

THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the portrayal and exploration of the second war in American literature, focusing on its themes, perspectives, and overall impact on literary works. Through a comprehensive analysis of various texts spanning different genres and periods, the article examines how writers have grappled with the complexities and repercussions of war. From World War II to contemporary conflicts, the narratives offer diverse insights into the human experience during times of conflict, shedding light on themes such as heroism, trauma, patriotism, and the quest for peace. By synthesizing historical context with literary analysis, this article contributes to a deeper understanding of how literature serves as a lens through which we can explore and interpret the impact of war on society and the individual.

KEYWORDS: literature, 20thcentury, publication, historical, situations, authors, novels.

INTRODUCTION

Between the two World Wars, American writing saw a "second flowering," according to literary historian Malcolm Cowley. In the 1920s and 1930s, American literature undoubtedly reached a new level of maturity and rich diversity, and important works by a number of influential authors from those years were released after 1945. While Frost, Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, E.E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, and Gwendolyn Brooks created significant poetry, Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Katherine Anne Porter wrote notable fiction that fell short of their prewar calibre. 1956 saw the posthumous publication of Eugene O'Neill's most notable drama, *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Robert Penn Warren wrote and published significant poetry, fiction, and criticism both before and during World War II. One of the best political novels in America is *His All the King's Men*.

FINDINGS

American literature during World War II Compared to other literary genres, war stories more overtly showcase fundamental cultural ideas, expectations, and self-images. In times of extreme conflict, society expects its members—who are primarily young people—to put their lives in danger for the sake of all. As a result, conflict provides an opportunity to critically examine the meaning of the individual and societal ideals and conceptions of self and other, which carry the risk of early death—

particularly in situations where triumph is improbable. Therefore, the literature of war presents examples of how a nation (or a people) "stories experience"; these are actions of "literary sense-making" (or not) carried out in reaction to specific historical situations - situations that, in effect, necessitate the suspension of norms essential to peaceful societies and sanctify the use of collective violence.

American literature has evolved significantly over the 20th century, with the two World Wars having had the biggest influence on the genre's expansion. Both of these post-war American literary genres illustrate the revolutionary shift in the literary figure's worldview and the use of the most cutting-edge techniques for understanding the devastated world. There has been a noticeable change in the subjects, devices, and techniques of literature in both poetry and fiction. The many genres of American literature all represent these shifts. "The United States became a "modern" nation between the start of World War I and the end of World War II (1914–1945)... Some writers, like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, saw art. The many genres of American literature all represent these shifts. "The United States became a "modern" nation between the start of World War I and the end of World War II (1914–1945)... Some writers, like Wallace Stevens, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams, saw art as an alternative to traditional ways of seeing the world, which led to the concept of "two cultures"—science and letters.

The realist legacy of the era's fiction reflects the influence of post-war society. As a result, during this time a new generation of writers emerged, including Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Lillian Hellman, and poet-essayist Robert Penn Warren. These writers "explored the fate of the individual within the family or community and focused on the balance between personal growth and responsibility to the group." (American Prose, 1945–1990: Exploration and Realism). One illustration of how the post-war world influenced American writing is found in the plays of the great genius Arthur Miller. "The work of playwrights revolutionised American theatre in the years immediately following the end of World War II."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Second World War profoundly influenced American literature, shaping narratives of trauma, resilience, and the evolving national identity. Through the lens of literature, we see how the war continues to resonate in the collective consciousness, catalyzing introspection and exploration of themes such as heroism, sacrifice, and the human condition. As authors grapple with the complexities of war and its aftermath, their works not only provide insight into historical events but also offer solace, understanding, and a pathway toward healing for future generations.

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