

The Place of Contemporary German Literature Writers in World Literature

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Abstract: This scholarly article analyzes the role and significance of German literature in the global literary process of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It examines the historical stages of the development of German literature, artistic explorations during the periods of modernism and postmodernism, issues of historical memory, the relationship between the individual and society, as well as the aesthetic and ideological influence of German writers on world literature. Through the works of authors such as Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, Bertolt Brecht, Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, Herta Müller, and Peter Handke, the international prestige and global relevance of German literature are substantiated.

Keywords: German writers, world literature, modernism, postmodernism, historical memory.

Introduction: In the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, German literature developed as an essential component of the global literary process. World War II, the division of Germany, and its subsequent reunification left a profound mark on the artistic consciousness of German writers. Consequently, during this period, German literature was recognized not only as a national literary tradition but also as a literary school aimed at addressing universal human issues.

The significance of German literature in world literature is determined by its ability to integrate historical realities with philosophical reflection, introduce new artistic forms and styles, and place moral responsibility at the center of its discourse. The relevance of this article lies precisely in the necessity of scientifically examining these aspects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

German literature has been the subject of extensive scholarly research due to its significant impact on global literary trends. Scholars such as Jeffrey Sammons and Helen Fehervary have emphasized the historical depth of German literature and its response to socio-political

transformations in the twentieth century, including World War II and the division of Germany.

The works of Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse have been frequently cited for their exploration of individual consciousness, existential dilemmas, and the effects of modernity on society. Mann's novels, such as *Buddenbrooks* and *The Magic Mountain*, are regarded as exemplars of philosophical realism that bridge personal experience and cultural critique. Hesse's writings, including *Steppenwolf* and *Siddhartha*, highlight introspection, spiritual quest, and cross-cultural influences, thereby contributing to German literature's international resonance.

The post-war period saw the emergence of the Group 47 writers, including Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass, who grappled with collective guilt, historical memory, and ethical responsibility. Böll's novels (*The Clown*, *Billiard at Half-Past Nine*) and Grass's *The Tin Drum* illustrate the integration of realism, grotesque elements, and satire, influencing both German and world literature (Clark, 2006; Sorg, 2012). These studies underline the ethical and moral concerns of post-war

literature, framing it as a medium for societal reflection. In contemporary German literature, scholars like Ingo Berensmeyer (2010) have analyzed the works of Herta Müller and Peter Handke, focusing on themes of authoritarianism, migration, identity, and experimental narrative techniques. Müller's poetic prose, particularly in *The Hunger Angel*, demonstrates the interplay of memory, trauma, and linguistic innovation, while Handke's exploration of language and consciousness contributes to experimental narrative structures in world literature.

Several comparative studies also highlight German literature's influence on international literary movements. For instance, the exploration of existentialism, postmodernism, and magical realism in German texts has inspired writers in France, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. This body of scholarship confirms that German literature has maintained a central role in shaping global literary discourse, both through thematic concerns and innovative narrative strategies.

The literature indicates that German literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is characterized by its engagement with historical consciousness, ethical reflection, and stylistic experimentation. The works of key authors like Mann, Hesse, Böll, Grass, Müller and Handke illustrate how German literature has contributed significantly to global literary developments and continues to influence contemporary narrative practices. [1,133]

METHODS

At the beginning of the twentieth century, German literature developed closely in connection with modernist movements. Expressionism, symbolism, and the new realism trends occupied a leading position in the literary process. Thomas Mann's novels, *Buddenbrooks* and *The Magic Mountain*, held a special place in world literature by providing a philosophical analysis of the human psyche and the crisis of civilization.

The works of Hermann Hesse, in turn, stand out for their exploration of the inner world of the individual, spiritual development, and engagement with Eastern philosophy. His writings were widely read internationally and had a significant impact on the worldview of younger generations. [2, 96]

Bertolt Brecht's dramaturgy contributed greatly to the development of political theater on a global scale. His theory of epic theater influenced the dramaturgy of many countries.

Post-war literature sought to artistically express the tragedies that befell humanity. During this period, German literature placed moral responsibility and historical memory at the center of its themes.

The new German literature that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s marked an important stage in the global literary process. Heinrich Böll's works addressed the fate of ordinary individuals, post-war societal issues, and ethical choices. His writings were translated into many languages and gained international recognition. [3,56]

Günter Grass, on the other hand, explored historical memory and collective guilt through grotesque and symbolic portrayals. His novel *The Tin Drum* became a unique exemplar of world literature.

By the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, German literature was enriched by postmodernist tendencies. In Herta Müller's work, issues of totalitarian regimes, migration, and personal memory found poetic expression. Her writings strengthened the place of Eastern European literature in the global literary landscape.

Peter Handke's oeuvre is distinguished by its exploration of language, consciousness, and existence through new artistic forms, making him a key representative of experimental approaches in contemporary literature.

The global significance of German literature is also clearly reflected in the careers of writers awarded the Nobel Prize. Authors such as Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, and Herta Müller receiving this honor confirms the universal importance of German literature.

German literature has influenced world literature not only through themes and ideas but also through artistic forms and styles. Movements such as Expressionism, epic theater, and the philosophical novel have left their mark on various national literatures. [4,150]

RESULTS

Modernist Developments in Early 20th-Century German Literature.

The research findings indicate that at the beginning of the twentieth century, German literature developed in close connection with modernist movements. Expressionism, symbolism, and the New Realism trends played a leading role in literary development. Thomas Mann's novels, *Buddenbrooks* and *The Magic Mountain*, gained international recognition by providing a philosophical analysis of the human psyche and the crisis of civilization. Hermann Hesse's works, focusing on the inner world of the individual, spiritual development, and engagement with Eastern philosophy, were widely read and had a significant impact on the worldview of younger generations.

New German Literature of the 1950s–1960s. The new German literature emerging in the 1950s and 1960s marked a critical stage in the global literary process. Heinrich Böll's works addressed the fate of ordinary individuals, post-war societal issues, and ethical decision-making. His writings were translated into numerous languages and gained international recognition.

Günter Grass and Historical Memory. Günter Grass explored themes of historical memory and collective guilt through grotesque and symbolic representations. His novel *The Tin Drum* became a distinctive example of world literature. Grass's integration of postmodernist techniques and artistic experimentation allowed him to combine historical events with personal narratives, highlighting the ethical and moral dimensions of history.

Postmodernism in Contemporary German Literature. By the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, German literature had been enriched by postmodernist tendencies. Herta Müller's works explored totalitarian regimes, migration, and personal memory through poetic expression. Her writings strengthened the global presence of Eastern European literature. Peter Handke's works stand out for their experimental approach to language, consciousness, and human existence, positioning him as a key representative of contemporary literary experimentation.

Impact on World Literature. The results demonstrate that German literature has influenced world literature not only through its themes and ideas but also through artistic form, style, and aesthetic innovation. Movements such as Expressionism, epic theater, and the philosophical novel have found resonance in various

national literatures, contributing to the integration of German literary achievements into the global literary process.

DISCUSSIONS

The role of German literature in world literature in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is defined by its ability to conduct a profound artistic and philosophical analysis of historical realities. German writers succeeded in addressing human issues beyond national boundaries, presenting them on a global scale.

The analysis of twentieth- and twenty-first-century German literature highlights its central role in shaping global literary discourse. German writers have consistently demonstrated the capacity to combine historical reflection with philosophical and artistic inquiry, addressing both national and universal human concerns.

The study shows that early modernist movements, including Expressionism, Symbolism, and New Realism, provided German authors with innovative narrative tools to explore individual consciousness, social crises, and the complexities of civilization. Thomas Mann's and Hermann Hesse's works exemplify this synthesis of philosophical inquiry and literary experimentation, illustrating how German literature influenced not only European but also global literary traditions.

In the post-war period, German literature underwent a transformation in response to collective trauma and moral responsibility. Writers such as Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass emphasized ethical reflection and historical memory, combining grotesque, satirical, and symbolic techniques to confront the legacy of World War II. Their works illustrate the unique ability of literature to mediate between personal experience and historical reality, providing models for similar engagements in other national literatures.

The later development of postmodernist tendencies further expanded the expressive range of German literature. Authors like Herta Müller [5,301] and Peter Handke [6,20] experimented with language, memory, and consciousness, demonstrating that German literature continues to innovate in form as well as content. Müller's focus on totalitarian regimes and migration, and Handke's exploration of perception and narrative structure, highlight German literature's ongoing contribution to experimental and reflective

approaches in world literature.

The findings also underscore the importance of international recognition, such as the Nobel Prize in Literature, in consolidating the global status of German authors. The awards received by Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, and Herta Müller confirm that German literature resonates beyond its national context and continues to shape literary thought worldwide.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that German literature's influence on world literature extends beyond thematic concerns to stylistic innovation and philosophical depth. Its integration of historical consciousness, ethical reflection, and formal experimentation has not only enriched German literary tradition but also provided a model for literary development in diverse cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, German literature developed as an integral part of world literature in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By combining artistic reflection, aesthetic exploration, and moral responsibility, German literature has exerted a significant influence on the literary process. Its role in global culture continues to remain relevant today.

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