gregory)
        (2)   Symbolism
                Formalistic retreatments of myth and legend (Yeats, Hofmannsthal), mystic evocation of soul states (Maeterlinck), attempt to put dream states on stage (Strindberg)

B.   Staging

        (1)   Realism
                Attempts to create graphic, slice of life stage sets to capture sense of the physical environment shaping the characters; use of costuming, lighting and set design to convey psychology of characters
        (2)   Symbolism
                Evocative, suggestive use of light, music, and non-illusionistic set design , using free-standing three-dimensional sets to complement actors' three-dimensional form(Appia and Craig, Copeau). Use of mask and formalistic costuming (Yeats)

C.   Acting

        (1)   Realism
                At once tries to capture more sharply the surface reality of the character (speaks and acts as real people in that social strata would regardless of taste"), and convey a richer, psychological subtext based on the characters' non-verbal language. Recognition that the irrational is another factor driving the "naturalistic" human being, and that realistic character creation often lies in the tension between "text" (what a character consciously says) and subtext (what his body, movement, and non-verbal language is saying unconsciously). (Stanislavsky)
        (2)   Symbolism
                Emphasizes new, non-illusionistic uses of the actors' bodies and voices. Experiments with stylized, dream-like movement, dance, mime, ritual, choral chant and choreography, eurhythmics, acrobatics. (Poe, Maeterlinck) Some even see actor as puppet to be totally manipulated by the director as just another production element (Craig)

D.   Directing

        Increasing complexity of stage language and emphasis on integrating all these new factors of movement, sound, music, theme, psychology and technical versatility into a unified, coherent vision leads to development of the director as the prime aesthetic shaper of the production. While some directors worked dominantly in one mode or another (Poe - symbolism; Stanislavsky - realism), or specialized in historical accuracy and reconstruction of earlier times or production styles (Poe, Meiningen), many tried more eclectic combinations of styles, conventions, and the sister arts, in an attempt to stretch the vocabulary of the existing stage language, both in reference to original work and startling reinterpretations of older plays (Meyerhold, Reinhardt, Evrienov)

E.   Theatre Management

Since most commercial stages were hostile to the aims and methods of these reformers, many established small, intimate, "art theatres" to escape the tight censorship of the public theatre and provide a place to experiment with aesthetics, style, subject matter and staging. While some stressed nationalism (Abbey, MAT) and others were international in their focus (Poe); and some were large and well-subsidized (Wagner, MAT, Meiningen) and others ran until the creators' energy or funds ran out (Antoine, Brahm) all stressed exciting, innovative productions of new, older or foreign works not to be found in the commercial theatre, and exposed their audiences to fresh new voices and trends in the theatre.

The Modern Theatre 1914-1945

1905	*Futurist Manifesto* (Filippo Marinetti). First of series of manifestos and essays on Futurism. Movement loses momentum in World War I, disappearing around 1930.
1911	French artists give exhibitions in Cubism
1911	Term "expressionism" used in Germany. First Expressionist plays done in 1912.
1912	Term "constructivism" first used to refer to the visual arts. Applied to drama during the 20s particularly in Russia.
1915	*Birth of a Nation.* Full-length epic film marks the arrival of the movies as a serious art form to rival drama.
1916-1920	Dada launched in 1916 by a group of artists. Principal spokesman, Tristan Tzara publishes 7 manifestoes.
1917	Apollinaire first uses term "surrealism" in the preface to his play, *The Breasts of Tiresias.* Andre Breton, the movement's most noted spokesman publishes First Manifesto in 1924, and second one in 1929.
1914-1918	World War I. 8,300,000 die. More than $337 billion spent. Ends with map of Europe redrawn, new republics to replace the old, and a League of Nations and a World Court established.
1917	The Russian Revolution. "The Russian Experiment" in Marxism watched with interest by political liberals, with horror by conservatives.
1919-1923	Ireland becomes a Republic. O'Casey starts to emerge as leading Irish playwright of his generation.

1920s and 1930s

Economic bad times especially after 1930, political instability, and loss of morale bring fascist regimes to power in Italy, Spain and Germany. Educational, extension (adult education) and community drama movements flourish in England, America, and Canada. Major non-realist writers and directors become active in France, Germany, Italy, Russia and America.

Italy
1921-36

Luigi Pirandello, already well-established in Italy, establishes international reputation with *Six Characters in Search of an Author.* Establishes and writes for his own company, touring Europe with them during 20s and 30s. Has difficulty with political repressiveness of the Mussolini regime. Wins Nobel. prize in 1934, dies in 1936.

Russia
1918-1934

1st flowering of Soviet Drama. Faith in drama as a pedagogical tool encourages strong subsidization of the Russian professional and amateur stage. 20,000 dramatic clubs among the peasants in 1926, some experimenting with agit-prop. Meyerhold and Tairov experiment intensively with constructivism during the 20s. Imposition of "Soviet Realism" as official aesthetic in 1934 and increasing political repression under Stalin ends era of experimentalism.

America
1920-41

Eugene O'Neill has first full-length play *,Beyond the Horizon,* performed on Broadway after being encouraged in his early efforts by the "little theatre" group, the Provincetown Players. Stanislavskian techniques arrive with tour of Moscow Arts Theatre (1923-24) and the immigration of some of the company to start the American Laboratory Theatre (1923-1930.) Financial hard

times and political radicalism lead to leftist theatre groups - The Group Theatre (1931-1941) and The Federal Theatre Project (1935-1939).

France
1917-1938   Surrealism, and Russian and Balinese dance influence some of most important writers, directors and critics of the period. Artaud, primary theoretician-practitioner advocates "theatre of cruelty" in which people are purged of cruel and violent instincts by appeal to the irrational mind in the theatre. Major non-realistic writers -Cocteau and Giraudoux - often tried reinterpreting myth in novel ways. Copeau, who reopens Vieux Columbier (1919-1925), influences 2nd generation of experimental directors - Jouvet, Dullin, Pitoeff and Baty.

Germany
1918-39   Expressionistic writing, design and directing reach their height in Germany (1919-1924). Best work of Kaiser and Toiler written and performed, most influential directors: Fehling and Jessner. Piscator starts experiments with producing a distinct "proletarian drama" and style of directing and production (1924-1928). Brecht moves from expressionism and dada in early plays *(Baal* - 1918) to Marxism and his own experimentation with Epic Theatre in the late 20s and early 30s. Goes into exile in 1933 to avoid Hitler. Major plays, including *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1938-1940) written abroad.

I   Dominant Themes and Concerns

Theatre dominated by world in which the very nature of realism as both a concept and an aesthetic comes under increasing scrutiny and criticism.

1.   Dominant philosophical influences

A. Psychology
        - Increasing advances in psychology as a science (i.e. Jung's *The Psychology of the Unconscious),* continue to validate the scope and significance of the subconscious mind, and of the language of archetypes, dreams, symbols and myths often arranged in nonlinear, freely associative patterns to appeal most strongly to the collective mind of an audience. Also places increasing emphasis on subjective rather than objective nature of reality.
3

B. Science
        - Albert Einstein's *Theories of Relativity (1905,* 1915) and Max Planck's *Quantum Theory in Physics* (1900) suggest that the universe is in a constant state of change and transformation, a continuous process of forming, creating, breaking and destroying. Things do not exist as static objects in a hierarchical Renaissance "chain of being", but as various states and stages moving horizontally forward in an ongoing process of interaction, change and transformation. Also suggests that "objective reality" is an impossibility since the very act of observation changes the behavior of what is observed, making "reality" by necessity, a subjective construct perceived, influenced and created differently by everyone. If rational, analytical observation of a objective, knowable object was not always possible in science, can it be an accurate model of observation and aesthetic construction in art?

C. Politics
        - Russian Revolution changes Marxism from a theory to a reality, thus validating its potential as a viable master-plan by which mankind and his/her world could be reconstructed into a completely new and better shape.

2.   Dominant Social and Material Influences

A. Collapse of the Touring System
        - disrupted by the war, and economic hard times but real problem was the rise of the electronic media, most notably radio and film, which could compete for the same commercial market much more successfully by presenting the same glitz, spectacle and illusion presented by the 19th century stage much more convincingly and cheaply. A can of film shot in Hollywood allowed the same production, performed at the same high quality, with the same stars,

to appear simultaneously in theatre houses across the country. Collapse of touring system left future of drama in doubt both as a commercial and an aesthetic venture.

B. World War I
    - traumatic experience that completely reshaped the map of Europe and shattered many of the values and assumptions on which 19th century society - and drama - were based. Shattered blind faith in technology: ability to dehumanize and destroy in appalling numbers becomes evident. Called many of the full-blown values melodrama supported into question: imperialism, patriotism, and concept of military glory and honour took a particular beating after the carnage of the battlefield, and the deliberate humiliation of the losers. Engendered a distrust in sentimentality and rhetoric - the power of "the big words" becomes suspect.

C. Economic and Political Instability
    - Initial hopes for a brave new world of peace and prosperity after the War troubled by political and economic instability during the 20s and the crushing effect of the Depression in the 30s. Deepened feelings of anger and betrayal towards the existing socioeconomic order, and strengthened incentive to find ways -including drama- to explore and push for change.

II   Aesthetics and Staging

    - Revolt against realism as (1) an aesthetic and (2) a correct vision of reality sends theatre reformers in several different directions:

    (A) Aesthetic
    (1)   - ability of film to render spectacle, "stars", and naturalism on a much grander, cheaper and more lavish scale to a commercial audience forces practitioners to reassess the nature and function of theatre as a viable social, moral and aesthetic art distinct from the movies.
                (a)Nationhood
                    To the extent that Hollywood perpetuated fantasies and internationalism there was still a call for an art form that expressed national identity and was written and performed by local artists. (i.e. O'Neill, O'Casey) Particularly true in countries just achieving nationhood, colonized countries like Canada and Australia and the regional areas in France, England and America who were only able to start building their own theatre after the collapse of the touring monopoly.
                (b)Educational Drama
                    Increasingly sophisticated theories of child psychology, and child and adult education that emphasized the intrinsic worth and development of well-rounded human beings especially in a rapidly changing world where good coping skills were needed, open new doors for the use of drama and its sister arts in the schools, universities and communities of the nation.
                (c)Political Radicalism
                    Employs drama as a teaching or pedagogical tool to convert people to need for social action, and educate them to be the future citizens of a brave, new world. Some associated with the fascists, but most with leftist or Marxist causes, especially in Germany (Piscator, Brecht, satirical revue or cabaret) and Russia (agit-prop, worker's theatre groups) but also many other places, including the States (The Group Theatre, Federal Theatre Project)

    (2)   - increasing use of technology and new advancements in lighting, sound, fabrics, metals and materials leads to further experimentation in expanding the visual and aural "stage language" of the theatre in new, non-naturalistic directions, and juxtaposing the familiar in strange new combinations and contexts. (Futurism, Constructivism, Cubism, Dada)
    (3)   - discontent with aesthetic limitations of realism and naturalism leads practitioners to re-examine older, non-realistic traditions of Western theatre (Commedia) and alternative Eastern traditions stressing dance, music, puppetry and great conventionalism and stylization of movement, costuming, mask and make-up. *(* Beijing Opera, Noh, Kabuki, Bunraku)

    (B) Vision

(I)   - Continued flight into symbolism and forms of theatre meant to capture the inner landscape of the mind and the collective unconscious shared by all human beings, or the essence of powers and forces active but hidden beneath the veneer of everyday life. (Expressionism, surrealism, Pirandello)

(2)   - Right towards political radicalism and forms of theatre suggesting that everyday reality is not only ephemeral and changeable, but should be recognized as such and changed on every level to effect radical changes not only in the sociopolitical order but man's concept of himself and his relationship to the universe. (Brecht and Epic Theatre)

THE MODERN THEATRE 1945 - present

1945	United States drops atomic bomb on Japan. World War II ends. The United Nations is founded. Russian Imperialism and refusal to withdraw from occupied territories triggers onset of the Cold War
1946	Invention of the electronic computer. Electronic revolution accelerates.
1947	India achieves Independence. By l9tOs most of Europe's remaining colonies, particularly in Africa, have achieved Independence. 30 post-colonial countries come into existence between 1947-1980.
1948	State of Israel founded. Arab resistance, exacerbated by the Six Day War (1967), the Iranian Revolution (1979), the Gulf War (1990) and the various political and economic interests attached to the region turn it into a continuing hotbed of terrorism and political unrest.
1949	Chinese Communist Revolution
1950	"Un-American activities" investigated. The McCarthy "witch hunts" mark the low-point of Cold War hysteria.
1957	Arms race paralleled by the Space race. Space satellite launched followed by first man in space (1961), first men on the moon (1968), and eventually "Star Wars" defense system.
1961.62	"Bay of Pigs" fiasco and Cuban Missile Crisis
1964-73	Escalation *of* Vietnam War ending in cease-lire and withdrawal of American troops.
1985	Mikhail Gorbachev becomes leader of the USSR. Policies of "Glasnost" and "Perestroika" start, climaxing in the collapse of the Soviet Union. Reunification of Germany in 1990, dismantling of the USSR in 1991.

I   Dominant Themes and Concerns

Theatre dominated by a rapidly changing technological and political world in which information was paradoxically never so abundant and accessible to so many people and in so many forms; and in which the sheer volume of ever-changing and contradictory data has never more strongly called into question the whole concept of a knowable, objective reality, or the whole human experience of perceiving reality - the limits of rational. "scientific" observation and linear, cause-and-effect reasoning in effectively understanding the world.

I   *Dominant philosophical influences*

A. Psychology
- Increasing advances in psychology continue to validate the scope and significance of the subconscious mind, and stress the subjective over the objective nature of reality. However, the universality of the collective unconsciousness called into question by behaviorists like Skinner *(Science and Human Behavior,* 1953) who reassert the primacy of environment and external stimuli in determining human behavior; medical advances which suggest that some forms of menial illness (i.e. schizophrenia) are organic rather than psychological in their origins, and people like Lacan who suggest new interpretations of the archetypes, myths and symbols of the Subconscious mind. Also, increasing attacks on the early psychoanalysts like Freud for observing and analyzing their data out of a definite set of social, racial and sexual biases, rather than the "scientific" objectivity they had claimed for themselves. Restores some possibilities of human change and control to the individual, but also chillingly suggests that the individual mind can be consciously manipulated, controlled and influenced - often in ways it is opposed to or unaware of - by outsiders wielding the correct technology and knowledge. (brainwashing, "mind control", lobotomies)

B. Science

- Rapid expansion of technology in all fields gives man unprecedented power and potential to change himself and his world in ways earlier generations considered both impossible - and unthinkable. Bioengineering opens possibility of man altering and improving himself - or being altered and improved by others to suit their needs - right down to the atomic level, while the advent of the atomic bomb opens the possibility of man blasting himself and the remaining life on his planet to atoms. Leads to increasing concerns over where that power will be centered, who will use it, for what purposes, and against whom; the division of personal and social responsibility in that power's use and abuse, and larger social and metaphysical concerns about the increased human potential for good and evil, or even whether those terms have become irrelevant. (No power and no responsibility = no morality?) Increasing concern over the effects of industrial technology on the ecology also leads to new ethical concerns not just about man's individual and corporate responsibility to himself and other men but to his planet, other life forms and the environment itself.

C. Politics
- The rise of the Third World nations continues to lend validity to Marxist theory and practice; to celebrate political self-determination and liberation; to increase support for pacifism and to call the ethics of Imperialism into question. Many governments, while firmly rejecting communism (now increasingly associated with the evils of Stalinism) adopt socialist planks including strong national health, welfare and pension programs - and government subsidization of the arts. At the same time, the realities of international terrorism, wars in the mid-East and the military-political interference of the Super Powers in global affairs more than ever leave men feeling they are at the mercy of hostile, inhuman forces working out their own destructive, self-serving or inscrutable ends. Yet, the terror of the bomb paradoxically never makes the need to avoid violence and war more compelling.

2.   Dominant Social and Material Influences

A.   World War II
Immediate response, especially in countries not invaded or directly damaged by the war is a burst of patriotism, a sense of having fought the good fight and won. Veterans, having survived a Depression and a major war return home committed to rebuilding a prosperous, happy post-war world to pass on to one's children. Politically a time of conservatism, especially in the wake of the McCarthy "witch hunts."
Europe and defeated countries, like Germany and Japan, considerably more traumatized by human atrocities and widespread material damage. Experience of "the Holocaust", the dropping of the bomb on Japan and the firebombing of civilian populations in German and British cities raises disturbing moral questions about the process through which moral, civilized, decent human beings can be seduced into becoming mass murderers of their fellow human beings. Tension between the welcome return of relatively good times of rebuilding and prosperity; and the sense of futility and insecurity engendered by the experience of being devastated by a major war twice in less than 20 years, and the horrifying realization that arms technology is advancing to the point where the whole world could be destroyed by the touch of a button. Sense, of people re-building their lives and cities over the abyss of a nuclear Armageddon that could arrive at any time without warning.

> *"The world today as it appears to us could hardly be encompassed in the form of the historical drama as Schiller wrote it, for the reason alone that we no longer have any tragic heroes, but only vast tragedies staged by world butchers and produced by slaughtering machines...Their power (Hitler and Stalin) is so enormous that they themselves are no more than incidental, corporeal and easily replaceable expressions of this power; and the misfortune associated with the former and to a considerable extent also with the latter is too vast, too complex, too horrible, too mechanical and usually simply too devoid of all sense....The state today...can not be envisioned for it is anonymous and bureaucratic...Today art can only embrace the victims, if it can reach men at all; it can no longer come close to the mighty...The state has lost its physical reality, and just as physics can now only cope with the world in mathematical formulas, so the state can only be expressed in statistics. Power today becomes visible, material only when it explodes as in the atom bomb, in this marvelous mushroom which rises and spreads immaculate as the sun and in which mass murder and beauty have become one. The atom bomb can not be reproduced artistically since it is mass-produced."*
>
> - Friedrich Durrenmatt, 1954

B.   Continuing Electronic Evolution
- advent of T.V. and later, the videocassettes puts even tougher pressure on the commercial theatre, especially in the United States. At the same time, electronics simultaneously continue to revolutionize stagecraft and add to the stage language directors and playwrights can build with. Words continue to lose their

authority, as theatre begins to copy the multiple visual and aural focuses of movie and T.V. Onslaught of information in thc mass media begins to blur the distinctions between art and life, documentary and fiction, and conventional concepts of dramatic lime, space, and coherence and completion of form. *(Particularly affects theatre of Richard Foreman, Robert Wilson, Robert Le Page)*

C.   Economic Prosperity

- Despite the anxiety of living in the shadow of the Cold War and the atomic bomb, the early post-war decades are relatively prosperous times of rebuilding in many countries. Eager to avoid the kind of laissez-faire capitalism that had created such hardship and political unrest during the Depression, many countries embraced the Keynesian idea that many of the abuses or deficiencies of market-driven private enterprise could be corrected by strong, socially responsible governments taking a more active hand in the cultural, educational and social welfare of their citizens. Led to important changes in arts policies in countries where government subsidization and regulation of the arts had previously been rare.

D.   Accelerating Political and Social Change

- increasing political and social radicalism in the 60s and 70s as the "baby boomers" hit adolescence and early 20s. Strong reaction against conservative, materialistic society of the 50s (the Establishment") which was seen as inhibiting the personal freedom of the individual and repressing disadvantaged racial and social minorities to maintain a privileged middle class. Also against the "Industrial-military complex" of the super-powers which was seen to be frustrating the legitimate social, cultural and political aspirations of the post-colonial nations in Asia, Africa and South America. Woman's movement sparks widespread social, ideological and economic change as women move increasingly into the mainstream of public and professional life. Traditional sexual roles and whole concept of "maleness" and "femaleness" come into question. "Rights" movements continue to accelerate over the 80s and 90s as society attempts to give a greater voice to people previously "silenced" either through persecution, misrepresentation ("cultural appropriation") or disregard.

II   Aesthetics and Staging

Revolt against realism continues to accelerate and move onto new levels.

(A)   Aesthetic
(1)   - growing assault of the electronic media continues to put increased pressure on the theatre to adapt and change and prove its viability as a social, moral and aesthetic art distinct from the movies and television.

        (a) Nationhood
        Post-colonial countries like Canada and Australia, influenced by burst of post-war patriotism and strong nationalist sentiment, renewed prosperity and active government subsidization of the arts rapidly develop professional theatres of their own. More established countries. like Britain, France, Germany and America, also develop more aggressive arts subsidization programs, and pursue active policies of decentralization to make theatre a cultural experience more fully accessible to people across the country. Includes active building of theatres and cultural centres in smaller communities, the establishment of theatre festivals and summer stock companies; and the funding of amateur or semi-professional companies outside the big centres, to form a strong regional network of professional theatres across the country. Emerging 3rd world countries re-examine their own native traditions, themes and forms as dramatic alternatives to the dominant Western tradition which often came with the colonizers. Attempt to establish individuality and community in the face of the homogenizing, culturally "imperialistic" influence of the mass media.

        (b) Educational Drama
        Increases in size and sophistication as a movement on all levels. In places like the western States and Canada the University Drama Department becomes the primary training facility for professional actors, designers and directors as well as educated audiences and drama educators. Children's theatre groups working in the classroom as well as the local theatre continue to proliferate.

        (c)Political Radicalism

Increased use of drama as a teaching or pedagogical tool among the disadvantaged of the 3rd world and those marginalized or excluded from the mainstream of Western society. Includes collective and popular theatre groups working improvisationally and within non-traditional cooperative theatre structures as well as groups doing more conventional scripted work. Allows previously silent groups to develop an authentic dramatic voice of their own, and experiment through drama with finding personal, political and social solutions to their own problems.

(d) Aesthetic Experimentalism

As pressure of media forces the mainstream theatre in the big centres to become increasingly more safe, commercial and spectacular, small theatres are founded to experiment with themes, subject matter and aesthetic forms no longer found in the mainstream. (e.g. Off-Broadway, and off-off Broadway, the Living Theatre; the "happening"; Schechner's "environmental theatre", Bread and Puppet Theatre's "street theatre".)

(B)   Vision

New set of "isms" dealing with the problem of meaninglessness or re-interpreting the nature of meaning in a world that seems to deny it..

1.   Early post-war France

Central question: how does man exist in a cosmos without meaning or order, thus rendering his existing values meaningless and his social and personal existence absurd? What use are rationality and words in a universe which is irrational and chaotic, rendering both faculties false and absurd? How does one meet the problem philosophically in one's view of man and the universe? How does one adjust both the conception of theatre and its language to deal with that reality?

Existentialism (Sartre and Camus)

in the face of a universe where there is no God, and fixed standards or codes of moral and social conduct are suspect, "human beings are condemned to be free...Man becomes what he chooses to be. (Sartre) Sees his theatre as one "of situations" where characters are defined not by their psychological states, but by their choices and actions. Reassess the world, forge your own standards and follow them through without compromise. Dramaturgy still tends to be more traditional and linear because philosophy still stresses bringing form out of chaos.

Absurdism (Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, Adamov)

Shares philosophy and world view of the existentialists but simply dwells on the experience of the absurd condition of humanity without suggesting a solution or way out. Dramaturgy attempts to reflect the experience of chaos. Structure associative, rather than rational cause-and-effect; episodes linked by theme and mood, not linear plot or psychological development. Juxtaposition of incongruous events produces ironic, serio-comic effects and makes fun of logic. No character coherence or development, stage objects take on exaggerated, surreal meanings; striking stage imagery or non-verbal sounds more important than spoken language.

2.   After 1968

Modernism

a variety of styles flourishes, but within each one, the artist tries to adhere consistently to the set of rules or conventions associated with that mode. Disparate elements ultimately harmonized into a consistent, unified whole.

Post-modernism

undisturbed by disparities or inconsistencies, and freely mixes styles and moods earlier considered incompatible; boundaries between the sexes, the arts, cultures, dramatic forms and performance styles deliberately collapsed. Simultaneity and multiple focus often replace linear cause-and-effect. Often reflexive in nature, drawing attention to the fact it is being made and how it is being made. Deconstructionism further draws attention to the fact that there is a serious distinction between the "work" (the physical document written by the author) and "the text" or what the director and beyond him, the spectator makes of the work in reading it or viewing it, since no interpretation - even the author's own - is a definitive one. One chooses from the multiplicity of meanings hidden - even from her/himself - in the author's work and creates one's own text in the process of watching and interpreting.

Environmental Theatre (Schechner)   (The Polish Laboratory Theatre, The Living Theatre, the Open Theatre,
                                      The Performance Group.)

Traditional   New

Traditional	New
plot	images/events
action	activity
resolution	open-ended
roles	tasks
themes/thesis	no pre-set meaning
stage distinct from house	one area for all
script	scenario or free form
flow	compartments
single focus	multi-focus
audience watches	audience participates, sometimes non-existent
product	process

Environmental theatre exists somewhere between traditional theatre and "happenings". "All the space is used for the audience"; spectators are both scene-makers and scene watchers; "the event can take place either in a totally transformed space or in a 'found' space; focus "is flexible and variable"; "all production elements speak their own language"; "a text need be neither the starting point nor the goal of a production. There may be no text at all"