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Answer to question no -1

Twentieth Century British theatre is commonly believed to have started in Dublin, Ireland with the foundation of the Irish

Literary Theater by William B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and J.M. Synge. (Greenblatt 1843) Their purpose was to provide a specifically Celtic and Irish venue that produced works that “stage[d] the deeper emotions of Ireland.” (The Abbey’s) The playwrights of the Irish Literary Theater (which later became the Abbey Theater, as it is known today) were part of the literary revival and included: Sean O’Casey, J.M. Synge, W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn, to name a few. In England the well-made play genre was being rejected and replaced with actors and directors who were committed to bringing both reform and a serious audience to the theatre by appealing to the younger, socially conscious and politically alert crowd. In the plays by George Bernard Shaw, Harley Granville Barker, W. Somerset Maugham, and John Galsworthy, characters emulated this new crowd, satirized the well-made play characters, and created new stereotypes and new standards.

The early twentieth century denoted the split between ‘frocks and frills’ drama and serious works, following in the footsteps of many other European countries. “In Britain the impact of these continental innovations was delayed by a conservative theatre establishment until the late 1950s and 1960s when they converged with the counter-cultural revolution to transform

the nature of English language theatre.” The West End, England’s Broadway, tended to produce the (Greenblatt 1844) musical comedies and well-made plays, while smaller theatres and Irish venues took a new direction. The new direction was political, satirical, and rebellious. Common themes in the new early 20th century drama were political, reflecting the unease or rebellion of the workers against the state, philosophical, delving into the who and why of human life and existence, and revolutionary, exploring the themes of colonization and loss of territory. They explored common societal business practices conditions of factories, new political ideologies socialism, or the rise of a repressed sector of the population women. Chothia Industrialization also had an impact on Twentieth century drama, resulting in plays lamenting the alienation of humans in an increasingly mechanical world. Not only did Industrialization result in alienation; so did the wars. Between the wars, two types of theatre reined. In the West End, the middle class attended popular, conservative theatre dominated by Noël Coward and G.B. Shaw. “Commercial theatre thrived and at Drury Lane large budget musicals by Ivor Novello and Noel Coward used huge sets, extravagant costumes and large casts to create spectacular productions.” West End After the wars, taboos were broken and new writers, directors, and actors emerged with different views. Many played with the idea of reality, some were radically political, others shunned

naturalism and questioned the legitimacy of previously unassailable beliefs. Towards the end of the century, the term 'theatre of exorcism' came into use due to the amount of plays conjuring the past in order to confront and accept it. Playwrights towards the end of the century count among their numbers: Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Brian Friel, Caryl Churchill, and Tom Stoppard. The last act of the century was a turn back towards realism as well as the founding of Europe's first children's cultural center.

For a year-by-year breakdown between 1895 and 1937, please [click here](#).

Trends

Realism and Myth

Sigmund Freud inspired an interest in myth and dreams as playwrights became familiar with his studies of psychoanalysis. Along with the help of Carl Jung, the two psychiatrists influenced playwrights to incorporate myths into their plays. This integration allowed for new opportunities for playwrights to increase the boundaries of realism within their writing. As playwrights started to use myths in their writing, a "poetic form of realism" was created. This form of realism deals with truths

that are widespread amongst all humans, bolstered by Carl Jung's idea of the collective unconscious.

Poetic Realism

Much of the poetic realism that was written during the beginning of the twentieth century focused on the portrayals of Irish peasant life. John Millington Synge, W.B. Yeats, and Lady Gregory were but a few writers to use poetic realism. Their portrayal of peasant life was often unappealing and many audiences reacted cruelly. Many plays that are poetically realistic often have unpleasant themes running through them, such as lust between a son and his step-mother or the murder of a baby to "prove" love. These plays used myths as a surrogate for real life in order to allow the audience to live the unpleasant plot without completely connecting to it.

Women

The female characters progressed from the downtrodden, useless woman to an empowered, emancipated woman. They were used to to pose subversive questions about the social order. Many female characters portray the author's masculine attitudes about women and their place in society. As time passed, though, females began gain empowerment. G.B. Shaw

became one of the first English playwrights to follow Ibsen's influence and create roles of real women. Mrs. Warren, Major Barbara, and Pygmalion all have strong female leads. Women first started voting in 1918. Later in the century, females (and males) were both subjected to the alienation of society and routinely were not given names to suggest to the audience the character's worth within the play.

Political Theatre and War

Political theatre uses the theatre to represent "how a social or political order uses its power to 'represent' others coercively." It uses live performances and often shows the power of politics through "demeaning and limiting" prejudices. Political theatre often represents many different types of groups that are often stereotyped – "women, gay men, lesbians, ethnic and racial groups, [and] the poor." Political theatre is used to express one's political ideas. Agitprop, a popular form of political theatre, even had its roots in the 1930s women's rights movement. Propaganda played a big role in political theater, whether it be in support of a war or in opposition of political schemes, theater played a big role in influencing the public.

The wars also affected the early theatre of the twentieth century. The consternation before WWI produced the Dada movement, the predecessor to Surrealism and Expressionism.

Types of Modern Drama

Realism

Realism, in theater, was meant to be a direct observation of human behavior. It began as a way to make theater more useful to society, a way to hold a mirror up to society. Because of this thrust towards the “real” playwrights started using more contemporary settings, backgrounds and characters. Where plays in the past had, for the most part, used mythological or stereotypical characters, now they involved the lower class, the poor, the rich; they involved all genders, classes and races. One of the main contributors to this style was Henrik Ibsen.

Social Realism

Social Realism began showing up in plays during the 1930s. This realism had a political conscience behind it because the world was in a depression. These plays painted a harsh picture of rural poverty. The drama began to aim at showing governments the penalties of unrestrained capitalism and the depressions that lax economies created. One of the main contributors to this style was G.B. Shaw.

Avant Garde Theatre

“Dramatic truth couldn’t be found in the tangibleness of realistic drama, but in symbols, images, legends, myths, fantasies, and dreams”

Absurdist Drama

Absurdist Drama was existentialist theatre which put a direct perception of a mode of being above all abstract considerations. It was also essentially a poetic, lyrical theatre for the expression of intuitions of being through movement, situations and concrete imagery. Language was generally downplayed. (Barnet) Symbolism, Dadaism and their offspring, Surrealism, Theatre of Cruelty, and Expressionism all fall into this category.

DADAISM

Dadaism, or Dada, was a reaction against WWI. Like many of the movements, Dada included writing, painting and poetry as well as theatre. Many Dadaists wrote manifestos detailing their beliefs, which normally outlined their disgust in colonialism and

nationalism and tried to be the opposite of the the current aesthetics and values. The more Dada offended, the better. It was considered to be by Dadaists, the 'anti-art'. It rejected the values of society and turned everything on its head, preferring to disgust and offend.

SYMBOLISM/AESTHETICISM

In England, Symbolism was also known as Aestheticism. A very stylized format of drama, wherein dreams and fantasies were common plot devices, Aestheticism was used by numerous playwrights from Yeats to Pinter. The staging was highly stylized, usually using minimal set pieces and vague blocking. While the playwrights who could be considered Aestheticists lived and worked at the beginning of the century, it influenced all of the following styles.

SURREALISM

Like Aestheticism, Surrealism has its base in the mystical. It developed the physicality of theatre and downplayed words, hoping to influence its audiences through action. Other common characteristics of surreal plays are unexpected comparisons and surprise. The most famous British playwright in the 20s surrealist style is Samuel Beckett. Theatre of Cruelty

is a subset of surrealism and was motivated by an idea of Antonin Artaud. It argues the idea that theatre is a “representational medium” and tried to bring current ideas and experiences to the audience through participation and “ritualistic theater experiments.” Artaud thought that theatre should present and represent equally. This type of theatre relies deeply on metaphors and rarely included a description of how it could be performed.

EXPRESSIONISM

The term ‘Expressionism’ was first coined in Germany in 1911. (Michaelides) Expressionism also had its hey-day during the 20s although it had two distinct branches. The branches had characters speaking in short, direct sentences or in long, lyrical expanses. This type of theatre usually did not name the characters and spend much time lamenting the present and warning against the future. Spiritual awakenings and episodic structures were also fairly common.

Epic Theatre

Epic theater was created by Bertold Brecht who rejected realistic theatre. He found that such plays were too picture-perfect. Epic Theatre is based on Greek Epic poetry. There are

dramatic illusions such as “stark, harsh lighting, blank stages, placards announcing changes of scenes, bands playing music onstage, and long, discomfiting pauses” (Jacobus). Brecht believed that drama should be made within its audiences and he thought that Epic Theatre drama would reinforce the realities that people were facing rather than challenge them. Epic Theatre helped to preserve the social issues that they portrayed.