“AFTER THE LEAVES HAVE FALLEN” ZEN AND THE ENLIGHTENING OF THE SELF IN MODERNIST POETRY

“After the Leaves Have Fallen”, Zen and the Enlightening of the Self in Modernist Poetry. This paper sets out to examine a number of connections between Modernist poetry and the path towards the enlightenment of the self in accordance with the Buddhist/Zen perspective on the role of meditation, spiritual...
advancement, as well as the search for balance and harmony. Through a metaphorical reading of certain Modernist efforts to incorporate Oriental material, we attempt to shed light on the ways in which poets of the age sought to provide answers to the problem of the individual living in a world marked by dichotomies, fragmentation and the alienation of subject from object.
Modernism is a philosophical movement that, along with cultural trends and changes, arose from wide-scale and far-reaching transformations in Western society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the factors that shaped modernism were the development of modern industrial societies and the rapid growth of cities, followed then by reactions of horror to World War I. Modernism also rejected the certainty of Enlightenment thinking, and many modernists rejected religious belief.

Modernism is a comprehensive movement which began in the closing years of the 19th century and has had a wide influence internationally during much of the 20th century. In the field of poetry—as also in other fields of literature—we find a tremendous activity. We find a lot of experimentation and innovation in modern poetry. Most of the poets have broken away from tradition completely, as they feel that poetry should change with the changing times. Modern poetry exercises a great freedom in the choice of themes. The two wars and impending danger of a third have cast a gloomy shadow on much of the poetry of the twentieth century. The modern age been called “the age of anxiety.”