

Theater of the Absurd

Post-World War 2

Primary Examples: Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, Arthur Adamov, Eugene Ionesco, Harold Pinter

Characteristics

Mixed genre, tragic and comic, often satiric
clichéd language

Tend to present problem or situation but no solution or resolution

Absence of dramatic irony, audience knows just as much as characters

World is beyond explanation and it is up to each individual to commit to creating meaning.

The plays are “theatrical” rather than realistic, often setting forth impossible situations with unreal characters.

the inability to communicate

the meaninglessness of life

The plays are relatively plotless (nothing much seems to happen).