

(5) Contemporary American Drama

Arthur Miller, Edward Albee, Woody Allen, David Mamet, Tony Kushner

Contemporary American Drama

Character-istics

- American theatre today is characterized as realistic, **contemporary**, middle-class, **domestic** and melodramatic
- most plays deal with real people in real situations, with present-day problems, social, political, moral or others
- the characters are ordinary people living ordinary lives, the settings are familiar places as houses, offices, bars
- the focus is on plays easily accessible and easy to be understood, high drama (as Shakespeare) is not preferred

Musical

American Musical

- Broadway produced the musical as a characteristically American art form, a medium for serious entertainment
- the first musicals were based on classical novels of European literature, as for instance *My Fair Lady* (1956)
- the musical combines music, song, dance and spoken dialogues, is closely related to the opera but differs from opera in that it uses popular music, different instrumentation and unaccompanied dialogue

European Musical

- the operetta is sometimes considered the European counterpart of the musical, it developed from the opera as a more accessible version suitable for mass audiences
- the American musical is meant for **entertainment**, whereas the European musical tends to be more serious in subject matter and often focuses on political issues, for instance Bertolt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* (1928)

Arthur Miller (1915–2005)

The Private & the Public

- continues examining the failure of individuals to acknowledge full responsibility for themselves and for others
- considers identity to be a product of decisions made or refused, insists on the existence of a connective tissue that inevitably links private actions to public events, individual to community, self to society and past to present
- his later plays reveal a fascination with the nature of character, the power of story and the substance of reality
- his early plays suggest that reality can be easily identified and that moral and social certainties derive from it

Nature of Reality

- his later plays show a growing sense of the deceptive nature of the real and distrust of the banality of surfaces
- the questions are if a world that is substantially the sum of private interpretations and public myths can be said to be real or, as we live in a house of mirrors, if we will ever see anything but a reflection of our own illusions
- examines the degree to which we are all but 'impersonators' of ourselves, the extent to which we are 'actors'
- believes in the obligation of trying to ascertain the real, since to abandon the attempt is to surrender also any sense of responsibility until 'everything becomes a question of taste, including the hanging of innocent people'

The Archbishop's Ceiling (1977)

Artist's Responsibility

- uses the setting of an unnamed East European country to consider an artist's political and moral responsibility
- a visiting American writer wonders if he cares about the plight of the people or simply uses them as material
- another question is if the two European writers whom the American meets are spies or simply complicit in the suppression and surveillance that scar their country, where the most innocent conversation loses its innocence
- the characters meet in a baroque palace in a room that may or may not contain concealed microphones, and the fact of the possible presence of the microphones transforms them all into performers acting out their dramas
- suggests a parallel to the then topical Watergate Scandal¹ in which the American president had turned the Oval Room into a form of theatre, alternately recalling and forgetting the microphones that he, too, had concealed

*Elegy for a Lady*² (1982)

Dying Woman

- an elegant and ambiguous exploration of love featuring a man who enters a shop to buy a gift for his dying lover and the proprietress of the shop who helps him to choose and takes on the persona of the dying woman
- opens with a motionless man and woman, devoid of character, function and identity, continues with generating a story from bringing them together and closes with the man leaving and the woman becoming motionless again

Some Kind of Love Story (1982)

Former Lovers

- a tense and intimate investigation of the strange relationship between a private detective and his former lover whom he questions about a murder and who may or may not possess the clue to the crime that he investigates
- the meaning of their encounter comes from their roles and from the story that unites them, they are lovers and investigator and witness, he is also a married man and she a schizophrenic changing a succession of identities

¹ In 1972 five men were arrested for breaking into the headquarters of the Democratic Party in Watergate, Washington D. C. In 1974 President Richard Nixon resigned when it was proved that he actively tried to conceal that the burglary was ordered by Republicans as one of a whole series of illegal activities authorized and carried out by his staff against their political opponents.

² *Elegy for a Lady* and *Some Kind of Love Story* are two related short plays published together under the title **Two-Way Mirror**.

***The American Clock* (1986)**The 1930s
Depression

- looks back in subject matter to the author's earlier dramatic explorations of the national democratic experiment
- offers an epic history of the 1930s Depression in both public and personal terms in memories of two survivals
- one of the survivors dwells on the domestic and the decline of his middle-class Jewish family into poverty, the other concentrates on the social and his fortunate survival thanks to his ability to anticipate the economic crash
- together these recollections manifest a faith in the ability of the American nation to repair and redefine itself and suggest that the Depression but strengthened democracy and gave Americans back their belief in themselves
- the play catches the critical faith in America and the belief that the world was meant to be better characteristic of the author's best work as well as its usual intimate blend of the domestic and the political, family and history

***I Can't Remember Anything* (1987)**Love in
Old Age

- focuses on the intricacies of love, this time in an elderly couple, to dramatize the pleasures and pains of old age

***The Ride Down Mount Morgan* (1991)**Bigamist
Husband

- an ironic comedy, first produced in London, carefully balancing between humour and a serious moral concern
- a bigamously married man is confronted by both wives when they rush to his hospital bedside after an accident
- the bigamist believes that he could have everything and that everyone benefits from his marital arrangement
- a response to the 1980s America in which greed and self-interest are sanctioned by a culture elevating the self

***The Last Yankee*³ (1993)**American
Dream

- set in a state mental institution treating women for depression, a response to a society committed to the dream of success at the cost of those individuals who accepted such a dream as a social and psychological imperative
- explores the relationship between a carpenter and his wife and between a successful businessman and his wife
- the carpenter's wife comes from an immigrant family and has internalized the need to succeed which ruined her brothers, while her husband comes from older stock, has older values and cares little for material rewards
- ends with the possibility of a new beginning for both couples, the lights however fade out with the bed which has been holding a fellow patient throughout the play, a woman who lies motionless, never visited and ignored

***Broken Glass* (1994)**Nazi
Paralysis

- set in 1938, the year of Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, when the Nazi attacked Jews and synagogues
- focuses on a woman suffering a sudden unexplained paralysis and her relationship with her Jewish husband
- explores the roots of the wife's paralysis, which seem sunk partly in private and psychological concerns and partly in a sudden disabling sense of the gathering irrational forces that threaten her own life as well as others
- presents broken relationships and the disintegrated bonds that once held individuals and communities together
- suggests that the woman cannot stand because there is no longer anywhere to stand, no security, no certainty
- ends with the protagonist standing up when her husband dies from a heart attack, and necessity drives her up

***Mr Peter's Connections* (1998)**Ageing
Pilot

- a minor serio-comic fantasy set in a dilapidated night club and centred around an ageing married man, former Pan Am pilot, who recalls his once glorious career and contemplates the present world full of baffling ambiguity

***Resurrection Blues* (2002)**Second
Coming

- uses a pointed comic edge to examine the dangers and benefits of blind belief, political, religious or emotional
- set in an unnamed Latin American third-world country, centres around a prisoner who is considered the second coming of Christ and thus poses a threat to the military dictator of the nation who sentences him to be crucified
- follows the moral dilemmas of several characters concerning the crucifixion, including the dictator's wealthy cousin, his daughter allied with the prisoner and an American television team that is to broadcast the crucifixion

***Finishing the Picture* (2004)**Marilyn
Monroe

- the author's last play, a thinly-veiled autobiographical examination of the time that the author and Marilyn Monroe, who was then his wife, spent shooting the film *The Misfits* (1961) for which he wrote the screenplay
- presents the failing marriage of the couple, plagued by Monroe's open infidelity, drug abuse and mental illness
- shows a successful actress, a natural choice for a major motion picture, whose personal problems afflict her performance so that the producer must decide whether to cancel the over-budget film or whether try to finish it

Edward Albee (b. 1928)

1970s

- in the late 1960s and in the 1970s he seems to have lost his way, his dramatic language as well as his audience
- his characters seem little more than instruments orchestrated by the dramatist and deprived of any dimension, the powerful theatricality of his early fine work appears to give way to thin and almost antitheatrical gestures

1990s

- in the 1990s he finds himself and starts again surprising audiences with his wit, invention and moral purpose

³ As the play is set in New England, the 'Yankee' probably refers to a 'New Englander', a descendant of the first English settlers.

- his achievement is striking by his integrity, commitment to experiment and refusal of easily won popularity
- his plays show private fears and public anxieties and the belief that the greatest tragedy is an unexamined life

***The Lady from Dubuque* (1980)**

- resembles a post-apocalyptic reverie in presenting dying and the despair of it as a necessary adjunct of living

***The Man Who Had Three Arms* (1981)**

- presents a character called Himself who speaks about his transformation from a successful family man through a person horrified to discover a third arm growing from between his shoulder blades to a three-armed celebrity
- follows the decline of Himself attendant on his celebrity circuit, including ‘money, sex, adulation’, his growing more and more in debt, his being abandoned by his wife and his eventual falling apart in front of the audience
- satirizes the excesses of the culture of celebrity as well as the shallowness of parent and child relationships

***Marriage Play* (1987)**

- recalls his most successful play in that it deals with a middle-aged married couple which succumbs to playing ritual games to express and contain their sense of life-disappointment and even to fighting each other physically
- opens with the husband coming home and informing his wife that he intends to leave her, the entry and the information is repeated three times because the husband is disappointed with the wife’s reaction to the news
- concludes with the couple recalling the memorable times of their life but soon resuming their previous insults

***Three Tall Women* (1991)**

- a successful play which won the author his third Pulitzer Prize (1994) and brought him back to theatre stages
- shows at first three different women, one an elderly, incontinent and apparently fast-fading lady, the others her nurse and a young lawyer; and then presents them as one and the same woman at different stages of her life
- inspired by the author’s adoptive mother and himself, represented in the play as a young man who has no lines
- derives its effectiveness from the wit generated out of the interplay between the various women, each of them with a different level of awareness, from youthful naivety through middle-age experience to old-age cynicism

***The Play About the Baby* (1998)**

- recapitulates themes from his earlier work in a witty debate about the way we constitute the reality we inhabit
- deals with a gleefully naive couple who has just had their first baby and whose youthful happy existence is disturbed by the appearance of a mysterious nameless older couple who may or may not have sinister motives

***The Goat, or, Who is Sylvia?*⁴ (2002)**

- described by the author as a play about a family deeply rocked by an unimaginable event and trying to solve it
- seeks to make the audience think about their values, as every civilization sets arbitrary limits to its tolerances
- centres around Martin, a renowned architect and family man, who in the same week turns fifty, earns a prestigious award and receives a lucrative commission, but is consumed by a forbidden secret passion, bestiality
- Martin’s life starts disintegrating as he unburdens himself on his oldest friend and the truth reaches his family

***Peter & Jerry* (2004)**

- adds a first act to *The Zoo Story* (1959), focuses on Peter’s marriage and ends with his leaving to Central Park
- performed together under the title *At Home at the Zoo* (2009) with Act I ‘Homelife’ and Act II ‘The Zoo Story’

Woody Allen (b. 1935)

- born and raised in New York, legally changed his original name Allen Stewart Konigsberg to Heywood Allen
- his father was a Jewish jewellery engraver, his grandparents were Yiddish and German-speaking immigrants
- his childhood was not particularly happy, his mother was a stern person and his parents did not get along well
- studied communication and film but never earned his degree, after several false starts became a comedy writer
- began his career writing gags for newspaper columns, producing scripts for television comedy shows, working as a stand-up comedian and writing humorous short stories, published for instance in the *New Yorker* magazine

- eventually became a scriptwriter, playwright, producer and film director, actor in his films and jazz clarinetist
- as a stand-up comedian created a persona of a nervous and neurotic intellectual, insecure and doubt-ridden
- as an actor in his own films most often incorporates comic figures who are wistful, wry and self-deprecating
- his writing draws on his urban middle-class Jewish background, literature, philosophy, psychology, sexuality
- his films are typically joke-oriented bittersweet comedies with elements of parody, slapstick and the absurd

***Don’t Drink the Water* (1966)**

- a successful Broadway comedy, a farce that takes place inside an American Embassy behind the Iron Curtain
- a family on a tourist trip accidentally wanders into a restricted area to take holiday photographs, the secret

Necessity
of DyingCulture of
CelebrityRitual
Marriage
GamesThree
Women
in OneYoung
Couple’s
BabyLimits of
TolerationAnother
Zoo StoryBack-
ground

Career

Iron
Curtain
Farce

⁴ The title refers to the song ‘Who is Sylvia’ sung in Shakespeare’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* by Proteus when he woos Silvia.

police suspects espionage but the family is granted asylum in the Embassy from which they attempt to escape

***Play It Again, Sam* (1969)**

Film
Parody

- a successful Broadway play, the title is a misquotation from the film *Casablanca* (1942) at which it pokes fun
- the protagonist has just undergone a trying divorce, his two friends convince him to dating, and throughout the play he receives advices from the ghost of the *Casablanca* actor Humphrey Bogart and from his former wife
- the dates fail as he assumes a mask of an attractive sophisticate, he develops feelings for his married friend and ends the play in a parody on the *Casablanca* ending when he explains her why she should stay with her husband

***God* (1975), *Death* (1975)**

Companion
Experiments

- two companion plays, the author turned the latter into a black and white film called *Shadows and Fog* (1992)
- the former presents lonely and bored Manhattan late night theatre visitors arguing with ancient Greek masters, and the twisted and turned plot with scenes from different periods and locations reflects our bizarre human lives

***The Floating Lightbulb* (1981)**

Failing
Family

- a critically successful Broadway play, though a box-office failure, the author's last play starting on Broadway
- a semi-autobiographical story about a lower middle-class family living in Brooklyn and their failed aspirations
- the family matriarch Enid Pollack once aspired to be dancer and now spends her days trying to support the family, while her philandering husband Max spends his time gambling and planning to escape from his marriage
- their son Paul is a bright but shy teenager who performs magic tricks, including a floating light bulb illusion
- a talent agent arrives seemingly to hire Paul, but the mother is disappointed to find that he only tries to woo her

***Central Park West* (1995)**

Failing
Relation-
ships

- a one-act play, a chronicle of dysfunction in human relationships with controversial autobiographical elements
- two middle-aged women, Carol and Phyllis, meet in the Central Park West flat of Phyllis, whose husband Sam just announced her that he is leaving her for another woman, whom Phyllis suspects to be nobody else but Carol
- Carol admits that she loves her friend's husband, it is however not her for whom Sam is leaving his wife, but the young college student Juliet, who happens to be a patient on a psychoanalysis therapy led by Phyllis herself

***Old Saybrook*⁵ (2003)**

Infidelity
Games

- a one-act play, a farce about infidelity reminiscent of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962)
- an accountant and his wife drop by the house they once lived in only to get drawn into into the new tenants' comic slipstream of sexual confession and accusation which continues until the characters produce a wildcard
- the wildcard is a playwright who appears to comment on the failure of the play, describing it as something that seemed a great idea but then it did not work, then leaves the characters who perform a parody of a happy ending

***Riverside Drive* (2003)**

Savage
Impulses

- a one-act play, a dark comedy of a homeless genius who stalks a screenwriter, convinced that he stole his idea
- the screenwriter, Jim Swain, and his pursuer, Fred Savage, confront each other on a bench on Riverside Drive where the self-absorbed author waits for his lover Barbara to break up with her and to return to his own wife
- Barbara threatens Swain and demands compensation in money for her not telling Swain's wife, Swain intends to apologize to her but Savage murders her on impulse and disposes of her body, tossing it in the Hudson River
- Savage, as his name suggests, represents the wild, infantile, murderous impulses which are here meditated on

***A Second Hand Memory* (2004)**

Memory
Play

- a memory play presented by Alma, the bad child who had an abortion and ran from her parents off to Europe
- the parents put all hopes on Eddie, the good child who lives with his parents and works in their jewellery shop
- the play tells about Eddie's transformation from a docile hard-working boy into a restless and resentful young man when he is employed by his uncle, a Hollywood agent, and falls in love with the uncle's secretary-mistress

***Getting Even* (1971), *Without Feathers* (1975), *Side Effects* (1980)**

Short
Stories

- collections of brief humorous sketches, originally published in the *New Yorker* as well as in other magazines

***Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989), *Husbands and Wives* (1992), *Bullets Over Broadway* (1994)**

Films

- low-budget films produced outside of the Hollywood system, a mix of absurd humour and realistic situations

David Mamet (b. 1947)

Language
Illusion

- preoccupied with language not just as a communicative tool but a way to give the illusion of substance to life
- explores characters who create a local habitation and a name for themselves out of fast and smart conversion
- his characteristic language is not so much the idiom of an actual subculture but an intensely poetic instrument
- repetition, intensification, a shared jargon of the characters create a sense of a closed world with its own games

⁵ *Old Saybrook* was published together with *Riverside Drive* under the title *Writer's Block* (2003).

Substitute
Fantasy

- the question is not whether what the character says is right or not, but whether the character makes it sound so
- his familiar trademarks are presenting the language as a substitute for meaning, selling as a mask for substance
- emphasizes the special status of those in the game, focuses on collisions of different word systems and worlds
- presents the characters not so much as liars as fantasists who use words to suspend disbelief in their fantasies
- comments not only on the fictions of a particular group but on the collective fictions, the myths of his country

***Glengarry Glen Ross* (1984)**Real Estate
America

- the play plunges into the dark heart of the selling of America by focusing on real estate agents conducting sales
- the title of the play is the fantasy name given to the tracts of land for sale which are actually worthless swamps
- revalues the perverse resourcefulness of the salesmen and their desperate faith which they need to earn living, to combine the cynicism appropriate to their fraudulent trade with a belief in the power of their sales techniques
- the language of the salesmen tells their story, 'a great sale' is the fiction that gives false meaning to their lives
- challenges the American myth of success, selling oneself, like in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949)

***Speed-the-Plow* (1988)**Hollywood
Underbelly

- the play is set in the Hollywood of flattery and fake intimacy and satirizes the American film making industry
- the title refers to the saying 'Industry produces wealth, God speed the plough', which the author saw as fitting for a play dealing with work, the end of the world and also with having to plough under and start over again
- Hollywood producers Bobby Gould and Charlie Fox engage in a verbal boxing match on art versus money, the former hesitates between recommending a bad action success or a film adaptation of a spiritually uplifting novel
- Gould makes an office girl read the apocalyptic novel and come to report on it later in his flat, which she does, only to become a victim the next day when Fox accuses her of using sex in order to get into the film business

***Oleanna* (1992)**Sexual
Harassment

- a controversial play on sexual harassment, a story of a female student who denounces her university professor
- the play does not make it clear whether the student has a legitimate grievance or whether she is working with her 'group' to achieve a kind of ethical cleansing, or whether there is an intriguing mix of both at work here

***Boston Marriage*⁶ (1999)**Female
Relation-
ships

- the play is set at the turn of the twentieth century and is delivered through a quick, witty Victorian-era dialogue
- explores the negotiation, conflict, compromise and reconciliation arising from the relationship of two women
- two women living together in a Boston Marriage, Anna and Claire, argue over Claire's new love, a young girl, and Anna's status as a mistress to a wealthy gentleman, and find out that the girl is the daughter of the same man
- the plot focuses on the question whether Anna and Claire will be able to hold on both to the girl and her father

***Romance* (2005)**Courtroom
Farce

- an off-Broadway comedy, a farce set in a modern-day courtroom in New York during Middle East peace talks
- features a judge whose allergy medications make him so drowsy that he falls asleep several times during the first act and then so manic that he eventually ends up stripping in the middle of the court during the second act
- also features a prosecutor who has troubles with his unmanageable boyfriend and a gentile lawyer who has troubles with his Jewish defendant, who suddenly comes up with a plan to solve the conflict in the Middle East
- lampoons the American judicial system and the hypocrisy about personal prejudice and political correctness

***November* (2007)**Presidential
Election

- an Oval Office satire, the play depicts one day in the life of an American President finishing his election period
- the President, Charles Smith, has little chances for re-election but he risks all in attempt to win public support
- described as a comedy, hilariously satirizes the state of America and the lengths to which people will go to win

***Race* (2009)**Racial
Prejudice

- the play premièred on Broadway and examines the theme of race and the lies we tell each other on the subject
- follows three attorneys, two black and one white, who are offered a chance to defend a white man charged with a crime against a black woman and who struggle with the evidence of the case and their feelings about race

Tony Kushner (b. 1956)

Writing

- a homosexual playwright, social and political activist, author of cleverly original plays mostly on topical issues
- his plays often depart from the traditional realistic representation, experiments with conventional storytelling by introducing shorter episodes, unexpected transitions and fast-paced action reinforced by condensed dialogues

***A Bright Room Called Day* (1985)**Hitler
& Reagan

- his controversial first play, written as a response to Bertolt Brecht's *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (1938)

⁶ The term 'Boston Marriage' was inspired by Henry James's *The Bostonians* (1886) and refers to the arrangement of two unmarried women living together without any man's support. Such a relationship may involve intimacy and commitment without sexuality.

- the main story line is set in Germany in the 1930s and concerns the dissolution of a small circle of friends under the pressures created by the fall of the Weimar Republic and the rise to power of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi
- the action is occasionally interrupted by scenes set in America in the 1980s and featuring a young woman who implies a parallel between the rise of Nazism in Germany and Republicanism in America under Ronald Reagan⁷
- the author commented on the play, explaining that he refuses to be intimidated by the seemingly implacable nature of the Holocaust and suggesting that the Right is far from dead, the ghosts of the past still walk the world

Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes (1991–1992)

Master-
piece

- a monumental seven-hour epic in two parts; the first part, *Millennium Approaches* (1991) won a Tony Award and a Pulitzer Prize (1993), the second part, *Perestroika*⁸ (1992) won the author his second Tony Award (1994)
- a carnivalesque exploration of America in the 1980s, a time of literal and symbolic plague, combines myth and fantasy with an analysis of the social, political and sexual pressures threatening the individual and community
- beyond the specific concern with AIDS, the play celebrates that pluralism most suspect in the 1980s America in bringing together seemingly disparate elements, making for instance a Jewish gay involved with a Mormon
- the author describes the play as a call for gay America to grab power in the war for tolerance and against AIDS
- may be seen as a play of redemption lying in the simultaneous acknowledgement and transcendence of history, suggests the need for individuals to neutralize obsolete entrapping myths by generating new myths of their own

Collapse
of Order

Slavs! Thinking About the Longstanding Problems of Virtue and Happiness (1994)

- an exploration of the implications of the collapse of order in the twentieth century and especially in the USSR
- considers the difficulty, the failure and the abiding importance of socialism toward building a more just society

Caroline, or Change (1999)

Civil Rights
Musical

- a musical set in Louisiana in the 1960s, the time of the Civil Rights Movement and the Kennedy assassination
- Caroline, a black maid, and Noah, son of her Jewish employers, struggle to find an identity for their friendship
- Noah deliberately leaves change in his pockets for Caroline to take it and support her children, which she reluctantly does, but their relationship collapses when Caroline is accused of stealing a twenty-dollar banknote
- addresses contemporary questions of culture, community, race and class through the musical lens of the 1960s

Afghanistan
& America

Homebody/Kabul (1999)

- the play addresses the relationship between Afghanistan and the West, examines our floundering attempts to connect with other people and cultures and the kaleidoscopic and contradictory images marring all our attempts
- follows the tangential thought processes of a woman who is fascinated by Afghanistan and whose encounter with an Afghan man with severed fingers provides her with an agonised testimony of the fundamentalist cruelty
- the woman's narrative constantly shifts, from episodes in Afghan history to elliptic observations about her life
- exposes the uncomfortable questions in our lives and shows up the liberal conscience in all its flawed dignity

The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures (2009)

Family
Drama

- a naturalistic drama about an extended family of intellectuals dealing with their retired patriarch's suicide wish
- the title is inspired by G. B. Shaw's *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1928) as well as by Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (1875), the bible of Christian Scientists
- centres at a retired longshoreman who feels confused and defeated by the onset of the twenty-first century and whose three children bring along spouses, ex-spouses, lovers and more to an unusual reunion with their father

⁷ President Reagan (in office 1981–1989) introduced Reaganomics, a supply-side economics supporting people producing goods and offering services. He also reduced public spending on health care, social security, education etc. and restricted government control of economy. By increasing defence budget, he raised national debts and turned the the US from a creditor into a debtor.

⁸ Perestroika is Russian for 'restructuring', originally used to refer to the reforms of the Soviet political and economic system introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev (1987). It is often credited with the fall of communism in the USSR and end of the Cold War.