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# **THE HISTORY OF THE USA LITERATURE**

**EDUCATIONAL AND PRACTICAL GUIDE**



The Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation  
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“South Ural State Humanitarian-Pedagogical University”

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The guide consists of a lecture course offering theoretical material on the history of literature in the United States, and a practical part including excerpts from works of fiction and tasks for literary analysis of the text. The purpose of this manual is to acquaint English language learners with the chronology of the literary process, with the main trends of literary thought, with the distinctive features and characteristics of each literary period, with original works of fiction by outstanding English-speaking writers and poets, with elements of literary analysis of fiction.

The texts are selected and arranged in a sequence corresponding to the theoretical material. Each work in prose or verse is accompanied by tasks, the performance of which will provide a deeper understanding of what is stated and the possibility of analysis at the level of text, context and subtext. The educational and practical guide is intended for bachelors of the Faculty of foreign Languages studying in the direction 44.03.05 “Pedagogical education”, profiles “English. Foreign language”, “German. English” and “French. English”, as well as in the direction of 45.03.02 “Linguistics”, the profile focus “Translation and translation studies”. The manual has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Education and assures the acquisition of a set of competencies provided by the disciplines: “History of Literature of the USA”, “Literature of Great Britain and the USA”, “Literature of the countries of the studied language”.

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МИНИСТЕРСТВО ПРОСВЕЩЕНИЯ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ  
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**Е.В. ЧЕЛПАНОВА**  
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# **ИСТОРИЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ США**

***УЧЕБНО-ПРАКТИЧЕСКОЕ ПОСОБИЕ***

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Пособие состоит из лекционного курса, предлагающего теоретический материал по истории литературы США, и практической части, включающей отрывки из художественных произведений и задания для литературного анализа текста. Цель данного пособия – познакомить изучающих английский язык с хронологией развития литературного процесса, с основными течениями и направлениями литературной мысли, с отличительными чертами и характеристиками каждого литературного периода, с оригинальными художественными произведениями выдающихся англоязычных писателей и поэтов, с элементами литературного анализа художественного текста.

Тексты подобраны и расположены в последовательности, соответствующей теоретическому материалу. Каждое произведение в прозе или стихах сопровождается заданиями, выполнение которых обеспечит более глубокое понимание изложенного и возможность анализа на уровне текста, контекста и подтекста.

Учебно-практическое пособие предназначено для бакалавров факультета иностранных языков, обучающихся по направлению 44.03.05 «Педагогическое образование», профили «Английский язык. Иностранный язык», «Немецкий язык. Английский язык» и «Французский язык. Английский язык», а также по направлению 45.03.02 «Лингвистика», профильная направленность «Перевод и переводоведение». Пособие подготовлено в соответствии с требованиями Федерального государственного образовательного стандарта высшего образования и обеспечивает усвоение студентами комплекса компетенций, предусмотренных дисциплинами: «История литературы США», «Литература Великобритании и США», «Литература стран изучаемого языка».

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## ВВЕДЕНИЕ

Учебно-практическое пособие «История литературы США» предназначено для бакалавров факультета иностранных языков, обучающихся по направлению 44.03.05 «Педагогическое образование», профили «Английский язык. Иностранный язык», «Немецкий язык. Английский язык» и «Французский язык. Английский язык», а также по направлению 45.03.02 «Лингвистика», профильная направленность «Перевод и переводоведение». Пособие является учебно-методическим обеспечением для проведения семинаров и практических занятий, предусмотренных дисциплинами: «История литературы США», «Литература Великобритании и США», «Литература стран изучаемого языка», а также самостоятельной работы обучающихся. Для достижения поставленной цели необходимо выполнение следующих задач:

– *ознакомить студентов с этапами становления и развития литературы США, а также с представителями этапов литературы США;*

– *развить у студентов умения идентифицировать общие закономерности исторического развития литературы США; идентифицировать основные литературные направления и жанры; анализировать мировоззренческие, социальные и личностные проблемы, поднятые в литературных произведениях;*

– *сформировать у студентов навыки оценивания фактов истории и культуры, отражённых в художественных произведениях; интерпретации идейного и жанрово-стилистического содержания художественных произведений.*

Применение знаний об истории литературы страны изучаемого языка, основных художественных системах основных литературных направлений, умений комплексного исследования текста литературного произведения, понимание авторской позиции и восприятие целостного эстетического смысла текста помогут обучающимся в дальнейшей научной и профессиональной деятельности.

Пособие подготовлено в соответствии с требованиями Федерального государственного образовательного стандарта высшего образования и отражает требуемые компетенции.

Пособие состоит из десяти разделов, основанных на лекционном курсе и заданиях для практических занятий.

Содержание данного пособия является материалом для подготовки к экзамену по дисциплине «История литературы США» и зачёту по дисциплине «Литература Великобритании и США». Во время подготовки к семинарским занятиям немаловажная роль отводится самостоятельной работе, а именно: работе со словарями, энциклопедиями, поиску и отбору материала для докладов, сообщений, подготовке проблемных вопросов, прослушиванию аудиозаписей, просмотру видеоматериалов.

Пособие способствует достижению требуемых результатов освоения дисциплин «История литературы США» и «Литература Великобритании и США»: обучающийся способен корректно и полно анализировать и обобщать информацию о литературном процессе в странах изучаемого языка, владеет культурой устной и письменной речи; обучающийся знает и в процессе анализа литературных произведений умеет корректно использовать основные способы выражения семантической, коммуникативной и структурной преемственности между частями высказывания — композиционными элементами текста (введение, основная часть, заключение), сверхфразовыми единствами, предложениями. Обучающийся способен свободно выражать свои мысли относительно феноменов национальной литературы США, адекватно используя разнообразные языковые средства с целью выделения релевантной информации.

Предлагаемое вашему вниманию учебно-практическое пособие может быть успешно использовано студентами неязыковых факультетов, а также широким кругом лиц, изучающих английский язык самостоятельно.

## **PART I. THE BEGINNING OF NATIONAL LITERATURE IN AMERICA**

### **1.1. AMERICAN LITERARY PERIODS**

American literature is traditionally classified into periods. Here is a general guide to the major ones.

**The Colonial Period (1607–1775).** It was the period of colonization of the North American continent. This period starts with founding the first English settlement called Jamestown in 1607 and continues up to the Revolutionary War in 1775. The majority of writings were historical, practical, or religious in nature. Some writers from this period include Captain John Smith, William Bradford, and Roger Williams.

#### **The Enlightenment. The Revolutionary Age (1765–1790)**

Beginning a decade before the Revolutionary War and ending about 25 years later, this period includes the writings of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine. This is the richest period of political writing. Important works include “The Declaration of Independence,” Benjamin Franklin’s “Autobiography” and “Poor Richard’s Almanac”.

#### **Romanticism**

##### **The Early Romantic Period (1775–1828)**

Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe created distinctly American fiction.

##### **The Late Romantic Period (The American Renaissance) (1828–1865)**

Also known as the Age of Transcendentalism, this period is commonly accepted to be the greatest of American Literature. Major writers include Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville



and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Other major contributions include the poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Walt Whitman.

### **Realism (1865–1914)**

Realism had a number of sub movements, such as *regionalism* (also called local colour writing, represented by Mark Twain and Bret Harte), *psychological realism* (Henry James), *naturalism* (which can be seen in the works by Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser and Jack London), *muckraking novels* (Frank Norris, Upton Sinclair)

### **The Modern Period (Modernism) (1914–1939)**

Novelists include Gertrude Stein, John Dos Passos, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Sinclair Lewis. The Modern Period contains within it certain sub movements including *the Jazz Age*, *the Harlem Renaissance* and *the Lost Generation*. Many of these writers were influenced by World War I and the disillusionment that followed.

**The Contemporary Period (1939 – Present) (Postmodernism, Poststructuralism)** After World War II, American literature becomes broad and varied in themes, modes, and purposes. The common term used for it is Postmodernism. There are a lot of writers whose works may be considered “classic”: Kurt Vonnegut, John Updike, Arthur Miller, Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, Tennessee Williams, Saul Bellow, Robert Penn Warren and others.

## **1.2. NATIONAL PECULIARITIES OF AMERICAN LITERATURE**

National Peculiarities of American Literature were determined by the unique historical development of the USA, by the whole set of factors, which formed the character and mentality of the American nation, their culture and way of life: the nation infancy and colonization, multiculturalism and multiethnic structure of the population, existence of frontier and slavery, the involvement of the American Dream and Puritanism.

1) The nation infancy and colonization. The first settlers of the North American continent were Englishmen who founded the first colonies at Jamestown and Plymouth at the beginning of the XVII century. They escaped religious persecution in their homeland and fled to the New World in search of spiritual freedom. They forced the spirit of Puritanism in the colonies.

However, the new reality shaped unique features of the young nation. A new civilization differed from the European one. The notion of “The New World” reflected the attitude of the first settlers who rejected any class division and inequality.

2) Multiculturalism and multiethnic population. Waves of adventurous entrepreneurial bold immigrants, coming from Europe and Asia, contributed different traditions and values into American culture. In the course of historical development these ethnic groups got into the common “melting pot”.

A “Melting pot” is a metaphor introduced by John Hector Crevecoeur (1735–1813), the founder of secular American literature. Multiethnic population defined unique peculiarities of American literature.

Though the Native Americans, the Indians, were extinct, Indian folklore integrated into the literature and culture of the USA. The Indian folklore conveys a system of values based on harmony with nature, equality and justice (the works by J.F. Cooper, Herman Melville, Mark Twain and others).

3) Existence of slavery. The culture of enslaved Afro-Americans, having been on the periphery for a long time, influenced the literature of the whites (Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, William Faulkner). In the XX century Afro-American writers of the world significance appeared, for example Toni Morrison.

4) Frontier. A significant feature of the historical development of the country was the presence of the unexplored and unoccupied lands until the middle of the 19th century. Settling down and hard work on these lands shaped the lives of many generations of Americans.

The frontier was a border between civilization and wilderness moving westward all the time as the lands were being occupied by the pioneers, hunters and farmers. The frontier with its folklore, jokes, traditions and

humour played an important role in American literature, which is seen in the works by Bret Harte, Jack London, Mark Twain, Washington Irving. Frontier formed such features of American mentality as love for freedom, individualism, optimism, industry and entrepreneurial spirit.

5) The evolvment of the American Dream. The American Dream is a complicated set of hopes, beliefs, and opinions of many citizens of the USA. It includes the ideals of freedom and equal opportunities, self-reliance and self-realization.

The concept of the American Dream was established by the Founding Fathers of the American democratic system George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine.

The critical evaluation of this phenomenon is present in such novels as “An American Tragedy” by Theodore Dreiser, “The Great Gatsby” by Francis Scott Fitzgerald and others.

6) Puritanism. Puritans saw their experiment as a model for the rest of the world to imitate. They were a religious group of English protestants in the XVI–XVII centuries. They wanted to “purify” the Church of England of its remaining Catholic influence and rituals. They wanted to return to the simple faith of the New Testament. They were self-made and self-educated. Puritanism rests on ambition, hard work, and striving for success. The influence of Puritanism on American mentality and literature is significant. Since the time of Puritans America has become a synonym for a community of spiritually regenerated people whose mission is spreading the ideas of salvation and freedom throughout the entire world.

### **1.3. INDIAN CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN LITERATURE**

The main genres of Indian Literature were myths, legends, tales and songs. The Indians didn't have any written language, they transmitted them orally from generation to generation. In Indian stories nature is alive and is

endowed with spirit; main characters may be animals or plants. Native Americans saw animals, plants, and the forces of nature as part of a great sacred cycle of life that humans must treat with respect.

The Sacred Cycle of life. Owning the land

Native Americans' belief that the entire earth and all the living things that inhabit it are sacred affected their attitude towards land ownership. In their view, no one could own land. It belonged in common to all people and other living things that inhabited it.

This concept of common land ownership contrasted sharply the ideas of the European settlers, who had a fierce desire to possess their own land. Violent conflicts often resulted when Native American leaders signed treaties which they usually did not understand that opened lands to white colonization.

Here is one of Native American songs entitled "I Have Killed the Deer" by Taos Pueblo. It embodies the Indians' concept of Nature as the great sacred cycle of life into which any person is included.

I have killed the deer.  
I have crushed the grasshopper  
And the plants he feeds upon.  
I have cut through the heart  
Of trees growing old and straight.  
I have taken fish from water  
And birds from the sky.

In my life I have needed death  
So that my life can be.  
When I die I must give life  
To what has nourished me.  
The earth receives my body  
And gives it to the plants  
And to the caterpillars  
To the birds  
And to the coyotes

Each in its own turn so that  
The circle of life is never broken [1, p. 8].

The Indian contribution to American literature and the American English language is great. There are hundreds of Indian words in everyday American English. They usually denote everyday objects like “a canoe”, items of clothing and footwear, such as “moccasins”, names of plants, vegetables, fruit and animals: “tobacco,” “potato,” “persimmon,” “moose,” “raccoon,” “tomahawk,” and “totem”. Totem is an object, an animal or a plant serving as an emblem of a family and used for religious worshipping.

#### **1.4. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD**

In the XV century Europeans started exploring the rest of the world. The main reasons for the exploration were the growth of trade between Europe and Asia and advances in navigation and shipbuilding.

One of the explorers was Christopher Columbus. He was an Italian explorer, but his 1492 expedition was funded by the Queen of Spain, Isabella. All in all he made four voyages from Spain to America. In 1493 Columbus printed a journal entitled “Epistola” (Letters) which recounted the trip’s drama: the terror of the men, who feared monsters and thought they might fall off the edge of the world; the nearmutiny; the fake of the ships’ logs Columbus made so the men would not know how much farther they had travelled than anyone had gone before; and the first sighting of land as they neared America.

In the XVII–XVIII centuries a number of colonies were founded in America. At the beginning the Portuguese and Spaniards occupied the rich gold and silver fields of South America. The Dutch and the French began the colonization of North America. The Dutch created their own colony around the Hudson River. They called it New Netherlands. The French occupied the territory that is the eastern part of Canada today.

England played an important role in the colonization of North America, too. But initial English attempts at colonization were a disaster. The first English colony was set up in 1585; all its colonists disappeared. Another colony was more permanent. It was established in 1607 and was called Jamestown. It endured starvation, brutality, and misrule. Why were the settlers ready to endure all those hardships? Why did they come to the new world? The reason was that they were persecuted in their homeland for their religious beliefs. They separated from the Church of England (Anglican Church) and sought spiritual freedom in the New World. Nowadays they are called Pilgrim Fathers.

Captain John Smith was the commander of the expedition of the three ships which landed in Virginia in 1607. His literary work "A true relation of Virginia" became the main record of the colony in Jamestown. Captain John Smith became one of the leaders of the colony. Smith was an incurable romantic, and he seems to have embroidered his adventures. To him we owe the famous story of the Indian maiden, Pocahontas. The story has been staged by W. Disney and became a famous cartoon. Whether fact or fiction, the tale integrated in American history and culture.

The story recounts Pocahontas, the favorite daughter of an Indian Chief, saving Captain Smith's life when he was a prisoner. Later, Pocahontas was given to the English as a hostage, but her gentleness, intelligence, and beauty impressed the English, and, in 1614, she married a wealthy English gentleman. The marriage initiated an eight-year peace between the colonists and the Indians, ensuring the survival of the new colony.

Another colony was set up in 1620; a large group of Englishmen landed their ship, the Mayflower, and founded the colony of Plymouth. They were the second wave of permanent colonists and brought their wives, children, tools for farming and craftwork. They were called Puritans.

Puritans were a religious group of English Protestants who wanted to "purify" the Anglican Church of its remaining Catholic influence. So the term "Puritans" was coined. What were Puritans characterized by?

✓ Puritans wanted religious freedom but did not tolerate any other religions.

✓ They were in many cases self-made and self-educated.

✓ Puritanism rests on ambition, hard work, and striving for success, emphasis on simplicity and practicality.

✓ The Puritans felt that in advancing their own profit and their community's well-being, they were executing God's plans. They also believed that they had a God-given responsibility to establish an ideal way of life in America.

✓ The great model of writing, belief, and conduct was the Bible.

✓ Puritans dressed plainly and held simple religious services in undecorated meetinghouses. In financial questions puritans are characterized by shrewdness and mercantilism.

✓ The influence of Puritanism on American mentality and literature is significant. It is from Puritans that referring to America as the Promised Land, as the New Jerusalem originates.

✓ Following Puritans' views on life, modern Americans still believe in their chosenness and exclusiveness.

✓ The best known expression from this period is the "American Dream". It is used to describe expectations of settlers seeking a new life, and of the poor striving for riches and social status.

### **1.5. The colonial period in American literature (1607–1775)**

What was American literature like in the colonial period? The colonial literature recorded the experience of exploration and settlement. The main genres were diaries, letters, travel journals, religious histories. The Puritans' plainness was shown in their writings, which employed straightforward language and often focused on their faith. The typical theme was "Life as a test".

The most famous literary works of the colonial period belong to William Bradford and Roger Williams.

**William Bradford (1590–1657)** was elected governor of Plymouth Colony. He was the first historian of this colony. His book, “Of Plymouth Plantation” (1651), is an account of the colony’s beginning. An extract from this work presents a justly famous description of the first view of America: “Being thus passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles... they had now no friends to welcome them nor inns to entertain or refresh their weather beaten bodies; no houses or much less towns to repair to, to seek for succor... savage barbarians... were readier to fill their sides with arrows than otherwise.” [2]

William Bradford was deeply pious, that is religious. The extract below proves the colonists believed that God’s power and will were the main forces that determined their lives:

“September 6. These troubles being blown over, and now all being compact together in one ship [the Mayflower], they put to sea again with a prosperous wind; yet, according to the usual manner, many were afflicted with sea sickness. And I may not omit here a special work of God’s providence. There was a proud young man, one of the seamen, of a lusty, able body; he would always be condemning the poor people in their sickness, and cursing them daily telling them that he hoped to help to cast half of them overboard. But it pleased God before they came half seas over, to smite this young man with a grievous disease, of which he died in a desperate manner, and so was himself the first that was thrown overboard. Thus his curses light on his own head, and it was an astonishment to all his fellows, for they noted it to be the just hand of God upon him.” from “Of Plymouth Plantation” by William Bradford [3].

**Roger Williams (1603–1683)** suffered for his own views on religion. Puritans were very intolerant to other religions. Many people suffered from this intolerance. Roger Williams was banished from Massachusetts in the middle of severe winter in 1635. He survived only by living with the Indians; in



1636, he established a new colony at Rhode Island that would welcome people of different religions. His intercultural experience of living among the Indians accounts for the significance of the book he wrote: “A Key into the Languages of America” (1643). It is the first phrase book of Indian languages. Each chapter is devoted to one topic — for example, eating and mealtime. Indian words and phrases pertaining to this topic are mixed with comments, anecdotes, and a concluding poem. It’s but natural he became a lifelong friend of the Indians.

Summing up, religion was a major factor in American colonial culture. Groups of Protestants from England, such as the Pilgrims and the Puritans, founded settlements in New England in 1607 (Jamestown) and 1620 (Plymouth). The writings of the Puritans at that time are characterized by the belief in a God-given mission to offer an example of an ideal community to the world.

### **1.6. The Enlightenment / the Age of Reason / the Revolutionary Age (1765–1790)**

The Enlightenment in American literature started a decade before the Revolutionary war. The major reasons of the war were growing self-consciousness, awareness of the basic human right for freedom and resistance against British unpopular tax laws. Britain raised taxes on transportation and goods. So Americans came to believe that they should have more independence from the British Empire and an increase in political and economic rights.

The War of Independence against the British Empire lasted for eight years (1775–1783). The war ended in adopting the Declaration of Independence. A Federative Democratic Republic – the United States of America – was founded. This event was extremely significant for the further development of the country, as it gave freedom and independence to the

American colonies. The War of Independence is often called a revolution because of its great significance.

This period in American Literature is called the Enlightenment. Its other name is The Age of Reason. It is called so because it was a rational period. Common sense ruled the day. Common sense was the guide in thought and conduct, in commerce and industry. The problem of vital importance was the study of man and the origin of his good and evil qualities.

The main genres of the Enlightenment in American Literature were the essay, the political pamphlet, autobiographies and revolutionary poetry.

American literature of the Enlightenment is characterized by its fighting character. **Thomas Paine (1737–1809)** was the most radical representative of the American Enlightenment movement.

Before the war, he published his pamphlet *Common Sense* which urged the separation of the American colonies from England. During the War of Independence he wrote *The Crisis* (1776–1783), a series of pamphlets, containing his comments on the events of the war. Another prominent work of his is *The Rights of Man* (1791–1792), a political essay.

The culture of the American colonies was shaped by the practical, pioneer spirit of settlers who had left their homelands to seek a better life. The career of Benjamin Franklin reflected the colonists' ability to rise in the world. He began life as one of seventeen children in a poor family. He ended as a businessman, an influential politician, and a famous writer and scientist. That's why he is called a self-made man.

**Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)** is the most prolific representative of the Enlightenment. Franklin's pamphlets and essays were published in his famous *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1732–1757). Franklin also made a fundamental contribution to the Declaration of Independence.

He is the author of *The Autobiography* which is a famous work on self-improvement. Here is an extract from *The Autobiography* by Benjamin Franklin

giving a list of human virtues and good qualities which every person should develop on his way to self-improvement.

“1. Temperance. Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

2. Silence. Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

3. Order. Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4. Resolution. Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

5. Frugality. Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.

6. Industry. Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

7. Sincerity. Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

8. Justice. Wrong none by doing injuries or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9. Moderation. Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10. Cleanliness. Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.

11. Tranquility. Be not disturbed at trifles or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12. Chastity. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another’s peace or reputation.

13. Humility. Imitate Jesus and Socrates.” [4]

Thus, the maturing American society emphasized the importance of self-improvement through education. It was believed that learning was a defense against evil. The writings of Benjamin Franklin inspired many people around the world to undertake self-improvement.

The effect of a bold, enterprising spirit coupled with education and self-improvement was the emergence of outstanding political leaders in the colonies. One of these leaders was Thomas Jefferson.

**Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)** was a lawyer, a philosopher, an architect, and a statesman. But his greatest contribution to American Literature and the world history is his draft of the Declaration of Independence. In 1776, as a member of the Continental Congress, he was in the committee of five (The Founding Fathers) to draft the Declaration of Independence. He outlined the principles of revolutionary democracy. He also listed basic human rights, including the natural right of the colonists to be free. He also believed that they had a right to establish their own independent government. In 1800 Jefferson won the elections and served two terms as President of the USA.

Passing over to poetry, we should mention **Philip Freneau (1752–1832)** who was the most outstanding poet of the Revolution. He wrote political poems mostly, such as *A Poem of the Rising Glory of America* (1772), *To the Americans* (1775). It's obvious he was very patriotic and the very titles of his poems contain the name of his country and the nation.

He also wrote lyrical poems of which *The Indian Burying Ground* (1788) and *The Wild Honey Suckle* (1785) are the best.

#### THE WILD HONEY SUCKLE (1785)

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,  
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,  
Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,  
Unseen thy little branches greet:  
No roving foot shall crush thee here,  
No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,  
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,  
And planted here the guardian shade,

And sent soft waters murmuring by;  
Thus quietly thy summer goes,  
Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,  
I grieve to see your future doom;  
They died – nor were those flowers more gay,  
The flowers that did in Eden bloom;  
Unpitying frosts, and Autumn's power  
Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews  
At first thy little being came:  
If nothing once, you nothing lose,  
For when you die you are the same;  
The space between, is but an hour,  
The frail duration of a flower. [5]

The poem is about a short life of a flower. But the flower is a metaphor. It is associated with a human.

The first stanza describes a babe in the womb. Untouched, unseen, and protected. The second talks about childhood, being protected in shade. The third is about maturing and ageing. The flower dies in the fourth stanza and leaves no trace.

Although the honeysuckle has gone through these changes, its life was short. Basically, Freneau tells us that our lives are also frail and short. The poem brings into focus the inevitability of death. Consequently, it questions the value of life. The fact that one has the opportunity to exist at all should be sufficient.

He personifies Nature as a kind of a caretaker or a gardener. Furthermore, Freneau personifies the flower. He talks to the flower as if it were a person. He uses the second person singular pronouns “thy” and “thee”.

## PART II. ROMANTICISM

### 2.1. ROOTS AND FEATURES OF ROMANTICISM IN LITERATURE

In the XVIII century, a huge economic change known as the *Industrial Revolution* began in Britain and soon spread to the United States. It caused tremendous economic growth which manifested in the following facts:

1) Large factories replaced home based workshops. The Boston Manufacturing Company, for example, employed thousands of women and children, who worked for lower wages than men and in often dangerous conditions.

2) Hundreds of new factories were built.

3) An expanding network of roads and canals united different sections of the country.

4) Two new inventions — the steamboat and the railroad — revolutionized transportation.

5) Manufacturers sold their goods nationwide or abroad instead of just locally.

6) The Industrial Revolution transformed American society. It divided Americans into two nations: the industrial North with large cities and an economy based on manufacturing, and the agricultural South with few large cities and a farming economy dominated by a single crop — cotton. This cotton was grown on large plantations worked by slaves.

#### Roots of Romanticism

Romanticism was a movement in art and thought that dominated Europe and the United States throughout the first half of the XIX century. In America

romanticism appeared as the result of the Revolution of 1775–1783.

*Romanticism was insured*

- a) by the disillusionment of most people in the results of the revolution;
- b) by the contradictions between the rich and the poor which were as strong as ever;
- c) by negro slavery flourishing in the country;
- d) by the extermination of the Indian tribes.

### Features of Romanticism

1. (Genres) Romantic writers in America developed such genres as the novel (historical, social, and fantastic), the romance and the short story. The writers of romanticism were true patriots. They loved their country and recognized the importance of developing national literature.

2. (Settings) The romantic writers were fascinated by remote periods of history and exotic places. They gave their readers a taste for old ballads, epics, and the folk-tales of the Indians.

3. (Plot) The romantic writers favoured a complicated plot, dynamic development of the events and sudden changes in the fates of the heroes. Many complicated dramatic conflicts were solved with the help of chance accidents, fatal meetings or the discovery of dreadful secrets.

4. The major themes are nature, the destructive effects of industry, self-development. Romanticism values *the individual over society, nature over city*. It questions rules, conventions. It glorifies the “noble savage” as it sees humanity living in nature as morally superior to civilized humanity.

5. Nature is one of the major themes. It was a time when new lands were discovered. Courageous pioneers penetrated into the wilderness. Man's struggle with nature inspired many American writers of that time. They celebrated beauty, power, and wonder of the natural world. They stressed the value of nature as a spiritual and moral guide for humanity.

6. Romantic writers celebrated individualism and freedom. The development of the “self” and self-awareness became major themes. The idea of “self,” which suggested selfishness to earlier generations, got a new positive meaning. New compound words emerged: “self-realization,” “self-expression,” “self-reliance.”

7. Romantic writers valued imagination and feeling over intellect and reason and were drawn to the nonrational side of a human.

The Romantic Period in American literature is usually divided into Early and Late Romanticism.

Early romantic writers were more optimistic about the American reality. Early romantics believed that American civilization had great possibilities for development though they criticized its drawbacks.

Late romanticism developed in an atmosphere of sharp social contradictions in the country. The fiction of late romantics was permeated with tragic mood, sharp conflicts, confused feelings.

## **2.2. THE EARLY ROMANTIC PERIOD**

Americans were aware of their dependence on English literary models. The search for a native literature became a national obsession. The first truly American writer of fiction was **Washington Irving (1783–1859)**.

Washington Irving ['wɒʃɪŋtən 'ɜ:vɪŋ] was born in New York in a wealthy merchant's family. Washington, the youngest of eleven children, being sickly in childhood, was not sent to school. His mother educated him at home. Washington was fond of wandering around the countryside. On the outskirts of his native New York City he made himself familiar with places famous in history and legends.



Writing became his hobby. He set off travelling to Germany, Spain, France, Italy and England. When he returned to the USA he started a paper called *Salmagundi* (from French). The very title of the paper showed it to be a humorous periodical published by the authors just for fun. *The Salmagundi* papers possess historical value as pictures of social life in New York during the first decade of the 19th century. Washington Irving's humour was highly appreciated.

Irving's notable works are *The Alhambra* (1832), mostly covering descriptions of Europe, and historical biographies: *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828); and *The Life of George Washington* (1855–1859).

Irving's most outstanding work is a series of sketches, short stories and essays, which were published in 1820, under the title of *The Sketch Book*.

*The Sketch Book* consists of 34 sketches. They depict both English and American life. The majority of the sketches describe rural England; the most famous are *Stratford-on-Avon* and *Westminster Abbey*. Yet, Irving's main merit lies in his creation of folk-tales of the Dutch colonial settlers of New York and sketches of the American Indians. They express the character, ways of thought, ideals and aspirations of the American simple people. The best-known sketches of American life are *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. The latter is a legend about a headless horseman. There is a film adaptation starring Johnny Depp.

In his sketches Irving uses legends, fairy-tales and records of customs and characters which he collected from personal talks with old Dutch folks. *The Sketch Book* is more than a romantic fairy-tale about the past of America. It contains rather sharp social observations. Thus, when Rip awakes after his twenty years' sleep, he finds America unchanged though a very important event, the American Revolution has taken place. Irving describes Rip's return to his village during an election campaign with much irony.

## Gothic Horror Literature

The dark side of Romanticism can be seen in Gothic literature. A classic example of Gothic Literature in England is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, a novel about a monster that destroys its creator. The American Romantic writers also recognized the power of supernatural, irrational and insane. Gothic horror relies on atmosphere, or mood, to achieve its scary effect.

Gothic writers create a scary atmosphere through plot, characters, and settings.

1. Plots often focus on mysterious happenings, tragic events.
2. Characters are often mad, half-mad, or frightened to death. They may exhibit strange behavior and physical traits.
3. Settings are dark and often contain decayed dwellings, strange sounds, and damp rooms.

The first American master of horror stories was Edgar Allan Poe.

He was an outstanding romantic poet and short-story writer, and one of the first professional writers of the United States. But in his lifetime he was more popular in Europe than at home.

**Edgar Poe** was born in Boston in 1809. His parents were actors, but he was left an orphan at the age of three. And though he was taken under protection of a prosperous tobacco merchant John Allan, his childhood was miserable. Mr. Allan's business took him abroad, and Poe lived with the family in Scotland and England. Back in the United States, he was sent to University. At the end of the first year Mr. Allan decided to remove him from the university. The tobacco merchant had never understood the boy's vocation for art. He made him a clerk in his business. Poe immediately ran away and went to Boston.

In Boston he published three volumes of poetry but not a single copy was sold. His poems passed unnoticed. However, Poe first became famous as a writer of fiction, with a short story he wrote for a magazine. It was the story *MS Found in a Bottle* (MS is short for manuscript). Then Poe married a 13-year-

old girl Virginia Clemm, his cousin-sister, he spent the rest of his life in Philadelphia and New York. Soon his young wife became very ill with tuberculosis. In 1847 his wife died and in 1849 Edgar Allan Poe's life ended. His death was as mysterious as his stories were. He was found dead on a bench in a park. He was, probably, attacked, robbed and murdered. According to another version, he was drunk and had a heart attack.

Poe distinguished himself in three fields: in the short story, poetry and criticism.

Poe's stories may be divided into horror stories and detective stories.

The most distinguished horror stories are: *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Black Cat*, *The Descent into Maelstrom*. The horror stories focus on various forms of suffering. They represent a psychological study of anxiety and terror, of passion, anger, revenge. These emotions are suffered by men who think they are destined for some strange fate. All Poe's best stories show some triumph of mind over danger to which the hero seems doomed.

Poe is a poet of beauty. His constant themes are the death of a beautiful woman and the grief caused by it. After his wife's death these themes became major ones.

His stories and poems deal with loss and sorrow, ruin and revenge, disease and death. Poe's literary works reflected his own troubles and fears, but many readers responded favorably to the tragic mood of his works. Poe's stories helped the readers confront their own fears.

Poe's stories illustrate his idea that any composition should have a single, unique effect. This effect is evident in the gloomy beginning of his short story "*The Fall of the House of Usher*". The story guarantees to make the reader long for sunshine or the comfort of his or her own room.

"During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of

the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was — but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit... I looked upon the scene before me — upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain — upon the bleak walls — upon the vacant eye-like windows — upon a few rank sedges — and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees — with an utter depression of soul.” [6]

The atmosphere created at the beginning of the story is oppressively gloomy and inspires fear.

Poe also wrote detective stories. He created the first master detective Auguste Dupin [ɔ:'gʌst dju:'pe]. Dupin is a very attractive character in Poe's stories. The reader delights in his common sense, wit and optimism. The author endows him with extraordinary powers of deduction and analysis. Dupin is the forerunner of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. Poe's best known detective stories are: *The Murder in Rue Morgue* and *The Mystery of Marie Roget*. His first detective story, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” combines Gothic horror with Dupin's reasoning and common sense.

**James Fenimore Cooper** ['dʒeɪmz 'fenɪmɔː 'ku:pə] (1789–1851) published historical romances of Indian life. Cooper is best remembered for his novel *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826).

James Fenimore Cooper was born in Burlington, New Jersey. This place is now called Cooperstown in his honour. It was a frontier town; beyond it was wooded wilderness.

He got his education from outdoor life. He heard many tales of adventures in the dark forest. Cooper began writing at the age of thirty. He succeeded as a writer when he published *The Pioneers* (1823), and later *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), with the central character Natty Bumppo.

### The Leatherstocking Tales

Cooper's fame as a novelist rests on his five novels of the American frontier, called *The Leatherstocking Tales*. Frontier is a border between the

civilized life and the wilderness. To follow the sequence of events we should read them in the order given below: *The Deerslayer* (1841), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Pathfinder* (1840), *The Pioneers* (1823) and *The Prairie* (1827).

The life of Natty Bumppo ['næti: 'bʌmpu:] is the unifying thread of these five novels. He is a frontiersman that is a man living on the frontier, on the border of wilderness. Natty Bumppo embodies Cooper's vision of the frontiersman as a gentleman, a "natural aristocrat". He is the idealized individualist who is better than the society. He is poor and isolated, yet pure.

The novels bring to life America from 1740 to 1804. Cooper's novels portray the waves of the frontier settlers: the original wilderness inhabited by Indians; the arrival of the first whites as scouts, soldiers, traders; the coming of the poor, rough settler families; and the final arrival of the middle class, bringing the first professionals — the judge, the doctor, and the banker.

Natty Bumppo's character is based on the real life of American pioneer Daniel Boone. Who was also adopted by an Indian tribe. Both Boone and the fictional Bumppo constantly kept moving west to escape the oncoming civilization. They both became legends in their own lifetimes.

*The Deerslayer*, the first novel of the pentalogy, shows Bumppo's youth as a hunter brought up among the Delaware Indians. He is a perfect woodsman. The Delaware Indians are his best friends. They have taught him to read the signs of the forest.

Cooper stresses that Bumppo's nobility of spirit and justice have been developed by his life among the Indians. The writer emphasizes that the white people, intruding on the Indian hunting grounds, provoke wars and bring corruption to the noble and simple Indians.

In *The Pioneers*, the fourth novel, Natty Bumppo comes into an open conflict with the law which defends property. He is punished for hunting a deer out of season.

In *The Prairie*, the last novel, Natty, now an old man, leaves his forests, and is driven out by the advance of civilization to the Western Plains. He dies conquered by the civilization.

The portraits of the Indians in the pentalogy depend on whether they support the English or their enemies, the French. The supporters of the English are noble whereas those of the French are cunning. Yet, the customs of the Indian tribes were described in the novels in detail and true to historical facts.

Cooper's main merit lies in the fact that he managed to convince the readers of the human worth of the Indians.

### **2.3. THE LATE ROMANTIC PERIOD. TRANSCENDENTALISM (1828–1865)**

The Late Romantic Period also known as the Age of Transcendentalism is commonly accepted to be the greatest of American Literature. Major writers and poets include Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Walt Whitman.

The main genre in fiction was the romance. As defined by N. Hawthorne, a Romance was a heightened, emotional, and symbolic form of the novel. They were not love stories, but serious novels that used special techniques to communicate complex and subtle meanings.

The typical protagonists of the American Romance are heroic figures, burning with mythic significance but they are haunted, alienated individuals, such as Hawthorne's Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Melville's Ahab in *Moby-Dick*, and the isolated and obsessed characters of Edgar Poe's tales. They are lonely protagonists struggling against their dark fates. The plots are symbolic. They reveal hidden actions of the anguished spirit.

## **Transcendentalism**

Transcendentalism was a movement that embodied the ideas of thinkers in New England in the 1830s and 1840s. This movement was represented by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Nathaniel Hawthorne. It is associated with Concord, Massachusetts, a town near Boston, where Emerson, Thoreau, and a group of other writers lived. Emerson was a leading figure in this group, which began as an informal discussion club.

The essence of Transcendentalism was the philosophy known as Idealism (represented by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant). For idealists, reality is not in material objects as such but exists in our ideas about those objects. The Transcendentalists believed that intuition is a more valuable guide than sensory experience.

American Transcendental Romantics pushed individualism to the extreme. They favored nature over formal religion, individual insight over dogma, and instinct over social convention.

**Ralph Waldo Emerson** was the leader of his era.

Each of us has ambitions and plans, hopes and dreams. Optimists believe they can reach their goals in life. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a lifelong optimist. He also celebrated the individual. He proclaimed that by being loyal to their innermost selves, people could accomplish great things. He believed that ordinary citizens could improve American society. Ralph Waldo Emerson said: "All that Adam had, all that Caesar could, you have and can do."

Emerson's optimism convinced him that the universe existed for humanity's benefit. He said "the world exists for you." He believed that ordinary human beings had limitless potential. He was convinced that humans are divine because they share in the Over-soul. Over-soul is Emerson's name for the spirit that pervades the universe. Emerson summed up his ideas by saying that every person was infinite.

Emerson is best known for his essays, such as "Self-Reliance".

“Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes follow the Past and the Distant. ...Why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought, and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also. Insist on yourself; never imitate.” [7]

The main idea of the paragraph is how important it is to perceive and to preserve one’s own self.

Emerson’s best friend was Henry David Thoreau.

**Henry David Thoreau** ['θɔːrəu] (1817–1862) was born in Concord and made it his permanent home. From a poor family, like Emerson, he worked his way through Harvard.

Thoreau’s essay “Civil Disobedience,” with its theory of passive resistance, inspired Mahatma Gandhi’s movement for independence of India and Martin Luther King’s struggle for black Americans’ rights in the XX century. Besides along with significant political ideas, Thoreau expressed some views which inspired modern ecological movement, like Green Peace. In the 1800s, Henry David Thoreau was one of the first environmental activists. He believed that contact with wild nature refreshed the human spirit. Nature can teach us to respect its destructive ways and remind us that we can never subdue its powerful forces.

Thoreau’s masterpiece, *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854), is the result of two years he spent living in a cabin at Walden Pond, near his hometown of Concord, Massachusetts. He built the cabin himself. Thoreau observed the natural surroundings; he was not fond of luxuries and was not afraid of living on his own.



Thoreau's concept of the natural world had much in common with the Native American viewpoint. Both opinions found harmony and purpose in the unspoiled earth. At Walden he wrote, "You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns."

Thoreau rejected conventional life. Like Emerson, Thoreau championed American individualism. Thoreau's extreme individualism led him to take certain radical political positions.

Many of Thoreau's writings, including *Walden*, are based on his journal. Thoreau kept a journal since the age of twenty and reshaped and revised it throughout his life. When he died at forty-four, the journal ran to 7,000 manuscript pages containing nearly two million words.

March 5. [1858] ... "The Indians stood nearer to wild nature than we. The wildest and noblest quadrupeds, even the largest fresh-water fishes, some of the wildest and noblest birds and fairest flowers have actually receded as we advanced, and we have but the most distant knowledge of them. ...It was a new light when my guide gave me Indian names for things for which I had only scientific ones before. I saw them from a new point of view." [8]

This paragraph persuades the reader that the Indians are closer to nature than civilized people.

### **Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864)**

Nathaniel Hawthorne was a descendant of Puritan ancestors. They were involved in the witch trials. Nathaniel wanted to distance himself from his family's shameful involvement in the witch trials, so he added the "w" to his last name. Among his ancestors was one of the first Puritan settlers who arrived in New England in 1630. Hawthorne's works are deeply concerned with the ethical problems of sin, punishment, and atonement. His exploration of these themes was related to the sense of guilt he felt about the involvement of his ancestors in the witchcraft trials of Massachusetts.

He wrote several successful short stories including “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”, “Roger Malvin's Burial”, and “Young Goodman Brown”.

His most famous novel is “The Scarlet letter”. When Hawthorne read the final pages of this novel to his wife, the end of the book broke her heart and sent her to bed with a headache. The author looked upon this reaction as a triumphant success.

*The Scarlet Letter* was an immediate success with the general public. His works still remain notable for their treatment of New England Puritanism, personal guilt, and the complexities of moral choices.

The story begins in the seventeenth-century Puritan Boston. A young woman, Hester Prynne, is led from the town prison with her infant daughter, Pearl; in her arms and the scarlet letter “A” on her breast. Hester is being punished for adultery. Hester’s husband, a scholar much older than she is, sent her ahead to America, but he never arrived in Boston. Everybody thinks that he has been lost at sea. While waiting for her husband, Hester has apparently had an affair, as she has given birth to a child. She will not reveal her lover’s identity, and the scarlet letter, along with her public shaming, is her punishment for her sin and her secrecy.

Hester’s missing husband is now practicing medicine and calling himself Roger Chillingworth. He settles in Boston, intent on revenge. He reveals his true identity to no one but Hester. Several years pass. Hester supports herself by working as a seamstress, and Pearl grows into a willful, impish child. Shunned by the community, they live in a small cottage on the outskirts of Boston. Community officials attempt to take Pearl away from Hester, but, with the help of Arthur Dimmesdale, a young and eloquent minister, the mother and daughter manage to stay together. Dimmesdale suffers from mysterious heart trouble, caused by psychological distress. Dimmesdale invents new tortures for himself, as it is he who is Pearl’s father. In the meantime, Hester’s charitable deeds have earned her a reprieve from the scorn of the community.

Themes:

### 1. Public Guilt vs. Private Guilt

The novel illustrates the difference between shaming someone in public and allowing him to suffer privately. Each person suffers enough for his own sins.

Hawthorne shows how private torture and guilt are enough punishment for the crime. We wonder whether the society has any right to impose law in private matters.

### 2. Punishment vs. Forgiveness / Memories vs. the Present

Hester learned to forgive herself for her adultery, but society continues to scorn her for it. As Pearl grows up, Hester learns to live in the present rather than in the past. Dimmesdale, meanwhile, is haunted by his past sins. In suppressing his own confession, Dimmesdale remains focused on a sinful past instead of looking at the problems of the present.

### 3. The Scarlet Letter

The scarlet letter is symbolic in a number of different ways. A woman was charged with adultery and forced to wear the letter A upon her clothes, but upon wearing it, she decided to add fancy embroidery as if to appropriate the letter as a point of pride. Hester sees the letter as a burden laid on by society. Dimmesdale, however, wears his own scarlet A burned upon his flesh. It is the community's rage he fears the most. Thus we see the difference between a woman who has made peace with the crime, publicly confesses, and endures the suffering the community imposes, and a man who imposes his own punishment on him because he cannot bear to reveal the crime to the community.

### 4. Civilization vs. Wilderness

Pearl embodies the theme of wilderness against civilization. She is wild, passionate, and completely oblivious to the rules of the society. But as soon as Dimmesdale dies, Pearl seems to lose her vigor and becomes a normal girl, able to marry and assimilate into society. The implication is that Pearl truly was

a child of lust and passion. Once the flame of love is extinguished, she can properly assimilate.

#### 5. The Town vs. the Woods

In the town, Hester usually is confronted with the legal and moral consequences of her crime. (The Governor of the town comes to take her child away.) But whenever Hester leaves the town and enters the woods, she is free to rediscover herself.

Hawthorne's novel is concerned with the effects of the affair rather than the affair itself. Hawthorne leaves out the details of the adultery between Hester and Dimmesdale entirely. Instead, he was concerned with the aftermath of the affair – the shaming of Hester, the raising of a child borne of sin, and the values of a society that continued to be punish for a sin long after it seemed reasonable.

The novel redefines adultery as a private matter in which the society has no interest to get involved. Hawthorne was moving minds to agree that if adultery was a crime, it was a crime of the heart that need not be punished by society, since it had its own consequences in the guilt, shame, and suffering.

#### **Herman Melville (1819–1891)**

One of the most important novels in American literature is *Moby Dick*.

Herman Melville was born in New York City, into a family whose fortunes had declined. After his twenty he sailed to the South Seas on a whaling ship where he witnessed the violence of life at sea. He experienced all sorts of sea adventures and troubles: with a companion he lived for a month among the cannibals on an isolated island. Then in Haiti he was temporarily imprisoned. He worked as a field laborer and then escaped to Hawaii, where he enlisted as a seaman on the U.S. Navy ship. After his discharge Melville began to write novels inspired by his voyages. These tales of exotic travel adventures brought Melville early success.

Melville's first novels all achieved quick popularity, among them were: *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846), *A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas* (1847), and others. But his masterpiece is *Moby Dick; or The Whale* (1851). Ironically, Melville's popularity dropped after the publication of this book. *Moby Dick* was too symbolic and complex.

The central theme of this novel is the conflict between Captain Ahab ['eɪhæb], master of the whaler Pequod ['pɪkwɒd], and Moby Dick, a great white whale. This whale tore off one of Ahab's legs at the knee. Ahab is dedicated to revenge. He drives himself and his crew over the seas in a desperate search for his enemy. For the crazy captain Ahab evil is personified in the huge white whale. Ahab pursues revenge with maniacal obsessiveness. Ahab is doomed to death. And so it proves to be: Moby Dick destroys the Pequod and all its crew except Ishmael.

The body of the book is written in an original, powerful style. In certain sections of the book Melville used different styles. The most impressive of these sections include the sermon delivered before sailing and the soliloquies [sə'ɪləkwɪz] of the mates; passages of a technical nature, such as the chapter about whales. These sections can stand by themselves as short stories.

*Moby Dick* was not a financial success, and Melville's following novels were critical and financial failure. His works remained in shade until the 1920s, when his genius was finally recognized and *Moby Dick* came to be considered a classic. While transcendentalism was fundamentally optimistic, celebrating human creativity and the beauty of nature, Melville demonstrated the darker side of life.

Facts about the whale and whaling cannot explain Moby-Dick; on the contrary, the facts themselves tend to become symbols. Whaling, throughout the book, is a grand metaphor for the 'pursuit of knowledge.

Certain literary references resonate throughout the novel. Ahab, named for an Old Testament king, desires total god-like knowledge. Ahab's ship

Pequod is named for an extinct Indian tribe; thus the name suggests that the boat is doomed to destruction. Whaling was in fact a major industry, especially in New England: It supplied whale oil as an energy source, especially for lamps. Thus the whale does literally “shed light” on the universe. The Pequod’s crew members represent all races and various religions, suggesting the idea of America as a melting pot.

#### Themes highlighted in Moby Dick

Themes are the fundamental and universal ideas explored in a literary work.

a. The Limits of Knowledge. Ishmael, the narrator, makes use of nearly every science discipline in his attempts to understand the nature of the whale. Each of these sciences fails to explain the whale. The multiplicity of approaches that Ishmael takes suggests that human knowledge should always be limited and insufficient.

Only the surfaces of objects are available to the human observer. As the whale swims, it hides much of its body underwater, and no one knows where it goes or what it does. The sea itself is the greatest frustration: its depths are mysterious.

Nature, however beautiful, remains alien and potentially deadly. In Moby-Dick, Melville challenges the idea that humans can understand nature. Moby-Dick, the great white whale, is an inscrutable, cosmic existence that dominates the novel.

b. The Deceptiveness of Fate Ishmael’s narrative contains many references to fate, creating the impression that the Pequod’s doom is inevitable. Ahab clearly exploits the sailors’ belief in fate to manipulate them into thinking that the quest for Moby Dick is their common destiny.

Abolitionism in the United States was the movement before and during the American Civil War to end slavery in the United States.

## **Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896)**

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in Litchfield, Connecticut.

She was one of thirteen children of the famous Puritan preacher and educator Lyman Beecher. His wife died when Harriet was only 5 years old.

In 1832 the family moved to Ohio, and there she married Calvin Stowe.

In 1850 Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law, prohibiting assistance to fugitives.

But the Stowes supported the Underground Railroad, temporarily housing several fugitive slaves in their home. They helped them to go to the North and then to Canada. Harriet began to fully sympathize with slave mothers whose children were sold away from them.

Stowe claimed that a vision of dying slaves and the death of her youngest child from cholera motivated her to write a story about the problem of slavery.

In 1851, when she was 40, her *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the best-selling novel of the XIX century.

The plot: Mr. Shelby, a slave owner and Mr. Haley, a slave trader, discuss how many slaves Mr. Shelby will need to sell in order to clear up his debt. Mr. Shelby decides to sell Tom, a faithful and honest man, and Harry, Eliza's son.

Eliza overhears the conversation and makes a decision to take her son and run away to Canada that very night. She hopes to reunite with her husband in Canada. Eliza escapes into Ohio by crossing a river on a piece of floating ice.

Tom chooses not to run because he knows his master and relies on his honesty.

Tom and Mr. Haley leave for the South. En route, Tom saves a little girl from drowning. The girl's father buys Tom to be his daughter's personal servant. The little girl, Eva, is a sweet child, devoted to her servants and family. Tom grows fond of little Eva. But some time later the girl dies from tuberculosis. Her father promises Tom his freedom but he is killed in a bar. Tom is sold at auction, along with other slaves.

Meanwhile, Eliza and her husband George are reunited and escape to Canada successfully.

Tom's new master is Simon Legree, an evil and violent man who works his slaves until they die, then buys new ones cheaply in a never-ending cycle. Despite Legree's treatment, Tom maintains his honest, kind behavior.

Legree beats Tom to death.

#### Uncle Tom

Stowe intended Tom to be a "noble hero" and a praiseworthy person, a long-suffering Christian slave. Throughout the book Tom stands up for his beliefs and is admired even by his enemies.

#### Major themes

**Slavery:** Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote this novel in order to illustrate the evil and inhumanity of slavery.

The novel illustrates not only the suffering and misery of slaves themselves, but the way that slavery harms everyone involved in it.

**Race:** The novel shows the domination of one group of people by another based on race is unacceptable. Blacks are depicted as having the same kind of souls and the same claims on God's love that whites have.

However, Stowe uses many XIX century racial stereotypes. Black characters are depicted as childlike and overemotional.

**Love:** Little angel Eva loves everybody, even her horrible mother Marie. Tom finds love in his heart for his murderer, Simon Legree. Tom and Eva's love is of a pure, Christian kind that extends to everyone around them – slave and free, black and white, nice and not-so-nice.

**Suffering:** In order to convince her readers that slavery is morally wrong, Stowe depicts all the different ways in which slaves suffer: physical suffering, brutal whippings and beatings, rape and sexual violation, and even murder. But it also shows such forms of suffering, as the separation of families and the degradation of the human spirit.



Stowe also makes it clear that masters “suffer” from slavery in another way: it makes them un-Christian and it interferes with the proper running of their households.

Style: Stowe's style is evangelical and democratic because of its biblical overtones and her addresses to the reader.

Three of the characters in Uncle Tom's Cabin have become bywords in American culture – little Eva (a symbol of angelic love), Uncle Tom (doomed for eternal suffering, not able to defend himself), and Simon Legree (a symbol of violence and rudeness).

The informal, conversational style of her novel permitted her to encourage people to address such controversial topics as slavery, religious reforms, and gender roles.

#### **2.4. ROMANTIC POETRY. H.W. LONGFELLOW, W. WHITMAN**

##### **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882)**

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a famed XIX century scholar and poet, known for the collection of poems *Voices of the Night*, and the epic-poem *The Song of Hiawatha*. He was heavily influenced by Romanticism. He was also known for his translation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*.

At college Longfellow was an excellent student, showing proficiency in foreign languages. Upon his graduation he was offered a position to teach modern languages, but on the condition that he first travel to Europe, at his own expense, to research the languages. Because the study of foreign languages was so new in America, Longfellow had to write his own textbooks.

Over the next 15 years, Longfellow would produce some of his best work such as *Voices of the Night*, a collection of poems including *Hymn to the Night* and *A Psalm of Life*, which gained him immediate popularity. During this time, Longfellow also taught full time at Harvard and directed the Modern Languages

Department. Due to budget cuts, he covered many of the teaching positions himself. Longfellow's popularity seemed to grow, as did his collection of works. He wrote about a multitude of subjects: slavery in *Poems on Slavery*, literature of Europe in an anthology *The Poets and Poetry of Europe*, and American Indians in *The Song of Hiawatha*. He practiced self-marketing and expanded his audience becoming one of the best-selling authors in the world.

One of his most recognizable works is *The Song of Hiawatha* [ˌhaɪə'wɔθə], based on an accumulation of American Indian stories and legends. The meter Longfellow used was based on a Finnish epic poem called the *Kalevala*. ['ka:lɪˌva:lə]

Hiawatha is a fictional Ojibwa [ɔu'dʒɪbwa:] warrior. The epic relates his adventures and the tragedy of his love for Minnehaha, a Dakota woman. Events in the story are set on the south shore of Lake Superior. Hiawatha is depicted by Longfellow as a noble savage. It was connected with the general feeling of Americans of that time that the Indians belonged nowhere in American life but in dim prehistory. Longfellow found the mass of Indian legends depicting noble savages out of time. By the time Longfellow wrote *Hiawatha*, the Indian as a direct opponent of civilization was dead, yet was still heavy on American consciences.

Longfellow's sources for the legends and ethnography found in his poem were the Ojibwa Chief who visited Longfellow's home and other Indians whom Longfellow encountered in Boston Common Park.

There was a tradition among the Indians of a personage of miraculous birth, who was sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing-grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace. He was known among different tribes by the several names of Michabou, Chiabo, Manabozo, Tarenyawagon, and Hiawatha.

The *Song* presents a legend of Hiawatha and his lover *Minnehaha* in 22 chapters (and an Introduction). Hiawatha is not introduced until Chapter III.

Chapters I to III tell the long story of Hiawatha's ancestors until he is born.

Then Hiawatha has childhood adventures, falls in love with Minnehaha, slays the evil magician Pearl-Feather, invents written language, discovers corn and other episodes. Minnehaha dies in a severe winter.

The poem closes with the approach of a birch canoe to Hiawatha's village, containing "the Priest of Prayer, the Pale-face." Hiawatha welcomes him joyously; and the "Black-Robe chief" brings word of Jesus Christ. Hiawatha and the chiefs accept the Christian message. Then Hiawatha bids farewell to the warriors, and departs forever.

*The Song of Hiawatha* has a great historical and literary significance as it helps general world public get acquainted with Indian folklore and culture.

Longfellow's shorter poems are also worth talking about. There are very different poems in mood and style: "A Psalm of Life" glorifies optimism whereas "The rainy day" is permeated with melancholic mood.

**Walter Whitman (1819–1892)** was an American poet, journalist and humanist. Born on Long Island, New York, Walt Whitman was a part-time carpenter and man of the people, whose brilliant, innovative work expressed the country's democratic spirit. Whitman was largely self-taught; he left school at the age of 11 to go to work, missing the sort of traditional education that made most American authors respectful imitators of the English. His *Leaves of Grass* (1855), which he rewrote and revised throughout his life, contains "Song of Myself," the most stunningly original poem ever written by an American.

The poem's innovative, unrhymed, free-verse form, open celebration of sexuality, vibrant democratic sensibility, and extreme Romantic assertion that the poet's self was one with the universe and the reader, permanently altered the course of American poetry.

The poetry was initially labeled and banned for its obscenity. *Leaves of Grass* was highly controversial during its time for its explicit sexual imagery, and Whitman was subject to criticism. Over time, however, the collection has

been recognized as one of the central works of American poetry. *Leaves of Grass* is notable for its discussion of delight in sensual pleasures during a time when such displays were considered immoral. *Leaves of Grass* exalted the body and the material world. Whitman's poetry praises nature and the individual human's role in it.

With one exception, the poems do not rhyme or follow standard rules for meter and line length. Among the poems in the collection are "Song of Myself", "I Sing the Body Electric", and "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking".

The first edition was very small, collecting only twelve unnamed poems. In "Song of Myself", Whitman emphasized an all-powerful "I" who serves as narrator. The "I" tries to relieve both social and private problems by using powerful affirmative cultural images. The emphasis on American culture helped reach Whitman's intention of creating a distinctly American poem.

Whitman edited, revised, and republished *Leaves of Grass* many times before his death, and over the years his focus and ideas were not static. One critic has identified three major "thematic drifts" in *Leaves of Grass*. In the first period, his major work is "Song of Myself" and it exemplifies his prevailing love for freedom. The second period paints the picture of a more melancholic, sober poet. In poems like "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd", the prevailing themes are of love and of death. Then in the third period his focus on death grows to a focus on immortality, the major theme of this period. Whitman became more conservative in his old age, and had come to believe that the importance of law exceeded the importance of freedom.

To sum up, Romanticism is an artistic and intellectual movement of the early XIX century placing an emphasis on the individual and on the personal emotions, on human imagination, and on nature in an idealized form. Romantic literature rebelled against the XVIII century reason, the age of the Enlightenment and pure logic.

The American Period of Romanticism had the same characteristics as European Romanticism but there were several uniquely American aspects.

Conditions that influenced American Romanticism:

✓ Frontier promising opportunity for expansion, growth, freedom; Europe lacked this element.

✓ Spirit of optimism invoked by the promise of an uncharted frontier.

✓ Immigration bringing new cultures and perspectives

✓ Growth of industry in the north further polarizing the north and the agrarian south

✓ The impulse to reform

✓ Seeing their experiment as a model for the rest of the world to imitate

Literary themes of romantic writings: escapism, common man as hero, Nature as refuge, source of knowledge and/or spirituality.

## **PART III. AMERICAN LITERATURE OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE XIX CENTURY AND THE BEGINNING OF THE XX CENTURY. REALISM**

### **3.1. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF REALISM**

Realism as a trend in American literature developed after the Civil War. The U.S. Civil War (1861–1865) between the industrial North and the agricultural, slave-owning South was a watershed in American history. The new era of the millionaire manufacturer and the speculator began. After the war Americans increasingly idealized progress and the “self-made man”. Darwinian evolution and the “survival of the fittest” sanctioned the unethical methods of the successful business tycoon. Business boomed after the war. War production had boosted industry in the North and given it prestige and political weight. It also gave industrial leaders valuable experience in the management of men and machines. The enormous natural resources – iron, coal, oil, gold, and silver – of the American land benefitted business.

The new intercontinental rail system, which was built in 1869, and the transcontinental telegraph, which began operating in 1861, gave industry access to materials, markets, and communications. The constant influx of immigrants provided an endless supply of inexpensive labor force. Over 23 million foreigners – German, Scandinavian, and Irish, and increasingly Southern Europeans thereafter – flowed into the United States between 1860 and 1910. By 1919 half of the population was concentrated in 12 cities.

Problems of urbanization and industrialization appeared: poor and overcrowded housing, unsanitary conditions, low pay (called “wage slavery”), difficult working conditions, and inadequate restraints on business. From

1860 to 1914, the United States was transformed from a small, agricultural ex-colony to a huge, modern, industrial nation. By World War I, the United States had become a major world power the world's wealthiest state.

To sum up, the factors that facilitated the development of realism are as follows:

- 1) the Civil War;
- 2) the urbanization and industrialization of America;
- 3) a reaction to Romanticism;
- 4) the emerging middle class;
- 5) social change and growing self-awareness.

### **3.2. REALISM AND ITS FEATURES (1865–1900)**

Realism was an artistic movement begun in the XIX century France. Writers strove for detailed realistic and factual description. The features of realism are:

1. Characters are from everyday life, rounded, dynamic. Characters dictate the plot; the ending usually open.

2. The plot is slow-moving. Time marches inevitably on; small things build up. Climax is not a crisis, but just one more unimportant fact.

3. The events and social conditions are represented as they actually are, without idealization. Realism recreated life in literature and focused on the truthful treatment of the average, everyday life, of the commonplace.

4. Realism is free from subjective prejudice, idealism, or romantic color.

5. Stresses the real over the fantastic.

6. Emphasizes optimistic tone, pragmatic, practical details

7. Humans are in control of their own destiny and are superior to their circumstances

8. Realism deals with people in society.

9. International novels appear – novels that depict two or more continents. The contrast of cultures gives character his identity. A common theme is an innocent American vs experience of Europe.

Realism varied in themes, ideas and techniques. There were several sub trends within realism. Here are some of them:

- ✓ Psychological realism (cosmopolitan writing)
- ✓ Regionalism (local colorists)
- ✓ Naturalism
- ✓ Genteel tradition
- ✓ Muckrakers

### 3.3. PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM AND HENRY JAMES

**Henry James (1843–1916)** is a major contributor to psychological realism.

James explored family relationships, romantic desires and struggles through his lens, often in painstaking detail. James' works focused largely on the inner lives of prosperous characters. His most famous novels — including *The Portrait of a Lady*, and *The Ambassadors* — portray characters that lack self-awareness but often have unfulfilled yearnings.

James's fiction is highly conscious, sophisticated. James is noted for his "international theme" — that is, the complex relationships between naïve Americans and cosmopolitan Europeans. Three phases are singled out in his writing career. His first, or "international", phase included such works as *The American* (1877), *Daisy Miller* (1879), and a masterpiece, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881). In *The American*, for example, Christopher Newman, a naïve but intelligent and idealistic self-made millionaire industrialist, goes to Europe seeking a bride. When her family rejects him because he lacks an aristocratic



background, he has a chance to revenge himself; in deciding not to, he demonstrates his moral superiority.

James's second period was experimental. He exploited new subject matters — feminism, social reform and political intrigue. In his third phase James returned to international subjects, but treated them with increasing sophistication and psychological penetration. The complex and almost mythical *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) date from this major period. James's constant concern is perception. According to Henry James, only self-awareness and clear perception of others gives wisdom and self-sacrificing love. As James develops, his novels become more psychological and less concerned with external events. In James's later works, the most important events are all psychological — usually moments of intense illumination that show characters their previous blindness. For example, in *The Ambassadors*, the idealistic, aging Lambert Strether uncovers a secret love affair and, in doing so, discovers a new complexity to his inner life. He discovers a capacity to accept those who have sinned. Thus his morality is humanized and enlarged.

#### Features of Psychological realism:

1. uses character-driven plots;
2. focuses on the motivations and internal thoughts of characters to explain their actions;
3. employs techniques peculiar for modernism: 1) the stream of consciousness technique; 2) interior monologues, employed to illustrate the inner workings of the human mind; 3) flashbacks.

An excellent example of this genre is Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The writer here shows not only what the characters do but also explains why they take such actions. The author expresses his opinion on a political issue through his characters.

### 3.4. REGIONALISM (LOCAL COLORISTS)

#### **Samuel Clemens (1835–1910)**

Better known by his pen name of **Mark Twain**, Samuel Clemens grew up in the Mississippi River frontier town of Hannibal, Missouri. His dream was to pilot a steamship. When he grew up his dream came true. For some time he worked as a steamship pilot. Samuel Clemens's pen name, *Mark Twain*, is the phrase Mississippi boatmen used to signify two fathoms (3.6 meters) of water, the depth needed for a boat's safe passage.

Twain's style is based on vigorous, realistic, colloquial American speech. It gave American writers a new appreciation of their national voice. Twain was the first major author to come from the interior of the country, and he captured its distinctive, humorous slang.

The main theme of Twain's work is the often humorous difference between pretense and reality.

For Twain and other writers realism was not merely a literary technique: It was a way of speaking truth and exploding conventions. Thus it was profoundly liberating. The most well-known example is his story of Huck Finn (*Huckleberry Finn*), a poor boy who decides to help a Negro slave escape to freedom, even though Huck thinks that he will be damned to hell for breaking the law.

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was Twain's masterpiece. It appeared in 1884. The action is set in the Mississippi River village of St. Petersburg. The son of an alcoholic, Huck has just been adopted by a respectable family when his father, in a drunken stupor, threatens to kill him. Fearing for his life, Huck escapes. He feigns his own death. He is joined in his escape by another outcast, the slave Jim. Jim's owner, Miss Watson, is thinking of selling him. Huck and Jim float on a raft down the Mississippi. They go through many comical and dangerous adventures that show the variety,

generosity, and sometimes cruel irrationality of society. In the end, it is discovered that Miss Watson had already freed Jim, and a respectable family is taking care of the wild boy Huck. But Huck grows impatient with civilized society and plans to escape to the Indian lands.

The ending gives the reader another version of the classic American “purity” myth: the open road leading to the wilderness, away from the bad influences of “civilization.”

Twain’s rare genius for humor and style keep his writing fresh and appealing.

#### Frontier Humor and Local Color (“regionalism”)

Two major literary currents in the XIX century America merged in Mark Twain: popular frontier humor and local color, or “regionalism.” These related literary approaches had earlier roots in local oral traditions: in frontier villages, on riverboats, in mining camps, and around cowboy campfires far from city amusements, storytelling flourished. Exaggeration, tall tales, incredible boasts, and comic workingmen heroes enlivened frontier literature. These humorous forms were found in many frontier regions. Each region had its colorful characters around which stories collected. The adventures of these characters were exaggerated and enhanced in ballads, newspapers, and magazines.

From the American frontier folk came the wild proliferation of comical new American words: “absquatulate” (leave), “flabbergasted” (amazed), “rampagious” (unruly, rampaging). Local boosters who asserted they were half horse, half alligator, also underscored the boundless energy of the frontier. They drew strength from natural hazards that would terrify ordinary men.

Like frontier humor, local color writing or regionalism has old roots but produced its best works long after the Civil War. Obviously, many pre-war writers painted striking portraits of specific American regions. What sets the colorists apart is their self-conscious and exclusive interest in rendering a given location, and their scrupulously factual, realistic technique.

The regional writing includes the works of Bret Harte, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Kate Chopin, Ellen Glasgow.

The features of regionalism are:

1. *The settings* are particularly important with emphasis on specific features such as dialect, customs, history, and landscape of a particular region. Settings are frequently remote and inaccessible. The setting may become a character in itself. There's a detailed description of small, seemingly insignificant details central to an understanding of the region.

2. *The characters* may become stereotypical: the character of the district or region rather than the individual. The characters are marked by their dialect, and by particular personality traits central to the region. The use of dialect establishes credibility and authenticity of regional characters.

3. *The Narrator* is an educated observer from the world beyond who preserves a sympathetic, sometimes ironic distance from the local residents. The narrator serves as mediator between the rural folk of the tale and the urban audience to whom the tale is directed.

4. *Plots*. It has been said in local color stories by women authors that "nothing happens", and often very little does happen. Stories may include lots of storytelling and revolve around the community and its rituals.

5. *The themes* include a certain degree of nostalgia for a past golden age; thematic tension or conflict between urban ways and old-fashioned rural values; intrusion of an outsider who seeks something from the community.

In local-color literature one finds the dual influence of romanticism and realism, since the author frequently looks away from ordinary life to distant lands, strange customs, or exotic scenes, but retains through minute detail a sense of accuracy of description.

**Bret Harte (1836–1902)** was an American short story writer and poet, best remembered for his short fiction featuring miners, gamblers, and other romantic figures of the California Gold Rush. As he moved from California to Europe, he incorporated new subjects and characters into his stories, but his Gold Rush tales have been most often reprinted, adapted, and admired. He is

remembered as the author of short adventurous stories such as *The Luck of Roaring Camp* and *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*, set along the western mining frontier. Bret Harte was the first great success in the local colorist school and for a brief time Harte was the best-known writer in America — such was the appeal of his romantic version of the West. He was one of the first to introduce low-life characters — cunning gamblers, prostitutes, and robbers — into serious literary works. He got away with this by showing that these seeming derelicts really had hearts of gold.

One of his best known stories is *The Luck of Roaring Camp*. This story is about a baby who changes the lives of the men of a rough mining camp dramatically. Here is the beginning of the story:

“Roaring Camp was the noisiest gold mining town in California. More than one-hundred men from every part of the United States had come to that little camp – stopping there for a short time on their way to getting rich.

Many of these gold miners were criminals. All of them were violent. The noise of their continual fighting finally gave the camp its strange name.

On a sunny morning in eighteen fifty, however, the men were quiet. A crowd was gathered in front of a small wooden house by the river. Inside that cabin was “Cherokee Sal,” the only woman in camp. Cherokee Sal was having a baby.

Deaths were not unusual in Roaring Camp. But a birth was big news.

Suddenly, a sharp cry broke the air... the cry of a new-born baby. Cherokee Sal was dead. But her baby, a boy, was alive.

The men formed a long line. One by one they entered the tiny cabin. On the bed, under a blanket, they could see the body of the unlucky mother. On a pine table, near that bed, was a small wooden box. Inside lay Roaring Camp's newest citizen, wrapped in a piece of bright red cloth.

Someone had put a large hat near the baby's box. And as the men slowly marched past, they dropped gifts into the hat. A gold tobacco box. A silver gun.

A diamond ring. A lace handkerchief. And about two hundred dollars in gold and silver.

Only one incident broke the flow of the men through the cabin. As a gambler named Kentucky leaned over the box, the baby reached up and held one of the man's fingers. Kentucky looked embarrassed." [9]

The men in the camp are joined together by a sense of responsibility for the orphan, although the child's actual father is unknown. They use the milk of an ass to feed the baby.

The intrusion of the infant into this setting has a civilizing effect on its inhabitants. The greatest change takes place in Kentuck, an impoverished miner who feels a strong affection for the child. Soon Roaring Camp and its people take on a new respectability and acquire an unexpected prosperity.

This story pictured the realism of life in a mining camp but did so within a sentimental framework. The story demonstrates Harte's method of seeing "hidden humanity among the sordid". Bret Harte's characters are stereotypes but he also makes them comically practical – they feed the newborn with asses' milk; they raise capital for his future out of stolen goods. Even naming the baby "Luck" avoids melodrama as the men are superstitious gamblers.

All the regions of the country were influenced by local color writing. Some of it included social protest as social inequality and economic hardship were particularly pressing issues. Racial injustice and inequality between the sexes appear in the works of southern writers such as **Kate Chopin** (1851–1904). Her novel *The Awakening* (1899) about a woman's attempt to find her own identity through passion was ahead of its time. In *The Awakening*, a young married woman with attractive children and an indulgent and successful husband gives up family, money, respectability, and eventually her life in search of self-realization. Poetic descriptions of the ocean, birds (caged and freed), and music make this short novel intense and complex.

### 3.5. THE NATURALIST PERIOD (1900–1914)

American Representatives of Naturalism are Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Stephen Crane, Edith Wharton, and John Dos Passos.

They insisted on recreating life as life really is, even more than the realists had been doing before. Their characters are victims of their own base instincts and of economic and sociological factors. Naturalistic writers used the scientific method to write their novels.

The term *naturalism* describes a type of literature that tries to apply scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to its study of human beings. Zola is the founder of Naturalism. He described his method in *The Experimental Novel* in 1880. Zola used the method of gathering data like a scientist – every material fact could be proved by reference to actuality or statistics. Thus Naturalism appears to be an intensification of Realism, but including more “research”.

It differed in spirit, however. Realism was an indifferent depiction of the commonplace, a photograph of unselected mediocrity. Naturalism, on the contrary, admitted purpose and selectivity. Each novel was a “study” exhibiting the truths of social existence. And for this purpose the worst items are the best.

Naturalistic novels deal with the local and contemporary. In this material the writers discover the extraordinary and excessive.

Distinguishing features of Naturalistic Novels:

1) Characters. The main characters are frequently ill-educated or lower-class people whose lives are controlled by the unseen forces, such as environment, heredity, instinct, passion, or chance. Their attempts at exercising free will or choice are hampered by forces beyond their control.

2) Settings. It is mostly an urban setting.

3) Techniques and plots. Depict man in conflict with nature, society, or himself. Offer a “chronicle of despair”.

- 4) Influences: Darwinism (natural selection) and psychology (Freud).
- 5) Themes. Survival, determinism, violence, and taboo are key themes. Naturalism dared to open up such topics as divorce, sex, adultery, poverty, and crime.
  - a) The “brute within” each individual. Characters are comprised of strong emotions: passions, such as lust, greed, or the desire for dominance or pleasure.
  - b) The fight for survival in an amoral, indifferent universe. The conflict in naturalistic novels is often “man against nature” or “man against himself”. Characters struggle to remain civilized human beings despite external pressures that threaten to release the “brute within”.
  - c) Nature as an indifferent force acting on the lives of human beings.
  - d) The forces of heredity and environment as they affect individual lives.
  - e) Indifferent universe. Naturalists often describe useless attempts of human beings to exercise free will. These attempts are ironically presented. The writers of this trend were sure that free will was an illusion.

**Edith Wharton [ˈiːdiθ ˈwɔːtn] (1862–1937)**

Edith Wharton grew up partly in Europe and eventually made her home there. She descended from a wealthy, established family in New York society and saw firsthand the decline of this cultivated group and, in her view, the rise of nouveau riche business families. This social transformation is the background of many of her novels.

Like Henry James, Wharton contrasts Americans and Europeans. Often a sensitive character feels trapped by unfeeling characters or social forces. Edith Wharton had personally experienced such entrapment, as a young writer suffering a long nervous breakdown partly due to the conflict in roles between writer and wife. Wharton’s best novels include *The House of Mirth* (1905), *The Custom of the Country* (1913), *The Age of Innocence* (1920).



The description of hidden sexual and financial motivations links Henry James and Edith Wharton with quite different writers: Stephen Crane, Jack London, Frank Norris, and Theodore Dreiser. These naturalists related the individual to society much more explicitly. They often exposed social problems and explored the dangers of the American dream. Naturalism is associated with bleak, realistic depictions of lower-class life; it perceives the universe as a machine.

If we compare Enlightenment thinkers of the eighteenth-century and Naturalists, we'll see that the Enlightenment world was also imagined as a machine, but as a perfect one, invented by God and tending toward progress and human improvement. Naturalists imagined society, instead, as a blind machine, godless and out of control.

### **Stephen Crane (1871–1900)**

Stephen Crane, born in New Jersey, had roots going back to Revolutionary War soldiers, clergymen, sheriffs, judges, and farmers. Working as a journalist, Crane saw life at its rawest, in slums and on battlefields. He also wrote fiction, essays, poetry, and plays. His best short stories are *The Open Boat*, *The Blue Hotel*, and *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*. His haunting Civil War novel, *The Red Badge of Courage*, was published to great acclaim in 1895. But having neglected his health, he died at 29. He was forgotten during the first two decades of the XX century. But then he was resurrected in 1923. He has enjoyed continued success ever since.

Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) is one of the best, and the earliest, naturalistic American novels. It is a story of a poor, sensitive young girl whose uneducated, alcoholic parents utterly neglected her. In love and eager to escape her violent home life, she allows herself to be seduced into living with a young man, who soon deserts her. When her mother rejects her, Maggie becomes a prostitute to survive, but soon commits suicide out of despair. Crane's objective, scientific style, devoid of moralizing, marks *Maggie* as a naturalist work.

### **Jack London (1876–1916)**

A poor, self-taught worker from California, the naturalist Jack London was transformed from poverty to fame by his first collection of stories, *The Son of the Wolf* (1900), set largely in Alaska and Canada. Other of his best-sellers, including *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *The Sea-Wolf* (1904), made him the highest paid writer in the United States of his time.

The autobiographical novel *Martin Eden* (1909) depicts the inner stresses of the American dream as London experienced them during his quick rise from obscure poverty to wealth and fame. Eden, an impoverished but intelligent and hardworking sailor and laborer, is determined to become a writer. Eventually, his writing makes him rich and well-known, but Eden realizes that the woman he loves cares only for his money and fame. His despair over her inability to love causes him to lose faith in human nature.

He also suffers from class alienation, for he no longer belongs to the working class, while he rejects the materialistic values of the wealthy whom he worked so hard to join. He sails for the South Pacific and commits suicide by jumping into the sea. Like many of the best novels of its time, *Martin Eden* is an unsuccessful story. It is a revelation of despair amid great wealth.

### **Theodore Dreiser (187–1945)**

Theodor Dreiser is an outstanding representative of naturalism. His novels depict real-life subjects in a harsh light. Dreiser's novels were considered to be amoral. Throughout his career he battled against censorship and popular taste. This started with *Sister Carrie* in 1900. It was not until 1981 that the work was published in its original form.

“A woman should someday write the complete philosophy of clothes. No matter how young, it is one of the things she wholly comprehends. There is an indescribably faint line in the matter of man's apparel which somehow divides for her those who are worth glancing at and those who are not. Once an individual has passed this faint line on the way downward he will get no glance

from her. There is another line at which the dress of a man will cause her to study her own." [10]

*Sister Carrie* was Dreiser's debut as a novelist. It is a powerful account of a young working girl's rise to success and her slow decline. The story was partly based on the life of his sister. "She was eighteen years of age, bright, timid and full of the illusions of ignorance and youth," as the writer described her.

Dreiser's commercially most successful novel was *An American Tragedy* (1925), which was adapted for screen for the first time in 1931. Dreiser had objected strongly to the version because it portrayed his youthful killer as a sex-starved idle loafer. Dreiser died in Hollywood, California, in 1945.

*An American Tragedy* explores the dangers of the American dream. The novel relates, in great detail, the life of Clyde Griffiths, a boy of weak will and little self-awareness. He grows up in great poverty in a family of wandering evangelists, but dreams of wealth and the love of beautiful women. A rich uncle employs him in his collar factory. He seduces Roberta Alden, an employee at the factory. When Roberta becomes pregnant, she demands that he marry her. Meanwhile, Clyde has fallen in love with a wealthy girl, Sondra Finchley, who represents success, money, and social acceptance. Clyde carefully plans to drown Roberta on a boat trip, but at the last minute he begins to change his mind; however, she accidentally falls out of the boat. Clyde, a good swimmer, does not save her, and she drowns. As Clyde is brought to justice, Dreiser replays his story in reverse, masterfully using the vantage points of prosecuting and defense attorneys to analyze each step and motive that led the mild-mannered Clyde, with a highly religious background and good family connections, to commit murder. The precise details build up an overwhelming sense of tragic inevitability.

Dreiser points out that materialistic society is as much to blame as the murderer himself. Dreiser based his study on the actual case of Chester Gillette, who murdered Grace Brown – he hit her with a tennis racket and pushed her overboard at Big Moose Lake in 1906. The novel is a portrait of the

American success myth gone sour. It is also a universal story about the stresses of urbanization, modernization, and alienation. Within the universe roam the romantic and dangerous fantasies of the poor. *An American Tragedy* is a reflection of the dissatisfaction, envy, and despair that many poor and working people experience in a competitive, success-driven society.

### Naturalism and Muckraking

As American industrial power grew, the glittering lives of the wealthy in newspapers and photographs sharply contrasted the lives of ordinary farmers and city workers. The media fanned rising expectations and unreasonable desires. Such problems gave rise to muckraking journalism — investigative reporting that led to social reform. Muckraking novels used eye-catching journalistic techniques to depict harsh working conditions and oppression.

*The Octopus* (1901) by Frank Norris exposed big railroad companies.

Upton Sinclair in his novel *The Jungle* (1906) painted the dirty conditions of the Chicago meat-packing houses

Jack London's dystopia *The Iron Heel* (1908) predicts a class war and the takeover of the government.

## **PART IV. AMERICAN LITERATURE OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE XX CENTURY.**

### **MODERNISM**

#### **4.1. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MODERNISM**

Many historians have characterized the period between the two world wars as the United States' traumatic "coming of age," despite the fact that U.S. direct involvement was relatively brief (1917–1918) and its casualties many fewer than those of its European allies and foes. Shocked and permanently changed, American soldiers returned to their homeland, but could never regain their innocence. Nor could soldiers from rural America easily return to their roots. After experiencing the world, many now yearned for a modern, urban life.

In the postwar "big boom," business flourished, and the successful prospered beyond their wildest dreams. For the first time, many Americans enrolled in higher education — in the 1920s college enrollment doubled. The middle class prospered; Americans began to enjoy the world's highest national average income in this era.

Americans of the "Roaring Twenties" fell in love with modern entertainments. Most people went to the movies once a week. Although Prohibition — a nationwide ban on the sale of alcohol — began in 1919, illegal "speakeasies" (bars) and nightclubs proliferated, featuring jazz music, cocktails, and daring modes of dress and dance. Dancing, movie going, automobile touring, and radio were national crazes. American women, in particular, felt liberated. They cut their hair short ("bobbed"), wore short "flapper" dresses,

and gloried in the right to vote. They boldly spoke their mind and took public roles in society.

In spite of this prosperity, Western youths on the cultural “edge” were a state of intellectual rebellion, angry and disillusioned with the savage war, as well as the older generation they held responsible. Ironically, difficult postwar economic conditions in Europe allowed Americans with dollars – like writers F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, and Ezra Pound – to live abroad handsomely on very little money, and to soak up the postwar disillusionment, as well as other European intellectual currents, particularly Freudian psychology and to a lesser extent Marxism.

Numerous novels, notably Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and Fitzgerald’s *This Side of Paradise* (1920), evoke the extravagance and disillusionment of what American expatriate writer Gertrude Stein dubbed “the lost generation.” In T.S. Eliot’s influential long poem “The Waste Land” (1922), Western civilization is symbolized by a bleak desert in desperate need of rain (spiritual renewal).

#### **4.2. THE LOST GENERATION**

The Lost generation includes the post-World War I generation in general, but specifically a group of U.S. writers who came of age during the war and established their literary reputations in the 1920s. The term stems from a remark made by Gertrude Stein to Ernest Hemingway, “You are all a lost generation.” Hemingway used it as an epigraph to *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), a novel that captures the attitudes of a hard-drinking, fast-living set of disillusioned young expatriates in postwar Paris. The generation was “lost” in the sense that its inherited values were no longer relevant in the postwar world. The term embraces Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, and many other writers who made Paris the centre of their literary activities in

the 1920s. They were never a literary school. In the 1930s, as these writers turned in different directions, their works lost the distinctive stamp of the postwar period.

### **Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (1896–1940)**

F. Scott Fitzgerald ['fra:nsis 'skot ,fits'dʒerəld] was one of the most famous authors of the Jazz Age. Fitzgerald's life resembles a fairy tale. During World War I, Fitzgerald enlisted in the U.S. Army and fell in love with a rich and beautiful girl Zelda. After he was discharged at war's end, he went to seek his literary fortune in New York City in order to marry her.

His first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920), became a best-seller, and at 24 they married. Neither of them was able to withstand the stresses of success and fame, and they spent all their money. They moved to France to economize in 1924 and returned seven years later. Zelda became mentally unstable and had to be institutionalized. Then Fitzgerald moved to Hollywood and worked as a scriptwriter. He became an alcoholic and died of a heart attack in 1940, at the age of 44.

Fitzgerald's secure place in American literature rests on his novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925), a brilliantly written, economically structured story about the American dream of the self-made man. More than any other writer, Fitzgerald captured the glittering, desperate life of the 1920s.

Published in 1925, *The Great Gatsby* is narrated by Nick Carraway, who moves house on Long Island, next door to a mansion owned by the wealthy and mysterious Jay Gatsby. The novel follows Nick and Gatsby's strange friendship and Gatsby's pursuit of a married woman named Daisy. He is ultimately exposed as a bootlegger.

With its beautiful lyricism, the perfect portrayal of the Jazz Age, love and the American Dream, *The Great Gatsby* is considered Fitzgerald's finest work. Although the book was well-received when it was published, it was not until the 1950s and '60s, long after Fitzgerald's death, that it achieved its status as

the definite portrait of the “Roaring Twenties,” as well as one of the greatest American novels ever written.

F. Scott Fitzgerald died believing himself a failure. None of his works received anything more than modest commercial or critical success during his lifetime. However, since his death, Fitzgerald has gained a reputation as one of the pre-eminent authors in the history of American literature due almost entirely to the enormous posthumous success of *The Great Gatsby*. This novel became required reading for every American high school student, and has had a great effect on generation after generation of readers.

### **Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961)**

Few writers have lived as colorfully as Ernest Hemingway, whose career could have come out of one his adventurous novels.

He was born in 1899, in Illinois, the second of six children. His family was strict and very religious. His father taught his children a love of nature and the outdoor life. Ernest caught his first fish at the age of three, and was given a shotgun for his twelfth birthday. His mother taught him a love of music and art. He didn't go to college after school. He went to Kansas City and worked as a journalist for the Star newspaper. He learned a lot, but left after only six months to go to war.

Hemingway was fascinated by war. He had wanted to become a soldier, but couldn't because he had poor eyesight. Instead, in the First World War, he became an ambulance driver and was sent to Italy, where he was wounded in 1918. He was hospitalized for six months. After the war, as a war correspondent based in Paris, he met expatriate American writers Sherwood Anderson, Ezra Pound, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein. Stein, in particular, influenced his style.

After his novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), brought him fame, he continued to work as a journalist, covering the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the fighting in China in the 1940s. Many of his books were about war. His most successful book, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, was written in 1940 and is



about the Spanish Civil War. Another novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, is about the futility of war. Hemingway's success in writing was not mirrored by similar success in his personal life. He married four times but all marriages ended in a divorce. He lived in Florida where he enjoyed hunting, fishing, and drinking, but he also suffered from depression. Hemingway's health was not good and he had many accidents. When all his marriages failed and his father committed suicide, he began to drink heavily. In 1954, he survived two plane crashes. In 1954 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature for his story *The Old Man and the Sea*.

His final years were taken up with health problems and alcohol. He began to lose his memory and he couldn't write any more. In 1961 Hemingway killed himself with a shotgun, just like his father had done before him.

Like Fitzgerald, Hemingway became a spokesman for his generation. But instead of painting its fatal glamour as did Fitzgerald, Hemingway wrote of war, death, and the "lost generation" of cynical survivors. His characters are not dreamers, but tough bullfighters, soldiers, and athletes. They are deeply disillusioned.

His mark is a clean style devoid of unnecessary words. Hemingway's greatest contribution to the world of literature is his unique style called *the theory of iceberg*. "Iceberg Theory" deals with the basic principle that "less is more". Instead of stating the obvious, Hemingway attempts to use dialogue and subtext to convey his themes. For Hemingway's works inner dialogues are typical. He seldom speaks of the feelings of his characters, much is left unsaid, but he manages to make the reader feel what his hero feels. Needless repetition and irrelevant information should be avoided. Hemingway likens this style to an iceberg since only a fraction of it lies visible above water; the rest – the greater mass – is unseen below. An attentive reader will uncover the missing parts.

Another peculiarity of Hemingway's style is the use of weather as an accompaniment to the emotional tones of different scenes. The background of every tragic episode in *A Farewell to Arms* is rain.

In his novels the author proves that private happiness is impossible in the restless world of the XX century. Seeing misery around him, Hemingway's hero cannot be happy.

The primary origin of Hemingway's peculiar style lies in his career as a reporter. Journalistic writing, particularly for newspapers, focuses only on events being reported, omitting superfluous matter. When he became a writer of short stories, he retained this minimalistic style, focusing on surface elements without explicitly discussing the underlying themes.

### **William Harrison Faulkner [fɔ:lknə] (1897–1962)**

Born to an old southern family, William Faulkner was raised in Oxford, Mississippi, where he lived most of his life. Faulkner created an entire imaginative landscape, Yoknapatawpha County, mentioned in numerous novels, along with several families with interconnections extending back for generations. This County, with its capital, "Jefferson," is closely modeled on Oxford, Mississippi, and its surroundings.

Faulkner re-creates the history of the land and the various races – Indian, African-American, Euro-American, and various mixtures – who have lived on it. An innovative writer, Faulkner experimented brilliantly with narrative chronology, different points of view and voices (including those of outcasts, children, and illiterates), and a rich and demanding baroque style built of extremely long sentences full of complicated subordinate parts.

The best of Faulkner's novels include *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *As I Lay Dying* (1930), two modernist works experimenting with viewpoint and voice to probe southern families under the stress of losing a family member; *Light in August* (1932), about complex and violent relations between a white woman and a black man; and *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), perhaps his finest,

about the rise of a self-made plantation owner and his tragic fall through racial prejudice and a failure to love.

Most of these novels use different characters to tell parts of the story and demonstrate how meaning resides in the manner of telling, as much as in the subject at hand. The use of various viewpoints makes Faulkner more self-referential, or “reflexive,” than Hemingway or Fitzgerald.

Faulkner’s themes are southern tradition, family, community, the land, history and the past, race, and the passions of ambition and love. He also created three novels focusing on the rise of a degenerate family, the Snopes clan: *The Hamlet* (1940), *The Town* (1957), and *The Mansion* (1959).

### **John Dos Passos (1896–1970)**

John Dos Passos wrote realistically, in line with the doctrine of socialist realism. His best work achieves a scientific objectivism and almost documentary effect. His masterwork *U.S.A.* consists of three novels: *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *1919* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936). This sprawling collection covers the social history of the United States from 1900 to 1930 and exposes the moral corruption of materialistic American society through the lives of its characters.

Dos Passos developed an experimental collage technique for this trilogy. Dos Passos’s new techniques included three elements: “newsreel” sections taken from contemporary headlines, popular songs, and advertisements, as well as “biographies” briefly telling the stories of important Americans of the period, such as inventor Thomas Edison, labor organizer Eugene Debs, film star Rudolph Valentino, financier J.P. Morgan. The second element is a documentary value of the newsreels and biographies; a third technique, the “camera eye,” consists of stream of consciousness prose poems that offer a subjective response to the events described in the books.

### 4.3. MODERNISM AND ITS MAIN FEATURES

Modernism: An international cultural movement after World War I expressing disillusionment with tradition and interest in new technologies and visions.

Modernism represents a “a deliberate and radical break with the traditional bases both of Western culture and of Western art” (Virginia Woolf).

There are controversies concerning the beginning of modernism. Still Virginia Woolf states that modernism began in 1910, the date of the first post-Impressionist exhibition in London.

There are established *features* that define modernism thematically and historically. From a literary perspective, the main characteristics of modernism include:

- 1) a challenge to realism, search for alternative ways of representing reality; not focusing on the external reality, moving the idea of reality to the inner world;
- 2) an emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity in writing; an emphasis on HOW seeing or perception takes place, rather than on WHAT is perceived;
- 3) new kinds of tools, such as the stream of consciousness, interior monologue;
- 4) representing consciousness, perception, emotion, the relation of the individual with the society;
- 5) a rejection of the objectivity, fixed points of view, and clear-cut moral positions;
- 6) narrations from different points of view and perspectives;
- 7) spontaneity and discovery in creation.

## Causes of Modernism

All the mentioned features are a kind of response to the great changes brought about by the new century: we've already mentioned these changes which included:

- industrialization;
- urban society;
- World War I;
- the new philosophical ideas (the ideas of Charles Darwin (1809–1882) (On Origin of Species) (1859), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), James G. Frazer (1854–1941), Karl Marx (1818–1883) (Das Kapital, 1867), and the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939).

But the most important factor in the development of modernistic ideas was the search for new instruments in art with which authors, artists and musicians attempted to throw off the burden of realism.

Modernism was a sharp break from the past expressed through art. Modern life seemed radically different from traditional life — more scientific, faster, more technological, and more mechanized. Modernism embraced these changes.

In literature, Gertrude Stein developed an analogue to modern art.

### **Gertrude Stein (1874–1946)**

Gertrude Stein was an American writer, poet and art collector who spent most of her life in France. Gertrude Stein, the youngest of a family of five children, was born in 1874, in Pennsylvania to upper-class German Jewish parents. Her father made investments in streetcar lines and real estate which made the family wealthy. Her mother died when she was 14 and her father three years later. Stein attended Radcliffe College where she studied medicine and psychology. It was through her experiments in psychology that she created examples of writing that represented “stream of consciousness” technique. Stein performed experiments on Normal Motor Automatism, a phenomenon

occurring in people when their attention is divided between two simultaneous intelligent activities, like writing and speaking.

In 1903, Stein moved to Paris, where she spent the rest of her life. For 11 years she lived there with her brother Leo Stein, an art critic. It was during this period that she became well-known. Much of Gertrude Stein's fame comes from a private modern art gallery which she assembled with her brother. For the art collection at 27 Rue de Fleurus, Gertrude “collected geniuses rather than masterpieces. She recognized them a long way off.” The collection soon had a worldwide reputation.

It is very important to note that modern literature developed together and under the influence of modern art. Gertrude together with her brother bought Gauguin's, Cézanne's, and Renoir's pictures. During the 1920s, her salon in Paris, with walls covered by avant-garde paintings, attracted many of the great writers of the time, including Ernest Hemingway, Fr. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson. She has been credited with inventing the term “Lost Generation” for some of these expatriate American writers.

Extremely charming, eloquent, and cheerful, she had many friends and often promoted herself. Her judgements of literature and art were influential.

#### Literary style

Her works include novels, plays, stories, poems written in a highly playful, repetitive, and humorous style. Typical quotes are: “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose”, “Out of kindness comes redness and out of rudeness comes rapid same question, out of an eye comes research, out of selection comes painful cattle”, about her childhood home in Oakland, “There is no there there”.

Stein's writing can be placed in three categories: “hermetic” works best illustrated by *The Making of Americans: The Hersland Family*; popularized writing such as *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*; and speech writing and

more accessible autobiographical writing of later years, of which *Brewsie and Willie* is a good example.

*The Making of Americans* is a novel by Gertrude Stein, completed in 1911 and considered to be one of Stein's major works. The novel was not published in book form until 1925 because of its lengthiness and experimental style. *The Making of Americans* lacks plot, dialogue, and action. It has a subtitle *A History of a Family's Progress*. The work is a history of three generations of Stein's forebears. By generalizing from her own family, Stein claimed that the book was the history of all Americans. Her objective was to analyze the "bottom nature," or essence, of every kind of men.

*The Making of Americans* is the story of "the old people in a new world, the new people made out of the old." *The Making of Americans* makes use of patterns of repetition and variation at the sentence level. The sentence structure resembles a musical fugue: "Men in their living have many things inside them they have in them, each one of them has it in him, his own way of feeling himself important inside in him, they have in them all of them their own way of beginning, their own way of ending, their own way of working, their own way of having loving inside them and loving come out from them, their own way of having anger inside them and letting their anger come out from inside them, their own way of eating, their own way of drinking, their own way of sleeping, their own way of doctoring." [11]

Her use of repetition is ascribed to her search for descriptions of the "bottom nature" of her characters. The narrator is described through the repetition of narrative phrases such as "As I was saying" and "There will be now a history of her". Stein used many Anglo-Saxon words and avoided words with "too much association". Social judgement is absent in her writing, so the reader is given the power to decide how to think and feel about the writing. Anxiety, fear and anger are also absent. Stein predominantly used the present progressive tense, creating a continuous present in her work. In addition Stein's

work is funny, and multilayered, allowing a variety of interpretations and engagements.

In 1933, Stein published a kind-of memoir of her Paris years, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, written in the voice of her life partner, Alice B. Toklas, an American-born member of the Parisian avant-garde. The book became a literary bestseller and moved Stein from the obscurity into the cult-literature.

She also wrote poems. Stein's poems in *Tender Buttons* are very stylized, as she preferred sound rather than sense.

These stream-of-consciousness experiments, rhythmical essays or “portraits”, were designed to evoke “the excitingness of pure being” and can be seen as literature’s answer to Cubism, plasticity, and collage.

Stein once explained that she and Picasso were doing the same thing, he in art and she in writing. Using simple, concrete words, she developed an abstract, experimental prose poetry. The childlike quality of Stein’s simple vocabulary recalls the bright, primary colors of modern art, while her repetitions echo the repeated shapes of abstract visual compositions. By dislocating grammar and punctuation, she achieved new “abstract” meanings as in her influential collection *Tender Buttons* (1914), which views objects from different angles, as in a cubist painting:

#### A Table

A Table means does it not my dear it means a whole steadiness.

Is it likely that a change.

A table means more than a glass even a looking glass is tall [12].

Meaning, in Stein’s work, was often subordinated to technique, just as subject was less important than shape in abstract visual art. The idea of form as the equivalent of content, a cornerstone modernist art and literature, crystallized in this period.

Technological innovation in the world of factories and machines inspired new attentiveness to technique in the arts. To take one example: Light,



particularly electrical light fascinated modern artists and writers. Posters and advertisements of the period are full of images of floodlit skyscrapers and light rays shooting out from automobile headlights, movie houses, and watchtowers.

Vision and different viewpoints became an essential aspect of the modernist novel as well. No longer was it sufficient to write a straightforward third-person narration. The way the story was told became as important as the story itself.

#### **4.4. NOVELS OF SOCIAL AWARENESS, LITERATURE OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION PERIOD**

Since the 1890s, an undercurrent of social protest had flooded American literature. Social protest and social awareness occurred in the naturalism of Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser and in the muckraking novels. Later socially engaged authors included Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, John Dos Passos.

They were concerned with the welfare of the common citizen and focused on groups of people — the professions, as in Sinclair Lewis's *Arrowsmith* (a physician) or *Babbitt* (a local businessman); families, as in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*; or urban masses, as Dos Passos accomplishes through his major characters in his *U.S.A.* trilogy.

##### **John Steinbeck (1902–1968)**

Novels of social awareness highlight social issues and raise the problems of class inequality. Out of those, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men* are must-reads. The author of these novels, John Steinbeck, is often called the working man's bard because of his devotion to detailed description of the working man's hardships and struggles to make two ends meet, to his love and hate against the beautiful landscape of farmland America. His works explored the themes of fate and injustice, especially as applied to downtrodden

or everyman protagonists. Other popular works by John Steinbeck are *East of Eden* (1952), *Cannery Row* (1945), and *The Pearl* (1947). All in all, he wrote 16 novels. Many of John Steinbeck's works have been adapted into films and plays, out of which *The Grapes of Wrath* won two Oscars.

He was born in California. He was of German and Irish descent. The initial surname was Großsteinbeck but his father simplified it contracting just to Steinbeck. He applied to Stanford University, and took admission, but left mid-term to go to New York to become a writer. But he soon returned and worked as a tour guide in California, while trying to get his work published in 1928.

Then he worked as a World War II correspondent in 1943, and was stationed in the Mediterranean. However, he was injured in North Africa by an explosion and returned home in 1944.

He traveled regularly to Soviet Union; his first trip was in 1947. At that time, he was amongst the few Westerners to visit the USSR, after the Communist revolution. One of his works *A Russian Journal* is about his experiences in the Soviet Union. Steinbeck had a left-wing political stance. He regularly attended strikes and meetings of worker unions. His visits to Russia and suspected pro-commie attitude made him an FBI target (which they deny to this day).

Steinbeck achieved his first critical success with *Tortilla Flat* (1935), a novel set in post-war Monterey, California. It portrays the adventures of a group of classless and homeless young men in Monterey after World War I, just before U.S. prohibition. They are portrayed in ironic comparison to mythic knights on a quest and reject nearly all the standard mores of American society in enjoyment of a dissolute life devoted to wine, lust, and petty theft. It has been said that in the United States this book came as a welcome antidote to the gloom of the depression as it described spicy and comic tales about a gang of asocial individuals who, in their wild revels, are almost caricatures of King Arthu's Knights of the Round Table.

Most of Steinbeck's work is set in southern and central California, particularly in the Salinas Valley, his birthplace. Steinbeck grew up in California's Salinas Valley, a culturally diverse place with a rich migratory and immigrant history. This upbringing imparted a regionalist flavor to his writing. In fact, Steinbeck described three main elements of Californian landscape in his books: mountains, valleys and the sea. Thus, critics classify his books according to the place of action into three groups: mountains ("The Wayward Bus"); valleys ("East of Eden", "Of Mice and Men", "Grapes of Wrath", "In Dubious Battle"); the sea coast ("Tortilla Flat", "Cannery Row").

Steinbeck began to write a series of "California novels" set among common people during the Great Depression. These included *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Grapes of Wrath*. Two of John Steinbeck's "California novels" are his most famous and acclaimed works. *Of Mice and Men* is a tragedy that was written as a play in 1937. The story is about two traveling ranch workers, George and Lennie, trying to earn enough money to buy their own farm/ranch. As it is set in 1930s America, it provides an insight into The Great Depression, encompassing themes of racism, loneliness, lost dreams, prejudice against the mentally ill, and the struggle for personal independence. It was critically acclaimed and called a "little masterpiece." It was made into a movie three times, in 1939, 1982, 1992. He created an allegory of self-determination and need, a parable. It was a compact and deceptively simple novelette about a tragic friendship. It was a work full of symbolism.

*Grapes of Wrath* (1939) is considered Steinbeck's masterpiece. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1940. It is a Great Depression story describing a family of sharecroppers, the Joads, who were driven from their land due to the dust storms in the 1930s.

The novel starts with Tom Joad coming out of prison just to realize that his home in Oklahoma was ravaged by nature and authorities. He and his family decide to move to California in hope for prosperity. However, reality falls off

their expectations. On their way to the better land they meet many troubles and their family eventually falls apart.

The poor Oklahoma farmers, Okies, hope to find the Promised Land in California but find instead a land of waste, corruption, and poverty. Expecting to find work, decent wages, and a chance to acquire their own land, they are instead introduced to a system of degrading migrant labor camps, low wages, and near starvation.

The novel tells how they and other migrant families are mistreated by the police and various employers in California.

This is not just a story about a family. The Joads represent the people of America, the poor and naïve but hard-working farmers who became the victims of the time. Their tragedy is tragedy of the whole nation.

The historical context of the novel is the Great Depression the Dust Bowl in the 1930s. In October, 1929, stock prices dropped immensely, causing businesses and banks to fail internationally and wiping out the savings of many families. Over the next few years, unemployment rates soared up to twenty-five percent. Forty percent of the working population in America at the time was farmers.

The resulting pressure on banks to collect on loans caused them to evict many farmers. However, this wasn't the only problem that plagued farm families.

Six years of severe droughts hit the Midwest during the 1930s, causing crops to fail. This, compounded by poor farming practices, caused the land to wither and dry up. Great dust storms buried entire communities in sand. More than five million square miles of land from Texas to North Dakota and Arkansas to New Mexico were affected.

The Midwest came to be called the Dust Bowl. Although no one escaped the economic pain, small farm families similar to the Joads were the hardest hit.

## Characters

Tom Joad, the second son in the family, is the main character of the story. All the characters in the novel are of equal importance, since each of them represents different aspects of the same tragedy. But the narrative in the book mostly comes from Tom's perspective. He has just been released from prison to which he has been sentenced for a murder. The prison has taught him to stay calm in emergency, to speak less, to do more. He is a strong character who really loves his family and cares about them, but at the same time he can be quite hot-headed. He has a strong sense of justice, that's why at the end he decides to leave his family and become the agitator – the one, who fights injustice and authority.

On the other hand, we have Ma – the strongest character in the novel. She is the true leader of the family and the only one who tries to keep them all together. Tough, but kind and caring at the same time. She is the soul of the Joades, the embodiment of will, wisdom and faith.

Other characters are:

– Reverend Casey is a homeless beggar who used to be a preacher, and a good one, but gave up preaching, as he seems to lose faith in God.

– Granma and Grandpa are petty tyrants who die the next day they leave their native place.

– Rose of Sharon is Tom's younger sister, child-like and naughty because of her pregnancy. But in the last chapter she does an act of honour, kindness and dignity: she saves a starving man's life by feeding him with her breast milk after her own baby was stillborn. Her husband Connie has left her without saying good-bye in the middle of their journey as he has lost the strength of spirit and doesn't want to be responsible for anyone.

The story of the Joads has a documentary value. Steinbeck based *Grapes of Wrath* on newspaper articles about migrant agricultural workers that he had written in San Francisco. It was inspired by his accompanying of several migrant

workers to California and then living in the camps and experiencing what the workers were experiencing. Steinbeck got very close to his subject at hand.

Steinbeck's political views, negative portrayal of capitalism, and sympathy for the plight of workers, led to a backlash against the author, especially close to home. His books were banned for some time.

*Grapes of Wrath* became symbolic of the hardships of every victim of the Dust bowl or of hard times and summed up the bitterness of the Depression decade. This novel provoked a wide and shocked reaction. *Grapes of Wrath* was a phenomenon on the scale of a national event.

Steinbeck combines realism with primitivist romanticism: he finds virtue in poor farmers who live close to the land. His fiction demonstrates the vulnerability of such people, who can be uprooted by droughts and are the first to suffer in periods of political unrest and economic depression.

Steinbeck's last novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), examines moral decline in a suburban community in America. The protagonist Ethan grows discontented with his own moral decline and that of those around him. The book has a very different tone from Steinbeck's earlier works. It was not a critical success. It was a novel of social protest. Steinbeck is trying to show how false the values of society may be.

In 1962, Steinbeck won the Nobel Prize for literature for his realistic and imaginative writing, combining sympathetic humor and keen social perception.

John Steinbeck died in New York City in 1968, of heart disease. He was 66, and had been a lifelong smoker.

Many of Steinbeck's works are required reading in American high schools. *Of Mice and Men* was one of the ten most frequently read books in public high schools. Contra-wisely, Steinbeck's works have been frequently banned in the United States. Steinbeck was one of the ten most frequently banned authors.

Despite ongoing attacks on his literary reputation, Steinbeck's works continue to sell well and he is widely taught in American and British schools.

Steinbeck saw the world as having problems. He liked to depict these problems in his stories. He had a realistic concept of society and he reflected the quality of contemporary American life in his works. He felt that man should be the beneficiary of his institutions, and not its victim.

Throughout his career, he wrote about the virtues of the American dream and warned off the evils of American society.

#### **4.5. MYTHOLOGICAL AND SYMBOLIC METHODS. SYMBOLISM OF “GRAPES OF WRATH”**

##### 1) The Title

While writing the novel, Steinbeck had unusual difficulty devising a title. *The Grapes of Wrath* was suggested by his wife. The title is a reference to lyrics from *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;  
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;  
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:  
His truth is marching on. [13]

These lyrics refer, in turn, to the biblical passage Revelation, an apocalyptic appeal to divine justice and deliverance from oppression in the final judgment.

The phrase also appears at the end of Chapter 25 in *The Grapes of Wrath*, which describes the purposeful destruction of food to keep the price high: “...and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage.” [14]

Thus, the image invoked by the title serves as a crucial symbol in the development of both the plot and the novel's themes: from the terrible winepress of Dust Bowl oppression will come terrible wrath but also the

deliverance of workers through their cooperation, which is hinted at but does not materialize within the novel.

## 2) The Dignity of Wrath

The Joads stand as exemplary figures in their refusal to be broken by the circumstances that conspire against them. At every turn, Steinbeck seems intent on showing their dignity and honor; he emphasizes the importance of maintaining self-respect in order to survive spiritually. Nowhere is this more evident than at the end of the novel. The Joads have suffered incomparable losses: Noah, Connie, and Tom have left the family; Rose of Sharon gives birth to a stillborn baby; the family possesses neither food nor promise of work. Yet it is at this moment (Chapter 30) that the family manages to rise above hardship to perform an act of unsurpassed kindness and generosity for the starving man, showing that the Joads have not lost their sense of the value of human life.

Steinbeck makes a clear connection in his novel between dignity and rage. As long as people maintain a sense of injustice — a sense of anger against those who seek to undercut their pride in themselves — they will never lose their dignity.

## 3) The finale inspires hope through a number of symbols:

a) Transformation of Tom's personality. The end of *The Grapes of Wrath* is among the most memorable concluding chapters in American literature. Tom continues the legacy of Jim Casy as he promises to live his life devoted to a soul greater than his own. Recognizing the truth in the teachings of the Christ-like Casy, Tom realizes that a person's highest calling is to put himself in the service of the collective good. As Tom leaves his family to fight for social justice, he completes the transformation that began several chapters earlier. Initially he lacked the patience and energy



to consider the future at all, now he marches off to lead the struggle toward making that future a kinder and gentler one.

Tom Joad: "Wherever there is a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever there is a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. ...An' when our folks eat the stuff they raise an' live in the houses they build — why, I'll be there. See? God, I'm talkin' like Casy. Comes of thinkin' about him so much. Seems like I can see him sometimes." [14]

b) Rain. Without Tom, and without food or work, the Joads sink (both in the direct and metaphorical sense). Nonetheless, the book ends on a surprisingly hopeful note: Steinbeck uses a collection of symbols borrowed from biblical stories to inject a deeply spiritual optimism into his bleak tale.

Thus, while the rain represents a damaging force that threatens to wash away the few possessions the Joads have left, it also represents a power of renewal. The downpours, although causing great destruction, also enable the coming of spring: we read that the raindrops are followed by "tiny points of grass", making the hills a pale green.

c) The stillborn baby. Even the events surrounding the birth of the dead baby contain images of hope. As Uncle John floats the child downstream, Steinbeck invokes the story of Moses, who, as a baby, was sent down the Nile, and later delivered his people out of slavery and into the Promised Land of Israel. As John surrenders the tiny body to the currents, he tells it: "Go down an' tell 'em. Go down in the street an' tell 'em that way. That's the way you can talk." The child's corpse becomes a symbolic messenger, charged with the task of testifying to his people's suffering. Again, in John's speech we find an allusion to the life of the Hebrew prophet, Moses: his words echo the refrain of the traditional folk gospel song "Go Down, Moses".

d) Transformation of Rose of Sharon's personality.

The closing image of the novel is imbued with equal spiritual power as Rose of Sharon and the starving man in the barn form the figure of the *Lamentation of Christ* — a famous motif in visual art in which the Virgin Mary holds the dead Christ in her lap. As Rose of Sharon feeds the dying man, we watch her transform from the complaining, naïve, often self-centered girl of previous chapters into a figure of maternal love. As a mother whose child has been sacrificed to send a larger message to the world, she assumes a role similar to that of the mother of Christ. Like Mary, she confirms an image of the world in which generosity and self-sacrifice are the greatest of virtues.

#### **4.6. THE WORLD OF POLITICS AND THE CONCEPT OF THE PAST IN LITERATURE**

##### **Robert Penn Warren (1905 –1989)**

Robert Penn Warren was born in 1905. While at University, he became a member of the group of southern poets called *the Fugitives*. Warren's first poems were published in *the Fugitive*, a magazine which the group published. The Fugitives were advocates of the rural Southern agrarian tradition and based their poetry on classical aesthetic ideals.

Though Warren was regarded the best poets of his generation, he was better known as a novelist and received recognition for *All the King's Men* (1946).

*All the King's Men* (1946) describes the rise and fall of Willie Stark, a politician and governor of an unnamed southern state, during the 1930s. The state is a disguised Louisiana, and readers and critics have drawn parallels between Stark and Huey Long, governor of Louisiana from 1928 to 1932. He

was popular with his poor white constituency – which was suffering terribly from the Great Depression.

Huey Long was dedicated to such noble purposes as: improving the standard of life in rural Louisiana, tax reform, expansion of paved roads, construction of bridges, and support for charity hospitals. But he achieved these purposes through any means possible. He used his power to manipulate any political situation to his advantage. After his election to the U.S. Senate, Huey Long served as both Louisiana governor and a U.S. senator until 1935, when he was shot down by an assassin in the presence of numerous bodyguards. Huey Long was a flamboyant and sinister politician.

The novel focuses on the darker implications of the American dream revealed through his career.

The title of the book possibly came from Long's motto, "Every Man a King" or his nickname, Kingfish.

Robert Penn Warren had a lifelong concern with history and democracy. Thus the novel demonstrates the author's concern with these values: democratic values within historical context. The novel may be defined as historical fiction. It was written in the period after World War II and contains some peculiar features of this period, namely, non-linear narration, the mix of fictional and real characters and events.

The plot:

The novel is told from the point of view of Jack Burden, who intertwines his biography with that of Willie Stark.

Jack Burden is a political reporter who comes to work as Governor Stark's right-hand man. Jack is the son of an aristocratic family who wanders aimlessly through life. He never finished his dissertation in history or married his first love, Anne Stanton. He is deeply cynical and tries to remain detached from life and people.

Burden accepts Willie's job offer because he fully understands Willie Stark's motivations and the nature of his choices.

Looking through an early description of the Boss – Willie Stark – in Chapter One, given by the first-person narrator, Jack Burden, Jack's ambiguous reading of this anti-hero becomes obvious. It is clear that Jack is wary of Willie, but simultaneously he also admires him: "He gave you the impression of being a slow and deliberate man to look at him, and he had a way of sitting loose as though he had sunk inside himself and was going down for the third time and his eyes would blink like an owl's in a cage. Then all of a sudden he would make a move." [15, p. 24]

Willie Stark, on the other hand, is born poor and crawls out of poverty through hard work. He rises from a lawyer to a politician and to the most powerful man in the state. Willie starts idealistic, believing in populism: the political philosophy that puts the interests of the common working people ahead of the wealthy and the political elites. With the beginning of the Great Depression in the 1930s, Willie's message gains a wide audience, and he rises quickly to become governor. Along the way, however, he learns to compromise his principles, using blackmail, bullying, and bribery to get his way.

He is vulgar and coarse, yet believable and likable. His gift for oratory makes him the center of every scene where he appears. Willie Stark is a demagogue but such people continue to be highly estimated in politics. Stark is the embodiment of the dreams of his constituency – poor farmers and small businessmen. He becomes a figure whom the voters can identify as a member of their class, a man who has managed to overcome an unfair system.

The author sympathizes with him and portrays him as a disillusioned idealist. Willie's actions are pragmatic, frequently illegal and unethical, but they often lead to humanitarian progress. Stark is driven by a passion to provide better public services for the rural people of his state.

Jack Burden, the narrator, like many people, is swept up by Willie's message and energy. Jack Burden becomes one of Willie's assistants. His task is to dig up dirt on Willie's opponents, to find blackmailing facts against them. Jack finds evidence against his family friend Judge Irwin who was mixed up in a scandal many years ago. The discovered facts lead to the Judge's suicide. The following day Jack gets to know that the judge was his biological father.

Then Jack learns about his boss's affair with Anne Stanton, Jack's own life-long love. Adam Stanton, Anne's brother, is also informed about this affair. Adam Stanton murders Willie Stark and is then killed by Willie's security.

Jack Burden leaves politics and rethinks his life. He eventually marries Anne and resumes work on a book about a Civil War soldier who had been the subject of his abandoned dissertation.

The reader witnesses Burden's moral growth from a spineless antihero to a man capable of assuming responsibility.

Adam Stanton and Anne Stanton are Jack's childhood friends.

Anne Stanton is Jack's childhood sweetheart. Many of the novel's passages revolve around Jack's memories of his relationship with Anne. Like many of Jack's friends, Anne disapproves of Willie Stark. However, she later has an affair with Stark.

Adam Stanton, Anne Stanton's brother, becomes a highly successful doctor. Adam Stanton is a crucial figure in the novel as he is the opposite of Governor Stark. The narrator calls Adam "the man of idea" and Stark "the man of fact". He describes Adam's central motivation as a deep need to "do good".

Governor Stark invites Adam to be director of his new hospital and medical center. Jack and Anne persuade Adam to accept the offer.

Still Adam Stanton remains a rather abstract figure as it is hard to imagine a person, who, being a worldwide noted doctor and scientist, spends

very little money on his own needs and lives in poor conditions. He doesn't take money from sick people because of his idealistic principles.

Thus, the author points out that there is neither absolute good nor absolute evil. Each character possesses both. The people whom the narrator thought to be flawless turn out to be a source of evil in certain situations: Anne Stanton becomes the governor's mistress, Adam Stanton commits a murder, and Judge Irwin took a bribe.

And in the reverse way, the unethical Stark, who blackmails political opponents and uses bribery, does more to improve the quality of people's life than generations of other politicians. There is also irony and paradox in the fact that his murder grows out of his dream to build a unique hospital for the poor people of the state.

The conclusion is that the novel does not present a clear victory of good over evil. *All the King's Men* abounds in moral ambiguities.

The social sensitivity of the author is manifested in the fact that betrayal, blackmail, infidelity, and political corruption shape the plot line. For the author, they are a part of human nature. There is no way to get rid of them. However, there is one character that is growing from an antihero to a recognized narrator. This is Jack Burden. He develops from a passive, spineless and cynical character to a man ready to accept moral responsibility. This change in Jack gives a note of hope in the end, hints at the creation of new meaning in life.

The author rejects Adam Stanton's and Willie Stark's dogmatic attempts to change their worlds. The writer points out the danger of people who adhere too rigidly to any set of rules.

Warren's novel suggests that both the pragmatist and the idealist are merely actors whose choices often produce ironic and tragic consequences.

To sum up, Adam Stanton's moral idealism is as ambiguous, flawed and dangerous as Willie Stark's pragmatism. Adam Stanton is an inflexible idealist.

He dies because he cannot bear the discovery that his sister falls short of his ideals.

Stark's pragmatism produces both evil consequences and social progress, particularly for those closest to him. His quest for power destroys his relationship with his wife. Stark's obsession with power even causes him to neglect his son, Tom, who becomes a worthless playboy leading an empty life before he is tragically injured on a football field.

#### **4.7. NEW SATIRE**

##### **Sinclair Lewis (1885–1951)**

In 1930, he became the first American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Harry Sinclair Lewis graduated from Yale University. Lewis's novel *Main Street* (1920) satirized monotonous small town life in a small town in Minnesota. His presentation of American life and his criticism of American materialism, narrowness, and hypocrisy brought him national and international recognition. In 1926, he was offered a Pulitzer Prize for *Arrowsmith* (1925), a novel tracing a doctor's efforts to maintain his medical ethics amid greed and corruption.

Lewis's other major novel is *Babbitt* (1922). George Babbitt is an ordinary businessman living and working in Zenith, an ordinary American town. Babbitt is moral and enterprising, and a believer in business as the new scientific approach to modern life. Becoming restless, he seeks fulfillment but is disillusioned by an affair with a bohemian woman, returns to his wife, and accepts his lot. The novel added a new word to the American language — "babbitry," meaning narrow-minded, complacent, bourgeois ways.

Babbitt is a satire about a man who typifies mediocrity. Middle-class businessman George F. Babbitt revels in his popularity, his automobile, and his ability to make money. He drinks bootleg whiskey, bullies his wife, and ogles his manicurist. Because he is firmly grounded in realism, Babbitt is one of American fiction's most memorable characters; his very name has entered the language as a synonym for the widespread phenomenon he represents.

**Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941). New story: *Winesburg, Ohio***

He was born in Ohio. His parents were very poor and he and his two brothers had to earn a living since early age. When he grew up he married a daughter of a wealthy Ohio businessman and set up his own business. Self-educated, Anderson rose to become a successful copywriter and business owner in Ohio. In 1912, Anderson had a nervous breakdown that led him to abandon his business and family to become a writer. He disappeared from his office and was found four days later in Cleveland, disheveled and disoriented, having suffered a mental breakdown. After that he divorced his wife. He was married 4 times. Only the fourth marriage appeared to be happy.

He is known for subjective and self-revealing works. Anderson's most notable work is his collection of interrelated short stories, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919). In his memoir, he wrote that “Hands”, the opening story, was the first “real” story he ever wrote. Instead of emphasizing plot and action, Anderson used a simple, precise, unsentimental style to reveal the frustration, loneliness, and longing in the lives of his characters. These characters are stunted by the narrowness of small-town life and by their own limitations.



## PART V. CONTEMPORARY PERIOD. POSTMODERNISM

### 5.1. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF POSTMODERNISM

Narrative in the decades following World War II was extremely various. The electronic era brought the global village. The spoken word on television gave new life to oral tradition. Oral genres, media, and popular culture increasingly influenced narrative.

In the past, elite culture influenced popular culture through its status and example; the reverse seems true in the United States in the postwar years. Serious novelists like Thomas Pynchon, Joyce Carol Oates, Kurt Vonnegut, and E.L. Doctorow borrowed from and commented on comics, movies, fashions, songs, and oral history. To say this is not to trivialize this literature: Writers in the United States were asking serious questions. Writers became highly innovative and self-aware, or reflexive. Often they found traditional modes ineffective and sought vitality in more widely popular material. To put it another way, American writers in the postwar decades developed a postmodern sensibility.

World War II offered prime material: Joseph Heller cast World War II in satirical and absurdist terms (*Catch-22*, 1961), arguing that war is laced with insanity. Thomas Pynchon presented an involuted, brilliant case parodying and displacing different versions of reality (*Gravity's Rainbow*, 1973). Kurt Vonnegut, became one of the shining lights of the counterculture during the early 1970s following publication of *Slaughterhouse-Five: or, The Children's Crusade* (1969), his antiwar novel about the firebombing of Dresden, Germany,

by Allied forces during World War II (which Vonnegut witnessed on the ground as a prisoner of war).

**5.2. POSTMODERNISM AND ITS MAIN FEATURES**

Postmodernism is a media-influenced aesthetic movement of the late XX century characterized by open-endedness and collage. Postmodernism questions the foundations of cultural and artistic form through irony and the juxtaposition of elements from popular culture and electronic technology. Postmodernism suggests fragmentation: collage, hybridity, and the use of various voices, scenes, and identities. They tend to distrust the master-narratives of modernist thought. Instead, they favour popular culture genres, especially science fiction, spy, and detective stories.

Postmodern authors fabricate complex plots that demand imaginative leaps. Post modernistic novels slide between vastly different times and places as easily as a computer mouse moves between texts.

Postmodernism literature is hard to define and there is little agreement on the exact characteristics, scope, and importance of postmodern literature. However, the unifying feature is that postmodern novels deal with an inner reality which is constantly at change according to the experiences of the characters.

Chart 1 – Divergent attitudes of modernism and postmodernism

modernism	postmodernism
Cultural progress is celebrated	Cultural progress is cynically resisted and radically doubted
The truth is sought	The truth is constructed
History is embraced	History is diversified
The plot is rejected	The plot is foregrounded

### 5.3. BLACK HUMOUR

Black humour writers evoked on the American literary scene during the period when postmodernism was a domineering trend in literature that is after World War II.

The concept of black humour appeared in the selected portfolio, named “black humour”, written by the American famous writer and literary critic Friedman in 1965.

Black humour is a postmodernist literary genre, which originated in America in the 1960s and affected the development of American literature. This term is used to denote the desperate humour in a difficult situation.

The “black” colour in the English language symbolizes darkness, depression, and death. That is why black humour does not have a relaxed and happy mood. The term “black humour” is used as the opposition to “light humour”.

Black humor is a term primarily associated with a group of American novelists from the 1960s whose work was characterized by comic and grotesque treatment of reality, by one-dimensional characters, wasteland settings, disjunctive and atemporal narrative combined with a profound sense of alienation and despair.

Black humorists include Joseph Heller, John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, and Kurt Vonnegut. They wrote during the postwar years.

Satirizing social illnesses, the use of paradox, irony are main tools of such writers. Their works are characterized by:

- 1) feelings of alienation and emptiness;
- 2) a sense of the absurdity and disorder of the contemporary world;
- 3) a humorous treatment of the absurd or morbid;
- 4) a refusal to offer any solutions to the problems;
- 5) such typical subjects of black humor narratives, as: war, disease, and death.

In black humour narratives, these subjects were treated in a manner that didn't live up to the reader's expectations of solemnity. Black humor violates sacred taboos without restraint.

Black Humor helped readers to cope with the fear of a nuclear war. Laughter of this nature served as beneficial therapy for the society existing under the pressure of the threat of war, of potential nuclear destruction.

In the 1960s, the United States was involved in the morass of the Vietnam War. The losses and hardships of the new war turned the whole country into a turbulent environment. The whole nation was in a state of panic and chaos. In such a social background, the writers could observe and capture the phenomenon, but it was difficult to affect the society. Therefore, they could only use self-mockery to express their discontent, anger and fear.

Thus, we can say that black humour in American literature was catalyzed by the social background of confusion and upheaval. Alienation and absurdity were the basic principles of literary creation. Black humour writers expressed a pessimistic and helpless view on life. They claimed that an individual could not change the world for the better. That's why it is useless to try. When facing a bizarre phenomenon, people could only relieve their pain by emitting a helpless wry smile.

### **1.7. JOSEPH HELLER'S ANTI-WAR NOVEL *CATCH-22***

**Joseph Heller (1923–1999)** was born in New York, to poor Jewish parents from Russia.

His father died following an operation in 1929. His mother never learned to speak English well, and the family struggled financially.

After graduating from cadet school as a first lieutenant in 1944, he was assigned to a squadron in Corsica where he initially had no serious complaints

about his life. His thirty-seventh mission, a raid on southeast France, made him realize he was courting death on these flights.

He completed sixty missions in the Mediterranean and received an Air Medal with his honorable discharge. He enrolled at University in 1945.

On receiving his B.A, then an M.A in American Literature and studying for a year at Oxford University in England, began working on a novel tentatively entitled *Catch-18*. It became Heller' first novel *Catch-22*, published in 1961. It describes Army Air Corps Captain John Yossarian's numerous unsuccessful strategies to avoid combat missions.

Heller wrote five additional novels, including *Something Happened*, *Good as Gold* and *Closing Time*, a sequel to *Catch-22*, in which he uses some characters of the original, including Yossarian, and Milo Minderbinder.

The darkly comic antiwar novel *Catch-22* centers on the antihero Yossarian. It is based on the writer's own experience as a bomber pilot in World War II and takes a satirical look at war, bureaucracy, and the maddening lack of logic. To him the rational response to war was not bravery or heroism, but cowardice.

In *Catch-22* laughter is used to show tragedy. Black humour describes the tragic plot in the absurd form. That's why this novel is often called a surrealistic comedy. It is a satire on the army and on the military mentality.

In *Catch-22* Joseph Heller uses black humour to attack the absurd reality and the chaos of society.

*Catch-22* was published in 1961. At first, the novel did not attract much attention. However, as the involvement of the US in the war in Vietnam (1955–1975) increased, it became the centre of the discussion of the wide audiences and critics. The novel fermented an anti-war thought, which evoked during this period.

What is "Catch-22"? It is a regulation, a law concerning soldiers' participation in military actions. According to "Catch-22", when a soldier faces the real danger in the battlefield, his concern about his own safety shows his

mental health. That is such a soldier can act and think rationally. One of the characters, named Orr, is crazy. In accordance with relevant regulations and policies, he is allowed to stop flying, as long as he himself does not ask for it. But when Orr puts forward this request, it proves that he can think rationally and his spirit is normal. Therefore, according to "Catch 22", he still has to go to war and perform flight mission. In fact, catch 22 does not exist at all. It's a trap into which a human gets.

In the book, Heller wrote. "Orr would be crazy to fly more missions. . . but if he didn't want to he was sane and had to". These words typified the phrase "Catch- 22" which entered the English lexicon and refers to "any absurd arrangement that puts a person in a double bind." [16]

Most of the novel takes place during approximately the last year of the war in Europe starting from spring 1944. Captain John Yossarian, the novel's protagonist, is a bombardier in a Squadron of the Army Air Forces, stationed on Pianosa, a fictionalized island in the Mediterranean between mainland Italy and Corsica. The squadron's assignment is to bomb enemy positions in Italy and eastern France. It is the summer of 1944, but events of the novel are not told in chronological order; sometimes time changes without warning. There are flashbacks to 1942, when Yossarian was in basic training in Colorado, and to 1943 when he was in cadet training in California.

The satirical novel is episodic and relies on character as much as it does on plot or theme.

We meet several key characters in the opening chapters. When the novel opens, Yossarian is in the base hospital, on Pianosa, faking a liver ailment. He has learned that the hospital can be a peaceful refuge and that liver ailments are difficult to diagnose. When able, hospitalized officers censor enlisted men's letters home; an early indication of Yossarian's character is the creative way he approaches this task, even altering one letter to resemble a love note and signing Chaplain Tappman's name. Others in Yossarian's ward include Dunbar, who thinks he can live longer by pursuing boring tasks and making time pass

slowly, and the “soldier in white”, an enigmatic figure smuggled into the ward in the middle of the night and encased from head to toe in plaster. Yossarian is so bored that he soon returns to his regular quarters. Other squadron members include McWatt, a pilot who enjoys buzzing (flying low over) Yossarian's tent and the beach bathers; Nately, who is in love with a prostitute in Rome; Doc Daneeka, a friendly but ineffectual flight surgeon who explains the meaning of “Catch-22” (Chapter 5); and Colonel Cathcart, who yearns to be a general so he tries to look like a strong leader by raising the number of missions required of the men to complete a tour of duty.

The early chapters satirize the military and political establishment, specifically through distortions of logic and reality. Although war and death are always in the background, the tone of the first third of the novel is ironic and absurdly light-hearted.

The tone changes with flashbacks to raids on Ferrara, Bologna, and Avignon. At Ferrara, in the spring of 1944, Yossarian is an inexperienced bombardier eager to succeed in the mission so it will not be repeated. Having failed to release his bombs on the first run, Yossarian directs his flight to take a second pass so that he can hit the target, a bridge that the squadron has tried in vain to destroy for a week. The tactic works, but a young airman named Kraft is killed. Although Yossarian is promoted to Captain and awarded a medal, the death haunts him. His tent mate, Orr, is shot down and presumed lost at sea.

The mission over Avignon, in July, is personally even more traumatic for Yossarian as his plane is badly hit and a gunner named Snowden severely wounded. Heller repeatedly refers to the event throughout the novel, playing it like a recurring theme in a symphony, the reader allowed to learn a little more of the horror as the story progresses. (The novel's first scene occurs shortly after the raid on Avignon.)

As the story progresses, amusing antics turn grim. The squadron's mess (dining hall) officer is an entrepreneurial genius named Milo Minderbinder. His actions are satirically entertaining until they turn deadly. Using squadron funds

to purchase black-market products, Milo builds an enormous syndicate dealing in everything from fresh eggs to prostitutes. He eventually contracts with both sides in the conduct of the war and goes so far as to arrange an air raid on his own base for profit. McWatt's buzzing of the beach is a practical joke until one day when he slices Kid Sampson in two in a macabre accident.

Yossarian's plan is to flee to Sweden where his buddy Orr has turned up after cleverly using his plane crash as a means of escape. Yossarian hopes to find himself by losing himself, to seek a separate peace, to run toward life by escaping the madness of war.

#### Artistic features of black humour in "Catch-22"

1) One of the artistic features of black humour novels is the absence of any certain narrative structure. *Catch-22* does not have any. Joseph Heller did not adopt the structure of the traditional novel but opened up two clues for understanding. One clue is Marlow as the centre according to the order of time; the other clue is the disordered psychology of Yossarian. At the same time, because the two clues often cross, it makes readers feel chaos in the process of reading. The author describes and reflects the absurdity and chaos of society at that time with the help of disorganized prose structure.

2) Time is purposely out of joint in the book, Heller's method of telling the story is episodic and relies heavily on his depiction of character. Heller connects the reality, dreams, and memories together, and mix serious philosophical problems with playful manner. The writer does not make the narration in accordance with the time sequence or a certain clue, but usually connects bizarre fantasies with memories of the past in the narrative of real life, and connects serious philosophical discussions with people's ridicule to reflect on all kinds of phenomena in society.

3) Black humour authors break the tradition and ignore the logic of the story. The plot is anti-logical. Black humour novels are not based on a certain time sequence. In *Catch-22*, the storyline is presented with great irrationality in a ridiculous manner with distortion of human nature. It is hard to understand.



For example, the description of Doctor Daniel is full of absurdity and irony. Daniel is very greedy. In order to obtain extra subsidies, he will add his name in the flight team list, which gives him a lot of benefits. Once, the plane crashed, and the crew of the flight were all gone, Doctor Daniel's name was among the crewmembers. So he has been regarded as a person who has been killed. Though he is healthy, colleagues see him living an active life; all the files, materials and newspapers refer to him as a man who has been killed in an airplane crash. In this circle, the living are regarded as the dead, while the dead enjoy the living treat. The absurdity of reality is described incisively and vividly.

An example is the exchange between Yossarian and Clevinger in Chapter 2. Yossarian complains, "They're trying to kill me." "Who's they?" asks Clevinger. "Who, specifically, do you think is trying to murder you?" Yossarian answers, "Every one of them." The dialogue continues:

"Every one of whom?"

"Every one of whom do you think?"

"I haven't any idea."

"Then how do you know they aren't?" [16]

Part of Yossarian's problem is that he quite justifiably, quite sanely thinks that the enemy gunners shooting at his plane are trying to kill him! He takes it personally. Clevinger, who is very bright but a conformist, accepts the madness of war as reasonable.

4) Black humour writers invent "Anti-heroes" with abnormal behavior. Their bizarre behavior reflects social reality. It shows the author's attitude to social problems. The "anti-hero" image expresses a rebellious spirit and resistance to distortion and deformation of the society in the state of war. Through the character's ridiculous words and deeds, the real phenomenon is conveyed. Heller applies exaggeration and grotesque to depict his characters. The central character, Yossarian, is often called an "antihero" because his values appear to contrast with those of the standard heroic figure. But within the context of the novel, he is courageous and inventive, as Heller

demonstrates from the beginning. Yossarian has the courage to confront the madness of war. At the hospital, he fights boredom by censoring the enlisted men's letters in creative ways. One day, he blocks out all adverbs and adjectives. Another, he takes out every mention of the articles a, an, and the. Another time, he blackens the entire message except for the salutation, "Dear Mary", and closes the letter, as if it is from the group's chaplain: "I yearn for you tragically. A.T. Tappman, Chaplain, U.S. Army." On some letters, he signs Washington Irving's name as censor or, when that wears thin, Irving Washington.

5) Black humour writers express dissatisfaction with reality through informal language. *Catch-22* raises boring and serious issues in a funny way. Although the characters adopt a playful tone, there is a deeply philosophical meaning in their words. The author speaks about solemn sacred things in a strange funny language and dresses trivial things in a solemn language environment. The author expresses despair in a humorous language, he tells a joke about the painful death. The language creates a ridiculous and grotesque image and suggests a kind of social reality, which people cannot understand: the characters are frustrated in the face of war. That is why their speech is illogical, bordering on insanity. Such a language acquires meaning and significance only in a certain literary environment.

## **5.5. POST MODERNISTIC FEATURES IN KURT VONNEGUT'S WORKS**

Irony, paradox, the use of wit, satirizing social ills, is the main tools of postmodern writers. If we look at Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse Five", the techniques of his black humor and post modernistic features are easily pointed out.

The use of black humor underscores the futility of the world of the hero, Billy Pilgrim, allowing the audience a sadistic opportunity to laugh at this bizarre existence. The text itself becomes a battleground between author and

audience, the goal of the former to strip away the latter's idealistic delusions and replace them with a soberer nature. "Slaughterhouse-Five" certainly accomplishes this goal. Characteristic of the black humor mode, the hero of "Slaughterhouse-Five" is a character who must invent his own world in order to escape the reality of his world. He has no control over where he is going next. He is in a constant state of stage fright, he says, because he never knows what part of his life he is going to have to act in next [17]. Pilgrim is an alienated man who has had no friends since childhood. He is a man with a poet's sensitivities who is raised by a father who believes in the philosophy of "sink or swim", and he realizes this when his father throws him into the deep end of a pool at age five. Pilgrim almost drowns, and from that time on reacts to his reality surrounded by a cloak of fear. As an adult he is faced with becoming a soldier during the Second World War. He is made a chaplain's assistant; a position which according to the text is "customarily a figure of fun in the American Army". He is a parody of what a soldier should be. He is met by disgust and laughter from all of his fellow soldiers. Pilgrim is a man "powerless to harm the enemy or to help his friends. When captured he soon dresses in a blue toga, silver shoes, and a muff (all discards from dead war victims). He is a caricature of a fool from a Shakespearean drama. But it is impossible to laugh at this figure of a gentle man who is trapped in the nightmare of war, who wishes only to be left alone – to die. He soon escapes to the world of his imagination – the world of another planet – Tralfamadore, a surrealistic world which becomes more real than the earthly world, so much so that Pilgrim wishes to tell everyone of his visits. The portrayal of such a hero is characteristic of black humor, making the reader solemn and contemplative rather than leaving them laughing. Pilgrim is a man on a quest, a quest for escape; and he finds it in a glass dome with the beautiful starlet, Montana Wildback, as they live naked in full, blissful view of the Tralfamadoreans. The element of irony is a poignant facet of this novel. When Billy is training to become a soldier, his father is shot to death by a friend while deer hunting back home. When Billy is in the

hospital, his wife rushes to the hospital in an expensive car. Billy has become a wealthy optometrist with little effort on his part after the war. She has an accident and dies in the hospital.

After the war in Dresden the Allies firebombed and killed 135,000 innocent people in one night. All of these sardonic ironies are punctuated by one phrase, “So it goes”. This simple phrase serves as the trigger for opportunities for the audience to laugh at the ironies of life. Laughter can at least bring the reader relief. It’s certainly more socially acceptable than crying. The hero can bring about no change in his earthy world. For, “Among the things Billy Pilgrim could not change were the past, the present and the future.” [17] The humor in this novel is a disturbing humor about destruction, the atrocities of war, death – it is black humor.

**Kurt Vonnegut ['kɜ:t 'vɒnɪgət] (1922–2007)** was born in Indianapolis, USA, in 1922. Vonnegut emerged as a novelist and an essayist in the 1960s. His classics are *Cat's Cradle*, *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Breakfast of Champions*. He is known for his satirical literary style, as well as the science-fiction elements in much of his work. He blended the absurd with pointed social commentary. Vonnegut created his own unique world in each of his novels and filled them with unusual characters, such as the alien race known as the Tralfamadorians in *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969).

After studying at Cornell University from 1940 to 1942, Kurt Vonnegut enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was sent by the Army to what is now Carnegie Mellon University to study engineering in 1943. The next year, he served in Europe and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. After this battle, Vonnegut was captured and became a prisoner of war. He was in Dresden, Germany, during the Allied firebombing of the city and saw the complete devastation caused by it. Vonnegut himself escaped harm only because he, along with other POWs, was working in an underground meat locker making vitamin supplements.

Soon after his return from the war, Kurt Vonnegut married his high school girlfriend, Jane Marie Cox. The couple had three children. He worked

several jobs before his writing career took off, including newspaper reporter, teacher, and public relations employee for General Electric. The Vonneguts also adopted his sister's three children after her death in 1958.

Showing Vonnegut's talent for satire, his first novel, *Player Piano*, took on corporate culture and was published in 1952. More novels followed, war remaining a recurring element in his work. One of his best-known works, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, draws some of its dramatic power from his own experiences.

Emerging as a new literary voice, Kurt Vonnegut became known for his unusual writing style – long sentences and little punctuation – as well as his humanist point of view. He continued writing short stories and novels, including *Breakfast of Champions* (1973), *Jailbird* (1979) and *Deadeye Dick* (1982).

Despite his success, Kurt Vonnegut wrestled with his own personal demons. Having struggled with depression on and off for years, he attempted to take his own life in 1984. Whatever challenges he faced personally, Vonnegut became a literary icon with a devoted following.

His last novel was *Timequake* (1997), which became a best seller despite receiving mixed reviews. Kurt Vonnegut chose to spend his later years working on nonfiction. His last book was *A Man Without a Country*, a collection of biographical essays. In it, he expressed his views on politics and art, and shed more light on his own life. Kurt Vonnegut died in 2007, at the age of 84, in New York City.

Most Vonnegut's works are brilliant examples of the postmodernism trend in literature and they certainly reflect its particular features.

First of all, the characteristic peculiar for postmodernism is a sense of disjunction and desolation. It appears to this or that extent in all Vonnegut's stories. In the story *A Big Trip up Yonder* members of the Fords' family are all close relatives. But they are in a constant fight for sleeping places in the flat. They are all rivals in the competition for the fortune [18].

The second feature is “cool apathy”. It can be observed throughout most stories. His characters aren’t concerned about anything and don’t show any enthusiasm in anything. Such as the painter in the story *2BRO2B* [19]. He is an aloof observer who doesn’t want to interfere with anything.

Postmodernism is also marked by intertextuality. It implies explicit allusions and references to other sources, works. Intertextuality serves as an aspect of the awareness about history and works of art. We can find in his texts mentioning of various titles of literature works, historical events and the Bible. For example, the very title of the story *2BRO2B* is a reference to the famous Hamlet’s monologue by W. Shakespeare. One of the main characters of the same story also mentions “the invisible man” which reminds the reader of Herbert Wells’ novel of the same name.

What is also inherent in works of postmodernism is playfulness. It deals with meanings, words, signs, quotations etc. The author plays with the text and involves the reader in this “game”. The purpose of it is to give the reader an opportunity to take part in understanding of the text, to guess what is going on and to assume the developing events. Thus, in the story *2BRO2B* there are several samples that illustrate the wordplay in the text. “My name is Duncan” “And you dunk people?” [19]

We cannot leave out irony. It becomes one of the most important stylistic devices in Vonnegut’s stories. Thus Wehling in the mentioned above story *2BRO2B* has to choose only one of his triplets to stay alive. So answering the remark that he doesn’t sound very happy he says with sad irony: “What man in my shoes wouldn’t be happy? All I have to do is pick out which of the triplets is going to live, then deliver my maternal grandfather to the Happy Hooligan, and come back here with a receipt.” [19]

Postmodernist works coolly and ironically expose the constructedness. And K. Vonnegut’s stories prove it. Constructedness implies the distinct organization of structures. Postmodernism works refuse it and rather support fragmentation, inconsistency and spontaneity. The author puts here

constructedness on the foreground. In the story *2BRO2B* this fact finds its realization in the description of the garden “Never, never had a garden been more formal, been better tended. Every plant had all the loam, light, water, air and nourishment it could use.” [19] The whole story ridicules the perfectly constructed and organized society where there were no prisons, no slums, no insane asylums, no cripples, no poverty, no wars, where all diseases as well as old age were conquered. But in such a society people can’t perform their main function – to multiply and replenish.

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that unlike modernist works, Vonnegut’s postmodernist stories are not orderly ended, their denouement is quick and unexpected. Vonnegut’s stories combine many characteristics of postmodern literature that appear on the level of content, composition, form, usage of artistic devices and relationship between the author and the reader. They allow us to observe the distinctive features that show the border between postmodernism and earlier movements.

## **5.6. NEW TENDENCIES: THOMAS PYNCHON. JOHN BARTH. SAUL BELLOW. JOHN UPDIKE**

In the 1960s, an ironic, comic vision came into view, reflected in the works of several writers. The comical and fantastic created a new mode, half comic and half metaphysical, in Thomas Pynchon’s paranoid, brilliant *V* and *The Crying of Lot 49*.

### **Thomas Pynchon (born in 1937)**

Pynchon's style is commonly classified as postmodernist. Pynchon is an experimental American novelist in the “black humor” tradition. Utilizing his strong technical and scientific background, Pynchon explodes in his novels traditional literary form, speech, and style to paint a self-destructive world.

All of Pynchon's fiction is similarly structured. A vast plot is unknown to at least one of the main characters, whose task it then becomes to render order out of chaos. The reader must follow along and watch for clues and meanings. This paranoid vision is extended across continents and time itself. The masterful use of popular culture – particularly science fiction and detective fiction – is evident in his works.

Pynchon's work *V* (1963) is structured around Benny Profane – a failure who engages in pointless wanderings and various weird enterprises – and his opposite, the educated Herbert Stencil, who seeks a mysterious female spy, V.

*The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), a short work, deals with a secret system associated with the U.S. Postal Service. *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) takes place during World War II in London, when rockets were falling on the city, and concerns a symbolic search for Nazis and other disguised figures.

He closely resembles Vonnegut and other post modernistic writers in finally not taking history very seriously, despite the overwhelming density of actual historical detail in his books. Pynchon's method makes it difficult for us to distinguish between historical fact and fictional invention. He sometimes presents not history but paranoid fantasy using historical materials.

From his very earliest work, Pynchon's encyclopedic knowledge, verbal ingenuity, and particular obsessions are apparent. Certain themes and subjects recur constantly: song, sexual perversion, suicide, science, slapstick, sewers, shit and Southwest Africa are some of them. Pynchon's fictional people are also distinctive from the very beginning of his career. There seem always to be two basic types of characters, those questing after some profound mystery, and those poor suckers who unwittingly are caught up in someone else's mad quest. Isolation and ignorance are the ground rules of the human condition in a bleak and unpredictable world. There is Pynchon's humour too, and Pynchon is a master of parody.



Pynchon's stories and novels reveal that Pynchon employed his most characteristic technique, the use of material from disciplines other than literature as fictional metaphor.

Pynchon has continued to use cognitive models from discourses other than literature, like ethnology or sociology, but especially science, as fictional metaphors. *V* is several novels under one roof: a New York novel, a Navy novel, an undergraduate novel, a war novel and an historical novel. His creation of *V*, a magnificently decadent woman who moves in and out of the major events of recent European history, is a really traditional novelistic symbol which Pynchon uses to organize the book's loose structure. As *V* grows older, she replaces more and more of her body with prosthetic devices, until she is almost entirely a mechanical thing, perhaps like modern European society itself.

His writings demonstrate a strong affinity with the practitioners and artifacts of low culture, including comic books and cartoons, pulp fiction, popular films, television programs, cookery, urban myths, paranoia and conspiracy theories, and folk art. This blurring of the conventional boundary between "high" and "low" culture has been seen as one of the defining characteristics of his writing.

In particular, Pynchon has revealed himself in his fiction and non-fiction as an aficionado of popular music. Song lyrics and mock musical numbers appear in each of his novels, he reveals a fondness for both jazz and rock and roll.

Investigations and digressions into the realms of human sexuality, psychology, sociology, mathematics, science, and technology recur throughout Pynchon's works.

### **John Updike (1932–2009)**

John Updike is regarded as a writer of manners with his suburban settings, domestic themes, reflections of wistfulness, and, particularly, his fictional locales on the eastern seaboard of the United States, in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

J. Updike was born in Pennsylvania. He grew up in a world of poverty. He early understood that he could escape only through his own wits. His ambitious mother encouraged him to write. He wrote his first short story at 8.

J. Updike graduated from Harvard and Oxford (in England), where he studied art.

He began his literary career in the mid – 1950s with short stories and wrote novels, poems, and critical pieces noted for their brilliant use of the language. Soon he became known as “The Brilliant Young Writer”. He was a full-time successful writer. He lived in New England, where most of his fiction is set, and in Massachusetts.

### Major writings

Updike is best known for his five Rabbit books, depictions of the life of a man – Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom – through the ebbs and flows of his existence across four decades of American social and political history.

It is about a little man in the utopian society of abundance, consumerism and commercialism. Harry Angstrom (Rabbit) is reluctant to confront the responsibilities of life. There came the sequels of *Rabbit, Run: Rabbit, Redux* (1971), *Rabbit is Rich* (1981), and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990). They follow Rabbit as he navigates through middle-class life in the changing America of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. If in *Rabbit, Run* Harry Angstrom is a sexually magnetic athlete, in *Rabbit at Rest* his body is swollen, he has chest pains.

*Rabbit, Run* (1960) is a mirror of the 1950s, with Angstrom an aimless, disaffected young husband. *Rabbit Redux* (1971) – spotlighting the counterculture of the 1960s – finds Angstrom still without a clear goal or purpose or viable escape route from the banal. In *Rabbit Is Rich* (1981), Harry has become a prosperous businessman during the 1970s, as the Vietnam era wanes. The final novel, *Rabbit at Rest* (1990), glimpses Angstrom’s reconciliation with life, before his death from a heart attack, against the backdrop of the 1980s.

Updike possesses the most brilliant style of any writer today, and his short stories offer brilliant examples of its range and inventiveness.

1963 sees J. Updike's *The Centaur*, where in a mythological framework the relationship of a schoolmaster father and his son is being explored. The book is highly symbolic and allusive. This is a philosophical parable about a modern centaur, a provincial teacher, living in two worlds, realistic and mythological.

Updike is very American. His central character is an isolated self. Thus he celebrates individualism. He mocks the American dream, the America oriented upon success and happiness, American consumer culture. His America is a world of middle and lower class materialists, a land of empty trivial lives centered on TV, movies, whose minds are dulled by soaps and trashy newspapers. He is a gentle satirist, mocking American life and customs, without being mean or aggressive.

His characters are searching for spiritual and religious meaning in life but they discover that love is a trap, happiness is brief, and life is dull.

His favored fictional mode is realism. He mocks modernism and postmodernism.

Updike owes his popularity, in no small measure, to his short stories. Here Updike shows himself a subtle psychologist as he penetrates into intimate impulses and motives of his characters. He is masterfully unraveling the hidden subterranean motives of human behavior.

Updike's new prose is characterized by the vanishing author, by the character advanced into the foreground, by attempts to convey a thinking process, by the character's changing point of view, by time and space continually shifting, by a metonymic detail which turns into a symbol.

### **John Barth (born in 1930)**

John Barth, a native of Maryland, is more interested in how a story is told than in the story itself, but where Pynchon deludes the reader by false trails and possible clues out of detective novels, Barth entices his audience into a carnival fun house full of distorting mirrors that exaggerate some features while minimizing others.

Realism is the enemy for Barth, the author of *Lost in the Funhouse* (1968), 14 stories that constantly refer to the processes of writing and reading. Barth's intent is to alert the reader to the artificial nature of reading and writing and to prevent him or her from being drawn into the story as if it were real. To explode the illusion of realism, Barth uses a panoply of reflexive devices to remind his audience that they are reading.

Barth's earlier works, like Saul Bellow's, were questioning and existential, and took up the 1950s themes of escape and wandering. *The End of the Road* (1958) concerns a complex love affair. Works of the 1960s became more comical and less realistic. *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960) parodies an eighteenth-century picaresque style, while *Giles Goat-Boy* (1966) is a parody of the world seen as a university.

*Chimera* (1972) retells tales from Greek mythology, and *Letters* (1979) uses Barth himself as a character. Later novels – *The Tidewater Tales* (1987), *The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor* (1991), and *Once Upon a Time: A Floating Opera* (1994) reveal Barth's "passionate virtuosity" (his own phrase) in negotiating the chaotic, oceanic world with the bright rigging of language.

## 5.7. THE BEAT GENERATION

### **Jack Kerouac (1922–1969)**

The son of an impoverished French-Canadian family, Jack Kerouac also questioned the values of middle-class life. He met members of the Beat literary underground as an undergraduate at Columbia University in New York City. Kerouac's best-known novel, *On the Road* (1957), describes beatniks wandering through America seeking an idealistic dream of communal life and beauty.

The alienation and stress underlying the 1950s found outward expression in the 1960s in the United States in the civil rights movement, feminism, antiwar protests, minority activism, and the arrival of a counterculture whose effects are still being worked through American society. Notable political and

social works of the era include the speeches of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the early writings of feminist leader Betty Friedan (*The Feminine Mystique*), and Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* (1968), about a 1967 antiwar march.

As the XX century ended and the XXI century began, mass social and geographic mobility, the Internet, immigration, and globalization only emphasized the subjective voice in a context of cultural fragmentation. Some contemporary writers reflect a drift towards quieter, more accessible voices. For many prose writers, the region, rather than the nation, provides the defining geography.

## PART VI. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHORT STORY AS A GENRE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

### 6.1. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SHORT STORY AS A GENRE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Definition: The short story is a kind of prose fiction, usually more compact and intense than the novel and the short novel (novelette) [20].

The short story has received little critical attention, and there are few valuable studies of the form of the short story. Among them are:

– Edgar Allan Poe’s critical works stating that stories must have a compact, unified effect.

– Ray B. West’s *The Short Story in America, 1900–1950*.

History:

1) Prior to the XIX century the short story was not regarded as a distinct literary form.

2) In the XIX century the words “sketch” and “tale” were used to denote what we now call a short story. There were hundreds of collections of sketches and tales in the United States:

a) Washington Irving’s *Sketch Book*;

b) Poe’s *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*;

c) Herman Melville’s *Piazza Tales*.

The modern short story grew out of the foundations established by the sketch and the tale.

The tale:

1) The tale is much older than the sketch.

2) Tales are filled with cryptic motifs, personages, and symbols.

3) Tales are fully understood only by members of the particular culture to which they belong. They are never created to address an outside culture. Tales are intracultural.

4) The old speak to the young through tales.

The sketch:

1. The sketch is intercultural.

2. It depicts some phenomenon of one culture for the benefit or pleasure of a second culture.

3. Factual and journalistic, the sketch is generally more analytic or descriptive and less narrative or dramatic than the tale.

4. The primary mode of the sketch is written; that of the tale is spoken. This difference accounts for their different effects. The sketch writer has his eye on his subject: he analyses what he sees. The tale is always a recreation of the past. The tale-teller is *an agent of time*, bringing together a culture's past and its present. The sketch writer is more *an agent of space*, bringing an aspect of one culture to the attention of a second.

In the XIX century certain writers who might be called the "fathers" of the modern story: Nikolay Gogol, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Prosper Merimee, Poe, combined elements of the tale with elements of the sketch. In the XIX century the fundamental means of structuring a short story was the overwhelming event or unique effect.

Thus, we can say the modern short story is a fusion of the sketch and the tale. Today the short story is a distinct and autonomous, though still developing, genre.

The modern short story ranges between the highly imaginative tale and the photographic sketch.

The short stories of Ernest Hemingway, for example, are imaginative and symbolic, they gain their force from the use of traditional mythic symbols (water, fish), but they are more closely related to the sketch than to the tale.

In the United States, the short story evolved in two varieties: the realistic story and the impressionist story.

The realistic story deals with seemingly real places, events, or people. The regionalist stories of the second half of the 19th century (including those by Bret Harte, Sarah Orne Jewett) are of this kind.

The impressionist story is a tale shaped by the consciousness and psychological attitudes of the narrator. It is subordinated to subjectivity. Such stories are less objective and less realistic.

Some writers contributed to the development of both types of the story. Washington Irving wrote realistic sketches in which he carefully recorded appearances and actions (as in *Westminster Abbey* and *Stratford-on-Avon*). Irving also wrote impressionist stories in which the details were taken not from reality but from a character's mind, as in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. *Rip Van Winkle* (1819) draws upon the symbolic surreality of Rip's dreams.

The short prose of Nathaniel Hawthorne illustrates the use of symbols. Hawthorne created scenes, persons, and events that were actual historical facts but were rich in symbols. Hawthorne's story *My Kinsman, Major Molineux* (1832) is about historical events as they are viewed subjectively by the central character.

The impressionist story

E.A. Poe's tales focus on the impressions of the events registered in the characters' minds, rather than the objective reality of the events themselves.

The hallucinations of a central character or narrator provide the facts of the story.

The narrators in *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843) and *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) distort and transform what they see so that the reader cannot look objectively at the scene. The reader can see only the narrator's impressions of the scene.

Poe dramatized man's confrontations with a fantastic, chaotic world. Poe believed that the definitive characteristic of the short story was its unity of effect.



Other examples of impressionist stories at the turn-of-the-centuries period are Mark Twain's tales of animals (*The Celebrated Jumping Frog, 1865*; *The Story of Old Ram, 1872*). They distort reality reflecting the speakers' impressions.

**Ambrose Bierce's** ['æmbrous 'biəs] *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge (1891)* is another example of this type of story in which the reader sees a mind at work – distorting, fabricating, and fantasizing – rather than an objective picture of actuality.

In the first half of the XX century, the appeal of the short story continued to grow. The short story form itself became more varied and complex. The fundamental means of structuring a story underwent a significant change. The overwhelming or unique event that formed the XIX century story fell out of favour with the storywriter of the early XX century. He grew more interested in subtle actions and unspectacular events.

In the postwar period, the art of the short story again flourished. Among its most respected authors was Flannery O'Connor, who developed a distinctive Southern gothic style in which characters acted at one level as people and at another as symbols. A devout Catholic, O'Connor imbued her stories with deeply religious themes. Among the widely studied are *A Good Man is Hard to Find* and *Everything That Rises Must Converge*.

Other important authors include Katherine Anne Porter (*Flowering Judas*), John Cheever, and Donald Barthelme.

Modern short stories are often experimental. Donald Barthelme's composition consisted of bits and pieces of television commercials, political speeches, literary allusions, graphic symbols, dialogue from Hollywood movies. All these were interspersed with his own original prose. His stories are experimental and hard to comprehend. Yet they hold the full attention of the reader.

## 6.2. SATIRICAL TRADITION IN AMERICAN SHORT STORIES. MARK TWAIN

Born 1835 in Florida, **Mark Twain (1835–1910)** “came in with the comet” and as he predicted “went out with the comet” passing April 21, 1910, the day after Halley’s Comet. His real name was **Samuel Longhorne Clemens**, and he took his pen name from his days as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River where the cry “mark twain” signaled the depth of water – about 12 feet was required for the safe passage of riverboats.

He started his career at a newspaper, worked as a printer, a riverboat pilot, and then turned to gold mining. Then he turned to journalism. It was during that time that he wrote the short story that would launch his career, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*.

As his writing grew in popularity, he became a public figure and iconic American whose work represents some of the best in the genre of Realism.

Mark Twain is also well remembered for his witty quotations, a small sampling follows:

1. Good breeding consists of concealing how much we think of ourselves and how little we think of the other person.
2. All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence; then success is sure.
3. It takes your enemy and your friend, working together, to hurt you: the one to slander you, and the other to get the news to you.
4. It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.
5. Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please [21].

The story which helped to first establish Twain as a humorist was *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. The story, told by Jim Smiley is set during the gold rush era and tells how Jim competes with others to see whose frog can jump farther. Twain used both humor and exaggeration

to satirize storytelling and the cultural differences between east and the new west.

Twain rewrote *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* several times, giving it different titles, and it was widely translated. The paragraph from this story presented below illustrates some features of Twain's style.

“Well, **thish**-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tomcats, and **all them kind of things**, till you couldn't rest, and you **couldn't fetch nothing** for him to bet on but he'd match you. He **ketched** a frog one day, and took **him** home, and said he **cal'klated** to **edercate** him; and so he **never done nothing** for three months but **set** in his back yard and **learn** that frog to jump. And **you bet you** he did **learn** him too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air **like a doughnut** – see him turn one summerset, or may be a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flatfooted and all right, **like a cat**. He got him up so in the matter of catching flies, and kept him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as far as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do **most anything** – and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor – **Dan'l Webster** was the name of the frog – and sing out, “Flies, Dan'l, flies!” and quicker'n you could wink, he'd spring straight up, and snake a fly off'n the counter there...” [22]

Twain's writing style is, at first glance, unrefined. The raw, uneducated vernacular of the characters can be convoluted and full of slang that it is difficult to understand. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that Twain's choice of words is carefully calculated to give the reader the sense of a carefree narrative.

Twain's descriptive language includes figurative devices, such as similes to develop a scene.

## Mark Twain's style

He was a master of rendering colloquial speech, vernacular dialogue, and subtle social commentary and helped to create and popularize a distinctive American literature built on American themes and language.

Mark Twain utilizes humor in several ways in his works: through characters, dialogue, setting, word choice.

### Characters:

– Twain creates unforgettable and hilarious characters and often uses child heroes in some of his most famous novels: Tom Sawyer's crazy ideas, cruel pranks, childish logic, imagination, acting ability, and wit make him a clever and funny creation.

– He spells the words so as to imitate his characters' pronunciation: *Dan'l* for Daniel, *p'nts* for points. The sound of his characters' speech is the key to the characters themselves.

– Twain reproduces the homey way that unschooled people speak.

– Twain captures the way that anecdotal story-tellers can spin yarns apropos of little and keep it up indefinitely which was common for frontier humor.

– Exaggeration, slang, numerous abbreviated words, and incorrect grammar serve to develop the characters in a more human way.

### Dialogue:

– Mark Twain is a master of dialogue: the way the characters interact with each other causes smiles — their pointless arguments and clever insults are often hilarious.

– Twain uses the unique dialects and colloquialisms of the areas around the Mississippi River for his characters. It contributes to the authenticity, only someone growing up in the region could have. Twain uses that unique way of speaking to humorous advantage, twisting the accents, superstitions, and phrases into passages packed with hilarity.

– Twain’s dialogue in his novel *The Prince and the Pauper* illustrates Twain’s perception of the dialogue of the sixteenth century England. The novel mixes Twain’s trademark, seemingly carefree style in the narrative with the exaggerated formalisms of the Old British vernacular, such as the phrase “Learning softeneth the heart and breedeth gentleness and charity”. Twain also uses the dialogue in *The Prince and the Pauper* to highlight class differences, as the vernacular of the beggars is much rougher than the overly formal and educated exchanges of the nobles.

#### Events:

Twain tosses his characters into ridiculous situations. For instance, after running away from home and realizing his family thinks him dead, Tom Sawyer finds he has the opportunity to attend his own funeral, providing the entertainment for the reader.

#### Setting:

Twain develops a nearly palpable setting for his novels through the use of imagery. The combined use of dialogue and imagery inject a sense of realism to his settings and characters. Twain renders a sense of realism amongst an element of adventure.

#### Words:

Mark Twain describes funny characters, paints funny dialogues, and tells of funny events — and he does all this in a funny way with the words he chooses. He writes in a witty and memorable fashion that leaves the reader laughing. It is the way his stories are told that sets him apart as a clever author.

His humor and way of depicting life in the 1800s are unforgettable and wonderfully funny. The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it.

Many of his works have been suppressed at times for various reasons. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been repeatedly restricted in American

high schools for its frequent use of the word “nigger”, which was in common usage in the pre-Civil War period in which the novel was set.

### 6.3. O. HENRY

**O. Henry (William Sydney Porter) (1862–1910)** is a famous American short-story writer, a master of surprise endings and ironical coincidences of the stories. He wrote about the life of ordinary people in New York City. Typical for O. Henry’s stories is a twist of plot, which turns on an ironic or coincidental circumstance.

William Sydney Porter was born in North Carolina. When William was three, his mother died, and he was raised by his paternal grandmother and a paternal aunt. At the age of fifteen, he left the school, and then worked in a drug store and on a Texas ranch. Over the next several years, Porter took a number of different jobs, from pharmacy to drafting, journalism, and banking. After moving to Austin, Texas, he married. In 1884, Porter started a humorous weekly *The Rolling Stone*. It was at this time that he began the heavy drinking. When the weekly failed, he joined the *Houston Post* as a reporter and columnist. Thus, while pursuing his many ventures, O. Henry began writing as a hobby.

In 1894 cash was found to have gone missing from the bank where Porter used to work and he was charged with embezzlement. He fled to Honduras but sent his wife and daughter back to Texas, after which he holed up in a hotel to write “*Kings and Cabbages*”. He learned his wife was dying of tuberculosis and returned to Austin to be with them and turned himself in to the court. His father-in-law posted his bail so he could remain with his wife until her death in 1897. He was sentenced for five years, although there has been much debate over his actual guilt.

While in prison, O. Henry started to write short stories to earn money to support his daughter Margaret. She was raised by the relatives. In prison, William often thought about her. He was very sorry that she would not receive a Christmas present from him that year. On receiving money for his first story, he bought and sent her a Christmas gift. His first work, *Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking*, appeared in an American magazine in 1899. His stories gained an immediate success among readers. After doing three years of the five years sentence, Porter emerged from the prison in 1901. He was released for good behavior and changed his name to O. Henry. According to some sources, he acquired the pseudonym from a warder called Orrin Henry.

Then O. Henry moved to New York City. From 1903 to 1906, he wrote a story a week for the New York "World", also publishing in other magazines. It was the most prolific period of his writing.

O. Henry's collection *The Four Million* (1906) included his well-known stories *The Gift of the Magi*, *The Furnished Room*, *The Cop and the Anthem*. The stories are set in New York City, and the title is based on the population of the city at that time. Henry had an obvious affection for New York.

O. Henry's trademark is his witty, plot-twisting endings, and his warm characterization of the awkward and difficult situations and the creative ways people find to resolve them.

His most famous short story, *The Gift of the Magi*, epitomizes his style. It is a story about a young married couple, short on money, who wish to buy each other Christmas gifts. That problem – their lack of funds – finds a famously endearing and ironic resolution. Ironically, the wife sells her hair so that she can buy her husband watch chain, while he sells his watch so that he can buy her a pair of combs. The author compares the young couple to the Magi, three Biblical images, and their gifts with the gifts of the Magi. The fact that the main characters are ready to sacrifice the most valuable things they have for the sake of their beloved person, makes this story both touching and instructive. Material things come and go, but spiritual values and feelings remain forever.

The story contains situational irony: by selling their most valuable possessions, they end up having sold the thing that they need to use with the gift of the beloved.

*The Cop and the Anthem* is about A New York City hobo with a creative solution for dealing with the cold city streets during winter.

Another story, *A Retrieved Reformation*, is about a safecracker Jimmy Valentine, fresh from prison, whose life takes an unexpected turn while casing his next crime scene.

*The Ransom of Red Chief*, a story about two kidnappers that snatch the wrong boy. All of these stories are highly entertaining and they are read for pleasure and used in classrooms around the world.

*The Trimmed Lamp* (1907) explored the lives of New Yorkers and included *The Last Leaf*, a story of two young artists, Sue and Johnsy sharing a flat at Greenwich Village in New York and their protector and neighbor, an old artist called Mr. Behrman. The major themes of the story are hope, friendship, sacrifice, optimism and pessimism. The last leaf is the symbol of hope that empowers the person to have the strength to fight death. Behrman's death is a symbol of self-sacrifice: the old drunk waited for the right moment to create his masterpiece, he realized that he could save the girl's life by inflicting hope in her mind, so he went out in the middle of a storm to paint a leaf. Though no one had ever been touched with his art before, he was sure that Johnsy would be affected by his painting, even only to get her through her illness. The masterpiece created by the painter on the wall and art on the whole symbolize optimism and the meaning of life. It was the final realization that the last leaf was not real but a painting which seemed to have a magical healing power that renewed Johnsy's will to live and to defeat her pneumonia.

O. Henry published 10 collections and over 600 short stories during his life time.

O. Henry's last years were shadowed by alcoholism, ill health, and financial problems. He was a very reserved person and avoided public and



journalists probably, being ashamed of his past. O. Henry died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1910, in New York. He died lonely and penniless being a favorite short story writer all over the world.

O. Henry's short stories, laconic and stylistically perfect, are characterized by:

- 1) humorous, witty style, a wonderful sense of humour;
- 2) depicting the life of common people of New York and American province;
- 3) a twist of plot;
- 4) unexpected endings;
- 5) ironical coincidences;
- 6) belief in good human nature;
- 7) warm characterization of the awkward and difficult situations and the creative ways people find to resolve them.

O. Henry is:

- 1) a humanist noticing all the social marks of his time;
- 2) a master of the "double" outcome: the first outcome is false, the second is unexpected;
- 3) a fatalist believing in the power of Chance and Fate;
- 4) the creator of the unique portrait of New York at the dawn of monopoly era. In his stories, New York is a diverse, attractive and cruel city with four million low rank "little Americans": clerks, shop assistants, beggars and homeless people, unknown painters, poets, actresses, adventurers;
- 5) a setter of moral guidelines: laws of ethics and humanity work in his small world even for those characters whose actions are illegal.

O. Henry's short story is a purely American phenomenon linked with the national literary traditions of E.A. Poe, Bret Harte and Mark Twain.

#### 6.4. DOROTHY PARKER

“Sarcastic, raw and deep.” This is how Dorothy Parker's satirical poems, short stories, articles and journalism pieces are typically described.

**Dorothy Parker (1893–1967)** was born in New Jersey in 1893. Dorothy, who was born when her mother was forty-two years old, was the last of four children. The family lived the comfortable lives of the upper middle class. Disaster, however, does not acknowledge wealth. When Dorothy was four years old, her mother died of a heart disease.

Within less than two years, her father married another well-educated gentile. Dorothy cordially despised her. Then her step-mother died suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Her father's death ten years later marked the end of Dorothy's comfortable, middle-class life for a time. After the siblings divided up the household goods, Dorothy was forced to support herself by playing the piano at various Manhattan dance schools. She amused herself in the off-hours by writing light verse. She sent pieces to various publishers. Acceptance finally came, when her poem “Any Porch” was published and a payment of twelve dollars was attached. Thrilled, Dorothy immediately proposed that she might be offered a job as well. A few months went by, and Dorothy was offered a job at *Vogue*. Her career was about to begin.

By the age of 20 she had lost her mother, step-mother, uncle and father. She had many sad times and found comfort in writing with a brutal honesty that still surrounds her memory.

In 1916 at 22 she took a job as Editor for *Vogue* and continued to write for magazines and journals. Only twenty-four years old, Parker became New York's only woman drama critic. The reviews she wrote showed her highly individual style, attracted her first broad audience. She became known for her “biting wit” and intense poetry. Her first published short story was entitled *A Pretty Little Picture*, and in 1925, she was on the Editorial Staff for the New

Yorker. She continued contributing poems and critiques for many years to the publication. Parker's first poetry collection was entitled *Enough Rope*. It was a bestseller.

In 1930 a collection of fiction was published, *Laments for the Living*. Another collection of short stories followed in 1933: *After Such Pleasures*.

In 1937, she wrote the script for the film *A Star is born* and won an Oscar for it.

She had a great sense of dark humor that combined her depressive temperament and her brilliant intelligence. She suffered tremendously from depression, addiction and a suicide attempt. Often, artists and writers are pained by their emotions but this may also be the well where they go for inspiration.

Parker's relationships were strained. Dorothy married a stock broker in 1917 and 11 years later they divorced after a difficult marriage. She befriended many other writers of her time including Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. In 1934 she married Alan Campbell, an actor with aspirations of being a screenwriter. Like Parker, he was half-Jewish and half-Scottish. They moved to California. They spent time together writing for Paramount Pictures. She and Campbell worked on more than 15 films. Their relationship took a toll on them and they divorced in 1947 and remarried in 1950. During their relationship they were a well-known and well-paid team. There were many ups and downs for the two and Alan had a moody disposition. In 1963, he died from an overdose.

#### Political activities

Dorothy was a socialist and member of the Communist party. She was blacklisted in Hollywood because of her association with it, but she continued to write and be a political woman throughout her life.

She died from a heart attack in 1967.

Dorothy was a true leader for women, writers, thinkers and activists. She courageously survived many losses in her life, lived on both American coasts, traveled extensively and had a robust personal and professional life. Her prolific collection of her work is innovative and creative. *“The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.”* [23]

Though her personal life was fraught with marriages and affairs, suicide attempts and alcoholism, in her writing, she is personified cool.

One of her most popular stories, *Big Blonde*, won the O. Henry Award in 1929.

Dorothy Parker was:

1) a supporter of realistic, socially important art and literature, promoting talented and fresh ideas. She mocked at stylistic carelessness and artistic errors;

2) a master of short fiction. Her short stories are satirical and psychological; though often witty, are also spare and incisive, and more bittersweet than comic;

3) an exposé and an accuser of greediness, heartlessness, dullness and stupidity hidden behind the outer decency of high and middle class world. In her best short stories Parker ridicules hypocrites and egoists (*Mr. Durant, The Custard Heart*), ladies bountiful (*Song of the Shirt*), false friends of Afro-Americans (*Arrangement in Black and White, Clothe the Naked*), earthliness of petty bourgeois existence (*Here We Are*).

Her style is characterized by:

1) key words, a careful choice of accessories and details loaded with significance and giving a precise description of her narrow-minded characters (мещанских героев);

2) lack of action and events due to the statics and immobility of the petty bourgeois world;

3) focus on characterization, rather than the plot;

4) the author’s unemotional detachment permeated with irony.

## 6.5. RING LARDNER

**Ring Lardner (1885–1933)** was an American sports columnist. As a short story writer, he is best known for his satire, his satirical takes on the sports world, marriage, and the theatre.

Ring Lardner had four sons, all of whom followed their father's steps. They all became newspaper reporters or magazine writers. His second son, James, was killed in the Spanish Civil War. David, the youngest son, worked as a war correspondent before he was killed by a landmine in Germany in 1944.

In 1916 Lardner published his first successful book, *You Know Me Al*, which was written in the form of letters (an epistolary), written by "Jack Keefe", a bush league baseball player, to a friend back home. It had initially been published as six separate, but inter-related short stories. Like most of Lardner's stories, *You Know Me Al* employed satire, in this case to show the stupidity and avarice of a certain type of athlete. This story is considered one of the top pieces of American humor writing.

Lardner went on to write such well-known stories as *Haircut*, *Some Like Them Cold*, *The Golden Honeymoon*, *Alibi Ike*, and *A Day in the Life of Conrad Green*. He also continued to write follow-up stories to *You Know Me Al*, with the hero of that book, the headstrong but gullible Jack Keefe, experiencing various ups and downs in his major league career and in his personal life. Private Keefe's World War I letters home to his friend Al were collected in *Treat 'Em Rough*.

Lardner also had a lifelong fascination with the theatre, although his only success was *June Moon*, a comedy.

With the exception of *You Know Me Al*, which was initially written and published as six separate stories, but was considered a novel by some critics, Lardner never wrote a novel, but is thought by many to be one of **America's best writers of the short story.**

Lardner was also a well-known sports columnist, who began his career as a teenager and pursued it until his death. Lardner's last baseball writing

was *Lose with a Smile* in 1933. He died in 1933 at age 48 of complications from tuberculosis.

His best known works are: *You Know Me Al* (1916), *Gullible's Travels* (1917), *Treat 'Em Rough* (1918), *How to Write Short Stories* (1924), *Haircut* (1925), *Round Up* (1929).

The following American traditions of short-story writing can be traced in Ring Lardner's works:

- 1) unmasking pretense and outward decency;
- 2) exposing selfishness, indifference, practicality, ignorance, substitution of kin and intimate relations for dollar interest (the heroine of the story "Some Like It Cold" announces to her lover that her poor father died from cancer but they got the insurance and are well-off. So she won't have to spend her money on Mom);
- 3) using satirical devices: parody, incisive author's commentary, irony, grotesque comparison of incomparable things. The short story collections entitled *The Love Nest* (1926) and *Round Up* (1929) include stories about failed marriages. According to Ring Lardner, the family, which used to be a shelter from troubles and evils of life, does not exist anymore. Love here is always a mercenary feeling (корыстное чувство) leading to indifference and coldness: *Now and Then*, *Anniversary*, *The Love Nest*, *A Day with Conrad Green*;
- 4) emphasis on social isolation and disintegration of people, communication gap;
- 5) playing upon the incorrect colloquial speech and sport slang.

## 6.6. WILLIAM SAROYAN

**William Saroyan (1908–1981)** was an American author, the son of Armenian immigrants. He wrote many plays and short stories about growing up impoverished. These stories were popular during the Great Depression and reflected the immigrant experience and the struggles of that time. Saroyan

grew up in Fresno, the center of Armenian-Americans in California, which served as the basis for many of his settings. Despite the difficulties of life during the Depression era, Saroyan's work nonetheless contained a ray of hope and optimism about life. That hope expresses the indomitable spirit of those immigrants who helped to build America.

Saroyan's father died in 1911. At the age of four, William was placed in an orphanage in California, together with his brothers — an experience he later described in his writing. Five years later, the family reunited, when his mother had obtained work in a cannery.

In 1921, Saroyan decided to become a writer. Saroyan continued his education on his own, supporting himself by taking odd jobs. His first stories appeared in the 1930s. Among these was *The Broken Wheel*.

Many of Saroyan's stories were based on his childhood experiences among the Armenian-American fruit growers or dealt with the rootlessness of the immigrant. The short story collection, *My Name is Aram* (1940), an international bestseller, was about a young boy and the colorful characters of his immigrant family.

Saroyan made his breakthrough with *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1934), the title taken from the nineteenth century song of the same name. The protagonist is a young, starving writer who tries to survive in a Depression-ridden society: "Through the air on the flying trapeze, his mind hummed. Amusing it was, astoundingly funny. A trapeze to God, or to nothing, a flying trapeze to some sort of eternity; he prayed objectively for strength to make the flight with grace." [24]

Following the United States involvement in World War II, Saroyan enlisted in the U.S. Army and in 1942, he was posted to London.

In 1943, Saroyan married eighteen-year-old Carol Marcus (1924–2003); they had two children, Aram Saroyan and Lucy Saroyan. By the late 1940s, Saroyan's increasing problems with drinking and gambling had taken a toll on

his marriage, and they divorced. Lucy later became an actress, and Aram became a writer who published a book about his father.

Saroyan's financial situation did not improve after the war, when interest in his works declined and he was criticized for sentimentalism.

### Works

As a playwright, Saroyan's work was drawn from deeply personal sources. He disregarded the conventional idea of conflict as essential to drama. *My Heart's in the Highlands* (1939), his first play, was a comedy about a young boy and his Armenian family. It was produced at the Guild Theatre in New York.

Among Saroyan's best known plays is *The Time of Your Life* (1939), set in a waterfront saloon in San Francisco.

*The Human Comedy* (1943) is set in California, where young Homer, a telegraph messenger, bears witness to the sorrows and joys of small town people during World War II.

Saroyan worked rapidly, hardly editing his text. Much of his earnings he spent in drinking and gambling. From 1958, the author lived mainly in Paris, where he had an apartment. He died from cancer, aged 72, in 1981, in his hometown of Fresno.

Peculiarities of the style:

1. William Saroyan's stories celebrated optimism in the midst of the trials of the Depression. Saroyan's work was full of zest for life and was seemingly impressionistic.

2. He was criticized for sentimentalism. Saroyan praised freedom. Brotherly love and universal benevolence were for him basic values, but his idealism was considered out of step with the times.

3. Saroyan combined authenticity and accuracy of pictures of everyday life with grotesque and fantasy based on Armenian folklore. The fusion of grotesque and true-to-life descriptions shows Saroyan's remoteness and



detachments from American reality because he had to conform to norms and laws foreign to him.

4. Saroyan pointed out the importance of the laws of national memory, which forms personality.

5. The theme of homelessness, of the search for the lost native land is a major theme for Saroyan. It reflects his specific experience as a first generation American. A modern urban citizen is doomed to native roots deprivation.

6. His character contrasts the tendency to standardization. His hero is a queer loser in everyday life but also a romantic spiritually elevated dreamer destined for hardship. Saroyan's character is naïve, sentimental, loyal to elaborate illusions, impractical. In Saroyan's fiction, the distance between the character and the author is often blurred.

## **6.7. ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

An innovative writing style and an adventurous, publicized life made **Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961)** the most influential writer of the XX century and a cultural icon: he was a leader of the post-World War I group of artists known as "The Lost Generation".

Hemingway was a big game hunter and fisherman, world traveler, and war correspondent. These pursuits influenced his work, which is often set in Africa or Europe.

Born to a doctor's family in Illinois, Hemingway edited his high school newspaper and worked as a reporter at *The Kansas City Star*. He served as an ambulance driver during World War I and was seriously wounded at the age of eighteen.

Like the heroes of his fiction, the author courted danger to prove his courage. Two plane crashes late in life left him in a state of chronic pain that

some say prompted his suicide. Like his father before him, he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Among his best short stories and novellas are *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*, *Cat in the rain* and others.

#### The Author's Style

1) Many of Hemingway's stories involve tests, which typically require courage and endurance. His characters are involved in violent activities such as boxing, hunting, bullfighting, and combat, where they are in a position to suffer both physical and psychological wounds.

2) Spare, understated prose, devoid of unnecessary words is a mark of the Hemingway style.

3) It emphasizes carefully pared down declarative sentences based on simple syntax, strategic repetition, and a minimum of explanatory material.

4) This style nevertheless conveys his characters' situations and feelings.

5) Hemingway mistrusted flowery and official-sounding language, preferring to use much simpler, concrete language in both narration and dialogue.

6) The ironic tone of Hemingway's storytelling is crucial. In his war stories, it reflects his cynicism about authorities who use notions such as duty in pushing naïve soldiers to sacrifice themselves. Sometimes a Hemingway character uses irony to protect him from acknowledging the depth of his pain. So it is particularly important whenever a Hemingway character does make a direct statement about his feelings or his situation. Many stories owe their insight to the author's personal war experience.

7) "*The theory of iceberg*": instead of stating the obvious, Hemingway uses dialogue and subtext to convey his themes. He manages to make the reader feel what his hero feels through inner dialogues. Hemingway likens this style to an iceberg since only a fraction of it lies visible above water; the rest –

the greater mass – is unseen below. An attentive reader will uncover the missing parts.

8) Weather is used as an accompaniment to the emotional tones of different scenes. The background of every tragic episode in *A Farewell to Arms* is rain.

9) The author proves that private happiness is impossible in the restless world of the XX century. Seeing misery around him, Hemingway's hero cannot be happy.

10) The origin of Hemingway's peculiar style lies in his career as a reporter. Journalistic writing focuses only on events being reported, omitting superfluous matter. When he became a writer of short stories, he retained this minimalistic style, focusing on surface elements without explicitly discussing the underlying themes.

## 6.8. FLANNERY O'CONNOR

Influences:

1) Catholicism: When **Flannery O'Connor (1925–1964)** was growing up in Georgia, she lived across the street from the Catholic cathedral her family attended. Later her intense Catholicism had a strong influence on her life and work.

2) Her parents' encouragement in developing her talents: O'Connor was a shy and talented only child who wrote, drew cartoons, and attended an experimental private school. The author showed ingenuity and a certain fascination with freakishness at a young age, when she taught a chicken to walk backwards. This fascination would later turn up in her writing.

3) Her illness: O'Connor went to college in the South and published her first story in 1946. Not long after receiving her master's degree, she was stricken with lupus, the chronic inflammatory disease that had killed her father.

She returned home to live with her mother and raise peacocks on her family farm while continuing to write until her death in 1964.

Remembered primarily as a short story writer, O'Connor's best-known works include the novel *The Violent Bear It Away* and the short story collections *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* and *Everything That Rises Must Converge*.

#### The Author's Style

1) O'Connor's stories resemble modern parables of spiritual enlightenment.

2) Bizarre characters, comical descriptions, and grotesque metaphors for the way things look mark her style.

3) The physical deformities of her characters often reflect their moral shortcomings.

4) Her stories often concern an individual's relationship to God.

5) Many of O'Connor's stories contain unexpected, violent, actions.

6) Her stories focus on the need for salvation in a world that is beset by evil.

7) O'Connor's characters speak in the idiom of rural Georgia.

8) O'Connor's characters fail to see the moral implications of their own words. They reveal through their manners and everyday behavior how obsessed they are by race and social class. They often think their wrongful actions and attitudes make them "good people." In the end, they are shaken out of their narrow habits of mind by violent events.

9) When O'Connor's characters are saved from their meanness and shallowness, it is not through their own efforts. Instead, it is by mysterious events, sudden evidence of the grace of God.

10) She is critical of the prideful and the smug — people who think they always know what is right — and these characters often pay a high price for the humbling insights they reach.

Flannery O'Connor's fiction reflects her devout Catholicism; her grotesque characters and often violent story lines express her belief in the

need for salvation. The combination of background, gender, ethnicity, and values makes up the author's world view.

#### Discussing the Story *Everything That Rises Must Converge*

1. In literature, recurrent images, objects, phrases, or actions are called *motifs*. The repetition of such elements unifies a work of literature. In the story *Everything That Rises Must Converge* there are several repeated elements: the mothers' hat, the theme of race, the theme of poverty. They give a clear understanding of the author's point of view on the issues of class inequality, race discrimination, generation gap. Judging by the story, what is the author's attitude to these problems?

2. The concept of martyrdom appears several times in the story. It hints at the sacrifices made by Julian's Mother. What did she sacrifice?

4. "To converge" means to come together and unite with a common focus. Considering the title, what in the story rises and therefore must converge?

5. It has been said that good literature raises more questions than it answers. O'Connor in particular is known for the profound questions her fiction poses. What questions do you think arise in this story?

6. Many of O'Connor's stories contain unexpected, sometimes violent, actions. What action or gesture do you think indicates the "real heart of the story"?

The story's title comes from the work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit philosopher who developed the idea of the "Omega Point," the theological idea that everything in the universe trends toward a final point of spiritual unification. O'Connor's take on it, however, is darkly ironic, as her characters' forced "union" on the bus ends awfully. Julian's Mother's dialogue obliquely references the line by saying, "They should rise yes, but on their own side of the fence," framing de Chardin's idea in the separate-but-equal rhetoric of the segregated South. The story does end with one moment of true convergence: after Julian's Mother seems to suffer a stroke a few moments

after getting hit by Carver's Mother, Julian feels suddenly sympathetic and connected to his mother, whom he has derided for so long. But even this is a soiled unity in which a "tide of darkness seemed to sweep him back to her,"[25] suggesting with its language of "darkness" that this moment will pull Julian's own ideas about race and difference more into alignment with his mother's. The story suggests that, in a society marred by racism, perhaps the belief that people recognize similarity and come together is unrealistic.

## 6.9. CATHERINE ANN PORTER

Born in Texas, **Katherine Anne Porter (1890–1980)** led a long and full life. The glamorous blonde author married for the first of four times at 16. A world traveler, she acted in two movies and moved frequently, both within the States and overseas. She also enjoyed a long writing career, living to the age of 90 and thus outlasting most of her contemporaries.

Because her mother died when Porter was two, the author was reared afterward by her beloved grandmother. It amused Porter that although she was to teach at many prestigious universities, she never went to college herself.

She began her career as a theatre and music critic, publishing her first story in 1922. Porter was known mostly for her short stories and was awarded the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for *Collected Short Stories*, published in 1965. While travelling to Germany in 1931 for a fellowship, Porter was horrified by the rise of the Nazis to power. This trip provided her with the background for her only novel, *Ship of Fools*, which was published 31 years later and made into a popular film.

### The Author's Style

Katherine Anne Porter's stories always convey a strong sense of place, revealing her understanding of the practical impact of social and economic

conditions on people's lives. Her primary focus, however, is on the hidden motives and emotions of her characters.

Porter understood that everyday people and uncomplicated events can still provide powerful stories of individual personality, character, and moral choice. Her often simple characters are typified by conflicted feelings and unexpressed tensions. She brings their perspectives out by clarifying and respecting their points of view. Many of Porter's most memorable characters are women.

Known as a careful planner of her novel and stories, the author revised each one many times in order to produce precise phrasing, concentrated action, and emotional focus. Her stories also reflect her careful attention to the idioms and dialects of particular times and places, making her writing representative of what came to be known as "the local color movement". A native Texan, Porter eventually lived and worked in Dallas, Denver, Chicago, and New York, and she traveled and lived for extended periods in Mexico and in Europe, including several years in Paris.

## **6.10. ISAAC ASIMOV**

The topic of artificial intelligence has received a great public response. It is the English-language works of fiction about robots that introduce a wide audience to the ethical, moral, technological and global consequences of creating intelligent computers.

After the end of World War II, the world was obsessed with a technological renaissance. Many writers were interested in the topic of creating artificial intelligence and its consequences. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Isaac Asimov's fantastic stories appeared on the pages of American magazines, which reflect society's concern about the dangers of the development of advanced technologies. The collection of the best short stories

will be released later in one binding under the title *I, Robot* and will become a classic which will change the consciousness of humanity, preparing us for a future in which humanity itself may be obsolete.

**Isaac Asimov (1919–1992)** is distinguished by a special manner of narration: generalization vs individualization. Discussions about the fate of humanity in the era of robots are interspersed with paragraphs about specific episodes of interaction between robots and humans, creating a polysemantic text.

The stories describing artificial intelligence in the collection *I, Robot* are built on the principle of complication; they show the evolution of artificial intelligence created by man from a limited set of functions to complete identity to the human mind. In the first story *Robbie* we read: “The Talking Robot’s only response was an erratic splutter and an occasional incoherent sound. The radical generalization offered it, i.e., its existence, not as a particular object, but as a member of a general group, was too much for it. Loyally, it tried to encompass the concept and half a dozen coils burnt out. Little warning signals were buzzing.” [26, p. 15]

And in one of the last stories of the collection, the robopsychologist Dr. Calvin has not revealed whether Stephen Byerly is a robot or a human: “What difference would it make? You share a prejudice against robots which is quite unreasoning. He was a very good Mayor. And when the Regions of Earth formed their Federation in 2044, he became the first World Coordinator. By that time it was the Machines that were running the world anyway.” [26, p. 130]

Paradoxically, to describe robots, A. Asimov more often operates with human categories: consciousness – subconsciousness/unconsciousness, dreams and visions, assumptions, guilt, doubts: “As we would say of a human being, not consciously.” [26, p. 22] They are characterized by feelings such as fear and love: “Gloria's mother, however, was a source of uneasiness to Robbie and there was always the impulse to sneak away from her sight.” [26, p. 10]



They have preferences: “He would have liked it like anything.” [26, p. 10] They are attracted to fairy tales and romance novels. Robbie’s favorite fairy tale is Cinderella: “Midnight was striking and everything was changing back to the shabby originals lickety-split,” said Gloria while Robbie listened tensely with burning eyes.”

Expressing sympathy for robots, people give them human names: Robbie, Nestor (the NS-2 model), Archie, etc. All the concepts representing the mega concept of Artificial intelligence in Asimov's early stories are predominantly marked by a positive connotation: Friendship, Help, Strength, Faith, Usefulness, and Devotion. The positive semantics of the concepts emphasizes that the world of artificial intelligence dominance is not devoid of meaning: it is more orderly and logical, more rational and practical. “Then you don’t remember a world without robots. There was a time when humanity faced the universe alone and without a friend. Now he has creatures to help him; stronger creatures than himself, more faithful, more useful, and absolutely devoted to him. Mankind is no longer alone.” [26, p. 3]

For the second category of people, the robot is an unpredictable monster: “I won’t have my daughter entrusted to a machine – and I don’t care how clever it is. It has no soul, and no one knows what it may be thinking. A child just isn’t made to be guarded by a thing of metal.” [26, p. 10] Negative connotations are represented by the concept of “Mechanism”, which also depicts the appearance of robots, showing them as a piece of steel: “*Gears and metal; electricity and positrons. Mind and iron.*” [26, p. 3] The concept of “Power” emphasizes the power and speed of machines: “Robbie's chrome-steel arms (capable of bending a bar of steel two inches in diameter into a pretzel) wound about the little girl gently and lovingly, and his eyes glowed a deep, deep red.” [26, p. 18] Grammatically, this concept is represented by comparative constructions: “A robot is infinitely more to be trusted than a human nurse.” [26, p. 11] “Remember, he's fighting us. He’s on his guard. The

only way we can catch him is to outsmart him – and, within his limitations, he can think much more quickly than a human being.” [26, p. 15]

In the work of Isaac Asimov, the main methods of linguistic representation of the concept of “artificial intelligence” are epithets (useful, devoted vs annoying, dangerous), comparative constructions, unreal conditional sentences, suspense, defeated expectancy.

In no work of fiction do robots achieve such a degree of humanization as in the stories of Isaac Asimov. One of the ways to “humanize” artificial intelligence is a robot storyteller (short stories *True Love*, *Robot Visions*, etc.). The story *Robot Dreams* uses the technique of defeated expectancy; only at the very end the reader learns that the narrator is a robot. On the other hand, Isaac Asimov gives a lot of keys, such as aposiopesis, omission, which should tell the reader that this narrator cannot be trusted (“the unreliable narrator”), that the narrative is not conducted by a person, but by some artificial intelligence that is trying to prove its superiority over the human: “And what am I doing with these people, when I myself am not even a physicist, but rather a – ? Well, merely a merely.” “It was my remark that led to a line of argument that showed that this was possible. It would be useless for me to try to explain that mathematically if you have not had Temporalist training. Just accept the matter. It was also a remark of mine that led the Temporalists to develop a line of reasoning that showed that travel into the past was impossible.” [26, p. 1]

Comparing A. Asimov’s early stories about robots with the stories of modern authors of the XXI century, it can be stated that the content and linguistic representation of the concept “artificial intelligence” in fiction has changed over the years. The implicit warning of Isaac Asimov is replaced by the explicit semantics of destruction in the modern artistic discourse about robots by English-speaking authors [27].

## PART VII. UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Utopian and dystopian writing sits at the crossroads of literature and other academic disciplines such as philosophy, history, psychology, politics, and sociology. It serves as a useful tool to discuss our present condition and future prospects – to imagine a better tomorrow and warn of dangerous possibilities. To examine the future of mankind through fascinating stories that highlight our anxieties in adventurous, thought-provoking ways. From Thomas More’s foundational text “Utopia” published in 1516 to the XXI century phenomenon of *The Hunger Games*, these stories seek to find the best – and the worst – in humanity, with the hope of better understanding ourselves and the world.

Let’s look at utopia, the earlier of the two genres. Utopia, both as a word and a concept, is a paradox. The word “utopia” means “no place,” but it is also a homonym for *eutopia* – a good or perfect place. This contradiction is the foundation on which the genre is built and why it provides such rich opportunities for exploration. Can we invent a perfect place if it is also no place?

The book credited as the beginning of the utopian genre is Thomas More’s book with the same title. “Utopia” was written in 1516. The term was coined for this very book. The fiction is set on an imaginary ideal island.

The term “dystopia” is the opposite of utopia. If Utopia is an idealized version of society, dystopia would be its nightmare alternative.

Dystopia is a genre in literature that depicts a frightening society or community. The society can be frightening for many reasons, and generally has one or more of the following problems: a corrupt and/or totalitarian government, dehumanization due to technological advances, environmental

disasters, and eradication of the family, cultish religions, limited resources, and unchecked violence.

One of the dominant tones of dystopian fiction in the XX century is irony. Irony reflects the sadness or humor resulting from the gap between life as it is idealized, and life as it really is. In dystopias irony is used to criticize some aspect of society or to reveal the silliness of people's behavior.

Ray Bradbury is a prolific author, most well-known for his controversial dystopia, *Fahrenheit 451*, a novel that focuses on a perfect society that lives in the bliss of ignorance. Mass media manipulates public consciousness and considers people who wish to learn criminals. This is a theme that carries over in many of Bradbury's novels and stories, the idea of a perfect paradise not being exactly what it seems. In many works of his, Ray Bradbury portrays utopia and dystopia, making the reader rethink the world he lives in.

*Fahrenheit 451* is Bradbury's most famous written work of social criticism. It deals with serious problems of control of masses by media, banning of books, and suppression of the mind with censorship. *Fahrenheit 451* is the inspiration for rebellion; for promoting free thinking and individual decision, breaking away from the majority.

In a few days, the protagonist, Guy Montag, is transformed from a narrow-minded and prejudiced conformist into a dynamic individual committed to social change and to a life of saving books rather than destroying them.

At the very least, Clarisse, Montag's neighbor, awakens in him a love and desire to enjoy the simple and innocent things in life. She speaks to him about her delight in letting the rain fall upon her face and into her mouth. Later, Montag, too, turns his head upward into the early November rain in order to catch a mouthful of the cool liquid. In effect, Clarisse, in a very few meetings, exerts a powerful influence on Montag, and he is never able to find happiness in his former life again.

Captain Beatty, Montag's boss, intuitively senses Montag's growing discontent with his life and job. Beatty is an intelligent but ultimately cynical man. He is, paradoxically, well-read and is even willing to allow Montag to have some slight curiosity about what the books contain. However, Beatty, as a defender of the state (one who has compromised his morality for social stability), believes that all intellectual curiosity and hunger for knowledge must be quelled for the good of the state – for conformity. Beatty can tolerate curiosity about books as long as it doesn't affect one's actions. When the curiosity for books begins to affect an individual's conduct and a person's ability to conform – as it does Montag's – the curiosity must be severely punished.

Notice that Beatty repeatedly displays great knowledge of books. Obviously, he is using his knowledge to combat the doubts that Montag is experiencing. In fact, Beatty points out that books are meaningless, because man as a creature is satisfied as long as he is entertained. Books create too much confusion because they lack definitive clarity.

Another interesting point discussed by Beatty in this section is how people view death. Beatty introduces the idea that death isn't something that people mourn at this time.

The major themes of the novel are: danger of censorship, ignorance vs knowledge, life vs death, importance of nature, the potential threat of technology, the blurred concept of “truth”.

Danger of censorship. In *Fahrenheit 451*, owning and reading books is illegal. If books are found, they are burned and their owner is arrested. People with interests outside technology and entertainment are viewed as possible threats.

In the book, Bradbury doesn't give a clear explanation of why censorship has become so great in this futuristic society. Bradbury gives the reader a brief description of how society slowly lost interest in books, first condensing them, then relying simply on titles, and finally forgetting about them all together.

Ignorance vs knowledge. Throughout the novel, the reader is presented with a conflict between knowledge and ignorance. What does true happiness consist of? Is ignorance bliss, or do knowledge and learning provide true happiness? Montag, in his belief that knowledge reigns, fights against a society that embraces and celebrates ignorance.

The fireman's responsibility is to burn books and therefore destroy knowledge. Through these actions, the firemen promote ignorance to maintain the sameness of society. After befriending Clarisse, Montag starts to believe life is more complete and satisfying when knowledge is welcomed into it. After making this discovery, Montag fights against ignorance, trying to help others welcome knowledge into their lives. When his wife's friends come over, he forces them to listen to poetry acquainting them with true emotion and knowledge.

Life vs death. Montag's interest in knowledge and dedication to a new and better society saved him from dying together with his wife and colleagues in the destroyed city. Thus, Bradbury seems to suggest that life is dependent on knowledge and awareness. If we become idle and complacent, we might as well be dead.

Importance of nature. In the opening paragraph, the burning book pages are compared to birds trying to fly away. When Millie attempts suicide, Montag compares the tool used to save her to a snake. The Mechanical Hound is a dominant presence throughout the novel. The image of the salamander is dominant as well, as a symbol of the fireman. This animal imagery expresses the importance of nature in life. The lack of nature, or the manipulation of nature (i.e. the development of the Mechanical Hound), causes death and destruction. The only time animal imagery is positive in the entire novel is when Montag gets out of the river and encounters a deer. At first he thinks it is a Hound, but then realizes his mistake. The deer is peaceful, beautiful, and an expression of nature. This image welcomes Montag into his new life.

The potential threat of technology. Technology in Bradbury's 24th century is highly advanced. Television screens take up entire parlor room walls and characters can speak directly to the listener, addressing him or her by name. Small seashell radios broadcast into people's ears throughout the day. People rely on their inventions, such as the Mechanical Hound and the snake-like tool. Technology dominates society. When Montag finally escapes his old life, the city is destroyed by atomic bombs – another example of negative technology. Bradbury is commenting on the negative influence of technological development in this world and the destructive potential of technology in our society.

The blurred concept of “truth”. The paradox exists in the concept of "truth" portrayed in the novel. Beatty's "truth" is a fabrication and manipulation of history. Actual truth is hidden from society, or to be exact, burned. Many people in Montag's life, including his wife, believe they live in reality when in fact they live in a superficial world dominated by television, government oppression and the media. Society is blind to the truth. Montag's discovery of the truth and his dedication to the truth save him from the ultimate destruction bombs bring to the city.

## PART VIII. AMERICAN DRAMA

In the United States of America, Drama lagged behind other branches of literature; it took a longer time to mature. In the XIX century, the American public was seeking for entertainment rather than art through the American theatre. That is why the most common theatre genre was the melodrama, sentimental, inspiring excitement. With the beginning of modernization, the taste was rapidly changing. With O'Neill, came the much-needed breaking away from tradition.

Expressionist playwrights dared to show their own soul, their inner self on the stage. That is, they were interested in the subjective reality.

The expressionists' interest in subjectivity forced them to create specific techniques in drama that distorted reality and formed a world of dream images. Therefore, the main intention of an expressionist drama is to reveal the innermost soul of man.

Essential characteristics and techniques of expressionist drama:

1) First, the atmosphere is dreamlike and nightmarish. It is achieved through shadowy, unrealistic lighting and visual distortions in the set.

2) The dream effect is also created by placing pauses or silence of unusual length in the middle of dialogues or monologues.

3) Settings are not shown in a detailed way. Minimalistic style of setting is emphasized. Simplification is pointed out, and images have a symbolical character.

4) Furthermore, the structure of the play is split into episodic scenes. Nevertheless, its unity is retained through the dream construct.



5) Characters lose their individuality and are reduced to types or caricatures. Characters represent social groups rather than particular people and are depicted in an unreal, exaggerated way.

6) The dialogue is written in an abbreviated style or is made up of short phrases. It can also appear in the form of long monologues sometimes ironical, poetic or lyrical. The dialogue is replaced by sound effects or music in order to support certain moods.

7) The player overacts and tries to adopt the mechanical and broad movements of a puppet.

In the development of modern American drama Eugene O'Neill was standing in the front line.

### **8.1. PRE-WAR AMERICAN DRAMA. EUGENE O'NEILL'S EXPRESSIONISM**

#### **Eugene O' Neill [ju'dzi:n ɔ'ni:l] (1888–1953)**

O'Neill took the themes from the ancient Greek time and mixed them with Freudian psychoanalysis.

- ✓ Eugene O' Neill, an American dramatist, got the Noble prize in 1936.
- ✓ He is remembered for realist, naturalist and expressionist drama.
- ✓ Expressionists wanted to show the inner reality of a person's mind or his psychological condition through symbols.
- ✓ There was a movement away from comedy to social or socialistic tragedy.

O'Neill's earliest dramas concern the working class and poor; later works explore subjective realms, and underscore his reading in Freud and his anguished attempt to come to terms with his dead mother, father, and brother. His work is the most impressive study of the tragic aspects of American reality.

O'Neill was born into the theatre. His father was a successful touring actor in the last quarter of the XIX century. His mother, Ella, accompanied her husband across the country, settling down only briefly for the birth of her sons.

Eugene, who was born in a hotel, spent his early childhood in hotel rooms, on trains, and backstage. He later blamed the insecurity of his early years on his father. His childhood was like a nightmare. The result of such a life was his mother's drug addiction – Eugene had the theatre in his blood.

At the age of 24, he held a job as a reporter but soon came down with tuberculosis. Confined to the Sanitarium for six months, he began to write plays.

O'Neill's first appearance as a playwright came in 1916, in the quiet fishing village in Massachusetts, where a group of young writers and painters had launched an experimental theatre. In their tiny, ramshackle playhouse on a wharf they produced O'Neill's one-act plays. The talent inherent in the plays was immediately evident to the group and the audience. Later they formed the Playwrights' Theater. By the time his first full-length play, *Beyond the Horizon*, was produced on Broadway, 1920, the young playwright had already had a small reputation. *Beyond the Horizon* and the plays following it were defined by American critics as "naturalistic" because of the detailed depiction of the dark sides of reality. Failed life destinies, personalities, broken by circumstances, appear in the play *Beyond the Horizon* in the images of two brothers, one of whom is a dreamer, the other a practitioner, and both suffer the collapse of hopes.

#### The period of major works

O'Neill's capacity for and commitment to work were amazing. Within 23 years he completed 20 long plays and a number of shorter ones. He wrote and rewrote many of his manuscripts half a dozen times before he was satisfied. His most-distinguished plays include *Bound East for Cardiff*, *In the Zone*, *The Long Voyage Home*, and *The Moon of the*; *The Emperor Jones*; and *The Hairy Ape*.

O'Neill's plays were written from an intensely personal point of view, his tragic view on life derived from his family's tragic relationships – his mother and father, who loved and tormented each other; his elder brother, who loved and corrupted him and died of alcoholism in middle age; and O'Neill himself, torn between love for and rage at all three. He mostly wrote tragedies.

The first full-length play was *Desire Under the Elms* (1924). The story:

- reflects his own family's conflicts;
- disregards the conventions of the contemporary Broadway theatre;
- avoids melodrama;
- shows total honesty of emotion.

In *Desire Under the Elms*, the thirst for possession – land, money, a beloved being – leads to a dark family tragedy. The intensity of the action in this play is achieved by deep and acute conflicts arising from the fact that the characters do not follow morality, but powerful passions.

His later plays include the acknowledged masterpieces *The Iceman Cometh* (1946), a stark work on the theme of death, and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956) – a powerful, extended autobiography in dramatic form focusing on his own family and their physical and psychological deterioration, as witnessed in the course of one night.

In the trilogy *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), the family history of a Southern general Mannon, returning from the Civil War, is dramatized in the spirit of ancient tragedies in direct parallel with the myth of Agamemnon. The author defined this work as the embodiment of the Greek concept of fate, which the modern public can perceive and at the same time experience excitement.

His masterpiece *Long Day's Journey into Night* was produced posthumously in 1956. It can be described as:

- a play about human responsibility and love-hate within a family;
- an autobiographical play;
- straightforward in style;

– shattering in its depiction of the agonized relations: the mother is a drug addict, the father is a man frustrated in his career and failed as a husband and father, the older son is an alcoholic, and the younger son is a tubercular youth with a slender chance for physical and spiritual survival.

O'Neill's final years were spent in grim frustration. Unable to work, he longed for his death, waiting for it in a Boston hotel, seeing no one except his doctor, a nurse, and his third wife.

O'Neill's tragic view of life was reflected in his relationships with the three women he married and with his three children. His elder son committed suicide at 40, while his younger son drifted into a life of emotional instability. His daughter was cut out of his life when, at 18, she infuriated him by marrying Charlie Chaplin, who was O'Neill's age.

O'Neill's final years were spent in grim frustration. Unable to work, he longed for his death and sat waiting for it in a Boston hotel, seeing no one except his doctor, a nurse, and his third wife. O'Neill died as broken and tragic a figure as the characters he had created for the stage.

## **8.2. POST-WAR AMERICAN DRAMA. EXISTENTIALISM AND NATURALISM IN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' PLAYS**

Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller dominated the post-war dramatic scene. Both were against life ruled by dollar interest. Both criticized the illnesses of American system – economic, social and political.

Their main theme is frustration and desperation. Miller and Williams express the same themes through different techniques. Williams is sensuous, funny and verbally luxuriant. Miller is tragic.

What links them is their love for the bruised vulnerable individual and his desperation, the agony of his soul.

**Tennessee Williams (1911–1983)** was brought up in the South. The element of the southern literary tradition is obvious in his work: complicated feelings about time and the past. The past is usually looked up on with sadness, guilt or fear. He describes his society as a hell of brutality and race hatred. His work focused on disturbed emotions within southern families.

He was known for a weird gothic settings and Freudian exploration of emotion. Tennessee Williams tries to express internal reality. He reached his peak early in his career, with *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). None of the works that followed reached the level of success of those two pieces. Williams wrote more than 20 full-length dramas, many of them autobiographical. Williams revealed the pain and suffering inside his characters, their desperation and the agony of their souls. He explored the internal hurt, which is opposite to the external behavior.

Tennessee Williams revealed the pain and suffering inside the heart of his characters. He tries to explore the internal hurt, which is opposite to the external behavior.

### *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Characters:

- Blanche DuBois (in her thirties well-educated, with no money, with nowhere else to go);
- Stella, her younger sister;
- Stanley Kowalski, Stella’s husband;
- Mitch, Stanley’s friend.

After the loss of her family home to creditors, Blanche DuBois arrives in New Orleans to live with her married sister, Stella, and brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski. Blanche tells Stella that she has taken a leave of absence from her English-teaching position because of her nerves (which is later revealed to be a lie). Blanche finds Stanley loud and rough, refers to him as “common”. Stanley, in return, dislikes Blanche’s presence.

Blanche meets Mitch, one of Stanley's poker player buddies. His courteous manner sets him apart from the other men. Blanche easily charms him.

As the weeks pass, the friction between Blanche and Stanley continues to grow. Stanley has gathered gossip on Blanche, revealing that she was fired from her teaching job for involvement with an under-aged student. As a result, Mitch refuses to marry Blanche.

While Stella is in hospital, giving birth to a baby, Stanley rapes Blanche, resulting in her complete mental breakdown. Blanche is to be committed to a mental hospital.

The 1960s were a difficult time for Williams. His work received poor reviews and the playwright turned to alcohol and drugs. Surrounded by bottles of wine and pills, Williams died in a New York City hotel room in 1983.

### **8.3. Tragic elements in Arthur Miller's plays**

Born in 1915, **Arthur Miller (1915–2005)** is one of the top most American playwrights. Miller's work belongs to the second half of the twentieth century. Miller was a leftist and he started his dramatic career with the propaganda plays, in which he overthrew capitalism and advocated for the establishment of socialism. Miller was influenced by Marxism. His propaganda plays were not published until the publication of *Death of a Salesman* in 1949. Miller was called before the House of Representatives in 1956 and asked to provide the names of persons who might have Communist sympathies. Because of his refusal to do so, Miller was charged with contempt of Congress, a charge that was overturned on appeal.

Miller's major works are: *All My Sons* (1947), *Death of a Salesman* (1949), *The Crucible*, *A View from the Bridge*; *The Misfits*.

Death of a Salesman is the best modern tragedy. It shows man's search for merit and worth in life and the realization that failure invariably looms. Set within the family of Willy Loman, the play focuses on the uneven relationships of father and sons, husband and wife.

It is a combination of realism and naturalism. It insists on the value of the individual, despite failure and error.

*Death of a Salesman* is a hymn to the common man – to whom “attention must be paid.” Miller experiments with the concept of a tragic hero, pronounced by Aristotle. According to Aristotle the tragic hero should be of noble birth, intelligent. However, Willy Loman is a very simple man from a simple family.

Miller claimed that the common man as a subject was as important for tragedy as kings were. An ordinary protagonist may rise to the status of a tragic hero because of his zeal and fervour and commitment to his goal.

#### Setting

Much of the play's action takes place in Willy's home. When Willy and Linda purchased it, it represented Willy's hopes for the future. Now, however, the house is hemmed in by apartment buildings on all sides, and sunlight barely reaches their yard.

Just as the house is besieged by apartment buildings, Willy's ego is besieged by doubts and evidence that he will never experience the fame and fortune promised by the American Dream.

Death of a Salesman is about the failure of the American Dream. The success-driven society makes people corrupt. When the desire for money is not fulfilled, they end up having a disaster. Willy believes in the promise of the American Dream – that a “well liked” and “personally attractive” man in business will deservedly acquire the material comforts. He focuses on the superficial qualities of attractiveness and likeability, whereas the Puritan concept of the American Dream identifies hard work as the key to success.

Fear for Abandonment. Willy's efforts to raise perfect sons reflect his inability to understand reality. Willy believes that he has every right to expect Biff to fulfill the promise inherent in him. Biff's inability to succeed in business furthers his estrangement from Willy. When Biff falls off his father's expectation, Willy takes it as a personal affront.

Recognizable Features of Miller's plays:

1. His plays are never devoid of social context. Miller's protagonist must be a part of meaningful social relationships. A lonely, isolated individual living in his own ivory tower is not suitable for a play. Man lives in a society and the play should depict the interaction between the individual and the society.

2. Miller uses expressionistic techniques to present the mental and emotional state of the protagonist, not the physical.

3. The important characters in Miller's plays are from the business community. Another profession peculiar for Miller's characters is a lawyer.

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Expressionism

Expressionism is a movement in which the playwright depicts not objective reality but rather the subjective emotions of the events.

The playwright accomplishes this aim through distortion, exaggeration, primitivism, and fantasy.

Willy Loman is an insecure, self-deluded traveling salesman. Willy believes wholeheartedly in the American Dream of easy success and wealth, but he never achieves it. Neither do his sons. When Willy's illusions begin to fail



under the pressing realities of his life, his mental health begins to unravel. Willy takes Biff's failure and lack of ambition as a reflection of his poor abilities as a father.

Despite his desperate searching, Willy does not achieve the self-realization or self-knowledge typical of the tragic hero. Willy fails to realize his personal failure in the sales profession and betrayal of his soul and family. He cannot grasp the true understanding of himself as a literal "loman" or "low man." Willy's failure to recognize the anguished love offered to him by his family is crucial to the play. The play presents this incapacity as the real tragedy. Despite this failure, Willy makes the most extreme sacrifice in his attempt to leave an inheritance that will allow Biff to fulfill the American Dream. In some respect, Willy does experience a sort of revelation, as he finally comes to understand that the product he sells is himself.

Biff Loman is Willy's thirty-four-year-old elder son. Biff was as a football star in high school with scholarship prospects, good male friends, and female admirers. He failed math, however, and did not have enough credits to graduate. Since then, his kleptomania has got him fired from every job that he has held. Biff represents Willy's vulnerable, poetic, tragic side.

Unlike Willy and Happy, Biff feels compelled to seek the truth about himself. While his father and brother are unable to accept the miserable reality of their lives, Biff acknowledges his failure and eventually manages to confront it. Willy sees Biff as a loser, while Biff sees himself as trapped in Willy's fantasies.

#### Happy Loman

Happy shares none of the poetry that erupts from Biff and that is buried in Willy — he is the stunted incarnation of Willy's worst traits and the embodiment of the lie of the happy American Dream. As such, Happy is one-dimensional and static throughout the play. For Happy there is no escape from the Dream's lies. Happy's diseased condition is irreparable — he lacks self-

knowledge or capacity for self-analysis. Happy is a doomed, utterly duped figure, destined to be swallowed up by the force of blind ambition.

#### 8.4. ABSURDISM AND EDWARD ALBEE

Many of the major dramatists after 1960 were newly inspired by European existentialism and the so-called Theater of the Absurd. The best dramatists became innovative and even surreal, rejecting realistic theater and attacking superficial social conventions. The most influential dramatist of the early 1960s was **Edward Albee (1928–2016)**. Adopted into a well-off family that had owned vaudeville theaters and counted actors among their friends, Albee actively brought new European currents, namely Absurdist Theater, into U.S. drama.

Albee came up with the series of successful works like *The Zoo Story* (1959); *The American Dream* (1960), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962).

*The Zoo Story* is a play written in Absurdist style.

*The American Dream* is a play that attacks the false values in American society. In *The American Dream* stick figures of Mommy, Daddy, and Grandma recite platitudes that caricature a loveless, conventional family.

*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is the most famous play raising the theme of emptiness and displaying witty dialogue in its shocking portrayal of married life. In this controversial drama, made into a film starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, an unhappily married couple's shared fantasy – that they have a child, that their lives have meaning – is violently exposed as an untruth. The main characters are George and Martha, husband and wife, who are frustrated. They are arguing all the time. The violence could not let them continue their partnership. They seem to be tired of arguing.

Most of Albee's dramas lack specific setting. Audiences never know the place where things are happening in a play. This is the important feature of absurdist drama.

Most of the characters presented in his works are restless and uncomfortable. They seem to suffer from loneliness; they cannot make any connection with each other. According to Albee it may be the result of a collapse of values in the western world in general and in the United States in particular.

Love is also presented in his plays but not in the way of a romantic situation but in the way of loss, decay, fall and failure. Albee's plays are full of violence, both physical as in *The Zoo Story* and verbal as in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

## PART IX. AMERICAN POETRY

### 9.1. THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

**Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965)** received the best education of any major American writer of his generation at Harvard College, the Sorbonne, and Oxford University. He studied Sanskrit and Oriental philosophy, which influenced his poetry. Like his friend, the poet Ezra Pound, he went to England early and became a towering figure in the literary world there. One of the most respected poets of his day, his modernist, seemingly illogical or abstract iconoclastic poetry had revolutionary impact.

In *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1915), the ineffectual, elderly Prufrock thinks to himself that he has “measured out his life in coffee spoons” — the image of the coffee spoons reflecting a humdrum existence and a wasted lifetime. The famous beginning of Eliot’s “Prufrock” invites the reader into tawdry urban alleyways that, like modern life, offer no answers to the questions of life:

Let us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherized upon a table... [28].

Similar imagery pervades *The Waste Land* (1922), which echoes Dante’s *Inferno* to evoke London’s thronged streets around the time of World War I:

Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many  
I had not thought death had undone so many... [29].

## 9.2. ROBERT LEE FROST

**Robert Lee Frost (1874–1963)** was born in California, but raised on a farm in the northeast until the age of 10. Like Eliot and Pound, he went to England, attracted by new movements in poetry there. He wrote of traditional farm life in New England (part of the northeastern United States), appealing to a nostalgia for the old ways. His subjects are universal – apple picking, stone walls, fences, country roads. Although his approach was lucid and accessible, his work is often deceptively simple. Many poems suggest a deeper meaning. For example, a quiet snowy evening by an almost hypnotic rhyme scheme may suggest the not entirely unwelcome approach of death. From: *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* (1923):

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village, though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow [30].

The Great Depression of the 1930s had virtually destroyed the American economy. World War II revived it. The United States became a major force on the world stage, and post-World-War-II Americans enjoyed unprecedented personal prosperity and individual freedom.

Expanded higher education and the spread of television throughout America after World War II made it possible for ordinary people to obtain information on their own and to become more sophisticated. A glut of consumer conveniences and access to large, attractive suburban houses made middle-class families more autonomous. Widespread theories of Freudian psychology emphasized the origins and the importance of the individual mind. The birth control “pill” liberated women from rigid subservience to biological norms. For the first time in human history, many ordinary people could lead vastly satisfying lives and assert their personal worth.

The rise of mass individualism – as well as the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s – empowered previously muted voices. Writers

asserted their deepest inner nature, as well as personal experience, and the importance of the individual experience implied the importance of the group to which it was linked. Homosexuals, feminists, and other marginalized voices proclaimed their stories. Jewish American and black American writers found wide audiences for their variations of the American dream, or nightmare. Writers of Protestant background, such as John Cheever and John Updike, discussed the impact of postwar culture on lives like theirs. Some modern and contemporary writers are still placed within older traditions, such as realism. Some may be described as classicists, others as experimental, stylistically influenced by the ephemera of mass culture, or by philosophies such as existentialism, or socialism. Many are more easily grouped according to ethnic background or region. However, on the whole, modern writers always lay claim to the worth of the individual identity.

### 9.3. SYLVIA PLATH

**Sylvia Plath (1932–1963)** lived an outwardly exemplary life, attending Smith College on scholarship, graduating first in her class, and winning a Fulbright grant to Cambridge University in England. There she met her charismatic husband-to-be, poet Ted Hughes, with whom she had two children, and settled in a country house in England. Beneath the fairy-tale success festered unresolved psychological problems evoked in her highly readable novel *The Bell Jar* (1963). Some of these problems were personal, while others arose from her sense of repressive attitudes toward women in the 1950s. Among these were the beliefs – shared by many women themselves – that women should not show anger or ambitiously pursue a career, and instead find fulfillment in tending their husbands and children. Professionally successful women like Plath felt that they lived a contradiction.

Plath's storybook life crumbled when she and Hughes separated and she cared for the young children in a London apartment during a winter of extreme cold. Ill, isolated, and in despair, Plath worked against the clock to produce

a series of stunning poems before she committed suicide by gassing herself in her kitchen. These poems were collected in the volume *Ariel* (1965), two years after her death.

Plath's early poetry is well crafted and traditional, but her late poems exhibit a desperate bravura and proto-feminist cry of anguish. In *The Applicant* (1966), Plath exposes the emptiness in the current role of wife (who is reduced to an inanimate "it"):

A living doll, everywhere you look.  
It can sew, it can cook.  
It can talk, talk, talk [31].

The "Beat poets" emerged in the 1950s. The term "beat" variously suggests musical downbeats, as in jazz; angelical beatitude or blessedness; and "beat up" – tired or hurt. The Beats (beatniks) were inspired by jazz, Eastern religion, and the wandering life. These were all depicted in the famous novel by Jack Kerouac *On the Road*, a sensation when it was published in 1957. An account of a 1947 cross-country car trip, the novel was written in three hectic weeks on a single roll of paper in what Kerouac called "spontaneous bop prose." The wild, improvisational style, hipster-mystic characters, and rejection of authority and convention fired the imaginations of young readers and helped usher in the freewheeling counterculture of the 1960s.

Most of the important Beats migrated to San Francisco from America's East Coast, gaining their initial national recognition in California.

#### **9.4. ALLEN GINSBERG**

##### **Allen Ginsberg (1926–1997)**

The charismatic Allen Ginsberg became the group's chief spokesman. The son of a poet father and an eccentric mother committed to Communism, Ginsberg attended Columbia University, where he became fast friends with fellow students Kerouac (1922–1969) and William Burroughs (1914–1997), whose violent, nightmarish novels about the underworld of heroin addiction

include *The Naked Lunch* (1959). These three were the nucleus of the Beat movement.

Beat poetry is oral, repetitive, and immensely effective in readings, largely because it developed out of poetry readings in “underground” clubs. Some might correctly see it as a great-grandparent of the rap music that became prevalent in the 1990s. Beat poetry was the most anti-establishment form of literature in the United States, but beneath its shocking words lies a love of country. The poetry is a cry of pain and rage at what the poets see as the loss of America’s innocence and the tragic waste of its human and material resources.

Poems like Allen Ginsberg’s *Howl* (1956) revolutionized traditional poetry.

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving  
hysterical naked,  
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an  
angry fix,  
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the  
starry dynamo in the machinery of night... [31].



## PART X. MULTICULTURAL ELEMENTS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

### 10.1. JEWISH ROOTS

Today writers with ethnic and global roots are informing the story genre with non-Western and tribal approaches, and storytelling has commanded critical and popular attention. The versatile, primal tale is the basis of several hybridized forms: novels that are constructed of interlinking short stories or vignettes, and creative nonfictions that interweave history and personal history with fiction.

The 1950s saw the delayed impact of modernization and technology in everyday life. Not only did World War II defeat fascism, it brought the United States out of the Depression, and the 1950s provided most Americans with time to enjoy long-awaited material prosperity. Business, especially in the corporate world, seemed to offer the good life (usually in the suburbs), with its real and symbolic marks of success – house, car, television, and home appliances.

Yet loneliness at the top, generalized American alienation was a dominant theme for many writers.

Most of the works supported the 1950s assumption that all Americans shared a common lifestyle. The studies criticized citizens for losing frontier individualism and becoming too conformist or advising people to become members of the “New Class” that technology and leisure time created.

The 1950s in literary terms actually was a decade of subtle and pervasive unease. Some of the best work portrays men who fail in the struggle to succeed, as in Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* and Saul Bellow’s novella *Seize the Day*.

Some writers went further by focusing on characters who dropped out of mainstream society, as did J.D. Salinger in *The Catcher in the Rye*, Ralph Ellison in *Invisible Man*, and Jack Kerouac in *On the Road*. And in the waning days of the decade, Philip Roth arrived with a series of short stories reflecting a certain alienation from his Jewish heritage (*Goodbye, Columbus*). His psychological ruminations provided fodder for fiction, and later autobiography, into the new millennium.

The fiction of American-Jewish writers Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Isaac Bashevis Singer – among others prominent in the 1950s and the years following – are also worthy, compelling additions to the compendium of American literature. The output of these three authors is most noted for its humor, ethical concern, and portraits of Jewish communities in the Old and New Worlds.

### **Saul Bellow (1915–2005)**

Born in Canada and raised in Chicago, Saul Bellow was of Russian-Jewish background. At college, he studied anthropology and sociology, which greatly influenced his writing. He once expressed a profound debt to the American realist novelist Theodore Dreiser for his openness to a wide range of experience and his emotional engagement with it. Highly respected, Bellow received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1976.

Bellow's works include *Herzog* (1964), about the troubled life of a neurotic English professor who specializes in the idea of the romantic self; *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970); *Humboldt's Gift* (1975); and the autobiographical *The Dean's December* (1982). Bellow's *Seize the Day* (1956) is a brilliant novella centered on a failed businessman, Tommy Wilhelm, who is so consumed by feelings of inadequacy that he becomes totally inadequate – a failure with women, jobs, machines, and the commodities market, where he loses all his money. Wilhelm is an example of the schlemiel of Jewish folklore – one to whom unlucky things inevitably happen.

**John Cheever (1912–1982)** has often been called a “novelist of manners”. He is also known for his elegant, suggestive short stories, which scrutinize the New York business world through its effects on the businessmen, their wives, children, and friends.

A wry melancholy and never quite quenched but seemingly hopeless desire for passion or metaphysical certainty lurks in the shadows of Cheever’s finely drawn, Chekhovian tales, collected in *The Way Some People Live* (1943), *The Housebreaker of Shady Hill* (1958), *Some People, Places, and Things That Will Not Appear in My Next Novel* (1961), *The Brigadier and the Golf Widow* (1964), and *The World of Apples* (1973). His titles reveal his characteristic nonchalance, playfulness, and irreverence, and hint at his subject matter. Cheever also published several novels – *The Wapshot Scandal* (1964), *Bullet Park* (1969), and *Falconer* (1977) – the last of which was largely autobiographical.

**J.D. Salinger (1919–2010)**

A harbinger of things to come in the 1960s, J.D. Salinger has portrayed attempts to drop out of society.

Born in New York City, he achieved huge literary success with the publication of his novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), centered on a sensitive 16-year-old, Holden Caulfield, who flees his elite boarding school for the outside world of adulthood, only to become disillusioned by its materialism and phoniness. When asked what he would like to be, Caulfield answers “the catcher in the rye”, misquoting a poem by Robert Burns. In his vision, he is a modern version of a white knight, the sole preserver of innocence. He imagines a big field of rye so tall that a group of young children cannot see where they are running as they play their games. He is the only big person there. “I’m standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff.” The fall over the cliff is equated with the loss of childhood innocence – a persistent theme of the era.

Other works by this reclusive, spare writer include *Nine Stories* (1953), *Franny and Zooey* (1961), and *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters* (1963), a collection of stories from *The New Yorker* magazine. Since the appearance of one story in 1965, Salinger – who lives in New Hampshire – has been absent from the American literary scene.

### **Isaac Bashevis Singer (1904–1991)**

Nobel Prize-winning novelist and short story master Isaac Bashevis Singer – a native of Poland who immigrated to the United States in 1935 – was the son of the prominent head of a rabbinical court in Warsaw. Writing in Yiddish all his life, he dealt in mythic and realistic terms with two specific groups of Jews – the denizens of the Old World *shtetls* (small villages) and the ocean-tossed twentieth-century immigrants of the pre-World War II and postwar eras.

Singer's writings served as bookends for the Holocaust. On the one hand, he described – in novels such as *The Manor* (1967) and *The Estate* (1969), set in 19th-century Russia, and *The Family Moskat* (1950), focused on a Polish-Jewish family between the world wars – the world of European Jewry that no longer exists. Complementing these works were his writings set after the war, such as *Enemies, A Love Story* (1972), whose protagonists were survivors of the Holocaust seeking to create new lives for themselves.

### **Bernard Malamud (1914–1986)**

Bernard Malamud was born in New York City to Russian-Jewish immigrant parents. In his second novel, *The Assistant* (1957), Malamud found his characteristic themes – man's struggle to survive against all odds, and the ethical underpinnings of recent Jewish immigrants.

Malamud's first published work was *The Natural* (1952), a combination of realism and fantasy set in the mythic world of professional baseball. Other novels include *A New Life* (1961), *The Fixer* (1966), *Pictures of Fidelman* (1969), and *The Tenants* (1971).

Malamud also was a prolific master of short fiction. Through his stories in collections such as *The Magic Barrel* (1958), *Idiots First* (1963), and *Rembrandt's Hat* (1973), he conveyed – more than any other American-born writer – a sense of the Jewish present and past, the real and the surreal, fact and legend.

Malamud's monumental work – for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award – is *The Fixer*. Set in Russia around the turn of the XX century, it is a thinly veiled look at an actual case of blood libel – the infamous 1913 trial of Mendel Beiliss, a dark, anti-Semitic blotch on modern history. As in many of his writings, Malamud underscores the suffering of his hero, Yakob Bok, and the struggle against all odds to endure.

## 10.2. AFRO-AMERICAN LITERATURE

**Toni Morrison (born in 1931)**, an African-American novelist, was born in Ohio to a spiritually oriented family. She attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., and has worked as a senior editor in a major Washington publishing house and as a distinguished professor at various universities.

Morrison's richly woven fiction has gained her international acclaim. In compelling, large-spirited novels, she treats the complex identities of black people in a universal manner. In her early work *The Bluest Eye* (1970), a strong-willed young black girl tells the story of Pecola Breedlove, who is driven mad by an abusive father. Pecola believes that her dark eyes have magically become blue and that they will make her lovable. Morrison has said that she was creating her own sense of identity as a writer through this novel: "I was Pecola, Claudia, everybody".

*Sula* (1973) describes the strong friendship of two women. Morrison paints African-American women as unique, fully individual characters rather than as stereotypes. Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977) has won several

awards. It follows a black man, “Milkman Dead” and his complex relations with his family and community. *Beloved* (1987) is the wrenching story of a woman who murders her children rather than allows them to live as slaves. It employs the dreamlike techniques of magical realism in depicting a mysterious figure, Beloved, who returns to live with the mother who has slit her throat. *Jazz* (1992), set in 1920s Harlem, is a story of love and murder. In 1993, Morrison won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

### **James Baldwin (1924–1987)**

James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison mirror the African-American experience of the 1950s. Their characters suffer from a lack of identity, rather than from over-ambition.

Baldwin, the oldest of nine children born to a Harlem, New York, family, was the foster son of a minister. As a youth, Baldwin occasionally preached in the church. This experience helped shape the compelling, oral quality of his prose, most clearly seen in his excellent essays such as *Letter From a Region of My Mind*, from the collection *The Fire Next Time* (1963).

In this work, he argued movingly for an end to separation between the races.

Baldwin’s first novel, the autobiographical *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), is probably his best known. It is the story of a 14-year-old boy who seeks self-knowledge and religious faith as he wrestles with issues of Christian conversion in a storefront church. Other important Baldwin works include *Another Country* (1962) and *Nobody Knows My Name* (1961), a collection of passionate personal essays about racism, the role of the artist, and literature.

**Ralph Ellison (1914–1994)** was a midwesterner, born in Oklahoma, who studied at Tuskegee Institute in the southern United States. He had one of the strangest careers in American letters – consisting of one highly acclaimed book and little more.

The novel is *Invisible Man* (1952), the story of a black man who lives a subterranean existence in a cellar brightly illuminated by electricity stolen from a utility company. The book recounts his grotesque, disenchanting experiences. When he wins a scholarship to an all-black college, he is humiliated by whites; when he gets to the college, he witnesses the school's president spurning black American concerns. Life is corrupt outside college, too. For example, even religion is no consolation: A preacher turns out to be a criminal. The novel indicts society for failing to provide its citizens — black and white — with viable ideals and institutions for realizing them. It embodies a powerful racial theme because the “invisible man” is invisible not in himself but because others, blinded by prejudice, cannot see him for who he is.

## **PART XI. EXTRACTS FOR READING, TRANSLATION AND DISCUSSION**

Analyze the given extracts from the point of view of the period when they were written, the literary movement to which they belong and the authors' individual styles. What are the authors' messages? What techniques do they use to convey their messages?

### **11.1. WASHINGTON IRVING. *THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW* (EXTRACT)**

I would not have it imagined, however, that he was one of those cruel potentates of the school, who joy in the smart of their subjects; on the contrary, he administered justice with discrimination rather than severity; taking the burden off the backs of the weak, and laying it on those of the strong. Your mere puny stripling, that winced at the least flourish of the rod, was passed by with indulgence; but the claims of justice were satisfied by inflicting a double portion on some little, tough, wrong-headed, broadskirted Dutch urchin, who sulked and swelled, and grew dogged and sullen beneath the birch. All this he called "doing his duty by their parents;" and he never inflicted a chastisement without following it by the assurance, so consolatory to the smarting urchin, that "he would remember it, and thank him for it the longest day he had to live."

When school hours were over, he was even the companion and playmate of the larger boys; and on holiday afternoons would convoy some of the smaller ones home, who happened to have pretty sisters, or good housewives for mothers, noted for the comforts of the cupboard. Indeed, it behooved him to keep on good terms with his pupils. The revenue arising from his school was



small, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder, and, though lank, had the dilating powers of an anaconda; but to help out his maintenance, he was, according to country custom in those parts, boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers, whose children he instructed. With these he lived successively a week at a time; thus going the rounds of the neighborhood, with all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.

That all this might not be too onerous on the purses of his rustic patrons, who are apt to consider the cost of schooling a grievous burden, and schoolmasters as mere drones, he had various ways of rendering himself both useful and agreeable. He assisted the farmers occasionally in the lighter labors of their farms; helped to make hay; mended the fences; took the horses to water; drove the cows from pasture; and cut wood for the winter fire. He laid aside, too, all the dominant dignity and absolute sway with which he lorded it in his little empire, the school, and became wonderfully gentle and ingratiating. He found favor in the eyes of the mothers, by petting the children, particularly the youngest; and like the lion bold, which whilom so magnanimously the lamb did hold, he would sit with a child on one knee, and rock a cradle with his foot for whole hours together. Thus, by divers little make-shifts in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated “by hook and by crook,” the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was thought, by all who understood nothing of the labor of headwork, to have a wonderfully easy life of it.

He would have passed a pleasant life of it, in despite of the devil and all his works, if his path had not been crossed by a being that causes more perplexity to mortal man than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was — a woman.

Among the musical disciples who assembled, one evening in each week, to receive his instructions in psalmody, was Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter and only child of a substantial Dutch farmer. She was a blooming lass of fresh eighteen; plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosy cheeked as one of

her father's peaches, and universally famed, not merely for her beauty, but her vast expectations. She was withal a little of a coquette, as might be perceived even in her dress, which was a mixture of ancient and modern fashions, as most suited to set off her charms.

Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart towards the sex; and it is not to be wondered at, that so tempting a morsel soon found favor in his eyes; more especially after he had visited her in her paternal mansion. Old Baltus Van Tassel was a perfect picture of a thriving, contented, liberal-hearted farmer. He seldom, it is true, sent either his eyes or his thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm; but within those every thing was snug, happy and well-conditioned. He was satisfied with his wealth, but not proud of it; and piqued himself upon the hearty abundance, rather than the style in which he lived. [33]

#### Issues to think over

Note on the use of the archaic style. It is an unusual way of using old or archaic English words and putting them in an unusual order to create an impression of antiquity inside a story. "Whilom" means "formerly" or "in the past". It is an archaic word. Archaic "doth" means "does". In *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* "the lion bold" was a reference to the schoolteacher. Lions are sometimes used to portray an aura of nobility onto a person. They are said to be "kings of the jungle" so applied to a person this produces a complementary attitude. One of the English kings was described as "Richard the Lionheart". Of course, this is not common everyday English anymore. So the reference in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is made to the schoolteacher who is bold to take care and attention of the young child (the lamb). It may also mean that the lion represents the predator and the lamb the prey. Rearranging the sentence to put it in its usual order and trimming extra words out, we arrive at: "The bold lion holds the lamb."

1. What is the role of archaic words and structures in the passage? Find examples and comment on the effect produced (irony, elevated style, musicality and lyricism of the text, etc.).

2. Comment on the cases of irony. Explain the mechanism of irony. Remember that irony is mockery disguised in eulogy. What kind of picture of the countryside schoolmaster do we get as a result?

– *He administered justice with discrimination rather than severity; and he never inflicted a chastisement without following it by the assurance, so consolatory to the smarting urchin, that “he would remember it, and thank him for it the longest day he had to live.”*

– *And on holiday afternoons would convoy some of the smaller ones home, who happened to have pretty sisters, or good housewives for mothers, noted for the comforts of the cupboard.*

– *The revenue arising from his school was small, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder, and, though lank, had the dilating powers of an anaconda;*

– *He was, according to country custom in those parts, boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers, whose children he instructed. With these he lived successively a week at a time; thus going the rounds of the neighborhood, with all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.*

– *He found favor in the eyes of the mothers, by petting the children, particularly the youngest; and like the lion bold, which whilom so magnanimously the lamb did hold, he would sit with a child on one knee, and rock a cradle with his foot for whole hours together.*

– *Thus, by divers little make-shifts in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated “by hook and by crook,” the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was thought, by all who understood nothing of the labor of headwork, to have a wonderfully easy life of it.*

– *He would have passed a pleasant life of it, in despite of the devil and all his works, if his path had not been crossed by a being that causes more*

*perplexity to mortal man than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was – a woman.*

– *He seldom, it is true, sent either his eyes or his thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm; but within those every thing was snug, happy and well-conditioned.*

3. Pay attention to binomials used in the passage: *sulked and swelled, boarded and lodged, useful and agreeable*. Find more examples, comment on their structural peculiarities (phonetic form, meaning).

4. Comment on the way Washington Irving describes Katrina Van Tassel. Which stylistic devices does the author apply to create her portrait? Can we guess the author's attitude to her judging by the description?

5. Find cases of alliteration in the passage. What is their function?

6. Comment on the following cases of metaphor:

– *he had the dilating powers of an anaconda;*

– *his rustic patrons are apt to consider the cost of schooling a grievous burden, and schoolmasters as mere drones;*

– *like the lion bold;*

– *so tempting a morsel.*

7. Pay attention to the cases of antithesis used as a method of arranging the story: *"I would not have it imagined, however, that he was one of those cruel potentates of the school, who joy in the smart of their subjects; on the contrary, he administered justice with discrimination rather than severity."* Find more examples of that in the passage.

## **11.2. EDGAR ALLAN POE. *THE TELL-TALE HEART* (EXTRACT)**

TRUE! – nervous – very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses – not destroyed – not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard

all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! And observe how healthily – how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture – a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees – very gradually – I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness, (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers,) and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily. I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out – “Who's there?”

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening; – just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief – oh, no! – it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself – “It is nothing but the wind in the chimney – it is only a mouse crossing the floor,” or “It is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp.” Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain. All in vain; because Death, in

approaching him had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little – a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it – you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily – until, at length a single dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell full upon the vulture eye.

It was open – wide, wide open – and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness – all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over acuteness of the senses? – now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment! – do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me – the sound would be heard by a neighbor! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once – once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled

gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye – not even his – could have detected anything wrong. There was nothing to wash out – no stain of any kind – no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all – ha! Ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock – still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart, – for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled, – for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search – search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct: – it continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definiteness – until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.

No doubt I now grew very pale; – but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased – and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound – much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath – and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly – more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men – but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! What could I do? I foamed – I raved – I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder – louder – louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! – no, no! They heard! – they suspected! – they knew! – they were making a mockery of my horror! – this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! – and now – again! – hark! Louder! Louder! Louder! Louder! –

“Villains!” I shrieked, “Dissemble no more! I admit the deed! – tear up the planks! – here, here! – it is the beating of his hideous heart!” [34]



### Issues to think over

1. The term “Gothic” is often used to refer to Poe’s work. The principal aim of Gothic fiction is to evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery, cruelty and nightmarish horrors. The following Gothic elements can be identified in *The Tell-Tale Heart*:

a) The setting is limited space within one room, which creates the feeling of desperation and inevitability of the tragedy.

b) The main character is mentally unstable.

c) The plot is structured so that dramatic tension is increasing with every line.

2. By his own definition, Poe’s style is based on the choice of “the curt, the condensed, the pointed”, a style in which every single word counts towards creating that “certain unique or single effect” around which the tale revolves. In *The Tell-Tale Heart* Poe succeeds in eliminating all the superfluous details, i.e. he does not dedicate his attention to traditional elements of storytelling (setting, physical descriptions, and characterization). He focuses on his main objective: to explore the mind of a psychopathic murderer.

3. Although there is no direct reference to the narrator’s state of mind in the text, numerous clues warn the perceptive reader of the storyteller’s mental instability. The following elements help the reader realize that the narrator is unreliable:

a) Poe chooses the first person narrative technique to examine the psychological make-up of the insane narrator; in this way the reader cannot see events as they actually are, but only as they appear to be to the sick consciousness of the “I” narrator.

b) There are unbelievable elements in the story: the constantly increasing sound, which appeared to be the beating the dead man’s heart.

c) The reader is not encouraged to sympathize with the narrator’s views. On the contrary, the reader is encouraged to question the reliability of the narrator whose interpretation of the events is clearly wrong. He has

committed a horrible murder but he narrates about it with pride, there is obvious lack of remorse for what he has done. In the matter of fact tone, he explains to the reader that he proceeded in a logical manner and therefore should not be considered a madman.

d) Add the elements on your own.

### **11.3. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. *THE SCARLET LETTER* (EXTRACT)**

“Minister!” whispered little Pearl.

“What wouldst thou say, child?” asked Mr. Dimmesdale.

“Wilt thou stand here with mother and me, to-morrow noontide?” inquired Pearl.

“Nay; not so, my little Pearl,” answered the minister; for, with the new energy of the moment, all the dread of public exposure, that had so long been the anguish of his life, had returned upon him; and he was already trembling at the conjunction in which – with a strange joy, nevertheless – he now found himself – “not so, my child. I shall, indeed, stand with thy mother and thee one other day, but not to-morrow.”

Pearl laughed, and attempted to pull away her hand. But the minister held it fast.

“A moment longer, my child!” said he.

“But wilt thou promise,” asked Pearl, “to take my hand, and mother's hand, to-morrow noontide?”

“Not then, Pearl,” said the minister; “but another time.”

“And what other time?” persisted the child.

“At the great judgment day,” whispered the minister; and, strangely enough, the sense that he was a professional teacher of the truth impelled him to answer the child so. “Then, and there, before the judgment-seat, thy

mother, and thou, and I must stand together. But the daylight of this world shall not see our meeting!”

Pearl laughed again.

But before Mr. Dimmesdale had done speaking, a light gleamed far and wide over all the muffled sky. It was doubtless caused by one of those meteors, which the night-watcher may so often observe burning out to waste, in the vacant regions of the atmosphere. So powerful was its radiance, that it thoroughly illuminated the dense medium of cloud betwixt the sky and earth. The great vault brightened, like the dome of an immense lamp. It showed the familiar scene of the street with the distinctness of mid-day, but also with the awfulness that is always imparted to familiar objects by an unaccustomed light. The wooden houses, with their jutting storeys and quaint gable-peaks; the doorsteps and thresholds with the early grass springing up about them; the garden-plots, black with freshly-turned earth; the wheel-track, little worn, and even in the market-place margined with green on either side – all were visible, but with a singularity of aspect that seemed to give another moral interpretation to the things of this world than they had ever borne before. And there stood the minister, with his hand over his heart; and Hester Prynne, with the embroidered letter glimmering on her bosom; and little Pearl, herself a symbol, and the connecting link between those two. They stood in the noon of that strange and solemn splendour, as if it were the light that is to reveal all secrets, and the daybreak that shall unite all who belong to one another.

There was witchcraft in little Pearl's eyes; and her face, as she glanced upward at the minister, wore that naughty smile which made its expression frequently so elvish. She withdrew her hand from Mr. Dimmesdale's, and pointed across the street. But he clasped both his hands over his breast, and cast his eyes towards the zenith.

Nothing was more common, in those days, than to interpret all meteoric appearances, and other natural phenomena that occurred with less regularity than the rise and set of sun and moon, as so many revelations from

a supernatural source. Thus, a blazing spear, a sword of flame, a bow, or a sheaf of arrows seen in the midnight sky, prefigured Indian warfare. Pestilence was known to have been foreboded by a shower of crimson light. We doubt whether any marked event, for good or evil, ever befell New England, from its settlement down to revolutionary times, of which the inhabitants had not been previously warned by some spectacle of its nature. Not seldom, it had been seen by multitudes. Oftener, however, its credibility rested on the faith of some lonely eye-witness, who beheld the wonder through the coloured, magnifying, and distorted medium of his imagination, and shaped it more distinctly in his after-thought. It was, indeed, a majestic idea that the destiny of nations should be revealed, in these awful hieroglyphics, on the cope of heaven. A scroll so wide might not be deemed too expensive for Providence to write a people's doom upon. The belief was a favourite one with our forefathers, as betokening that their infant commonwealth was under a celestial guardianship of peculiar intimacy and strictness. But what shall we say, when an individual discovers a revelation addressed to himself alone, on the same vast sheet of record. In such a case, it could only be the symptom of a highly disordered mental state, when a man, rendered morbidly self-contemplative by long, intense, and secret pain, had extended his egotism over the whole expanse of nature, until the firmament itself should appear no more than a fitting page for his soul's history and fate. [35]

#### Issues to think over

1. What was Mr. Dimmesdale's mood in his conversation with little Pearl? Pick out words that reveal it.

2. Comment on the epithets and the atmosphere they create in the episode describing the fall of the meteor (the muffled sky, burning out to waste; an immense lamp; with the distinctness of mid-day, but also with the awfulness that is always imparted to familiar objects by an unaccustomed light; quaint gable-peaks; the garden-plots, black with freshly-turned earth; all were visible, but with a singularity of aspect that seemed to give another moral

interpretation to the things of this world than they had ever borne before; they stood in the noon of that strange and solemn splendor; etc.).

3. Find the description of little Pearl. Which features does the author emphasize in her? Whose point of view do you think it is: the author's or Mr. Dimmesdale's?

4. What examples of revelations from a supernatural source and tokens do we find in the paragraph? Which literary style do they convey? What role did they play in the history of mankind?

5. How do you understand the final lines of the passage? "In such a case, it could only be the symptom of a highly disordered mental state, when a man, rendered morbidly self-contemplative by long, intense, and secret pain, had extended his egotism over the whole expanse of nature, until the firmament itself should appear no more than a fitting page for his soul's history and fate." How do they correlate with the main idea of the novel?

#### **11.4. WALT WHITMAN. *O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!***

O Captain! My Captain! our fearful trip is done;  
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring:  
But O heart! heart! heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! My Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up – for you the flag is flung – for you the bugle trills;  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths – for you the shores a-  
crowding;  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;  
Here captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head;  
It is some dream that on the deck,  
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;  
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;  
From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object won;  
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!  
But I, with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck my captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead. [36]

#### Issues to think over

1. The poem is written as an elegy. In modern literature an elegy is a poem of serious reflection, typically a lament for the dead. Whitman's poem takes the form of an allegorical narrative in which the characters and story are linked to historical figures and events: the captain is an allegorical representation of Abraham Lincoln, the ship – of the USA, the ship's difficult but successful journey – the Civil War, the people ashore – the people of the North, the death of the captain – Lincoln's assassination. Abraham Lincoln led the North to victory over the South in the American Civil War (1861–1865) and paved the way for the abolition of slavery. He was killed at the end of the war in 1865 while watching a performance at the theatre.

2. The poet expresses his admiration for the captain, which is intensely personal. The poet's attachment to his leader is conveyed with the possessive pronouns "my", "our", the adjective "dear" and the noun "father". The poet mourns "My captain!", "Dear Father!". Celebrating the life of the great leader, the poet also expresses a sense of personal loss: the narrator walks on deck with mournful tread instead of joining the crowd exulting on shore. He puts the arm beneath his head in the hope to revive him and show that for him the flag is flung, for him crowds call, for him the bugle trills.

3. The story is told in the present simple tense. It abounds in exclamatory sentences. These two techniques make the events of the story seem immediate and dramatic. The opening two lines imply that the journey (that is the war) has been very hard and fearful but successful: the prize they sought is won. The prize is the abolition of slavery.

4. Though the rhyming scheme of the poem is not strong and regular, we can clearly trace the typical rhythmic pattern of a ballad that dominates much of the poem (4 stressed syllables followed by 3 stressed syllables).

5. The poem appeals to the reader's feelings and emotions. Its main purpose is to render a sense of loss in a community.

#### **11.5. HENRY LONGFELLOW. *PSALM OF LIFE***

*What the heart of the young man said to the psalmist*

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream!  
For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act, that each to-morrow  
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,  
And our hearts, though stout and brave,  
Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,  
In the bivouac of Life,  
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!  
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!  
Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
Act, – act in the living Present!  
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait. [37]

#### Issues to think over

1. The main purpose of the poem is to make the reader understand that we should not spend our priceless moments sitting idly and doing nothing, rather we have to work hard towards reaching our goal and to make the most out of this short life. Life is precious. We should do something great, so that people remember us forever. Thus, the poem is inspiring, motivating and educational. It teaches us how to live.

2. What is a psalm? A "psalm" is a religious or sacred song. A psalm of life is a song to glorify life with its immense potential and possibilities.



3. Longfellow capitalizes the words Art, Time, Future, Past and Present. They are personified. These are the forces that rule people's lives. These elements may be symbolic of the control we have over our lives: Art and the work we do are long-lasting, Time is escaping our hands, and Future is not trust-worthy, Past is dead and the Present is still alive.

4. Longfellow's religious views are made obvious in the poem. He believed in the existence of immortal soul. He thought that the Biblical teaching "Dust thou art, to dust thou returnest" was only spoken of the body, not of the soul. He believed in work to make ourselves better. So, to him religion was to work, to inspire others, to strive for improvement and to win this battle of life. To Longfellow, death is not the ultimate goal of life; life does not end with death. Our works remain in this world even after our death.

5. The poem begins with the imperative verb "Tell" which gives the positive keynote to the whole poem. It also indicates that the poet is going to give us instructions on what life actually is and how we should take it.

6. The poem takes the subtitle "What the heart of the young man said to the psalmist". Here, the speaker (a young man) responds to the Biblical teachings that this human life is not important and that we eventually return to dust. The speaker insists on carrying on, reaching great heights, still not leaving. People must learn to labour, to act wisely, and wait for the rewards patiently.

#### **11.6. HERMAN MELVILLE. *MOBY DICK* (EXTRACT)**

Chapter 36 (...) When the entire ship's company were assembled, and with curious and not wholly unapprehensive faces, were eyeing him, for he looked not unlike the weather horizon when a storm is coming up, Ahab, after rapidly glancing over the bulwarks, and then darting his eyes among the crew, started from his stand-point; and as though not a soul were nigh him resumed his heavy turns upon the deck. With bent head and half-slouched hat he

continued to pace, unmindful of the wondering whispering among the men; till Stubb cautiously whispered to Flask, that Ahab must have summoned them there for the purpose of witnessing a pedestrian feat. But this did not last long. Vehemently pausing, he cried: – “What do ye do when ye see a whale, men?” “Sing out for him!” was the impulsive rejoinder from a score of clubbed voices. “Good!” cried Ahab, with a wild approval in his tones; observing the hearty animation into which his unexpected question had so magnetically thrown them. “And what do ye next, men?” “Lower away, and after him!” “And what tune is it ye pull to, men?” “A dead whale or a stove boat!” More and more strangely and fiercely glad and approving, grew the countenance of the old man at every shout; while the mariners began to gaze curiously at each other, as if marvelling how it was that they themselves became so excited at such seemingly purposeless questions. But, they were all eagerness again, as Ahab, now half-revolving in his pivot-hole, with one hand reaching high up a shroud and tightly, almost convulsively grasping it, addressed them thus: – “All ye mast-headers have before now heard me give orders about a white whale. Look ye! D’ye see this Spanish ounce of gold?” – holding up a broad bright coin to the sun – “it is a sixteen dollar piece, men. D’ye see it? Mr Starbuck, hand me yon top-maul.” While the mate was getting the hammer, Ahab, without speaking, was slowly rubbing the gold piece against the skirts of his jacket, as if to heighten its lustre, and without using any words was meanwhile lowly humming to himself, producing a sound so strangely muffled and inarticulate that it seemed the mechanical humming of the wheels of his vitality in him. Receiving the top-maul from Starbuck, he advanced towards the mainmast with the hammer uplifted in one hand, exhibiting the gold with the other, and with a high raised voice exclaiming: “Whosoever of ye raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw, whosoever of ye raises me that white-headed whale, with three holes punctured in his starboard fluke – look ye, whosoever of ye raises me that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!” “Huzza! huzza!” cried the seamen, as with swinging tarpaulins

they hailed the act of nailing the gold to the mast. "It's a white whale, I say", resumed Ahab, as he threw down the top-maul; "a white whale. Skin your eyes for him, men; look sharp for white water; if ye see but a bubble, sing out." All this while Tashtego, Daggoo, and Queequeg had looked on with even so more intense interest and surprise than the rest, and at the mention of the wrinkled brow and crooked jaw they had started as if each was separately touched by some specific recollection. "Captain Ahab", said Tashtego, "that white whale must be the same that some call Moby Dick." "Moby Dick?" shouted Ahab. "Do ye know the white whale then, Tash?" "Does he fan-tail a little curious, sir, before he goes down?" said the Gay header deliberately. "And has he a curious spout, too," said Daggoo, "very bushy, even for a parmacetty, and mighty quick, Captain Ahab?" "And he have one, two, three – oh! good many iron in him hide, too, Captain," cried Queequeg disjointedly, "all twisketee betwisk, like him – him" faltering hard for a word, and screwing his hand round and round as though uncorking a bottle, "– like him – him –." "Corkscrew!" cried Ahab, "aye. Queequeg, the harpoons lie all twisted and wrenched in him; aye, Daggoo, his spout is a big one, like a whole shock of wheat, and white as a pile of our Nantucket wool after the great annual sheep-shearing; aye, Tashtego and he fan-tails like a split jib in a squall. Death and devils! men, it is Moby Dick ye have seen – Moby Dick – Moby Dick!" "Captain Ahab", said Starbuck, who, with Stubb and Flask, had thus far been eyeing his superior with increasing surprise, but at last seemed struck with a thought which somewhat explained all the wonder. "Captain Ahab, I have heard of Moby Dick – but it was not Moby Dick that took off thy leg?" "Who told thee that?" cried Ahab; then pausing, "Aye, Starbuck; aye my hearties all round; it was Moby Dick that dismasted me; Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now. Aye, aye," he shouted with a terrific, loud, animal sob, like that of a heart-stricken moose"; "Aye, aye! it was that accursed white whale that razeed me; made a poor pegging lubber of me for ever and a day!" Then tossing both arms, with measureless imprecations he shouted out: "Aye, aye! and I'll chase him round Good Hope,

and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelström, and round perdition's flames before I give him up. And this is what ye have shipped for, men! to chase that white whale on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look brave." "Aye, aye!" shouted the harpooneers and seamen, running closer to the excited old man: "A sharp eye for the White Whale; a sharp lance for Moby Dick!" "God bless ye," he seemed to half sob half shout. "God bless ye, men. Steward! go draw the great measure of grog. But what's this long face about, Mr. Starbuck; wilt thou not chase the white whale? art not game for Moby Dick?" "I am game for his crooked jaw, and for the jaws of Death too, Captain Ahab, if it fairly comes in the way of the business we follow; but I came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance. How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? It will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market." "Nantucket market! Hoot! But come closer, Starbuck; thou requirest a little lower layer. If money's to be the measure, man, and the accountants have computed their great counting-house the globe, by girdling it with guineas, one to every three parts of an inch; then, let me tell thee, that my vengeance will fetch a great premium *here!*" "He smites his chest," whispered Stubb, "what's that for? Methinks it rings more vast, but hollow." "Vengeance on a dumb brute!" cried Starbuck, "that simply smote thee bam blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous." [38]

#### Issues to think over

1. The obsessive, epic pursuit of the great white whale by Captain Ahab is one of the attractions of the novel. In the extract he addresses his men on the ship and explains what mission they are about to undertake. The aim of Ahab's speech is to manipulate the crew into collaborating with him in his quest for Moby dick. He uses different devices to whip the crowd into this frenzy.

a) wishing to create expectancy and suspense, he paces in silence before starting his speech.

b) He starts his speech by asking “unexpected” questions. They are unexpected because everybody knows the answer and because the crew expected the captain to talk, not to ask questions.

c) In fact, he asks questions in order to make the crew think it was their own decision, not his. That is his purpose is to unite the men and create a crowd mentality. On the other hand, he wishes to glorify and romanticize whale hunting.

d) The ritual of hammering the coin to the mast serves as a constant reminder to the crew that their main purpose on the ship is hunting Moby Dick.

2. Names of the characters in Moby Dick have strong associations and provide information about a character’s social, economic and ethnic background. Thus, Melville chooses symbolic or allusive names. Captain Ahab is named after a King of the Israelites from the Old Testament who was a wicked and vile person.

3. The use of naval and technical terms (mast-headers, top-maul) make the passage more realistic and true-to-life.

### **11.7. MARK TWAIN. *THE CELEBRATED JUMPING FROG FROM CALAVERAS COUNTY***

I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, Leonidas W. Smiley, as requested to do, and I hereunto append the result. He replied as follows. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once:

There was a feller here once by the name of Jim Smiley, in the winter of '49 – or maybe it was the spring of '50. He was the curiosest man about always betting on anything that turned up you ever see, if he could get anybody to bet on the other side; and if he couldn't, he'd change sides. Any way that suited the other man would suit him – any way just so's he got a bet, he was satisfied. But still he was lucky, uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. Well, thish-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken

cocks, and tomcats, and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketch'd a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal'klated to edercate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet you he did learn him too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut – see him turn one summerset, or may be a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flatfooted and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of catching flies, and kept him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as far as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do most anything – and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor – Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog – and sing out, “Flies, Dan'l, flies!” and quicker'n you could wink, he'd spring straight up, and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor again as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it came to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had traveled and been everywheres, all said he laid over any frog that ever they see.

Well, Smiley kept the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him downtown sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller – a stranger in the camp, he was – come across him with his box, and says:

“What might it be that you've got in the box?”

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent like, "It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain't – it's only just a frog."

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, "H'm – so 'tis. Well, what's he good for?"

"Well," Smiley says, easy and careless, "he's good enough for one thing, I should judge – he can outjump any frog in Calaveras county."

The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, "Well, I don't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog."

"Maybe you don't," Smiley says. "Maybe you understand frogs, and maybe you don't understand 'em; maybe you've had experience, and maybe you ain't only a amature, as it were. Anyways, I've got my opinion, and I'll risk forty dollars that he can outjump any frog in Calaveras county."

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like, "Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I ain't got no frog; but if I had a frog, I'd bet you."

And then Smiley says, "That's all right – that's all right – if you'll hold my box a minute, I'll go and get you a frog." And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's and set down to wait.

So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to hisself, and then he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail shot – filled him pretty near up to his chin – and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says:

"Now, if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l, with his fore-paws just even with Dan'l and I'll give the word." Then he says, "one – two – three – jump!" and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off, but Dan'l give a heave, and hysted up his shoulders – so – like a French-man, but it wan't no use – he couldn't budge; he was planted as solid

as an anvil, and he couldn't no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.

The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out at the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulders – this way – at Dan'l, and says again, very deliberate, “Well, I don't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog.”

Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, “I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw'd off for – I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him – he 'pears to look might baggy, somehow.” And he ketched Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and lifted him up and says, “Why, blame my cats, if he don't weigh five pound!” and turned him upside down, and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man – he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And –

[Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called from the front yard, and got up to see what was wanted.] And turning to me as he moved away, he said: “Just set where you are, stranger, and rest easy – I ain't going to be gone a second.”

But, by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond Jim Smiley would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he buttonholed me and recommenced:

“Well, thish-yer Smiley had a yaller one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only jest a short stump like a bannanner, and –”

“Oh! hang Smiley and his afflicted cow!” I muttered, good-naturedly, and bidding the old gentleman good-day, I departed. [22]



### Issues to think over

1. Search the text for ungrammatical examples, common phonetic features of colloquial speech and graphons that convey peculiar individual manner of speaking and pronouncing words. Find examples of colloquial vocabulary. What effect do they produce in the story? What image of the story-teller do they create?

2. Pay attention to similes, as in the example *"like a doughnut"*. Find more similes in the text. What's their role in the story-telling?

3. Comment on the grammatical structure: "I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor." Identify the type of the construction, groups of verbs it is used with, the form of the infinitive that follows. What is the value of the construction for this particular story?

4. Comment on the following cases of metaphor:

1) *and quicker'n you could wink, he'd spring straight up, and snake a fly off'n the counter there;*

2) *and he couldn't no more stir than if he was anchored out.*

5. Are there exaggerations in the story? What's their function?

6. Are there examples of personification? What effect do they produce?

7. Pick out words that describe the amazing gymnastic exercises the frog could perform.

8. Look for epithets (adjectives and adverbs), e.g. *and looked at it careful; Smiley says, easy and careless*. Why are they important for the story?

9. Find the words that prove that Smiley was proud of his frog and even boastful.

10. Is good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler a good story-teller? Prove your point of view.

Satire:

Twain is satirizing several aspects of American life, but especially the country bumpkins who tend to speak at length about subjects that are close to them but are really unimportant and nonsensical.

Narration:

✓ “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” uses the framework of a story within a story, with the search for the Reverend Smiley being the least important part of the story.

✓ The main narrator, Simon Wheeler, uses a serious, deadpan and understated style that gives the tale an overall humorous effect. As Wheeler weaves his story, the story gets more ridiculous and ironic – pay particular attention to the description of Smiley's attempts at teaching the frog.

Unique Elements in Twain's Story:

– This story was not original with Mark Twain. He had heard it told many times in mining camps and other places he visited prior to his writing it.

– Note Twain's use of extremely long descriptive sentences when relating Wheeler's story and how Twain slows it down through his use of linguistics, bad grammar, and heavy dialect.

– The broad humor in the actual telling of the story. The story is layered so that there is not just one or two anecdotes told, but various parts throughout the whole are funny.

– Twain depicts the humorous personal characteristics of both frontier characters, Simon Wheeler, and Jim Smiley.

### **11.8. BRET HARTE. *THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP***

By THERE was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1805 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp, — “Cherokee Sal.”

Perhaps the less said of her the better. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministrations of her own sex. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed from the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced *ab initio*. Hence the excitement.

“You go in there, Stumpy,” said a prominent citizen known as “Kentuck,” addressing one of the loungers. “Go in there, and see what you kin do. You’ve had experience in them things.” The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue. The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. In the midst of an excited discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire, rose a sharp, querulous cry, – a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder, but, in consideration of the situation of the mother, only a few revolvers were discharged; for, whether owing to the rude surgery of the camp, or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame forever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. “Can he live now?” was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful. The only other being of Cherokee Sal’s sex and maternal condition in the

settlement was an ass. There was some conjecture as to fitness, but the experiment was tried, and it was apparently successful.

When these details were completed, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious crowd of men who had already formed themselves into a queue, entered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shelf, on which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets stood a pine table. On this a candle-box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flannel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle-box was placed a hat. "Gentlemen," said Stumpy, – "Gentlemen will please pass in at the front door, round the table, and out at the back door. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy." The first man entered with his hat on; he uncovered, however, as he looked about him, and so, unconsciously, set an example to the next. The contributions were as characteristic: A silver tobacco-box; a navy revolver, silver mounted; a very beautifully embroidered lady's handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin; a diamond ring; a Bible (contributor not detected); a silver teaspoon (the initials, regret to say, were not the giver's); a Bank of England note for £5; and about \$200 in loose gold and silver coin. During these proceedings Stumpy maintained a silence as impassive as the dead on his left. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle-box half curiously, the child turned, and, in a spasm of pain, caught at his groping finger, and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked foolish and embarrassed. Something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek. "The d – d little cuss!" he said, as he extricated his finger, with, perhaps, more tenderness and care than he might have been deemed capable of showing. He held that finger a little apart from its fellows as he went out, and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same original remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it... [9]

### Issues to think over

1. Which words show the conditions in which the men lived in Roaring Camp?

2. Pay attention to the irregular ungrammatical colloquial speech of the characters. How does it characterize them? Who were the people in Roaring Camp as mentioned by the author?

3. Comment on the following cases of metonymy:

1. *“The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.”*

2. *“In the midst of an excited discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen.”*

3. *“The camp rose to its feet as one man!”* What are the implications? Find another case of metonymy in the story.

4. What is the role of foreign words in the story (*but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced ab initio; the door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife; the assemblage numbered about a hundred men*)?

5. Can you find euphemisms in the story? What is their function?

6. What stylistic devices are used to describe the very moment of childbirth: *“Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire, rose a sharp, querulous cry, – a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.”* What atmosphere do they create?

7. How do the contributions (*the contributions were as characteristic: a silver tobacco-box; a navy revolver, silver mounted; a very beautifully embroidered lady’s handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin; a diamond ring; a Bible (contributor not detected); a silver teaspoon (the initials, regret to say, were not the giver’s); a Bank of*

*England note for £5; and about \$200 in loose gold and silver coin)*  
characterize the men of Roaring Camp?

8. Why did Kentuck “look foolish and embarrassed” when “something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek”? What kind of change did the birth of the child bring about on Roaring Camp? Did they like this change?

9. What is the attitude of the author to the inhabitants of Roaring Camp? Pick out words from the passage that convey it.

### **11.9. HENRY JAMES. *THE TURN OF THE SCREW* (EXTRACT)**

I can say now neither what determined nor what guided me, but I went straight along the lobby, holding my candle high, till I came within sight of the tall window that presided over the great turn of the staircase. At this point I precipitately found myself aware of three things. They were practically simultaneous, yet they had flashes of succession. My candle, under a bold flourish, went out, and I perceived, by the uncovered window, that the yielding dusk of earliest morning rendered it unnecessary. Without it, the next instant, I saw that there was someone on the stair. I speak of sequences, but I required no lapse of seconds to stiffen myself for a third encounter with Quint. The apparition had reached the landing halfway up and was therefore on the spot nearest the window, where at sight of me, it stopped short and fixed me exactly as it had fixed me from the tower and from the garden. He knew me as well as I knew him; and so, in the cold, faint twilight, with a glimmer in the high glass and another on the polish of the oak stair below, we faced each other in our common intensity. He was absolutely, on this occasion, a living, detestable, dangerous presence. But that was not the wonder of wonders; I reserve this distinction for quite another circumstance: the circumstance that dread had unmistakably quitted me and that there was nothing in me there that didn't meet and measure him.

I had plenty of anguish after that extraordinary moment, but I had, thank God, no terror. And he knew I had not – I found myself at the end of an instant magnificently aware of this. I felt, in a fierce rigor of confidence, that if I stood my ground a minute I should cease – for the time, at least – to have him to reckon with; and during the minute, accordingly, the thing was as human and hideous as a real interview: hideous just because it WAS human, as human as to have met alone, in the small hours, in a sleeping house, some enemy, some adventurer, some criminal. It was the dead silence of our long gaze at such close quarters that gave the whole horror, huge as it was, its only note of the unnatural. If I had met a murderer in such a place and at such an hour, we still at least would have spoken. Something would have passed, in life, between us; if nothing had passed, one of us would have moved. The moment was so prolonged that it would have taken but little more to make me doubt if even I were in life. I can't express what followed it save by saying that the silence itself – which was indeed in a manner an attestation of my strength – became the element into which I saw the figure disappear; in which I definitely saw it turn as I might have seen the low wretch to which it had once belonged turn on receipt of an order, and pass, with my eyes on the villainous back that no hunch could have more disfigured, straight down the staircase and into the darkness in which the next bend was lost. [39]

#### Issues to think over

Unites States' writer Henry James became a British subject shortly before his death. He is, perhaps, the first writer to be equally claimed in both Europe and America.

Themes: In his novels, James contrasts the puritan, idealistic and often naïve views of Americans and the sophisticated, tolerant but frequently corrupt attitudes of Europeans. Although these novels recognize the traditions, courtesies and cultural richness of Europe, they also exalt America for its innocence and idealism.

His style is very complex, based on intricate syntax. It has won much admiration on a technical level. Other critics find his writing unnecessarily

difficult to follow. His style mirrored the refined nature of the human consciousness. His analysis of character is subtle and intricate.

One of his most finely drawn creations is Isabel Archer, the rich, Europe-based American heroine of the novel entitled *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881). The novel is narrated from the limited point of view: the world is seen through the eyes of Isabel, who is a sensitive and intelligent observer. The story follows her search for self-identity and her growth to self-understanding and maturity. Isabel falls victim to an unscrupulous husband.

Of his many short stories, the enigmatic English ghost story *The Turn of the screw* (1898) has given rise to many interpretations. It is a mystical psychological story. The limited point of view technique also heightens the suspense here. It is an ambiguous story of the occult, which leaves the reader guessing.

The young narrator takes on a job as governess in a country house. She has to look after two children, Miles and Flora. Mrs. Grose is the housekeeper. The new governess sees apparitions of the two dead servants: Peter Quint and the previous governess Miss Jessel.

The setting of the story is a haunted country house. In the first text, the action takes place at dawn. The choice of such a setting and time creates enigmatic, mysterious, tense atmosphere. The governess feels a strange presence in the dark house and approaches the staircase that is only illuminated on the landing near the window. The woman suddenly becomes aware of three things: 1) there is an apparition, 2) it is the spirit of the dead servant Peter Quint that she had already seen twice before; 3) she is not afraid of him.

The narrator is sure she can overcome the ghost because she can read his mind. ("I had no terror. And he knew I had not.")

Their long silence seems unnatural to the woman: The silence is prolonged, and they gaze at each other from a short distance. The moment made the woman doubt if she herself was alive. The moment seems unnatural



because if it were a burglar or a criminal, they would have said something to each other. They both would have undertaken some actions or would have moved away.

On this occasion the ghost seems human and hideous. It is also referred to with such words and phrases as: apparition, low wretch, a living detestable dangerous presence. The use of these phrases shows that the narrator feels superior to the ghost, she feels she can order him because of her higher social status: she is a governess and he was a valet when he was alive. The ghost of Quint follows the order (“It leaves as if on receipt of an order”) which gives the governess a sense of victory and satisfaction. She has won her confrontation with the ghost.

As for the ghost’s description, we don’t know any objective physical detail about him. We don’t know what he looks like: he is described in terms of the reaction he provokes in the narrator.

The story is the first person narration and the reader is plunged into the world of the woman who lives in a strange house but she is not a coward. She wants to investigate the strange things that are happening around her. The whole story is presented in terms of the narrator, through her “limited point of view”. That’s why Henry James is called a forerunner of the stream of consciousness technique.

In the second extract the governess encounters the other apparition, Miss Jessel. But it appears the narrator is the only person who sees it. Neither Mrs. Grose nor Flora sees the ghost. The narrator seeks for support from Mrs. Grose but she fails. It becomes obvious that the housekeeper is not able to see the apparition and she doesn’t believe the narrator. Mrs. Grose comforts Flora reassuring her that poor Miss Jessel is dead and buried. Flora becomes estranged from the governess, she disapproves of the hysterics, watches her with reproach, she is frightened and wants to be taken away from her.

Feeling her own situation crumble, the governess becomes confused, nervous, unbalanced and even hysterical. Her movements are described with

such verbs as “to grasp”, “to seize”, “to thrust”, “to insist”, “to point”, which give a sense of urgency and tension. Even her attitude to Flora whom she admired and loved changes: Flora’s beauty has vanished, “her dreadful little face” has “turned common and almost ugly”.

Even at the end of the story, the author doesn’t give the answer whether the children and the governess actually see the ghosts or whether they are simply the creation of the governess’s neurotic mind.

In the first hypothesis, the governess is seen as a savior who tries to protect the children from evil spirits; in the second hypothesis, she is a deeply disturbed individual who exercises a harmful and ultimately fatal (in the case of Miles) influence on the children.

The ambiguity of the story is created through the use of a limited point of view: the governess’s account of events is inevitably subjective – the reader never sees the character and events of the story as they really are, but only as they appear to her. It is up to each individual reader to decide whether or not he can trust what the governess is saying, whether to think of her as a reliable or unreliable narrator.

#### **11.10. JOHN STEINBECK. *GRAPES OF WRATH* (EXTRACT)**

##### ***Chapter 25***

***(...)***

All California quickens with produce, and the fruit grows heavy, and the limbs bend gradually under the fruit so that little crutches must be placed under them to support the weight.

Behind the fruitfulness are men of understanding and knowledge, and skill, men who experiment with seed, endlessly developing the techniques for greater crops of plants whose roots will resist the million enemies of the earth:

the molds, the insects, the rusts, the blights. These men work carefully and endlessly to perfect the seed, the roots. And there are the men of chemistry who spray the trees against pests, who sulphur the grapes, who cut out disease and rots, mildews and sicknesses. Doctors of preventive medicine, men at the borders who look for fruit flies, for Japanese beetle, men who quarantine the sick trees and root them out and burn them, men of knowledge. The men who graft the young trees, the little vines, are the cleverest of all, for theirs is a surgeon's job, as tender and delicate; and these men must have surgeons' hands and surgeons' hearts to slit the bark, to place the grafts, to bind the wounds and cover them from the air. These are great men.

The year is heavy with produce. And the men are proud, for of their knowledge they can make the year heavy. They have transformed the world with their knowledge. The short, lean wheat has been made big and productive. Little sour apples have grown large and sweet, and that old grape that grew among the trees and fed the birds its tiny fruit has mothered a thousand varieties, red and black, green and pale pink, purple and yellow; and each variety with its own flavor. The men who work in the experimental farms have made new fruits: nectarines and forty kinds of plums, walnuts with paper shells. And always they work, selecting, grafting, changing, driving themselves, driving the earth to produce.

And first the cherries ripen. Cent and a half a pound. Hell, we can't pick 'em for that. Black cherries and red cherries, full and sweet, and the birds eat half of each cherry and the yellowjackets buzz into the holes the birds made. And on the ground the seeds drop and dry with black shreds hanging from them.

The purple prunes soften and sweeten. My God, we can't pick them and dry and sulphur them. We can't pay wages, no matter what wages. And the purple prunes carpet the ground. And first the skins wrinkle a little and swarms of flies come to feast, and the valley is filled with the odor of sweet decay. The meat turns dark and the crop shrivels on the ground.

Then the grapes — we can't make good wine. People can't buy good wine. Rip the grapes from the vines, good grapes, rotten grapes, wasp-stung grapes. Press stems, press dirt and rot.

But there's mildew and formic acid in the vats. Add sulphur and tannic acid.

The smell from the ferment is not the rich odor of wine, but the smell of decay and chemicals.

Oh, well. It has alcohol in it, anyway. They can get drunk.

The little farmers watched debt creep up on them like the tide. They sprayed the trees and sold no crop, they pruned and grafted and could not pick the crop. And the men of knowledge have worked, have considered, and the fruit is rotting on the ground, and the decaying mash in the wine vat is poisoning the air. And taste the wine — no grape flavor at all, just sulphur and tannic acid and alcohol.

This little orchard will be a part of a great holding next year, for the debt will have choked the owner.

This vineyard will belong to the bank. Only the great owners can survive, for they own the canneries, too. And four pears peeled and cut in half, cooked and canned, still cost fifteen cents. And the canned pears do not spoil. They will last for years.

The decay spreads over the State, and the sweet smell is a great sorrow on the land. Men who can graft the trees and make the seed fertile and big can find no way to let the hungry people eat their produce. Men who have created new fruits in the world cannot create a system whereby their fruits may be eaten. And the failure hangs over the State like a great sorrow.

The works of the roots of the vines, of the trees, must be destroyed to keep up the price, and this is the saddest, bitterest thing of all. Carloads of oranges dumped on the ground. The people came for miles to take the fruit, but this could not be. How would they buy oranges at twenty cents a dozen if they could drive out and pick them up? And men with hoses squirt kerosene on

the oranges, and they are angry at the crime, angry at the people who have come to take the fruit. A million people hungry, needing the fruit — and kerosene sprayed over the golden mountains.

And the smell of rot fills the country.

Burn coffee for fuel in the ships. Burn corn to keep warm, it makes a hot fire. Dump potatoes in the rivers and place guards along the banks to keep the hungry people from fishing them out. Slaughter the pigs and bury them, and let the putrescence drip down into the earth.

There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation. There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize. There is a failure here that topples all our success. The fertile earth, the straight tree rows, the sturdy trunks, and the ripe fruit. And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange. And coroners must fill in the certificate — died of malnutrition — because the food must rot, must be forced to rot.

The people come with nets to fish for potatoes in the river, and the guards hold them back; they come in rattling cars to get the dumped oranges, but the kerosene is sprayed. And they stand still and watch the potatoes float by, listen to the screaming pigs being killed in a ditch and covered with quicklime, watch the mountains of oranges slop down to a putrefying ooze; and in the eyes of the people there is the failure; and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage. [13]

#### Issues to think over

Much of the *Grapes of Wrath* is set in California in the 1930. California is and has always been the biggest producer of fruit in the world. This American state most fascinates people from other countries and other regions of the USA. However, the image of California created by mass media is very different from that presented by John Steinbeck. The writer chronicles the hardship and poverty that hit rural America during the Great Depression. It happened

because the pursuit of profit and the interests of consumers did not correspond, as exemplified by the extreme example of the destruction of crops despite widespread starvation in the *Grapes of Wrath*. On their arrival the Joads see that California is a bountiful and fertile state. Yet, people are starving and tons of ripe produce are being destroyed every day.

To make the narration more realistic, persuasive and emotional, the author uses free indirect speech incorporated into traditional third-person omniscient narration. The omniscient narrator is outside the story and refers to the characters with the third person pronoun “they”. But the text also incorporates comments which can be attributed to specific people and mirror their point of view:

“The purple prunes soften and sweeten (the omniscient narrator’s point of view). My God, we can’t pick them and dry and sulphur them. We can’t pay wages, no matter what wages (the farmers’ point of view). And the purple prunes carpet the ground (the omniscient narrator’s point of view).”

The technique of shifting from one point of view to another is called *free indirect speech*.

“Men of knowledge” and scientists are mentioned several times in the extract. The attitude to them is controversial, though. They select and graft and make new kinds of fruit. They are proud of their successful work in transforming the natural produce in which the wheat is short and lean, the apples are little and sour, the grapes are old and tiny, into scientifically modified produce which is big, productive, sweet, with a thousands of varieties. Still the narrator does not admire them. He believes they should have used their knowledge for the worthier cause: to create a system which will allow to feed all the people, which will allow people to eat their own produce. So far all the scientific achievements seem to the narrator useless: “And the failure hangs over the State like a great sorrow”, oranges and potatoes are dumped, pigs are slaughtered, grapes and prunes rotten and shrivel.

## 11.11. ERNEST HEMINGWAY. *A FAREWELL TO ARMS* (EXTRACTS)

### *Chapter 32*

Lying on the floor of the flat-car with the guns beside me under the canvas I was wet, cold and very hungry. Finally I rolled over and lay flat on my stomach with my head on my arms. My knee was stiff, but it had been very satisfactory. Valentini had done a fine job. I had done half the retreat on foot and swum part of the Tagliamento with his knee. It was his knee all right. The other knee was mine. Doctors did things to you and then it was not your body any more. The head was mine, and the inside of the belly. It was very hungry in there. I could feel it turn over on itself. The head was mine, but not to use, not to think with, only to remember and not too much remember.

I could remember Catherine but I knew I would get crazy if I thought about her when I was not sure yet I would see her, so I would not think about her, only about her a little, only about her with the car going slowly and clickingly, and some light through the canvas and my lying with Catherine on the floor of the car. Hard as the floor of the car to lie not thinking only feeling, having been away too long, the clothes wet and the floor moving only a little each time and lonesome inside and alone with wet clothing and hard floor for a wife.

You did not love the floor of a flat-car nor guns with canvas jackets and the smell of vaselined metal or a canvas that rain leaked through, although it is very fine under a canvas and pleasant with guns; but you loved some one else whom now you knew was not even to be pretended there; you seeing now very clearly and coldly – not so coldly as clearly and emptily. You saw emptily, lying on your stomach, having been present when one army moved back and another came forward. You had lost your cars and your men as a floorwalker loses the stock of his department in a fire. There was, however, no insurance. You were out of it now. You had no more obligation. If they shot

floorwalkers after a fire in the department store because they spoke with an accent they had always had, then certainly the floorwalkers would not be expected to return when the store opened again for business. They might seek other employment; if there was any other employment and the police did not get them.

Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation. Although that ceased when the carabinieri put his hands on my collar. I would like to have had the uniform off although I did not care much about the outward forms. I had taken off the stars, but that was for convenience. It was no point of honor. I was not against them. I was through. I wished them all the luck. There were the good ones, and the brave ones, and the calm ones and the sensible ones, and they deserved it. But it was not my show any more and I wished this bloody train would get to Mestre and I would eat and stop thinking. I would have to stop.

Piani would tell them they had shot me. They went through the pockets and took the papers of the people they shot. They would not have my papers. They might call me drowned. I wondered what they would hear in the States. Dead from wounds and other causes. Good Christ I was hungry. I wondered what had become of the priest at the mess. And Rinaldi. He was probably at Pordenone. If they had not gone further back. Well, I would never see him now. I would never see any of them now. That life was over. I did not think he had syphilis. It was not a serious disease anyway if you took it in time, they said. But he would worry. I would worry too if I had it. Any one would worry.

I was not made to think. I was made to eat. My God, yes. Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine. To-night maybe. No that was impossible. But tomorrow night, and a good meal and sheets and never going away again except together. Probably have to go damned quickly. She would go. I knew she would go. When would we go? That was something to think about. It was getting dark. I lay and thought where we would go. There were many places. [40]



### Issues to think over

1. Comment on the following words: “Doctors did things to you and then it was not your body any more. The head was mine, and the inside of the belly. It was very hungry in there. I could feel it turn over on itself. The head was mine, but not to use, not to think with, only to remember and not too much remember.”

2. Make a list of military terms, “the war words”, e.g. *the flat-car, the guns, the canvas etc.* How do they contribute to the narration?

3. Find examples of the stream of consciousness technique. Comment on them. What atmosphere do they enact?

4. Earnest Hemingway’s is a very rhythmic prose. Find the best examples of rhythmicality in the extract. What language means are used to achieve it?

5. Search the second paragraph for the sound that is often repeated. What is the sound? What atmosphere does it create?

6. Comment on the lines: “You did not love the floor of a flat-car nor guns with canvas jackets and the smell of vaselined metal or a canvas that rain leaked through, although it is very fine under a canvas and pleasant with guns; but you loved some one else whom now you knew was not even to be pretended there.” How do they correlate with the title of the novel ‘Farewell to Arms’?

7. Would you agree that Earnest Hemingway’s is a masculine prose? Give examples to prove your point of view.

8. Earnest Hemingway was a journalist by profession. Can we feel it throughout the narration? What is the key journalistic rule to observe? Give examples from the text.

9. Earnest Hemingway never trusted ‘big, ten-dollar words’, he preferred the vocabulary of high frequency and common currency. Can we find the evidence of this in the text? Give examples.

***Please don't let her die***

***Chapter 41***

***(...)***

I ate the ham and eggs and drank the beer. The ham and eggs were in a round dish – the ham underneath and the eggs on top. It was very hot and at the first mouthful I had to take a drink of beer to cool my mouth. I was hungry and I asked the waiter for another order. I drank several glasses of beer. I was not thinking at all but read the paper of the man opposite me. It was about the break through on the British front. When he realized I was reading the back of his paper he folded it over. I thought of asking the waiter for a paper, but I could not concentrate. It was hot in the cafe and the air was bad. Many of the people at the tables knew one another. There were several card games going on. The waiters were busy bringing drinks from the bar to the tables. Two men came in and could find no place to sit. They stood opposite the table where I was. I ordered another beer. I was not ready to leave yet. It was too soon to go back to the hospital. I tried not to think and to be perfectly calm. The men stood around but no one was leaving, so they went out. I drank another beer. There was quite a pile of saucers now on the table in front of me. The man opposite me had taken off his spectacles, put them away in a case, folded his paper and put it in his pocket and now sat holding his liqueur glass and looking out at the room. Suddenly I knew I had to get back. I called the waiter, paid the reckoning, got into my coat, put on my hat and started out the door. I walked through the rain up to the hospital.

Upstairs I met the nurse coming down the hall.

“I just called you at the hotel,” she said. Something dropped inside me.

“What is wrong?”

“Mrs. Henry has had a hemorrhage.”

“Can I go in?”

“No, not yet. The doctor is with her.”

“Is it dangerous?”

"It is very dangerous." The nurse went into the room and shut the door. I sat outside in the hail. Everything was gone inside of me. I did not think. I could not think. I knew she was going to die and I prayed that she would not. Don't let her die. Oh, God, please don't let her die. I'll do anything for you if you won't let her die. Please, please, please, dear God, don't let her die. Dear God, don't let her die. Please, please, please don't let her die. God please make her not die. I'll do anything you say if you don't let her die. You took the baby but don't let her die. That was all right but don't let her die. Please, please, dear God, don't let her die.

The nurse opened the door and motioned with her finger for me to come. I followed her into the room. Catherine did not look up when I came in. I went over to the side of the bed. The doctor was standing by the bed on the opposite side. Catherine looked at me and smiled. I bent down over the bed and started to cry.

"Poor darling," Catherine said very softly. She looked gray.

"You're all right, Cat," I said. "You're going to be all right."

"I'm going to die," she said; then waited and said, "I hate it."

I took her hand.

"Don't touch me," she said. I let go of her hand. She smiled. "Poor darling. You touch me all you want."

"You'll be all right, Cat. I know you'll be all right."

"I meant to write you a letter to have if anything happened, but I didn't do it."

"Do you want me to get a priest or anyone to come and see you?"

"Just you," she said. Then a little later, "I'm not afraid. I just hate it."

"You must not talk so much," the doctor said.

"All right," Catherine said.

"Do you want me to do anything, Cat? Can I get you anything?"

Catherine smiled, "No." Then a little later, "You won't do our things with another girl, or say the same things, will you?"

“Never.”

“I want you to have girls, though.”

“I don’t want them.”

“You are talking too much,” the doctor said. “Mr. Henry must go out. He can come back again later. You are not going to die. You must not be silly.”

“All right,” Catherine said. “I’ll come and stay with you nights,” she said. It was very hard for her to talk.

“Please go out of the room,” the doctor said. “You cannot talk.” Catherine winked at me, her face gray. “I’ll be right outside,” I said.

“Don’t worry, darling,” Catherine said. “I’m not a bit afraid. It’s just a dirty trick.”

“You dear, brave sweet.”

I waited outside in the hall. I waited a long time. The nurse came to the door and came over to me. “I’m afraid Mrs. Henry is very ill,” she said. “I’m afraid for her.”

“Is she dead?”

“No, but she is unconscious.”

It seems she had one hemorrhage after another. They couldn’t stop it. I went into the room and stayed with Catherine until she died. She was unconscious all the time, and it did not take her very long to die. [40]

#### Issues to think over

1. Comment on the function of the descriptive part of the text that precedes the dialogues. Doesn’t it make a sharp contrast with the topic of “death” prevalent in the text? Why does Hemingway introduce it?

2. Hemingway is known to have discovered a new mode of dialogue. Study the dialogues in the extract and comment on their role in the narration. Comment on the vocabulary of the dialogues, the topics, the atmosphere they contribute to.

3. Hemingway's prose is believed to be a very detached and dispassionate one. Still the reader feels great tension, anxiety and drama permeating the extract. How does the writer manage to achieve it?

#### **11.12. F. SCOTT FITZGERALD. *THE GREAT GATSBY* (EXTRACTS)**

##### ***Chapter 3***

**(...)**

There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden; old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably, and keeping in the corners – and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps. By midnight the hilarity had increased. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian, and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz, and between the numbers people were doing “stunts” all over the garden, while happy, vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky. A pair of stage twins, who turned out to be the girls in yellow, did a baby act in costume, and champagne was served in glasses bigger than finger-bowls. The moon had risen higher, and floating in the Sound was a triangle of silver scales, trembling a little to the stiff, tinny drip of the banjos on the lawn.

I was still with Jordan Baker. We were sitting at a table with a man of about my age and a rowdy little girl, who gave way upon the slightest provocation to uncontrollable laughter. I was enjoying myself now. I had taken two finger-bowls of champagne, and the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental, and profound.

At a lull in the entertainment the man looked at me and smiled.

“Your face is familiar,” he said, politely. “Weren't you in the Third Division during the war?”

“Why, yes. I was in the Ninth Machine-gun Battalion.”

“I was in the Seventh Infantry until June nineteen-eighteen. I knew I’d seen you somewhere before.”

We talked for a moment about some wet, gray little villages in France. Evidently he lived in this vicinity, for he told me that he had just bought a hydroplane, and was going to try it out in the morning.

“Want to go with me, old sport? Just near the shore along the Sound.”

“What time?”

“Any time that suits you best.”

It was on the tip of my tongue to ask his name when Jordan looked around and smiled.

“Having a gay time now?” she inquired.

“Much better.” I turned again to my new acquaintance. “This is an unusual party for me. I haven’t even seen the host. I live over there –” I waved my hand at the invisible hedge in the distance, “and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation.” For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand.

“I’m Gatsby,” he said suddenly.

“What!” I exclaimed. “Oh, I beg your pardon.”

“I thought you knew, old sport. I’m afraid I’m not a very good host.”

He smiled understandingly – much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced – or seemed to face – the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just so far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished – and I was looking at an elegant young rough-neck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Some time before he introduced himself I’d got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care.

Almost at the moment when Mr. Gatsby identified himself, a butler hurried toward him with the information that Chicago was calling him on the wire. He excused himself with a small bow that included each of us in turn.

“If you want anything just ask for it, old sport,” he urged me. “Excuse me. I will rejoin you later.”

When he was gone I turned immediately to Jordan – constrained to assure her of my surprise. I had expected that Mr. Gatsby would be a florid and corpulent person in his middle years.

“Who is he?” I demanded.

“Do you know?”

“He’s just a man named Gatsby.”

“Where is he from, I mean? And what does he do?”

“Now you’ve started on the subject,” she answered with a wan smile. “Well, he told me once he was an Oxford man.” A dim background started to take shape behind him, but at her next remark it faded away.

“However, I don’t believe it.”

“Why not?” “I don’t know,” she insisted, “I just don’t think he went there.”

Something in her tone reminded me of the other girl’s “I think he killed a man,” and had the effect of stimulating my curiosity. I would have accepted without question the information that Gatsby sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or from the lower East Side of New York. That was comprehensible. But young men didn’t – at least in my provincial inexperience I believed they didn’t – drift coolly out of nowhere and buy a palace on Long Island Sound.

“Anyhow, he gives large parties,” said Jordan, changing the subject with an urbane distaste for the concrete. “And I like large parties. They’re so intimate. At small parties there isn’t any privacy.”

There was the boom of a bass drum, and the voice of the orchestra leader rang out suddenly above the echolalia of the garden.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he cried. “At the request of Mr. Gatsby we are going to play for you Mr. Vladimir Tostoff’s latest work, which attracted so much attention at Carnegie Hall last May. If you read the papers, you know there was a big sensation.” He smiled with jovial condescension, and added: “Some sensation!” Whereupon everybody laughed.

“The piece is known,” he concluded lustily, “as Vladimir Tostoff’s Jazz History of the World.” [41]

### Issues to think over

1. In his “jazz band novel” F. Scott Fitzgerald reproduces the spirit of “Gatsby parties”, festivities intended to capture the air of the titular Jay Gatsby’s famously lavish, bacchanalian parties. Can we feel that atmosphere of the 20ies in the text? Which words carry the sensation of lightness, lightheartedness and self-indulgence?

2. How did war intermingle with the gaiety of the party?

3. What impression did the host make on the narrator? Which stylistic device is used to describe it? Did Nick (the narrator) expect to find Gatsby his age and very companionable?

4. Why was Gatsby picking his words with care when speaking to the narrator?

5. Is Gatsby a mystery man? How is this image created?

6. The roaring 20ies were the time of paradoxes. Find at least one example of paradox in the extract.

## **Chapter 9**

**(...)**

“Look here, this is a book he had when he was a boy. It just shows you.”

He opened it at the back cover and turned it around for me to see. On the last fly-leaf was printed the word SCHEDULE, and the date September 12, 1906. And underneath:



Rise from bed . . . . . 6.00 A.M.  
 Dumbbell exercise and wall-scaling . . . . . 6.15–6.30  
 Study electricity, etc . . . . . 7.15–8.15  
 Work . . . . . 8.30–4.30 P.M.  
 Baseball and sports . . . . . 4.30–5.00  
 Practice elocution, poise and how to attain it 5.00–6.00  
 Study needed inventions . . . . . 7.00–9.00

GENERAL RESOLVES

No wasting time at Shafters or [a name, indecipherable]  
 No more smokeing or chewing  
 Bath every other day  
 Read one improving book or magazine per week  
 Save \$5.00 {crossed out} \$3.00 per week  
 Be better to parents

“I came across this book by accident,” said the old man. “It just shows you, don't it?”

“It just shows you.”

“Jimmy was bound to get ahead. He always had some resolves like this or something. Do you notice what he's got about improving his mind? He was always great for that. He told me I et like a hog once, and I beat him for it.”

He was reluctant to close the book, reading each item aloud and then looking eagerly at me. I think he rather expected me to copy down the list for my own use.

A little before three the Lutheran minister arrived from Flushing, and I began to look involuntarily out the windows for other cars. So did Gatsby's father. And as the time passed and the servants came in and stood waiting in the hall, his eyes began to blink anxiously, and he spoke of the rain in a worried, uncertain way. The minister glanced several times at his watch, so I took him aside and asked him to wait for half an hour. But it wasn't any use. Nobody came.

About five o'clock our procession of three cars reached the cemetery and stopped in a thick drizzle beside the gate – first a motor hearse, horribly black and wet, then Mr. Gatz and the minister and I in the limousine, and a little later four or five servants and the postman from West Egg in Gatsby's station wagon, all wet to the skin. As we started through the gate into the cemetery I heard a car stop and then the sound of someone splashing after us over the soggy ground. I looked around. It was the man with owl-eyed glasses whom I had found marvelling over Gatsby's books in the library one night three months before.

I'd never seen him since then. I don't know how he knew about the funeral, or even his name. The rain poured down his thick glasses, and he took them off and wiped them to see the protecting canvas unrolled from Gatsby's grave.

I tried to think about Gatsby then for a moment, but he was already too far away, and I could only remember, without resentment, that Daisy hadn't sent a message or a flower. Dimly I heard someone murmur, "Blessed are the dead that the rain falls on," and then the owl-eyed man said "Amen to that," in a brave voice.

We straggled down quickly through the rain to the cars. Owl-eyes spoke to me by the gate.

"I couldn't get to the house," he remarked.

"Neither could anybody else."

"Go on!" He started. "Why, my God! they used to go there by the hundreds." He took off his glasses and wiped them again, outside and in.

"The poor son-of-a-bitch," he said. [41]

### **Issues to think over**

1. What does the list of resolves speak of Gatsby? What are his priorities? Have you ever made the same list of resolutions? Do you think such list could be helpful?

2. What's the symbolic function of the rain on the day of Gatsby's funeral?

3. Comment on the closing remarks of the novel: "I couldn't get to the house," he remarked. "Neither could anybody else." "Go on!" He started. "Why, my God! They used to go there by the hundreds." He took off his glasses and wiped them again, outside and in. "The poor son-of-a-bitch," he said. What verdict on society does this scene pass?

### **11.13. KURT VONNEGUT. 2 B R O 2 B**

*Got a problem? Just pick up the phone.*

*It solved them all – and all the same way!* Everything was perfectly swell. There were no prisons, no slums, no insane asylums, no cripples, no poverty, no wars. All diseases were conquered. So was old age. Death, barring accidents, was an adventure for volunteers. The population of the United States was stabilized at forty-million souls.

One bright morning in the Chicago Lying-in Hospital, a man named Edward K. Wehling, Jr., waited for his wife to give birth. He was the only man waiting. Not many people were born a day any more.

Wehling was fifty-six, a mere stripling in a population whose average age was one hundred and twenty-nine.

X-rays had revealed that his wife was going to have triplets. The children would be his first. Young Wehling was hunched in his chair, his head in his hand. The room was being redecorated. It was being redecorated as a memorial to a man who had volunteered to die. A sardonic old man, about two hundred years old, sat on a stepladder, painting a mural he did not like. The mural depicted a very neat garden. Men and women in white, doctors and nurses, turned the soil, planted seedlings, sprayed bugs, spread fertilizer. Men and women in purple uniforms pulled up weeds, cut down plants that were old and

sickly, raked leaves, carried refuse to trash-burners. Never, never, never – not even in medieval Holland nor old Japan – had a garden been more formal, been better tended. Every plant had all the loam, light, water, air and nourishment it could use.

A coarse, formidable woman strode into the waiting room on spike heels. Her shoes, stockings, trench coat, bag and overseas cap were all purple, the purple the painter called “the color of grapes on Judgment Day.”

The medallion on her purple musette bag was the seal of the Service Division of the Federal Bureau of Termination, an eagle perched on a turnstile. The Federal Bureau of Termination was an institution whose fanciful sobriquets included: “Automat,” “Birdland,” “Cannery,” “Catbox,” “Easy-go,” “Good-by, Mother,” “Happy Hooligan,” “Kiss-me-quick,” “Lucky Pierre,” “Sheepdip,” “Waring Blendor,” “Weep-no-more” and “Why Worry?”

“2 B R 0 2 B” (“To be or not to be”) was the telephone number of the municipal gas chambers of the Federal Bureau of Termination. The zero in the telephone number was pronounced “naught”.

“Is this where I'm supposed to come?” she said to the painter.

“A lot would depend on what your business was,” he said. “You aren't about to have a baby, are you?”

“They told me I was supposed to pose for some picture,” she said. “My name's Leora Duncan.” She waited.

“And you dunk people,” he said.

“What?” she said.

“Skip it,” he said.

“That sure is a beautiful picture,” she said. “Looks just like heaven or something.”

“Or something,” said the painter. He took a list of names from his smock pocket. “Duncan, Duncan, Duncan,” he said, scanning the list. “Yes – here you are. You're entitled to be immortalized. We've got a few choice ones left.” He

meant that the faces of many of the figures in the mural were still blank. All blanks were to be filled with portraits.

She studied the mural bleakly. “Gee,” she said, “they're all the same to me. I don't know anything about art.”

The painter pointed to a figure in purple who was sawing a dead branch from an apple tree. “How about her?” he said. “You like her at all?”

“Gosh –” she said, and she blushed and became humble – “that – that puts me right next to Dr. Hitz. It's – it's just such an honor.”

“Ah, You admire him, eh?” he said.

“Who doesn't admire him?” she said. “He was responsible for setting up the very first gas chamber in Chicago, the hospital's Chief Obstetrician.”

“Nothing would please me more,” said the painter, “than to put you next to him for all time. Sawing off a limb – that strikes you as appropriate?”

“That is kind of like what I do,” she said. She was demure about what she did. What she did was make people comfortable while she killed them.

And into the waiting room bounded Dr. Hitz himself. He was seven feet tall, tanned, white-haired, omnipotent Zeus and he boomed with importance, accomplishments, and the joy of living.

“Well, Miss Duncan! Miss Duncan!” he said, and he made a joke. “What are you doing here?” he said. “This isn't where the people leave. This is where they come in! Guess what was just born,” he said. “Triplets!”

“Triplets!” she said. She was exclaiming over the legal implications of triplets.

The law said that no newborn child could survive unless the parents of the child could find someone who would volunteer to die. Triplets, if they were all to live, called for three volunteers.

“Do the parents have three volunteers?” said Leora Duncan.

“Last I heard,” said Dr. Hitz, “they had one, and were trying to scrape another two up.”

“I don't think they made it,” she said. “What's the name?”

"Wehling," said the waiting father, sitting up, red-eyed and frowzy. "Edward K. Wehling, Jr., is the name of the happy father-to-be."

He raised his right hand, looked at a spot on the wall, gave a hoarsely wretched chuckle. "Present," he said.

"Oh, Mr. Wehling," said Dr. Hitz, "I didn't see you."

"The invisible man," said Wehling.

"They just phoned me that your triplets have been born," said Dr. Hitz. "They're all fine, and so is the mother. I'm on my way in to see them now."

"Hooray," said Wehling emptily.

"You don't sound very happy," said Dr. Hitz.

"What man in my shoes wouldn't be happy?" said Wehling. He gestured with his hands to symbolize care-free simplicity. "All I have to do is pick out which one of the triplets is going to live, then deliver my maternal grandfather to the Happy Hooligan, and come back here with a receipt."

Dr. Hitz became rather severe with Wehling, towered over him. "You don't believe in population control, Mr. Wehling?" he said.

"I want those kids," said Wehling quietly. "I want all three of them."

"Of course you do," said Dr. Hitz. "That's only human."

"I don't want my grandfather to die, either," said Wehling.

"Nobody's really happy about taking a close relative to the Catbox," said Dr. Hitz gently, sympathetically.

"I wish people wouldn't call it the *Catbox*, and things like that," she said.

"You're absolutely right," said Dr. Hitz. "Forgive me." He corrected himself, gave the municipal gas chambers their official title, a title no one ever used in conversation. "I should have said *Ethical Suicide Studios*," he said.

"This child of yours – whichever one you decide to keep, Mr. Wehling," said Dr. Hitz. "He or she is going to live on a happy, roomy, clean, rich planet, thanks to population control. In a garden like that mural there." He shook his head. "Two centuries ago, when I was a young man, it was a hell that nobody

thought could last another twenty years. Now centuries of peace and plenty stretch before us as far as the imagination cares to travel.”

He smiled luminously. The smile faded as he saw that Wehling had just drawn a revolver. Wehling shot Dr. Hitz dead.

“There's room for one – a great big one,” he said. And then he shot Leora Duncan.

“It's only death,” he said to her as she fell. “There! Room for two.” And then he shot himself, making room for all three of his children. Nobody came running. Nobody, seemingly, heard the shots. The painter sat on the top of his stepladder, looking down reflectively on the sorry scene.

The painter pondered the mournful puzzle of life demanding to be born and, once born, demanding to be fruitful ... to multiply and to live as long as possible – to do all that on a very small planet that would have to last forever.

And then the painter decided he had had about enough of life in the Happy Garden of Life, too, and he came slowly down from the ladder. He took Wehling's pistol, really intending to shoot himself. But he didn't have the nerve.

And then he saw the telephone booth in the corner of the room. He went to it, dialed the well-remembered number: “2 B R O 2 B.” “Federal Bureau of Termination,” said the very warm voice of a hostess.

“How soon could I get an appointment?” he asked, speaking very carefully.

“We could probably fit you in late this afternoon, sir,” she said. “It might even be earlier, if we get a cancellation.”

“All right,” said the painter, “fit me in, if you please.” And he gave her his name, spelling it out.

“Thank you, sir,” said the hostess. “Your city thanks you; your country thanks you; your planet thanks you. But the deepest thanks of all is from future generations.” [19]

### Issues to think over

The two stories by Kurt Vonnegut portray the societies of the far future, namely the XXII and XXIII centuries. The structure and laws of these communities are described in a negative light. That is why the stories may be called dystopias.

The title of the story *2 B R O 2 B* denotes a telephone number of the Federal Bureau of Termination. Actually, it is a reference to Hamlet's monologue from William Shakespeare's famous tragedy. Such references to other literary works and historic events are called "intertextuality" and are abundant in Kurt Vonnegut's works and in the works of other postmodernist writers. In *2 B R O 2 B*, we find another literary reference: to Herbert Wells' novel "The Invisible Man". There are also allusions to the Bible and to the Greek myths: "omnipotent Zeus", "the colour of grapes on Judgement Day". Intertextuality helps to create the common awareness of the author and the reader about literary works and historic events, to emphasize their affiliation to the same generation, to share common interests.

The official name of the institution that helps volunteers die is Ethical Suicide Studios but nobody uses this name in every day conversations. Citizens prefer to use its fanciful sobriquets, such as "Happy Hooligan", "Cannery", "Good-by, Mother", "Easy-go", "Kiss-me-quick", "Why Worry?" and others. These sarcastic nicknames reflect people's attitude to death as an adventure, as an easy thing not worth worrying about. This attitude is created artificially, to inspire more volunteers to die. Even a room in the hospital is being redecorated as a memorial to a man who has volunteered to die. In the society where ageing and diseases have been conquered, the greatest problem is overpopulation. To solve this problem a special system was developed called the population control programme. It implies that a birth of a baby has legal consequences: its parents will have to find a volunteer to die. Thus humanity faces a hard moral choice: to live or to let others live, to live immortal careless life or to give birth to new generations and let them flourish.



#### **11.14. DONALD BARTHELME. *SOME OF US HAD BEEN THREATENING OUR FRIEND COLBY***

Some of us had been threatening our friend Colby for a long time, because of the way he had been behaving. And now he'd gone too far, so we decided to hang him. Colby argued that just because he had gone too far (he did not deny that he had gone too far) did not mean that he should be subjected to hanging. Going too far, he said, was something everybody did sometimes. We didn't pay much attention to this argument. We asked him what sort of music he would like played at the hanging. He said he'd think about it but it would take him a while to decide. I pointed out that we'd have to know soon, because Howard, who is a conductor, would have to hire and rehearse the musicians and he couldn't begin until he knew what the music was going to be. Colby said he'd always been fond of Ives's Fourth Symphony. Howard said that this was a "delaying tactic" and that everybody knew that the Ives was almost impossible to perform and would involve weeks of rehearsal, and that the size of the orchestra and chorus would put us way over the music budget. "Be reasonable," he said to Colby. Colby said he'd try to think of something a little less exacting.

Hugh was worried about the wording of the invitations. What if one of them fell into the hands of the authorities? Hanging Colby was doubtless against the law, and if the authorities learned in advance what the plan was they would very likely come in and try to mess everything up. I said that although hanging Colby was almost certainly against the law, we had a perfect moral right to do so because he was our friend, belonged to us in various important senses, and he had after all gone too far. We agreed that the invitations would be worded in such a way that the person invited could not know for sure what he was being invited to. We decided to refer to the event as 'An Event Involving Mr Colby Williams.' A handsome script was selected from a catalogue and we picked a cream-colored paper. Magnus said he'd see to having the invitations printed, and wondered whether we should serve

drinks. Colby said he thought drinks would be nice but was worried about the expense. We told him kindly that the expense didn't matter, that we were after all his dear friends and if a group of his dear friends couldn't get together and do the thing with a little bit of *éclat*, why, what was the world coming to? Colby asked if he would be able to have drinks, too, before the event. We said, "Certainly."

The next item of business was the gibbet. I said that although I thought the whole thing ought to be done really well and all, I also thought four hundred dollars for a gibbet, on top of the expense for the drinks, invitations, musicians, and everything, was a bit steep, and why didn't we just use a tree – a nice-looking oak, or something? I pointed out that since it was going to be a June hanging the trees would be in glorious leaf and that not only would a tree add a kind of 'natural' feeling but it was also strictly traditional, especially in the West. Tomás, who had been sketching gibbets on the backs of envelopes, reminded us that an outdoor hanging always had to contend with the threat of rain. Victor said he liked the idea of doing it outdoors, possibly on the bank of a river, but noted that we would have to hold it some distance from the city, which presented the problem of getting the guests, musicians, etc., to the site and then back to town.

At this point everybody looked at Harry, who runs a car-and-truck-rental business. Harry said he thought he could round up enough limousines to take care of that end but that the drivers would have to be paid. The drivers, he pointed out, wouldn't be friends of Colby's and couldn't be expected to donate their services, any more than the bartender or the musicians. He said that he had about ten limousines, which he used mostly for funerals, and that he could probably obtain another dozen by calling around to friends of his in the trade. He said also that if we did it outside, in the open air, we'd better figure on a tent or awning of some kind to cover at least the principals and the orchestra, because if the hanging was being rained on he thought it would look kind of dismal. As between gibbet and

tree, he said, he had no particular preferences and he really thought that the choice ought to be left up to Colby, since it was his hanging. Colby said that everybody went too far, sometimes, and weren't we being a little Draconian? Howard said rather sharply that all that had already been discussed, and which did he want, gibbet or tree? Colby asked if he could have a firing squad. No, Howard said, he could not. Howard said a firing squad would just be an ego trip for Colby, the blindfold and last-cigarette bit, and that Colby was in enough hot water already without trying to "upstage" everyone with unnecessary theatrics. Colby said he was sorry, he hadn't meant it that way, he'd take the tree. Tomás crumpled up the gibbet sketches he'd been making, in disgust.

Then the question of the hangman came up. Pete said did we really need a hangman? Because if we used a tree, the noose could be adjusted to the appropriate level and Colby could just jump off something – a chair or stool or something. Besides, Pete said, he very much doubted if there were any free-lance hangmen wandering around the country, now that capital punishment has been done away with absolutely, temporarily, and that we'd probably have to fly one in from England or Spain or one of the South American countries, and even if we did that how could we know in advance that the man was a professional, a real hangman, and not just some money-hungry amateur who might bungle the job and shame us all, in front of everybody? We all agreed then that Colby should just jump off something and that a chair was not what he should jump off of, because that would look, we felt, extremely tacky – some old kitchen chair sitting out there under our beautiful tree. Tomás, who is quite modern in outlook and not afraid of innovation, proposed that Colby be standing on a large round rubber ball ten feet in diameter. This, he said, would afford a sufficient 'drop' and would also roll out of the way if Colby suddenly changed his mind after jumping off. He reminded us that by not using a regular hangman we were placing an awful lot of the responsibility for the success of the affair on Colby himself, and that

although he was sure Colby would perform creditably and not disgrace his friends at the last minute, still, men have been known to get a little irresolute at times like that, and the ten-foot-round rubber ball, which could probably be fabricated rather cheaply, would insure a ‘bang-up’ production right down to the wire.

At the mention of “wire,” Hank, who had been silent all this time, suddenly spoke up and said he wondered if it wouldn’t be better if we used wire instead of rope – more efficient and in the end kinder to Colby, he suggested. Colby began looking a little green, and I didn’t blame him, because there is something extremely distasteful in thinking about being hanged with wire instead of rope – it gives you a sort of a revulsion, when you think about it. I thought it was really quite unpleasant of Hank to be sitting there talking about wire, just when we had solved the problem of what Colby was going to jump off of so neatly, with Tomás’s idea about the rubber ball, so I hastily said that wire was out of the question, because it would injure the tree – cut into the branch it was tied to when Colby’s full weight hit it – and that in these days of increased respect for the environment, we didn’t want that, did we? Colby gave me a grateful look, and the meeting broke up.

Everything went off very smoothly on the day of the event (the music Colby finally picked was standard stuff, Elgar, and it was played very well by Howard and his boys). It didn’t rain, the event was well attended, and we didn’t run out of Scotch, or anything. The ten-foot rubber ball had been painted a deep green and blended in well with the bucolic setting. The two things I remember best about the whole episode are the grateful look Colby gave me when I said what I said about the wire, and the fact that nobody has ever gone too far again. [42]

#### Issues to think over

1. Pick out examples of black humour which are associated with things incompatible with the dramatic event of hanging.

2. What other absurdities does the reader come across in the story?
3. How do the friends affirm their right to kill Colby though they know that capital punishment is mostly a taboo and requires a public due process they have not given him?
4. What is the story's only display of empathy?
5. Is the story's ultimate message humane? What is it?
6. Does the story tackle the relations between an individual and society? Are they harmonious?
7. Does the story mock at public ceremonies and performances? How do lengthy discussions, technicalities of hanging and the many arguments, the friends came up with, characterize society? What is society's worst evil.

**11.15. ARTHUR MILLER. *DEATH OF A SALESMAN* (EXTRACT)**

[Light has risen on the boys' room. Unseen, Willy is heard talking to himself, "Eighty thousand miles," and a little laugh. Biff gets out of bed, comes downstage a bit, and stands attentively. Biff is two years older than his brother, Happy, well built, but in these days bears a worn air and seems less self-assured. He has succeeded less, and his dreams are stronger and less acceptable than Happy's. Happy is tall, powerfully made. Sexuality is like a visible color on him, or a scent that many women have discovered. He, like his brother, is lost, but in a different way, for he has never allowed himself to turn his face toward defeat and is thus more confused and hard-skinned, although seemingly more content.]

Happy [getting out of bed]: He's going to get his licence taken away if he keeps that up. I'm getting nervous about him, y'know, Biff?

Biff: His eyes are going.

Happy: No, I've driven with him. He sees all right. He just doesn't keep his mind on it. I drove into the city with him last week. He stops at a green light and then it turns red and he goes. [He laughs.]

Biff: Maybe he's color-blind.

Happy: Pop? Why, he's got the finest eye for color in the business. You know that.

Biff [sitting down on his bed]: I'm going to sleep.

Happy: You're not still sour on Dad, are you, Biff?

Biff: He's all right, I guess.

Willy [underneath them, in the living-room]: Yes, sir, eighty thousand miles – eighty-two thousand!

Biff: You smoking?

Happy [holding out a pack of cigarettes]: Want one?

Biff [taking a cigarette]: I can never sleep when I smell it.

Willy: What a simonizing job, heh!

Happy [with deep sentiment]: Funny, Biff, y'know? Us sleeping in here again? The old beds. [He pats his bed affectionately.] All the talk that went across those two beds, huh? Our whole lives.

Biff: Yeah. Lotta dreams and plans.

Happy [with a deep and masculine laugh]: About five hundred women would like to know what was said in this room.

[They share a soft laugh.]

Biff: Remember that big Betsy something – what the hell was her name – over on Bushwick Avenue?

Happy [combing his hair]: With the collie dog!

Biff: That's the one. I got you in there, remember?

Happy: Yeah, that was my first time – I think. Boy, there was a pig! [They laugh, almost crudely.] You taught me everything I know about women. Don't forget that.

Biff: I bet you forgot how bashful you used to be. Especially with girls.

Happy: Oh, I still am, Biff.

Biff: Oh, go on.

Happy: I just control it, that's all. I think I got less bashful and you got more so. What happened, Biff? Where's the old humor, the old confidence? [He shakes Biff's knee. Biff gets up and moves restlessly about the room.] What's the matter?

Biff: Why does Dad mock me all the time?

Happy: He's not mocking you, he –

Biff: Everything I say there's a twist of mockery on his face. I can't get near him.

Happy: He just wants you to make good, that's all. I wanted to talk to you about Dad for a long time, Biff. Something's – happening to him. He – talks to himself.

Biff: I noticed that this morning. But he always mumbled.

Happy: But not so noticeable. It got so embarrassing I sent him to Florida. And you know something? Most of the time he's talking to you.

Biff: What's he say about me?

Happy: I can't make it out.

Biff: What's he say about me?

Happy: I think the fact that you're not settled, that you're still kind of up in the air.

Biff: There's one or two other things depressing him, Happy.

Happy: What do you mean?

Biff: Never mind. Just don't lay it all to me.

Happy: But I think if you got started – I mean – is there any future for you out there?

Biff: I tell ya, Hap, I don't know what the future is. I don't know – what I'm supposed to want.

Happy: What do you mean?

Biff: Well, I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk, salesman, business of one kind or another. And it's a measly manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in summer. To devote your whole life to keeping stock, or making phone calls, or selling or buying. To suffer fifty weeks of the year for the sake of a two-week vacation, when all you really desire is to be outdoors, with your shirt off. And always to have to get ahead of the next fella. And still – that's how you build a future.

Happy: Well, you really enjoy it on a farm? Are you content out there?

Biff [with rising agitation]: Hap, I've had twenty or thirty different kinds of job since I left home before the war, and it always turns out the same. I just realized it lately. In Nebraska when I herded cattle, and the Dakotas, and Arizona, and now in Texas. It's why I came home now, I guess, because I realized it. This farm I work on, it's spring there now, see? And they've got about fifteen new colts. There's nothing more inspiring or – beautiful than the sight of a mare and a new colt. And it's cool there now, see? Texas is cool now, and it's spring. And whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the feeling, my God, I'm not gettin' anywhere! What the hell am I doing, playing around with horses, twenty-eight dollars a week! I'm thirty-four years old, I oughta be makin' my future. That's when I come running home. And now, I get here, and I don't know what to do with myself. [After a pause] I've always made a point of not wasting my life, and every time I come back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life.

Happy: You're a poet, you know that, Biff? You're a – you're an idealist!

Biff: No, I'm mixed up very bad. Maybe I oughta get married. Maybe I oughta get stuck into something. Maybe that's my trouble. I'm like a boy. I'm not married, I'm not in business, I just – I'm like a boy. Are you content, Hap? You're a success, aren't you? Are you content?

Happy: Hell, no! [43]



### Issues to think over

1. What is the mood of the brothers' talk? Are they happy and settled in life as they return back to the family nest? Give examples from the extract to justify your opinion. Do the brothers have a common ground and get on well with each other? What are their relations with the father?

2. What middle-class anxieties does the author centre on in the extract? What are the predominant themes? What are the joys and the disappointments of the brothers?

3. How does the author emphasize the hollow values of material success?

4. What features of colloquial informal English have you noticed? (grammar, idioms, contractions, syntactic structures etc.)

5. What are the features of the male conversation in the dialogue?

6. Comment on the following idea: "I've always made a point of not wasting my life, and every time I come back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life."

7. Would you describe *Death of a Salesman* as social criticism, a tragedy, or simply a psychological study? Justify your point of view relying on the text.

### **11.16. JACK LONDON. *MARTIN EDEN* (extract)**

#### **CHAPTER 1**

And then he turned and saw the girl. The phantasmagoria of his brain vanished at sight of her. She was a pale, ethereal creature, with wide, spiritual blue eyes and a wealth of golden hair. He did not know how she was dressed, except that the dress was as wonderful as she. He likened her to a pale gold flower upon a slender stem. No, she was a spirit, a divinity, a goddess; such sublimated beauty was not of the earth. Or perhaps the books were right, and

there were many such as she in the upper walks of life. She might well be sung by that chap, Swinburne. Perhaps he had had somebody like her in mind when he painted that girl, Iseult, in the book there on the table. All this plethora of sight, and feeling, and thought occurred on the instant. There was no pause of the realities wherein he moved. He saw her hand coming out to his, and she looked him straight in the eyes as she shook hands, frankly, like a man. The women he had known did not shake hands that way. For that matter, most of them did not shake hands at all. A flood of associations, visions of various ways he had made the acquaintance of women, rushed into his mind and threatened to swamp it. But he shook them aside and looked at her. Never had he seen such a woman. The women he had known! Immediately, beside her, on either hand, ranged the women he had known. For an eternal second he stood in the midst of a portrait gallery, wherein she occupied the central place, while about her were limned many women, all to be weighed and measured by a fleeting glance, herself the unit of weight and measure. He saw the weak and sickly faces of the girls of the factories, and the simpering, boisterous girls from the south of Market. There were women of the cattle camps, and swarthy cigarette-smoking women of Old Mexico. These, in turn, were crowded out by Japanese women, doll-like, stepping mincingly on wooden clogs; by Eurasians, delicate featured, stamped with degeneracy; by full-bodied South-Sea-Island women, flower-crowned and brown-skinned. All these were blotted out by a grotesque and terrible nightmare brood-frowsy, shuffling creatures from the pavements of Whitechapel, gin-bloated hags of the stews, and all the vast hell's following of harpies, vile-mouthed and filthy, that under the guise of monstrous female form prey upon sailors, the scrapings of the ports, the scum and slime of the human pit.

“Won't you sit down, Mr. Eden?” the girl was saying. “I have been looking forward to meeting you ever since Arthur told us. It was brave of you –” He waved his hand deprecatingly and muttered that it was nothing at all, what he had done, and that any fellow would have done it. She noticed that

the hand he waved was covered with fresh abrasions, in the process of healing, and a glance at the other loose-hanging hand showed it to be in the same condition. Also, with quick, critical eye, she noted a scar on his cheek, another that peeped out from under the hair of the forehead, and a third that ran down and disappeared under the starched collar. She repressed a smile at sight of the red line that marked the chafe of the collar against the bronzed neck. He was evidently unused to stiff collars. Likewise her feminine eye took in the clothes he wore, the cheap and unaesthetic cut, the wrinkling of the coat across the shoulders, and the series of wrinkles in the sleeves that advertised bulging biceps muscles. [44]

#### Issues to think over

1. It is common knowledge that Jack London was a versatile writer combining romanticism with realism in his works. Knowing these styles intertwining in London's books, which of the two styles prevails in Martin's vision of his new acquaintance, Ruth, and in Ruth's impression of the uncouth young gentleman, her unexpected guest? How does it characterize both of them?

2. The linguistic features of romanticism are the use of artistic plural of nouns. Stylistically it is marked by the presence of ostentatious metaphors and exquisite similes. It can also be traced through exaggerations. Can you find similar examples in the description of Martin's reflections?

3. Romanticism implies the use of the exotic. Can this be observed in Martin Eden's picture of the world?

4. Which style predominates in the description of other girls that Martin used to meet before? Give examples. Are epithets important to make this description meticulously detailed?

5. Can we feel social issues brought about in this extract from the novel? Supply examples and comment on their nature.

## 11.17. JACK LONDON. *THE CALL OF THE WILD* (extract)

### CHAPTER 5

It was beautiful spring weather, but neither dogs nor humans were aware of it. <> From every hill slope came the trickle of running water, the music of unseen fountains. All things were thawing, bending, snapping. The Yukon was straining to break loose the ice that bound it down. It ate away from beneath; the sun ate from above. Air-holes formed, fissures sprang and spread apart, while thin sections of ice fell through bodily into the river. And amid all this bursting, rending, throbbing of awakening life, under the blazing sun and through the soft-sighing breezes, like wayfarers to death, staggered the two men, the woman, and the huskies.

With the dogs falling, Mercedes weeping and riding, Hal swearing innocuously, and Charles's eyes wistfully watering, they staggered into John Thornton's camp at the mouth of White River. When they halted, the dogs dropped down as though they had all been struck dead. Mercedes dried her eyes and looked at John Thornton. Charles sat down on a log to rest. He sat down very slowly and painstakingly what of his great stiffness. Hal did the talking. John Thornton was whittling the last touches on an axe-handle he had made from a stick of birch. He whittled and listened, gave monosyllabic replies, and, when it was asked, terse advice. He knew the breed, and he gave his advice in the certainty that it would not be followed.

"They told us up above that the bottom was dropping out of the trail and that the best thing for us to do was to lay over," Hal said in response to Thornton's warning to take no more chances on the rotten ice. "They told us we couldn't make White River, and here we are." This last with a sneering ring of triumph in it.

"And they told you true," John Thornton answered. "The bottom's likely to drop out at any moment. Only fools, with the blind luck of fools, could have

made it. I tell you straight, I wouldn't risk my carcass on that ice for all the gold in Alaska.”

“That's because you're not a fool, I suppose,” said Hal. “All the same, we'll go on to Dawson.” He uncoiled his whip. “Get up there, Buck! Hi! Get up there! Mush on!”

Thornton went on whittling. It was idle, he knew, to get between a fool and his folly; while two or three fools more or less would not alter the scheme of things.

But the team did not get up at the command. It had long since passed into the stage where blows were required to rouse it. The whip flashed out, here and there, on its merciless errands. John Thornton compressed his lips. Solleks was the first to crawl to his feet. Teek followed. Joe came next, yelping with pain. Pike made painful efforts. Twice he fell over, when half up, and on the third attempt managed to rise. Buck made no effort. He lay quietly where he had fallen. The lash bit into him again and again, but he neither whined nor struggled. Several times Thornton started, as though to speak, but changed his mind. A moisture came into his eyes, and, as the whipping continued, he arose and walked irresolutely up and down.

This was the first time Buck had failed, in itself a sufficient reason to drive Hal into a rage. He exchanged the whip for the customary club. Buck refused to move under the rain of heavier blows which now fell upon him. Like his mates, he barely able to get up, but, unlike them, he had made up his mind not to get up. He had a vague feeling of impending doom. [45]

#### Issues to think over

1. Following the principles underpinning romanticism, Jack London personifies nature endowing it with extraordinary power. This can be a case of personification. Can you provide such examples from the extract?

2. Aspiring to help the reader experience the real atmosphere of spring nature, Jack London uses words that imitate its true sounds. This can be a case of onomatopoeia. Can you find these examples in the text under discussion? Comment on them. What mood do they contribute to?

3. Why is the Yukon mentioned in the text? Which event from the history of America does it remind of? Does it shed a new light on the characters of the story?

3. Which stylistic device is used in the following lines of the story: "And amid all this bursting, rending, throbbing of awakening life, under the blazing sun and through the soft-sighing breezes, like wayfarers to death, staggered the two men, the woman, and the huskies." What are the function and the effect of this device?

4. Comment on the use of "-ing" forms in the extract. They have different functions in the description of nature and the presentation of the main characters, don't they?

5. The romantic hero is a literary archetype referring to a character that rejects established norms and conventions, has been rejected by society, and has themselves at the center of their own existence. The Romantic hero is often the protagonist in a literary work, and the primary focus is on the character's thoughts rather than their actions. Do we have such romantic hero in the text under discussion?

6. Comment on the contrasts in the story. Why are they necessary?

7. How is naturalism identified in the extract? What's the difference between realism and naturalism? How do short stark sentences, *e.g. John Thornton compressed his lips. Solleks was the first to crawl to his feet. Teek followed*, contribute to the naturalistic effect?

9. Can we trace Charles Darwin's theory according to which 'the fittest' survive' in the extract? Explain your point of view.

8. Pick out metaphors. Comment on them.

**11.18. ARTHUR HAILEY. *AIRPORT* (PART 1. 6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M. (CST))**

***CHAPTER 1***

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings.

From High Flight by John Gillespie Magee, Jr. (1922–1941), sometimes Flight Lieutenant, Royal Canadian Air Force.

At half past six on a Friday evening in January, Lincoln International Airport, Illinois, was functioning, though with difficulty.

The airport was reeling – as was the entire Midwestern United States – from the meanest, roughest winter storm in half a dozen years. The storm had lasted three days. Now, like pustules on a battered, weakened body, trouble spots were erupting steadily.

A United Air Lines food truck, loaded with two hundred dinners, was lost and presumably snowbound somewhere on the airport perimeter. A search for the truck – in driving snow and darkness – had so far failed to locate either the missing vehicle or its driver.

United's Flight 111 – a non-stop DC-8 for Los Angeles, which the food truck was to service – was already several hours behind schedule. The food snafu would make it later still. Similar delays, for varying reasons, were affecting at least a hundred flights of twenty other airlines using Lincoln International.

Out on the airfield, runway three zero was out of use, blocked by an Aereo-Mexican jet – a Boeing 707 – its wheels deeply mired in waterlogged ground beneath snow, near the runway's edge. Two hours of intensive effort had failed to get the big jet moved. Now, Aereo-Mexican, having exhausted its own local resources, had appealed to TWA for help.

Air Traffic Control, hampered by the loss of runway three zero, had instituted flow control procedures, limiting the volume of incoming traffic from

adjoining air route centers at Minneapolis, Cleveland, Kansas City, Indianapolis, and Denver. Despite this, twenty incoming flights were stacked up overhead, and orbiting, some nearing low fuel limits. On the ground, twice that number were readying for takeoff. But until the backlog of flights in the air could be reduced, ATC had ordered further delays of outbound traffic. Meanwhile, terminal gates, taxiways, and ground holding areas were increasingly crammed with waiting aircraft, many with engines running.

In the main passenger terminal, chaos predominated. Terminal waiting areas were jammed with thousands of passengers from delayed or canceled flights. Baggage, in piles, was everywhere. The vast main concourse had the combined appearance of a football scrimmage and Christmas Eve at Macy's.

High on the terminal roof, the airport's immodest slogan, LINCOLN INTERNATIONAL – AVIATION CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD, was entirely obscured by drifting snow.

The wonder was, Mel Bakersfeld reflected, that anything was continuing to operate at all.

Mel, airport general manager – lean, rangy, and a powerhouse of disciplined energy – was standing by the Snow Control Desk, high in the control tower. He peered out into the darkness. Normally, from this glass-walled room, the entire airport complex – runways, taxi strips, terminals, traffic of the ground and air – was visible like neatly aligned building blocks and models, even at night their shapes and movements well defined by lights. Only one loftier view existed – that of Air Traffic Control which occupied the two floors above. [46]

#### Issues to think over

1. What is the importance of the preface to the extract? What mood does it create?
2. How is the main character, Mel Bakersfeld, introduced? He comes across as a captain of the ship. How is this effect produced? Which qualities



are emphasized, appearance or character? To judge by the description of the airport through his eyes, what kind of manager is he? Explain your point of view.

3. *Airport* is an industrial novel. What terms are used to introduce the reader into the technicalities of the airport operation?

4. Are there examples of represented speech in the extract? What's their role? Whose perspective does this part present?

5. What is the function of geographical names in the extract? Do they give an idea of the airport's importance for the region?

6. Comment on the language of the text under discussion. Which stylistic devices are used to picture the troubles that the airport had to face on that fateful day?

### ***Part 3. Chapter Seven***

For a moment or two Inez wondered hopefully if she had made a mistake in presuming that D. O. was leaving on the flight; the idea of her husband's going to Rome at all still seemed fantastic. Then the agent said, yes, there was a D. O. Guerrero aboard Flight Two, and he, the agent, was sorry that Mrs. Guerrero had missed seeing her husband, but everything was in a mixup tonight because of the storm, and now if she would please excuse him...

It was when the agent had gone and Inez realized that despite the press of people around her in the terminal, she was utterly alone, that she began to cry.

At first the tears came slowly; then, as she remembered all that had gone wrong, they streamed in great heaving sobs which shook her body. She cried for the past and for the present; for the home she had had and lost; for her children whom she could no longer keep with her; for D. O. who, despite his faults as a husband, and the failure to support his family, was at least familiar, but now had deserted her. She wept for what she herself had been and had

become; for the fact that she had no money, nowhere to go but to the mean, cockroach-infested rooms downtown, from which she would be evicted tomorrow, having nothing left – after the taxi ride and driver's theft – from the pathetically small amount with which she had hoped to stave off the landlord... she was not even sure if she had enough small change to return downtown. She cried because her shoes still hurt her feet; for her clothes which were shabby and sodden; for her weariness, and because she had a cold and a fever which she could feel getting worse. She cried for herself and all others for whom every hope was gone.

It was then, to avoid stares of people who were watching, that she began walking aimlessly through the terminal, still weeping as she went. Somewhere near that time, too, the defensive machinery of her mind took over, inducing a protective numbness, so that her sorrow persisted but its reasons, for a while, were mercifully blurred.

Soon after, an airport policeman found her and, with a sensitivity for which police are not always credited, placed her in as obscure a corner as he could find while telephoning his superiors for instructions. Lieutenant Ordway happened to be nearby and dealt with the matter personally. It was he who decided that Inez Guerrero, though incoherent and upset, was harmless, and had ordered her taken to the airport general manager's office – the only place Ned Ordway could think of which was quiet, yet less intimidating than police headquarters.

Inez had gone docilely, in an elevator and along a mezzanine, only half-knowing that she was being taken anywhere at all, and not caring; and after, had sat quietly in a seat she was guided to, her body, if not her mind, grateful for the rest. She had been aware of people coming and going, and some had spoken, but she had brought neither the sight nor sound of them into focus, the effort seeming too much. [46]

### Issues to think over

1. What was Mrs. Guerrero's state of mind when she arrived at the airport to stop her husband in his terrible and bloody mistake? Is Arthur Hailey a good psychologist describing it? What is the role of synonyms in creating the personal drama of Mrs. Guerrero? How do repetitions contribute to the tension and the drama of the moment? What is the function of the passive voice in rendering Mrs. Guerrero's psychological condition ( Inez had gone docilely, in an elevator and along a mezzanine, only half-knowing that she was being taken anywhere at all, and not caring; and after, had sat quietly in a seat she was guided to, her body, if not her mind, grateful for the rest.)? Is it also a psychological novel?

2. What social and family problems does the extract touch upon?

3. Are the airport personnel efficient in dealing with people and their troubles? Prove it with extracts from the text.

4. What stylistic devices create the atmosphere of the text? Pick them out and comment on them.

5. Whose perspective is this part written from? Is the narration objective then? What is the role of the author?

### **11.19. RAY BRADBURY. *HERE THERE BE TYGERS***

#### **Extract 1**

"You have to beat a planet at its own game," said Chatterton. "Get in, rip it up, poison its animals, dam its rivers, sow its fields, depollinate its air, mine it, nail it down, hack away at it, and get the hell out from under when you have what you want. Otherwise, a planet will fix you good. You can't trust planets. They're bound to be different, bound to be bad, bound to be out to get you, especially this far off, a billion miles from nowhere, so you get them first. Tear

their skin off, I say. Drag out the minerals and run away before the damn world explodes in your face. That's the way to treat them."

The rocket ship sank down towards planet 7 of star system 84. They had travelled millions upon millions of miles. Earth was far away, her system and her sun forgotten, her system settled and investigated and profited on, and other systems rummaged through and milked and tidied up, and now the rockets of these tiny men from an impossibly remote planet were probing out to far universes. In a few months, a few years, they could travel anywhere, for the speed of their rocket was the speed of a god, and now for the ten thousandth time one of the rockets of the far-circling hunt was feathering down towards an alien world.

"No," said Captain Forester. "I have too much respect for other worlds to treat them the way you want to, Chatterton. It's not my business to rape or ruin, anyway, thank God. I'm glad I'm just a rocket man. You're the anthropologist-mineralogist. Go ahead, do your mining and ripping and scraping. I'll just watch. I'll just go around looking at this new world, whatever it is, however it seems. I like to look. All rocket men are lookers or they wouldn't be rocket men. You like to smell new airs, if you're a rocket man, and see new colours and new people if there are new people to see, and new oceans and islands."

"Take your gun along," said Chatterton. "In my holster," said Forester. They turned to the port together and saw the green world rising to meet their ship. "I wonder what it thinks of us?" said Forester.

"It won't like me," said Chatterton. "By God, I'll see to it it won't like me. And I don't care, you know. I don't give a damn. I'm out for the money. Land us over there, will you, Captain; that looks like iron country if I ever saw it." It was the freshest green colour they had seen since childhood.

Lakes lay like clear blue water droplets through the soft hills; there were no loud highways, signboards, or cities. It's a sea of green golf-links, thought Forester, which goes on for ever. Putting greens, driving greens, you could walk ten thousand miles in any direction and never finish your game. A Sunday

planet, a croquet-lawn world, where you could lie on your back, clover in your lips, eyes half-shut, smiling at the sky, smelling the grass, drowse through an eternal Sabbath, rousing only on occasion to turn the Sunday paper or crack the red-striped wooden ball through the hoop.

“If ever a planet was a woman, this one is.”

“Woman on the outside, man on the inside,” said Chatterton. “All hard underneath, all male iron, copper, uranium, black sod. Don't let the cosmetics fool you.”

He walked to the bin where the Earth Drill waited. Its great screw-snout glittered bluely, ready to stab seventy feet deep and suck out corks of earth, deeper still with extensions into the heart of the planet. Chatterton winked at it. “We'll fix your w”

“Yes, I know you will,” said Forester, quietly.

### ***Extract 2***

A soft wind blew over them.

“I don't want to leave now.” Driscoll put his hands behind his head, lying quietly. “And it doesn't want us to leave.”

“If we go back to Earth and tell everyone what a lovely planet it is, what then, Captain? They'll come smashing in here and ruin it.”

“No,” said Forester, idly. “First, this planet wouldn't put up with a full-scale invasion. I don't know what it'd do, but it could probably think of some interesting things. Secondly, I like this planet too much; I respect it. We'll go back to Earth and lie about it. Say it's hostile. Which it would be to the average man, like Chatterton, jumping in here to hurt it. I guess we won't be lying after all.”

### ***Extract 3***

They stared at the soft hills and the trees and the river running off to other horizons.

“Let's get aboard ship,” said Forester, with difficulty.

“Captain...”

“Get aboard,” he said.

The rocket rose into the sky. Looking back, Forester saw every valley and every tiny lake.

“We should've stayed,” said Koestler. “Yes, I know.”

“It's not too late to turn back.” “I'm afraid it is.” Forester made an adjustment on the port telescope. “Look now.” Koestler looked.

The face of the world was changed. Tigers, dinosaurs, mammoths appeared. Volcanoes erupted, cyclones and hurricanes tore over the hills in a welter and fury of weather.

“Yes, she was a woman all right,” said Forester. “Waiting for visitors for millions of years, preparing herself, making herself beautiful. She put on her best face for us. When Chatterton treated her badly, she warned him a few times, and then, when he tried to ruin her beauty, she eliminated him. She wanted to be loved, like every woman, for herself, not for her wealth. So now, after she had offered us everything, we turn our backs. She's the woman scorned. She let us go, yes, but we can never come back. She'll be waiting for us with those...” He nodded to the tigers and the cyclones and the boiling seas. “Captain,” said Koestler. “Yes.” [47]

#### Issues to think over

1. As the name of Ray Bradbury is associated with the genre of science fiction, first and foremost, what are the features of this genre in the extracts from the story *Here There Be Tygers*?

2. What are the two philosophies of treating a planet delineated in the story judging by the fragments? Which characters represent them? Read pieces from the story revealing these two philosophies. Which part of speech characterizes Chatterton's philosophy? Which part of speech shows Forester's vision?

3. How did the residents of the Earth treat their planet as it is described in the story? Do they transfer their practice to other planets? What is Ray Bradbury's attitude to such treatment even though it is not stated directly?

4. Would you lie to the authorities back on Earth as Forester planned to do it about the new planet being hostile or would you tell the truth about its beauty?

5. Which metaphors and similes allow the reader to imagine the beauty of the new planet? Can we find impressionistic technique in this description which relies on the use of colours, different sensorial spheres, continuous changing processes expressed through '-ing' forms?

6. Comment on the central extended metaphor of the story which makes the new planet woman-like. Do we find the contrast of male and female approach to nature and the world around?

7. Can we say that the story is a fine example of romanticism which can be traced through the use of plural forms and exaggerations? Give examples from the text under discussion.

8. What is the moral of the story? Can we call it a parable? Can the story be part of environmental discourse that focuses on the issues connected with nature and our treatment of it? [48; 49]

## PART XII. TASKS FOR SEMINARS

### 12.1. QUESTIONS FOR ORAL SURVEY

#### Seminar 1

1. What periods is American literature traditionally classified into? Name the main representatives of each period and approximate dates. Speak on the Indian contribution to American literature including the words that Native Americans gave to the English language. What was the Indians' attitude to Nature and land ownership? What did the writings of the colonial period record? Why did religion play an important role in American colonial culture? What belief did the Puritans express in their writings? Dwell upon the cultural features of Puritan writings. Name the most famous literary works and writers of the colonial period.

2. Describe the historical background of the Enlightenment in American literature. What were the main literary genres during this period? Name the most notable writers of that time. What is their literary heritage? What facts from their biographies are important for understanding their works? Why is B. Franklin called a "self-made man"? What did Franklin write about in his "Autobiography"? Do you agree with these ways of self-improvement? Do you try to follow any of these rules?

3. Speak on Thomas Jefferson's political career and contribution to American literature.

4. Why and when did Romanticism appear in American literature? What were its roots, features and historical background? Dwell upon Washington Irving's life and major literary works. Sum up the plots of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle".



5. What are the characteristics of Gothic Horror literature? What is known about Edgar Allan Poe's life? Why did he have an unhappy childhood? Name his most famous detective and horror stories. Sum up the plots of one detective and one horror story. What are the reoccurring themes of his works?

6. What novel is James Fenimore Cooper best remembered for now? How is the setting of his novels connected with his life? Who is Natty Bumppo? When and where does the action of the pentalogy take place? Sum up the plot of all the five novels. What is Cooper's main contribution to American literature?

7. What is Transcendentalism? Who embodied its principles in American literature? Describe the essence of transcendentalism and R.W. Emerson's transcendental views on life. What is his best work called and what is its main idea? What is known about Henry David Thoreau's life and education? What literary work is considered Thoreau's masterpiece? Where did he take the material for it? Describe his political views and his opinion about the effect of civilization on nature.

8. How did Nathaniel Hawthorne's ancestors influence his literary work (the choice of themes and the change of his surname)? Sum up the plot of "The Scarlet Letter", describe the main characters. What are the major themes discussed in the novel?

9. How is Herman Melville's personal experience of working at sea reflected in his writings? Name some of his first novels. Why did Melville's popularity drop after the publication of "Moby Dick"? What does Melville's novel "Moby Dick" focus on? What are the unique features of its composition? Can humans understand nature, according to Herman Melville? What are the major themes discussed in the novel?

10. Describe the historical background of abolitionism in American literature. Speak on Harriet Beecher Stowe's life and literary heritage. Sum up the plot of "Uncle Tom's Cabin". What are the major themes of the novel and the peculiarities of the style?

11. What are the main works of Henry Wordsworth Longfellow? Sum up the plot of “The song of Hiawatha”. How is Hiawatha depicted? What is the literary and historical significance of “The song of Hiawatha”?

12. What kind of poetry did Walt Whitman write? What is the title of his most famous collection of poems and what is it notable for? Why is “Song of Myself” considered to be the most original poem ever written by an American? What are the major characteristics of Romanticism as a literary trend in American literature?

## **Seminar 2**

1. What are the causes, the historical background and the features of Realism?

2. What themes did Henry James explore? What are the elements of his psychological realism? What periods is his literary career divided into and what are his major works? Sum up the plot of “The Portrait of a Lady”.

3. What is the origin of Samuel Clemens’ pen name? What peculiarities of Twain’s style single him out of other writers of his time? Sum up the plot of “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”. What literary movement does Mark Twain belong to? What features of his works make him similar to local colour writers? What elements look like the romantic influence on his works?

4. Who are the main representatives of Regionalism in American literature? Name the major features of local color writings (setting, characters, plot, narrator, themes). What works is Bret Harte best remembered for? What is the story “The Luck of the roaring camp” about? How did he depict “low-life people” and derelicts?

5. Speak on Naturalism as a literary movement. Who is its founder? What method did naturalist writers use? Name the major representatives of American Naturalism and their major works. What characteristics distinguish naturalism from other realistic sub trends? What are the major themes of Naturalist works? What is known about Stephen Crane’s life and literary

career? What marks his novel "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets" as one of the best naturalistic works? Dwell upon the plot of this novel.

6. How did the first collection of Jack London's stories change his life? What are J. London's best-selling novels called? Speak about his life and literary career. Dwell upon the plot and the main themes of "Martin Eden".

7. How do Theodore Dreiser's novels depict life? What was Dreiser's debut as a novelist? What is this novel about? What themes does "An American Tragedy" explore? Point out the manner in which the story of the crime is narrated in "An American Tragedy". What makes this story similar to the real police investigation?

8. What factors caused the appearance of muckraking journalism and muckraking novels? What are their special techniques? Name the most famous muckraking novels. Sum up the plot of one of them.

9. What is the origin of the term "The Lost Generation"? What does this term imply and include? What writers does this term embrace? How does F.S. Fitzgerald's life resemble a fairy tale? Speak on his biography and literary career. What spirit did F.S. Fitzgerald capture in his novel "The Great Gatsby"? How is the self-made man Gatsby portrayed? Sum up the plot.

10. What do you think were the most important events in E. Hemingway's life? How did his parents influence his career? When did he move to Paris? Who did he meet there? How did war play an important part in his life and career? How many times was he married? What is his main literary award? Describe his final years and his major works. What is the essence of "the theory of iceberg"? Emphasize its main points. Where does the origin of Hemingway's peculiar style lie (think of his biography)?

11. Enumerate the best of W. Faulkner's novels, the peculiarities of his style and narration. What themes did he explore and what area of the USA did he describe in his novels? Sum up the plot of "The Sound and the Fury".

12. What effect did John Dos Passos achieve in his works? What new experimental techniques did he develop in his trilogy “The USA”? Sum up the plot of one of the novels of the trilogy.

### **Seminar 3**

1. Give a definition of modernism as a cultural and literary movement. Emphasize the features of modernism that distinguish it thematically and historically. What were the causes of modernism in American literature? What were the writers and artists inspired by in developing new technique?

2. Point out the most important facts in Gertrude Stein’s biography? What did she study at Radcliffe College? How did her college experiments influence her writing style? What makes the period of her life from 1903 to 1914 significant for the world art? What is her worldwide reputation based on? What were the meaning and sense subordinate to in Gertrude Stein’s writings? What does “The Making of Americans” focus on? What is it devoid if?

3. What word does Sinclair Lewis’s novel “Babbitt” (1922) add to the American language? What does it mean? Why? What does Sinclair Lewis criticize in his novel? Sum up the plot of “Babbitt” and say a few words about Sinclair Lewis’s life.

4. Define postmodernism as a cultural and literary movement. Dwell upon the historical background and causes of postmodernism. Name the most prominent representatives of postmodernism in American literature. What are the features of postmodernism?

5. How do black humour writers treat and present the material? Who do black humorists include? What feelings and senses are their works characterized by? What are the typical subjects and the main tools of black humor narratives? What are the causes and the historical context of black humour in American literature?

6. Make a list of the most prominent American black humour authors and their major works. What are the main characteristics and tools of such works? Why did the audience respond favourably to such works?

7. Dwell upon the plot and structure of Joseph Heller's most famous novel "Catch-22". Make character sketches.

8. What events influenced Joseph Heller's life and literary career? Speak about the artistic features of Joseph Heller's novel "Catch-22".

9. What black humour techniques does Kurt Vonnegut use in his novel "Slaughterhouse-Five"? Sum up the plot of the novel.

10. What peculiarities of style is Kurt Vonnegut mostly known for? What do you know about his life and literary career? What are his major works? What autobiographical elements can we trace in his works? What features of his works make Kurt Vonnegut a postmodern writer? Sum up the plot of his novel "Cat's Cradle".

11. Dwell upon Thomas Pynchon's life and literary career. What world does Thomas Pynchon "paint"? Name his major works. What are the evident characteristics of the structure and style of his novels? Sum up the plot of one of them.

12. Describe John Updike's biography, main writings and innovations in style. What role does mythology play in "Centaur"? Summarize the plot of this novel concerning its symbolism and allusions.

#### **Seminar 4**

1. What issues do novels of social awareness highlight? What themes does John Steinbeck explore in such novels? List John Steinbeck's most popular works? Dwell upon the plot of "Tortilla Flat". What gives regionalist flavor to Steinbeck's works? How are his books classified? Speak on John Steinbeck's biography and his series of "California novels". What is "Of Mice and men" about? Dwell upon its plot. What kind of literary work is it (its genre and style)? What themes does it encompass?

2. What is the historical context of the novel “Grapes of Wrath” by John Steinbeck? Sum up the plot of the novel. Describe the members of the Joads’ family. Why is the novel said to have a documentary value? What literary trend does the novel belong to?

3. Summarize the plot of Steinbeck’s last novel “The Winter of Our Discontent”. How is Steinbeck’s view on life reflected in his novels? What major issues does he highlight? Speak on his winning the Nobel Prize and his last years.

4. Characterize the symbols in “Grapes of Wrath”: the title, the dignity of wrath, the finale.

5. What does Robert Penn Warren’s novel “All the King’s Men” run about? What parallels can be drawn between fiction and reality? Why is the novel often defined as a historical fiction? (How does it involve history?) Render the plot of the novel.

6. Portray the main characters of Robert Penn Warren’s novel “All the King’s Men”. Why is it believed that Willie Stark embodied the passions of the crowd? What is the historical background of the novel? How is the opposition of Adam Stanton's and Willie Stark’s dogmatic attempts to change the world presented in the novel? What four major themes are highlighted in the novel?

7. Define the short story as a genre. Describe the development of the short story as a genre in American literature. Emphasize the differences between the sketch and the tale as the foundations out of which the modern short story grew. In what varieties does the modern short story evolve in the United States? Give examples of both kinds of short stories and point out their key features.

8. Give a brief summary of the development of the short story as a genre since the turn-of-the-centuries period to the present time. Make a list of the major authors and their most prominent stories. Sum up the plot of any story mentioned in your speech.

9. What are the roots of satirical tradition in American short stories? Speak about Mark Twain's life and literary career, the origin of his pen name. What are his major novels and short stories? What tools did Mark Twain use to convey his message? What are the main features of his works? Sum up the plot of one of his stories.

10. Speak on O. Henry's life and literary career. Sum up the plot of "The Gift of the Magi". What symbols does the author use to convey complex issues in a short fiction form? Name O. Henry's other famous stories.

11. What are the major themes and symbols of the story entitled "The Last Leaf"? Summarize the plot of the story. What are the main themes and the features of O. Henry's style?

12. Describe Dorothy Parker's childhood, literary career, personal life and political activities. List her best-known stories. What are the features of her individual author's style? Retell the plot of her most famous short story "Big Blond". What is the message of the story? What themes does it explore?

### **Seminar 5**

1. Dwell upon the most important facts about Ring Lardner's personal life and writing career. Name Ring Lardner's well-known stories and short story collections. What traditions of short-story writing can be traced in Ring Lardner's works? Sum up the plot of one of his short stories: "The Love Nest", "Haircut" or "Round-up". What are the features of his individual author's style?

2. Speak on William Saroyan's immigrant origin, Armenian roots in his works and peculiarities of his style. What kind of characters did he create? What problems did he raise in his works? What are his most famous works? Render the plot of "The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze" in brief.

3. Speak about Flannery O'Connor's life and literary career. What short stories is she famous for? What are peculiarities of her style? Sum up the plot of one of her stories.

4. Why is it often said that the development of drama lagged behind other literary genres in America? Emphasize the essential characteristics and techniques of expressionist drama. Why is Eugene O' Neill called the father of American drama? How was his life linked with the theatre? What is known about his life and major works? What autobiographical elements can be traced in his plays, such as "Desire under the Elms", "Long Day's Journey into Night"? Sum up the plot of one of them. Define the features of O' Neill's style.

5. What elements of the southern literary tradition are obvious in Tennessee Williams's work? What plays did he reach the peak with? What is unique about his characters and settings? Why is "The Glass Menagerie" called an autobiographical drama? What is it about? Sum up the plot of "A Streetcar Named Desire". Speak about Williams's last years.

6. Make a list of Arthur Miller's major works. What is "Death of a salesman" about? Retell the plot. Characterize the relationships in the Loman's family. Why does Willy Loman's American dream fail?

7. What are the causes and the historical context of black humour in American literature? Make a list of the most prominent American black humour authors and their major works. What are the main characteristics and tools of such works? Why did the audience respond favourably to such works?

8. Speak about the origin of the Utopian genre. What does the word "utopia" mean? Why did Utopias become so popular? Name some examples of this genre that followed the foundational text. What do you know about the life of Thomas More and the plot of his most famous literary work? Make use of the Internet to get the answers.

9. How is the dystopia different from the utopia? What are the functions of the dystopia? Name at least seven dystopian works by American and British authors. What is considered the first dystopian literary work?

10. Summarize the plot of Ray Bradbury's dystopia "Fahrenheit 451". Make character sketches and define the major themes of the novel.



11. Postmodernism was the cultural paradigm of the 1950–1970-es characterized by variety of interpretations, lack of a single concept. Speak about “Literature of exhaustion” and John Barth’s novel “Chimera”. How are these postmodern features manifested in the novel?

12. What are the National Peculiarities of American Literature determined by? Speak about the factors that influenced the development of national literature, such as: the nation infancy and colonization, multiculturalism and multiethnic structure of the population, existence of frontier and slavery, the evolution of the American Dream and Puritanism.

### **Seminar 6**

1. Henry Miller “Tropic of Cancer”, “Tropic of Capricorn”: modernist trends in the writer's work.

2. Books about the Second World War. Norman Mailer “The Naked and the Dead”.

3. 1940s–1950s: The Cold War, conformism and the formation of a consumer society. Beatnik Movement: J. Kerouac “On the Road”.

4. New trends in US literature of the second half of the XX century. Gardner J. “Autumn Light”.

5. Multiculturalism: an Ethnic component in US Literature. Literature of the native inhabitants of the continent – Scott Momaday “House Made of Dawn”.

6. Multiculturalism: an Ethnic component in US Literature. The theme of the search for one's national identity. Writers of Jewish origin. Isaac Bashevis Singer. Pessimism and humor in the novels “Shosha”, “Enemies, A Love Story.”

7. Multiculturalism: an Ethnic component in US Literature. The theme of the search for one's national identity. Writers of Jewish origin. Edgar Lawrence Doctorow. “Ragtime”.

8. Multiculturalism: an Ethnic component in US Literature. The theme of the search for one's national identity. Writers of Jewish origin. Bernard Malamud. "The Fixer", "God's Grace".

9. Multiculturalism: an Ethnic component in US Literature. The theme of the search for one's national identity. Writers of African-American descent. Toni Morrison. Postmodern features of the novels "Beloved" and "Song of Solomon".

10. Multiculturalism: an Ethnic component in US Literature. The theme of the search for one's national identity. Writers of African-American origin. Richard Wright "Native Son".

11. Multiculturalism: an Ethnic component in US Literature. The theme of the search for one's national identity. Writers of African-American origin. James Baldwin "Go Broadcast from the Mountain", "If Beale Street could talk".

12. Psychological prose by Joyce Carol Oates. Novels "The Garden of Earthly Joys", "Do with me what you want".

## **12.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A LITERARY DIARY**

While reading the works from the recommended list, fill in your literary diary. You are supposed to summarize the plot of the novel and include some quotations which will help you to express your own opinion. Define what literary movement the author belongs to and what features of the author's individual style are reflected in the work you have read. Express your opinion about the work.

Follow the plan:

1. A brief description of the movement to which the author belongs.
2. Peculiarities of the author's individual style.
3. An essential topic in his/her works.
4. Summary of the work.
5. Time and place of the action.

6. Compositional structure.
7. Main and secondary characters.
8. Central conflict.
9. Atmosphere. Themes.
10. The author's message.
11. Stylistic means.
12. Your impressions.

### **12.3. WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Describe the influence of the Puritan views and lifestyle on the literary works created on the North American continent (language, styles, genres, themes).

3. How is the philosophy of self-improvement reflected in the works of the writers of American Enlightenment?

4. Ph. Freneau's poem "The Wild Honey Suckle" depicts a life cycle of a flower. It's a metaphor. What does it symbolize?

5. What does the phrase "American Dream" imply? What period in American history does it originate from? Give examples from American literature illustrating how the American dream came true or failed.

6. What are the National Peculiarities of American Literature determined by? Justify by work titles.

### **12.4. TOPICS FOR THE ESSAY**

1. How do Kurt Vonnegut's novels and stories reflect his humanistic views? List Vonnegut's works which represent the author as a great pacifist and humanist. What black humour techniques does he use to express his judgement on the society and war? Justify your answer by the text quotations.

2. How do technological advances change people's life, according to Kurt Vonnegut's works? What message does the author send in his dystopias? Think of the novels and short stories. Prove by the text.

3. How is the complexity of moral choice described in the works of American postmodernist writers (Kurt Vonnegut, Ray Bradbury, Thomas Pynchon and others)? What is their attitude to technological and cultural progress?

4. What image of reality does "the black humour school" create? Name representatives of this school in American literature and analyze their works from the point of view of the period when they were written, the writer's message and themes.

5. What does the phrase "a melting pot" mean referring to American literature? Prove your opinion by literary sources, relate to definite names and works.

6. What literary movement does the short story "The Luck of the Roaring Camp" by Bret Harte belong to? Analyze this story from the point of view of the period when it was written, the literary movement to which it belongs, the writer's message and themes.

7. How does the novel "The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne question Puritan ideals and beliefs?

8. What features of Gothic literature can be identified in Edgar Allan Poe's works? Think of the settings, characters, plots. What does the author describe and explore in the novella "The Tell-Tale Heart"? What techniques does he use to focus on his main objective and to create a single unique effect? Justify your answer by the text quotations.

9. Analyze the suggested extract from "A Farewell to Arms" by E. Hemingway from the point of view of the period when it was written, the literary movement to which it belongs, the writer's message and themes. How does Ernest Hemingway describe the war and its effect on man in his novel? How does the description of nature contribute to creating the appropriate

atmosphere? What elements of his theory are evident in the extract you have read? Justify your answer by quoting the text.

10. Analyze the suggested extract from “The Great Gatsby” by F.S. Fitzgerald from the point of view of the period when it was written, the literary movement to which it belongs, the writer’s message and themes. Justify your answer by quoting the text.

11. Why does Henry James’ story “The Turn of the Screw” give rise to many interpretations? What technique does the author use to make it more ambiguous and to leave the reader guessing? Give examples based on the text.

12. How does the protagonist’s attitude to people change in Henry James’ story “The Turn of the Screw” after she loses self-confidence and feels her own situation crumble? How does the author gradually lead the reader to the discovery of the narrator’s unreliability? Prove your opinion by the text quotes.

13. What American authors and poets introduced the Indian folklore and culture to the whole world? What are their works’ titles? What literary periods do they belong to? Analyze their works from the point of view of the writers’ message and themes. Prove by the text.

14. Analyze “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” by W. Irving from the point of view of the period when it was written, the literary movement to which it belongs, the writer’s message and themes. Justify your answer by the text quotations.

15. What modernist techniques does John Steinbeck use in his realistic novel “Grapes of Wrath”? What are the peculiarities of the novel composition? What is the purpose of using free indirect speech in the extract describing the destruction of the crops? Justify your answer by the examples from the text.

16. “Grapes of Wrath” by John Steinbeck is deeply symbolic. Analyze the final chapter of the novel from the point of view of the writer’s message and symbols. Prove you answer by the text.

17. What literary movement does “Catch-22” by Joseph Heller belong to? Analyze this novel from the point of view of the period when it was written, the literary movement to which it belongs, the writer’s message and themes.

18. What contribution did Arthur Miller make to the development of American Drama? What interpretation does his play “Death of a Salesman” give to the concept of the “American Dream”? Prove your answer by the quotations from the play. What do you think Willy’s major mistake was?

**Follow the requirements listed below:**

1. List at least three quotations to prove your answer;
2. Make sure the length is at least 750 words;
3. Give a brief analysis of the historical background and major features of the literary movement;
4. Don’t forget to make an introduction and a conclusion and to say:
  - ✓ what the main idea of the story is;
  - ✓ what the author’s message is;
  - ✓ what views on life the author expresses in the story;
  - ✓ what your attitude to the characters of the story is, their behaviour and activities;
  - ✓ what you would do if you were in the main character’s shoes;
  - ✓ if you think the story is life-like or unreal;
  - ✓ what the story teaches us;
  - ✓ what the moral of the story is;
  - ✓ if you would like to read \_\_\_\_\_’s other stories and novels;
  - ✓ if you think the story is worth reading.

**Assessment criteria:**

1. originality vs plagiarism
2. covering all the issues of the topic
3. logic, creativity

4. grammar, spelling

The maximum for each criteria is 10 points. Thus, the total maximum score for the essay is 40 points.

## 12.5. SAMPLE TASKS FOR THE FINAL TEST

### *Do the matching. Chart 1*

1. E. Hemingway	a) An American Tragedy
2. Th. Dreiser	b) A Farewell to Arms
3. J.F. Cooper	c) The Great Gatsby
4. F.S. Fitzgerald	d) Slaughterhouse Five
5. K. Vonnegut	e) The last of the Mohicans
6. Gertrude Stein	f) Life on the Mississippi
7. Sh. Anderson	g) The Making of Americans
8. Mark Twain	h) The Grapes of Wrath
9. John Steinbeck	i) V.
10. Thomas Pynchon	j) Winesburg, Ohio

### *Do the matching. Chart 2*

1. Mark Twain	a) For whom the bell tolls
2. Th. Dreiser	b) Tender is the night
3. J.F. Cooper	c) Cat's Cradle
4. F.S. Fitzgerald	d) Sister Carrie
5. K. Vonnegut	e) The Pioneer
6. E. Hemingway	f) The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
7. Thomas Pynchon	g) Babbitt
8. William Faulkner	h) Of Plymouth Plantation
9. William Bradford	i) The Crying of Lot 49
10. Sinclair Lewis	j) The Snopes Trilogy

**Do the matching. Chart 3**

1. William Faulkner	a) the Octopus
2. Nathaniel Hawthorne	b) Uncle Tom's Cabin
3. Benjamin Franklin	c) The Wings of the Dove
4. John Dos Passos	d) The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
5. Herman Melville	e) Gravity's Rainbow
6. H.B. Stowe	f) Moby Dick
7. Frank Norris	g) The Hamlet
8. Thomas Pynchon	h) Poor Richard's Almanac
9. Washington Irving	i) The Scarlet Letter
10. Henry James	j) The 42 <sup>nd</sup> Parallel

**Do the matching. Chart 4**

1. John Dos Passos	a) The Fall of the House of Usher
2. Thomas Paine	b) The Awakening
3. R.W. Emerson	c) A True Relation of Virginia
4. Gertrude Stein	d) The Leatherstocking Tales
5. Jack London	e) Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas
6. J. Fenimore Cooper	f) Common Sense
7. Kate Chopin	g) The Portrait of a Lady
8. E.A. Poe	h) Martin Eden
9. Henry James	i) Self-Reliance
10. John Smith	j) The USA Trilogy

**Do the matching. Chart 5**

1. E.A. Poe	a) The Rights of Man
2. Bret Harte	b) Rip Van Winkle
3. Philip Freneau	c) The Deerslayer
4. Washington Irving	d) Walden, or Life in the Woods



5. Edith Wharton	e) The Murders in the Rue Morgue
6. Thomas Paine	f) Maggie: A Girl of the Streets
7. H.D. Thoreau	g) The Luck of Roaring Camp
8. Jack London	h) The Wild Honey Suckle
9. Stephen Crane	i) The House of Mirth
10. J. Fenimore Cooper	j) The Call of the Wild

**Do the quiz:**

1. *The Great Gatsby* is the perfect portrayal of the:
  - a) "Roaring Twenties";
  - b) "Roaring Thirties";
  - c) "Roaring Forties".
2. *Salmagundi* became popular in literary America as:
  - a) a meat salad;
  - b) a romantic novel;
  - c) a humorous periodical.
3. Edgar Allan Poe's childhood was miserable because he:
  - a) was left an orphan;
  - b) was taken abroad against his will;
  - c) hated studying at a preparatory school.
4. Characters in Gothic Literature are:
  - a) typical representatives of the nobility;
  - b) strong-willed and courageous people;
  - c) mad or frightened to death people.
5. In which century was "The Making of Americans" written?
  - a) the twentieth;
  - b) the nineteenth;
  - c) the seventeenth.
6. Native Americans transmitted their myths, legends and songs from generation to generation:
  - a) through book records;
  - b) in manuscripts;
  - c) orally.
7. Gothic Literature is created to inspire:
  - a) laughter;
  - b) fear;
  - c) excitement.
8. E.A. Poe married a very young girl who soon:
  - a) gave birth to his two children;
  - b) betrayed him;
  - c) died of tuberculosis.
9. Settings in Romantic Literature are:
  - a) typical industrial areas of contemporary periods;
  - b) exotic places and remote periods of history;
  - c) agricultural countryside of the previous century.

10. Natty Bumppo is:  
a) a representative of an Indian tribe; b) a frontiersman; c) an American writer.
11. When did Anne Bradstreet write her poems?  
a) in the XVI century; b) in the XVII century; c) in the XVIII century.
12. According to Native Americans' belief land:  
a) could be owned by a person; b) belonged in common to all living things; c) could be sold and bought.
13. In Indian stories animals, plants, natural forces:  
a) are a part of a sacred cycle of life; b) are created to serve people; c) help people in everyday life.
14. Raccoon is:  
a) a weapon; b) an animal; c) a plant.
15. Totem is:  
a) a ceremony of chain-smoking; b) a ritual linking the spirits of hunters and animals; c) a family emblem.
16. Persimmon is:  
a) juicy fruit; b) a common Indian vegetable; c) a herb.
17. Christopher Columbus's expedition was funded by the:  
a) Italians; b) Spaniards; c) Portuguese.
18. Puritans were a religious group of:  
a) English protestants; b) of Roman Catholics; c) Orthodox Christians.
19. Pocahontas was:  
a) the governor's daughter; b) a Puritan maiden who arrived in America on board the Mayflower; c) an Indian maiden, favourite daughter of chief Powhatan.
20. According to Captain John Smith's record, Pocahontas:  
a) fell in love with him; b) saved his life; c) returned with him to England.

21. Captain John Smith's literary work "A true relation of Virginia" became the main record of the colony in:

a) New Netherlands;            b) Plymouth;            c) Jamestown.

22. Referring to America as the Promised Land originates from:

a) Romanticism;            b) Realism;            c) Puritanism.

23. The Pilgrim Fathers are:

a) the first settlers;    b) the chiefs of the Indian Tribes;    c) the authors of the draft of the Declaration of Independence.

24. The Founding Fathers are:

a) the first settlers;    b) the chiefs of the Indian Tribes;    c) the authors of the draft of the Declaration of Independence.

25. The life of ... is the unifying thread of the five romances about the Leatherstocking

a) J.F. Cooper;            b) Natty Bumppo;            c) the chief of the Mohicans.

26. J.F. Cooper managed to convince the world of the human worth of:

a) the Afro-Americans;    b) the Indians;            c) the first settlers.

27. Romances of the late Romantic period are:

a) short love stories;    b) a series of novels;    c) serious symbolic novels.

28. Auguste Dupin is:

a) a writer of the early romantic period;    b) a short story character, a master detective;    c) a poet of the romantic period.

29. Human virtues are listed in "The Autobiography" by:

a) Thomas Jefferson;    b) Benjamin Franklin;    c) Thomas Paine.

30. Philip Freneau was:

a) a revolutionary poet;    b) a romantic poet;            c) a realistic poet.

31. Romanticism in American Literature was insured by:

a) new technological inventions;    b) the disillusionment of most people on the results of the American Revolution of 1775–1783;    c) the launch of large factories.

32. According to Thomas Jefferson “natural aristocracy” included people who were:

a) wealthy and noble by origin;    b) educated, talented and enterprising;  
c) rich and bold.

33. In his history “Of Plymouth Plantation” William Bradford employed:

a) post modernistic technique;    b) sophisticated, graceful structures;  
c) straightforward language and plain style.

34. Puritans were:

a) fond of luxurious furniture and clothes;    b) hard-working, practical  
and religious;    c) tolerant to other religions.

35. Political pamphlets and essays became popular genres in:

a) the Colonial period;    b) the Enlightenment period;    c) in the  
Romantic period.

36. The study of the origin of the man’s good and evil qualities is the primary problem of writers of:

a) Modernism;    b) the Enlightenment;    c) Realism.

37. The result of the War for Independence was the foundation of:

a) a federative democratic republic;    b) an absolute monarchy;  
c) a constitutional monarchy.

38. Captain Ahab, the main character of H. Melville’s novel Moby Dick, pursues the White Whale like a maniac because he wants to:

a) understand the essential nature of the white whale;    b) make a  
fortune;    c) take revenge.

39. Limitations of human knowledge is one of the themes in:

a) The Scarlet Letter;    b) Moby Dick;    c) Walden, or Life in the Woods.

40. Imagination and feeling were valued over intellect and reason by:

a) The writers of the Enlightenment;    b) Romantic writers;  
c) the Puritans.

41. Henry James is a major representative of:

a) psychological realism;    b) muckraking writing;    c) regionalism.

42. Huck Finn escapes and hides in the forest because:  
a) he is an outlaw;    b) he has committed a crime;    c) his father is an alcoholic and threatens to kill him.
43. In Bret Harte's story "the Luck of Roaring Camp" *luck* stands for:  
a) a baby born;    b) accidentally gained fortune;    c) a woman.
44. Bret Harte is best remembered for his short stories featuring gamblers, miners and outcasts of:  
a) frontiers towns;    b) Californian Gold Rush;    c) New York slums.
45. "An American Tragedy" explores:  
a) hardships of life on the frontier;    b) the dangers of the American Dream;    c) Californian Gold Rush.

***Complete the statements:***

46. Washington Irving's Sketchbook depicts life in both ...
47. E.A. Poe's short stories may be divided into...
48. What principle does naturalism apply to its study of human beings?
49. E.A. Poe's constant themes are ...
50. Thomas Jefferson's greatest contribution to American Literature and the world history is his draft of the Declaration of Independence in which he outlined the principles of ...
51. The main genres favoured and developed by Romantic writers were ...
52. Major themes of Romantic literary works are ...
53. English settlements in North America developed from two centres founded in 1607 and 1620. These first colonies were called ...
54. The term "Puritans" implies that they wanted to "purify" the Church of England of its ...
55. The earliest literature of Exploration and the Colonial Period is made up of ...

56. The most radical representative of the American Enlightenment movement who urged the separation of the American colonies from England in his pamphlet "Common Sense" was ...

57. Modernism in American literature was caused by ...

58. The main representatives of modernism in American literature are ..., ..., ...

59. The main representatives of post-modernism in American literature are ..., ..., ...

60. Constructedness implies ...

61. Intertextuality implies ...

62. Diversified history (presenting history from different points of view) is a feature of ... trend in literature.

63. According to the "theory of iceberg", instead of stating the obvious, Hemingway attempts to use ... to convey his themes.

64. Muckrakers developed within ... movement.

65. In America the border between wooded wilderness and civilized life was called ...

***Answer the questions:***

66. What literary movements reject constructedness and support fragmentation, inconsistency and spontaneity?

67. Which of the movements ironically exposes constructedness and which rejects it completely?

68. What authors use intertextuality abundantly?

69. What literary trends focus on the inner world of the main characters, their ideas and impressions rather than objective presentation of reality?

70. Who are the authors of "The Declaration of Independence"? (name at least two)

71. Representatives of what literary trend believed that "Vice is due to ignorance"?

72. What was the main literary genre during the late Romantic Period?

73. Who are the most popular writers and poets of the Revolutionary age in American Literature? (name at least three)

74. What were writers and common people guided by during the Enlightenment period?

75. What are the names of the main characters in “The Scarlet Letter” (name two female and two male characters)

76. What did the American colonies get after the eight-year war (1775–1783)? What is this war called?

77. How many voyages did Columbus make from Europe to America?

78. What does the phrase “American Dream” express?

79. What time does the phrase “American Dream” originate from?

80. What kind of man is Benjamin Franklin sometimes called? Why?

81. Why is it commonly believed that the Industrial Revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century divided the Americans into two nations?

82. Who was more optimistic about American reality: early or late romantic writers?

83. What happens to Rip Van Winkle?

84. How is an atmosphere of horror created in Gothic Literature?

85. What is Captain Ahab’s ship “Pequod” in Moby Dick named after?

86. In which movement are people superior to their destiny and circumstances?

87. What are the main features of the stream of consciousness technique?

88. Who is the main character in Samuel Clemens’s novel “Life on the Mississippi”?

89. What is Regionalism also called?

90. What does regionalism emphasize and study in detail?

## ЗАКЛЮЧЕНИЕ

Дорогие студенты!

Авторы надеются, что данное пособие вдохновило вас к чтению художественных произведений на английском языке, дало ключ к пониманию позиций и точек зрения писателей, помогло вам преодолеть трудности в овладении литературным анализом и систематизировать знания по периодизации литературного процесса. Проблемы, поднятые в представленном материале, звучат актуально. Мы верим, что пособие, основанное на работах ведущих критиков и литературоведов, помогло вам провести параллели между художественной литературой и реалиями современной жизни.

Для обеспечения наглядности и практической полезности пособия мы включили отрывки из обсуждаемых произведений, пояснения к ним, вопросы и образцы тестов для самоконтроля и самокоррекции.

Мы стремились сделать так, чтобы работа с данным пособием была для вас полезной и приятной, а цели и задачи, поставленные в начале, достигнуты.



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