



# Realism, Modernism, Post- Modernism

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Literary Overview

# Neo-Romanticism

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- importance to the representation of internal feelings
- expression of strong emotions such as terror, awe, horror and love
- Promotion of supernatural experiences
- Major writers:
  - Lewis Carroll
  - Alan Ginsberg
  - J. R. R. Tolkien
  - Dylan Thomas

# Decadence

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- used elaborate, stylized language to discuss taboo and often unsavory topics, such as death, depression, and deviant sexualities
- opposition to everyday morality
- Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley were the foremost English Decadents

# The Movement

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- first coined by Jay D. Scott in 1954
- Refers to a group of writers
  - Philip Larkin
  - John Wain
  - Kingsley Amis
  - Elizabeth Jennings
  - Donald Davie
  - Thom Gunn
  - Robert Conquest
  - D. J. Enright

# Contd. . .

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- opposed to the manifold traits exhibited by modernist poetry of the 1920s and 1930s
- The Movement poets lay stress on formal verse and lucidity in expression and are fervently anti-romantic in their tone and style
- not an organized group with any well-defined and deliberately formulated aims
- wanted a poetry that was clearer ,simpler, more obviously structured, and more modest in its style and subject matter
- Representative anthologies: *New Lines* edited by Robert Conquest and *Poets of the 1950's* edited by D. J. Enright

# Working Class Literature

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– Novelists: John Braine

David Storey

Alan Sillitoe

Stan Barstow

– Dramatists: John Osborne

Arnold Wesker

Shelagh Delaney

# Angry Young Men


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- a group of mostly working and middle class British playwrights and novelists who became prominent in the 1950s
- characterized by disillusionment with traditional English society
- shared an outspoken irreverence for the British class system, its traditional network of pedigreed families, and the elitist Oxford and Cambridge universities
- their writings frequently expressed raw anger and frustration as the postwar reforms failed to meet exalted aspirations for genuine change



# Leading Figures

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- John Osborne
  - Kingsley Amis
  - John Wain
  - Alan Sillitoe
  - Arnold Wesker
  - John Braine
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# Modernist Writers

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- Poets: Basil Bunting (*Briggflatts*)  
David Jones (*The Anathemata*)
- Novelists: Christine Brooke-Rose  
B. S. Johnson  
James Hanley  
Wilson Harris

# Postmodernism

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- Stylistic characteristics: self-reflexivity, parody, pastiche and metafiction
- Reality is dependent on language
- Comically subvert the high pretensions and artistic seriousness of modernism
- Undermine the philosophical assumptions of classical realism
- Major writers: Martin Amis, Salman Rushdie, Jeanette Winterson, Angela Carter, Julian Barnes, Graham Swift, John Fowles, Peter Ackroyd, Iain Sinclair