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Part 1

General Introduction

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General Introduction

Although modernism, like romanticism or realism, was a global phenomenon, its most striking manifestations are generally associated with Europe and the USA; that is, parts of the world in which dramatic civilizational changes affected almost every aspect of people's lives. It grew from romantic individualism and subjectivity, which may be traced back to Friedrich Schiller who, in his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* compares the industrial civilisation of his times with the classical Greek civilisation, and arrives at a picture which would be a perfect description of the culture characteristic of the time period around the turn of the century:

> That zoophyte character of the Greek States, where every individual enjoyed an independent life and, when need arose, could become a whole in himself, now gave place to an ingenious piece of machinery, in which out of the botching together of avast number of lifeless parts a collective mechanical life results. State and Church, law and customs, were now torn asunder; enjoyment was separated from labour, means from ends, effort from reward. Eternally chained to only one single little fragment of the whole, Man himself grew to be only a fragment; with the monotonous noise of the wheel he drives everlastingly in his ears, he never develops the harmony of his being, and instead of imprinting humanity upon his nature he becomes merely the imprint of his occupation, of his science.
>
> (Schiller 35)

Although Schiller's text is considered to be a response to his disillusionment stemming from the French Revolution, he precisely identifies many issues which have been haunting western society since that time – mechanical civilisation, absence of harmony with the environment and the increasing compartmentalisation of knowledge, to which one can also add the movement from the country to the city, the increasing role of time in human life (especially the psychological effects of the contraction of time and space), the impact of sciences (both natural and social) and political tensions on human life.

Indeed, life was rapidly becoming different. One of the agents of change was science, especially the scientific theories of Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and James Frazer. While Darwin shed new light on the domain that was traditionally occupied by religion, showing that humankind may not be the result of divine creation but part of natural evolution, Freud drew attention to the human soul, calling it "the unconscious" and claiming that it was also part of nature rather than something divine. Frazer was an anthropologist who tried to interpret the beliefs and ideas of early people as expressed in mythology, magic, or rituals. Scientific inventions were constantly reminding people of the fact that they were living in a time of great changes. For example, as Kalaidjian has it, "Harvard professor Henry Adams would be so awed by the giant electromagnetic dynamos on display at the Great Exposition of 1900 that he would 'see only an absolute fiat in electricity, defining the modern age" (1). And, as he further mentions, the modern age included not only electricity, but the discovery of X-rays, radio waves, the detection of radium, and soon (1).

None of the above changes could leave the human "soul" untouched. They frequently led to its almost complete uprooting through the subversion of many accepted truths, forcing people to search for a private refuge in subjectivity, often in its extreme forms. The substitution of traditional normality of communal life (with its traditionally defined roles) for new relations based on new phenomena provoked a strong response from artists, many of whom "felt there was something badly unbalanced about 'normal' life itself, if by normal we mean industrialised, Western modernity, with its timetables, empires, machines, bureaucracies and banks" (Howarth 9—10). Modernist art then attempted to re-establish the role of a human being in the world. And one of the ways to achieve this was through the highlighting of non-normality, as, for example in the famous International Exhibition of Modern Art (generally known as the Armory Show) held in New York in 1913, characterised as a way of "making insanity pay" (Kalaidjian 3).

The United States of America was the country which perhaps best embodied these new tendencies, since it was not bound by tradition and perceived itself (and was so perceived by others) as the first modern nation. When compared with the previous two centuries, the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries saw America as a country which really changed from an agricultural and rural land to an

industrial superpower. The rapid growth of its cities, providing ideal and ample space for all the already mentioned modernistic tendencies, allowed Senator Beveridge to claim that "[t]he twentieth century will be American [...] The regeneration of the world, physical as well as moral, has begun" (qtd. in Ruland and Bradbury 239).

This American "regeneration" was not happening only in the world of science and technology, but was accompanied by similar trends in the human and social sciences, which took up the methods of hard sciences, such as Darwinian biology with its evolutionary theory, and attempted to apply them in their own field, for example history. In philosophy, the general trends toward the materialistic and the real, found their expression in the emergence of pragmatism, which can be characterised as a uniquely American contribution to the investigation of reality. Although its founder and most important representative, William James, acknowledged that "[t]here is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. Socrates was an adept at it. Aristotle used it methodically. Locke, Berkeley and Hume made momentous contributions to truth by its means," they were just "preluders," and it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that the method "generalized itself." Its essence was in linking the abstract with the concrete, or, as he claims, the rationalist and the empiricist, trying "to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences" (James). Pragmatism thus directly expressed the practical, experimental spirit of the developing nation, based not on metaphysical or historical abstractions, but on real results which could immediately be put to work. A very similar position was held by John Dewey for whom the sense of theory was primarily in its being an instrument of practical use. He was also active in various other activities, such as education, civil rights, peace, etc. Both personalities also became "instruments" of the new times in which the traditional had to give way to the modern.

While in science and technology modernism was linked to the creation of new things and phenomena, literature produced works which portrayed attempts to come to terms with these phenomena; works which analysed their reflections in human consciousness. We can thus find literary works which depart from the treatment of broad ethical issues through elaborate descriptions of characters and their relations to community or society, or works depicting historical or sociological phenomena – though rather highly subjectively, – as individualised, fragmented (even to the point of

incomprehensibility) treatments of newly emergent existential conditions. Perhaps the most illustrative case of this could be found in British literature in the shift from Victorian morality, based on the necessity to follow socially accepted values, towards the extreme subjectivity and isolation which can be found in the work of authors such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce who adopted the "stream of consciousness" style of writing.

In American literature the transition was not so extreme and sharp, since the first signs of modernistic consciousness emerged there maybe even earlier than in Britain, mostly in the poetry of Emily Dickinson or Walt Whitman. One could compare this distinction with the differences between American and British romantic writers. The American romantics were not so revolutionary as the British, because the political and material conditions in the USA did not require it due to an almost fully established democracy, a huge territory with "safety valve" options if problems occurred and relatively good working conditions in comparison to Britain, etc.). Despite that, Whitman and Dickinson, as the early American modernist poets, brought new poetic expressions suited to a fragmented and broken consciousness resulting from the breakup of the collapsing romantic attempts to "fuse" subject and object, nature and city.

One of the significant features of modernism, experimentation, thus found its clear manifestation in poetry. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, there were several poets as well as poetic movements which changed the traditional understanding of poetry, both in terms of form as well as content. As for the form, there was a departure from traditional versification strategies. Regular rhythm, rhyme, and organisation into stanzas became less important than free verse, fragmentation, lack of rhythm and rhyme, or half-rhymes, etc. From the point of view of content, it is possible to say that most poets shifted their focus from great universal topics towards the everyday, the urban; the material on one side, or the philosophical, mystical and mythical on the other.

The crystallisation of the new poetic imagination was not, naturally, sudden and uncomplicated. It had to evolve through the work of the poets who were both part of _ and attempting to depart from _ Victorian sensibility and look for new possibilities of expression. Such tensions between the old and the new began to appear, for example, in the work of Gerald Manley Hopkins and Thomas Hardy, in the case of British poetry,

and in the work of the aforementioned poets Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman in American literature. However, they only became fully resolved in the work of William Butler Yeats, and, later, in that of the arch-modernists E. Pound and T. S. Eliot — the two Americans who revolutionised artistic milieus not only in Britain, but, one might say, in the whole of Europe. Acknowledging the importance of Dickinson and Whitman, one must thus say that their true role was rather in the creation of conditions and in setting the terrain for modernist expression in the USA. The writers who embody the full flowering of modernism came in the first decades of the twentieth century. They were poets, prose writers as well as playwrights.

The most representative American "poetic" modernists, Ezra pound and T. S. Eliot, were naturally attracted to European artistic circles and spent most of their creative life in Europe. Eliot even gained English citizenship and lived in London for the greater part of his life. Ezra Pound, too, left America and went to Europe, but his reasons had much to do also with his personal "extravagance" that made him see America as a "half-savage country, out of date" (pound, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley"). On the other hand, quite a few influential writers, remained in the USA, or went abroad just briefly. They included such towering personalities as William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, as well as Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, and others. It is often claimed that this created a division, a schism in American arts, with one group living and working in Europe and writing culturally sophisticated poetry, and the other staying at home and poetically depicting America, both its urban and rural settings.

As far as modernist fiction is concerned, one must start with the works written at the turn of the century by the so-called naturalists (Theodore Dreiser and Stephen Crane) — who in their novels most directly responded to the social forces changing American society and portrayed how these forces were projected into the lives of literary characters – as well as with the early experimentalism found in the work of Ambrose Bierce. Naturally, the fiction writers could not escape a rift similar to that in poetry which divided them into expatriates, including G. Stein, E. Hemingway, F. S. Fitzgerald, who lived for different amounts of time in European capitals and wrote about European themes, especially in the case of Hemingway, and writers like Sherwood Anderson or Willa Cather who focused on more characteristic American settings such as small towns or prairies. The expatriate writers have also been referred to as the *Lost*

Generation, especially because of the disillusionment affecting their lives as well as their work after WWI. As the twentieth century progressed, the European-American division lost its grip on American imagination, giving way rather to identity-based classifications. Thus, we find literature of the South, African-American literature, Native American literature, Jewish American literature, to name only the most significant. Although the literature of the Beat Generation did not directly address ethnic issues, it attacked the middle-class culture of the establishment, becoming a strong counter-cultural force and, in away, sharing the anti-traditionalist view of Modernism as such. Through its power of subversion, it was preparing the way for the onset of Postmodern values of the late twentieth century.

Emily Dickinson

Dickinson,s poetry shows the first signs of modern times in the conflict between human existence and the attempt to express it, between the implicit sense and explicit form, manifested not only in her themes (extreme introspection, constant movement between the theme of death and nature), but in composition as well (semantic compactness opposed to formal fragmentariness). She lacks totalising romantic conceptions, which, we feel, are just illusions for her. Her poems are more human and truer, expressing inner struggles through which the poet wants to look at (her) life in its contradictoriness as well as simplicity.

Since the publication of the so-called Johnson edition of Emily Dickinson,s poems there have been many attempts to grasp her poetry from many different points of view. In *The Emily Dickinson Handbook* (Grabher et al.), for example, authors look at different aspects of her poetry - historical, biographical, cultural, feminist, cognitive, dialogic - trying to contextualise and "update" her criticism within the framework of current critical approaches. However, whatever new approach one could adopt, it would be safe to say that "Dickinson has never been what one might call the theorist,s exemplary poet" (perlof 31), or to agree that "[i]n her symbolic language Dickinson could enjoy the creative liberty of mind that transcends all ideology and all stereotype, not least stereotyped gender restrictions" (Hagenb防chle 24). Even though the reasons for her "nonconformity" are complex, one would be of a very high importance - she was a strong individualist, revolting, consciously or subconsciously, against the culture she grew up in. There is an agreement amongst literary scholars that it was the culture of the collapsing Puritan world which brought an air of an emergence of something new. Emily Dickinson no longer believed in the old religious tenets but did not see anything else instead either. Her response thus was not programmatic, but individualistic, using the language of ambiguity and indeterminacy as a means of her ontological searches.

Another fact which may have contributed to the uniqueness of her poetry was her way of life. Since she spent almost all of it in her father,s house, she could not (and did not want to) smooth her poetry by participating in intellectual discussions or other group activities of the day. The poems "materialised" on scraps of paper during her solitary walks and meditations, having been manifestations of the poet,s existential anxieties.

This is the most natural reason for their formal irregularities and fragmentariness; they were the lived out by-products of intense spiritual activities, or, as Hagenb防chle has rightly noted, "processual[1]." Naturally, there have always been critics[2] who claimed that the fragmentariness and formal "irregularities" occurring in her poems are signs of her poetic deficiency, and the publishers who tried to "formalise" her poems. Gradually, however, the number of critics who, on the contrary, saw this as a sign of her modernity has increased and, nowadays, she is even considered to be a literary inspiration for contemporary postmodern artists. As Fathi has put it, "poets affiliated with modernism, postmodernism, and trends in contemporary poetry denoted by a host of other terms, have cited Dickinson as a literary precursor. Today, one finds many 'Dickinsonians, developing poetries of indeterminacy, negation, ellipsis, syntactic difficulty, and back-grounded narrative" (77).

There is no doubt that not all her poems show high level of complexity of form and thought. The fact that she kept writing poetry from her young age up to her death must have had an influence upon its quality. The first poems were simpler, "childish" ones, but the older she was getting, the more demanding they were becoming, increasing her level of "departure" from the contemporary intellectual and artistic milieu. Hagenb防chle, in his highly illuminating essay, provides, from the structuralist point of view, quite an exhaustive list of features of Dickinson,s poetry which make her so unique and impossible to be labelled by any theoretical movement: thinking in alternatives, elusiveness of meaning, the search for self, exploration of the symbolic power of language, its liminal or threshold quality, difficult writerly style based on semotactic indeterminacy, complex semantic shifts subverting the Victorian culture, the arrow of meaning, crossing the frontiers, and venturing into the wilderness.

The complex character of her poetic world results from the complexity of her reliance on the material world. Despite the claims by many critics that she was not primarily a mimetic writer, material things were crucial to her. No wonder — her lived world was

[1] In this respect Hagenb防chle maintains that "Tomas H. Johnson,s standard edition creates a false impression since his editorial decisions [...] tend to erase what is a crucial feature of Dickinson,s poetry: its processual quality" (15).

[2] The attempts to "discipline" her poems started already during her lifetime: "By 1866 she had seen at least ten, very probably more, of her poems in print. The Republican had printed most of them, and in most of the printings Dickinson had seen alterations of her poems. According to her, such editorial interference dissuaded her from conventional publication" (Smith 11).

not extensive, in terms of her moving in many places and visiting cities, but intensive in its deep touch with objects that surrounded her. She saw the world through them. This seeing, however, was not only a traditionally romantic perception through "powerful feelings," or "a series of ecstatic assertions, an abandonment to excess verging on mental unbalance" (peterson qtd. in Deppman, "Trying to Think" 84), but a highly focused attempt to think of what she saw, and to invite the reader to participate in this, highly difficult, intellectual enterprise. The word "thinking" is thus one of the crucial concepts for Dickinson,s poetry which requires an intelligent reader, able to interpret what she thinks; to interpret the meaning of her words. According to Deppman, "she provides far fewer 'ecstatic assertions, than careful sequences of ideas and images, not so much 'abandonment to excess, as thoughtful production of, and reaction to, extreme states of being" ("Trying to Think" 85).

But the poet is no traditional formal thinker either, for what she expects from the reader is not a usual interpretive exercise, but a truly cognitive effort to "decipher" the meaning through images. Allen Tate captured it very well when he said that she "sees the ideas, and thinks the perceptions" (220). His analysis of Dickinson,s "figurative thinking" is based on her poem "Because I could not stop for Death —," or as he claimed, "one of the perfect poems in English" (218):

Because I could not stop for Death —
He kindly stopped for me —

The Carriage held but just Ourselves —
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste
And I had put away

My labor, and my leisure too,
For His Civility —

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess – in the Ring —

We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain —
We passed the Setting Sun —

Or rather – He passed Us —

The Dews drew quivering and chill —

For only Gossamer, my Gown —
My Tippet – only Tulle —

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground —

The Roof was scarcely visible —
The Cornice – in the Ground —

Since then – 'tis centuries – and yet
Feels shorter than the Day

I first surmised the Horses, Heads
Were toward Eternity —

(Dickinson 350)

According to Tate, every image in the poem "is precise and, moreover, not merely beautiful, but fused with the central idea" (219). The poem is one of her attempts to present what is unpresentable through thinking, the idea of death. She does it through images – of the driver, carriage, playing children, the setting sun – which as if they showed the familiar objects of her life silently stopping, and disappearing, making way for the intimated finitude. The image of loss, of leaving something behind the carriage, is, however, complicated by the last stanza in which the plenitude is introduced. Death is contradistinguished to eternity, or "the idea of immortality is confronted with the fact of physical disintegration. We are not told what to think; we are told to look at the situation" (220), which cannot be resolved, only perceived.

One of Dickinson perhaps most anthologised poems is "There,s a certain Slant of light" which is frequently considered to be the expression of her transcendental sublime. The poem does not address death directly, as the previous one, but concentrates on the perception of a sublime moment in which her being has glimpsed its fullness.

There,s a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons —

That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes —

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us —
We can find no scar,

But internal difference,

Where the Meanings, are –
None may teach it – Any –

'Tis the Seal Despair –

An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air –

When it comes, the Landscape listens –
Shadows – hold their breath –

When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death –

(Dickinson 118–119)

The thought-provoking image here is that of a synesthetic perception of a strange heavy-sounding light whose otherness changes the world around, evoking the imminent presence of something intangible. Its presence is promising as well as painful for the poet just as the presence or absence of death can be. It metonymically points to the difference between the common and the substantial (which means also the painful and the terrifying) within the everyday. It is one of the poems in which Dickinson comes closest to Emerson's transcendentalist idea of nature as the place of the sublime, a means of transcendence towards Divinity. The poem may also betaken as a metaphor of Dickinson's work, in which she was obsessed with the search for the fullness of meaning in the materiality of her world.

The approach of "thinking through images," as I have tried to demonstrate through the two poems above, is, naturally, a *conditio sine qua non* for cognitive literary studies – the approach which has been very often used when discussing Dickinson's poetry. Its main hypothesis is that human cognition as such is largely based on mechanisms of metaphorical mapping (Lakoff and Johnson). However, there are also other features which make her work lend itself relatively easily to cognitive criticism. As mentioned above, one of the maxims of cognitive literary studies is that signifying processes are based on the "materiality" of human signifying processes. The language was not given to us by a transcendental authority, but is a natural function of the processes occurring within the human brain. Such proximity of the literary to the material can be found

throughout the work of Emily Dickinson. Perhaps the best way to illustrate it is to use her own words describing what poetry means to her: "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken of, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?" (qtd. in Hirsch). Dickinson almost never loses herself in free-floating abstractions, as, perhaps, her contemporary Nathaniel Hawthorne does. Even if one has a feeling that she uses abstract words, it frequently turns out that they are the products of metonymical shifts. Cognitive literary scholars have used this peculiar quality of Dickinson,s material and scientific leaning for the analysis of several of her poems. In the following part, I will try to comment on some of these analyses, especially the ones by Margaret H. Freeman who has turned out to be Dickinson,s most prolific "cognitive" commentator.

In her study "Metaphor Making Meaning: Dickinson,s conceptual Universe," Freeman sets out to characterise Dickinson,s conceptual world through which she structures the metaphorical world of her poems. She starts by characterising her time and place (the breaking of Puritan New England resulting in the shakeup of orthodox religious beliefs and the rise of new scientific discourses), to justify the shifts in Dickinson,s perception of reality. This is, in fact, not different from Tate,s identification of reasons for the uniqueness of Dickinson,s imagination. However, while Tate arrived at his concept of "thinking through images," Freeman identified the shifts in cultural paradigms, as well as the materiality of life around her, open to the scientific leaning of the poet,s mind, as the main reason for Dickinson,s not modelling her conceptual universe on the traditional LIFE IS A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME metaphor which suited very well to her calvinist upbringing. "From the details of nature in its annual cycles, the circumference of hills that surround the valley in which the town of Amherst lies, and, ultimately, from the discoveries of the new science, Dickinson transformed the metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME into that of LIFE IS A VOYAGE IN SPAcE" ("Metaphor Making Meaning" 648). Freeman goes on to explain how the religious "journey through time," aimed at salvation in the afterlife, could not hold for Dickinson because of the effect of the changing paradigm and new scientific discoveries.

A similar metaphorical structuring may be demonstrated in the poem "Because I could not stop for Death -." If for Tate the poem,s effect was achieved by a cluster of images

(the carriage, the rider, children, the setting sun, gazing grain), in cognitive analysis the poem,s effect rests on the key image of driving and passing, i.e. the movement, and leaving behind the things of this world. Besides setting this basic concept, Freeman does not, however, discuss other stylistic or semantic subtleties. We all know that "life is a journey" from the beginning to the end, but in between these two extremes, there are other phenomena our life is filled with, such as pleasure, love, suffering etc.

A more sophisticated analysis of Dickinson,s poems is offered by Freeman in her article entitled "Momentary Stays, Exploding Forces: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach to the poetics of Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost" in which she compares the two great American poets. I will concentrate again on the poem which I have tried to briefly discuss above through a traditional, i.e., non-cognitive, approach - "There,s a certain Slant of light," commenting primarily on the differences between the cognitive and non-cognitive analysis, not on the differences between the poetics of Dickinson and Frost. In her analysis, Freeman herself demonstrates the two approaches when, at the beginning, she divides the poem into two parts, the first one consisting of the first and the last stanza, while the second part consists of the two inner stanzas. She claims that the "outer" stanzas are subjective, subjecting the human agency to the inhuman qualities of the light, while in the "inner" stanzas we learn about the objective qualities of the light. So far, the analysis is insightful, depicting the human condition with the interiority of meanings facing the objective and threatening force of nature. When, however, Freeman decides to incorporate the language of cognitive linguistics, we get back to the mechanical schemas of cognitive models. Here is what she arrives at using cognitive science terminology:

The poem exists as a whole, framed by its opening and closing lines: 'There,s a certain Slant of light [...] On the look of Death -., But inside that frame, iconically representing the frame of the CONTAINER schema of the human being in the inner stanzas, the damage has been done; not visible, but internal, an affliction of 'Despair., We are made one with the 'certain Slant of light, which, as it comes and goes, leaves us - through the operation of the CHANGE schema - with the intimation of our own mortality ("Momentary Stays, Exploding Forces" 13).

Freeman is, of course, right when she approaches the poem through the CONTAINER schema, since Lakoff and Johnson classify CONTAINER metaphors as a type of

ontological metaphor which appear "through our experiences with physical objects (especially our own bodies)" and provide "ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances" (23), and there is no doubt that Dickinson is primarily an ontological poet, concerned with the exploration of her experiences with physical objects.

The acknowledgement of the cognitive metaphors, partial structuring of human communication is, in our opinion, where the true contribution of cognitive linguistics, theory of metaphorical structuring for literary theory lies. If we look at the above poem, for example, we clearly see that there is the inside-outside, subjective-objective schema involved, as it is in most of Dickinson,s other poems. The CONTAINER in this case seems to be the light which suffuses the scene and makes it different from ordinary, everyday scenes. It affects us, forces us to look at things in a different way, and to see them both as things in themselves ("We can find no scar") and as things for ourselves ("internal difference") throwing us to the "affliction" of existence within "differences," "despair." It is a figurative CONTAINER of our humanity, of our human condition as well as an image and a figure that causes us to think of something other.

The CONTAINER schemas are very frequent in Dickinson,s poetry (see, for example, the poems "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers —," "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," "I felt a Cleaving in my Mind —," "I found the words to every thought," etc.). They fit into her basic existential predisposition of a person deeply obsessed with meanings which cannot be found on the surface, but deep inside. In her search, she disposes of the superficial, of the unnecessary, and uses language in its emblematic and gnomic capacities to arrive at that inner meaning, which, as in the above poem, is frequently threatened with death, or nothingness. The inside is also frequently associated with the force she had to keep in (as a result of her life in the Puritan society requiring the observance of Calvinist tenets she, consciously or subconsciously, disagreed with), releasing it only through her poetry ("On my volcano grows the Grass").

The poem, "Of Death I try to think like this —," shows the same CONTAINER schema:

Of Death I try to think like this —
The Well in which they lay us

Is but the Likeness of the Brook

That menaced not to slay us,
But to invite by that Dismay

Which is the Zest of sweetness
To the same Flower Hesperian,
Decoying but to greet us —

I do remember when a Child
With bolder Playmates straying

To where a Brook that seemed a Sea
Withheld us by its roaring

From just a Purple Flower beyond
Until constrained to clutch it
If Doom itself were the result,
The boldest leaped, and clutched it —

(Dickinson 648)

Here, however,the inside is more directly associated with death, which is "The Well in which they lay us." The whole outside (most importantly the brook, which "seemed a Sea" in the second stanza) is a figurative expression of the border between life and death, with the exception of the "Flower Hesperian" and the "purple Flower" which symbolise eternity, attained only through the crossing of the border of death. The basic CONTAINER schema is complicated by the PASSING schema, and even more by the PASSING IN TIME movement which is, in this case, reverse, since the second stanza is a flash-backto the (poet,s?) childhood. The movement to the past thus gives a peculiar air to the whole poem, hinting that earth (or eternity) waits at both ends of our life.

Walt Whitman

The poetry of Walt Whitman appears to be, on one hand, a re-statement of the existential nature of artistic expression found in Dickinson,s approach, whilst on the other hand it is a wholly new grasp of modern being. His imagination is robust and heterogenic, pushing him more to national and ideological contexts, which are, however, also relevant realms for modernist poets. Whitman is one of those unique poets who tackles the most profound layers of humanity through more pragmatic (political, social, racial, industrial, and rural) realities. Given the differences, both have one thing in common — they are no longer traditional poets expressing traditional concerns through a traditional poetic language.

Despite being considered a manifestation of American nationalism and democracy, Whitman,s poetry, especially his most celebrated poem from the first edition of *Leaves of Grass,* "Song of Myself" (Whitman 25—86), is also "politically-ontological," allowing the poet to express what it means "to be" an American as well as, and this is very important and frequently forgotten, also what it means to be human. Although "Song of Myself" is a source of inspiration for the generations of American poets who drew on his democratic impulses (for example, Ginsberg,s Howl, to name at least one of the most important poems of the twentieth century American poetry, shows clear indebtedness to Whitman), it also works perfectly well with "the system of doctrine … [which] is more Eastern than Western, [and which] includes notions like metempsychosis and karma" (cowley xii). The source of these mystic notions must have been "a mystical experience in the proper sense of the term" (xii). As Cowley further refers to one of Whitman,s disciples, the experience may have taken place in 1853 or in 1854, and it was essentially the same as the illuminations or ecstasies of earlier bards and prophets. Such ecstasies consist in a rapt feeling of union or identity with God (or the Soul, or Mankind, or the Cosmos), a sense of ineffable joy leading to the conviction that the seer has been released from the limitations of space and time and has been granted a direct vision of truths impossible to express (xii—xiii).

Despite strong mystic motifs, however, Cowley,s suggestion that "Song of Myself" "is hardly at all concerned with American nationalism, political democracy, contemporary progress, or other social themes that are commonly associated with Whitman,s work"

(iv), must be refuted, for it is, of course, impossible to separate the discussion of the poet from these issues, at least because in Whitman,s introduction to the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* he directly confronts them, saying that "The Americans of all nations at anytime upon the earth have probably the fullest poetical nature. The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem" (Whitman 5), that America "is not merely a nation but a teeming nation of nations" (5), that the great variability of common America, with its "deathless attachment to freedom" (6) is itself an embodiment of "unrhymed poetry" (6). Neither one can oversee the origin of *Leaves of Grass* in the context of American attempts at "cultural independence from Europe," seeking for a great national poem, or novel, which was explicitly acknowledged even by the great Emerson himself who greeted him "at the beginning of a great career" (qtd. in Cowley ix).

But again, despite these clearly recognisable connections to his "Americanness," Whitman was, as suggested above, a poet of universal appeal, attempting to grasp all cultures, all minorities, all political or ideological contexts, in a grand move of respecting the contradictions:

> Do I contradict myself?
>
> Very well then… I contradict myself;
> I am large… I contain multitudes."
>
> (Whitman 85)

His subjectivity, and his Americanness, was also his universality; one not cancelling out but rather complementing, the other: "In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less, / And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them" (43). His existence is his being, differentiated as well as undifferentiated: "I exist as I am, that is enough" (44), "I am the poet of the body, / And I am the poet of the soul" (44), "I am the poet of the woman the same as the man, / And I say it is as great to be a woman as to bea man" (44), "I am integral with you… I too am of one phase and of all phases" (46), "One time as good as another time […] here or henceforward it is all the same to me" (47). His creed is all creeds:

"Sermons and creeds and theology… but the human brain, and what is called reason, and what is called love, and what is called life?

I do not despise you priests;

My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths,

Enclosing all worship ancient and modern, and all between ancient and modern,"

(74–75)

To conclude, although Whitman,s first, and strongest, poetic expression dates to the mid-nineteenth century, the messages it brought are still surprisingly modern even in postmodern times, perhaps maybe especially in the deluded postmodern times. And, of course, they are universal. What else is literature good for if not to teach us that we are all human beings and deserve undivided, universal respect?

Fiction at the Turn of the Century

If one were to search for the writers whose work would be the most direct response to scientific theories, an obvious choice would be a group of writers coming to the literary scene in the USA in the 1890s and, some of them, continuing well into the twentieth century – the Naturalists. The characters portrayed in their works resemble direct expressions of Darwin,s evolutionary theory and seem to embody the application of his concept of the "survival of the fittest" to literature. Naturalism is often considered to be the second stage of realism; a stage in which the processes of realistic depiction, such as found in Dickens, criticism of various social phenomena, were used to present even the most ugly and brutal of events in which a protagonist is involved. They usually include scenes of death, crime and descriptions of a physical fight for survival. In American literature they can be found, most vividly, in the work of Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser.

Stephen Crane was awriter who, for the first time in American literature, in his novella *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), described war as something not noble and romantic, but as a scene of brutal killing and loss of lives. His protagonist, Henry Fleming, goes through the stages of youthful admiration of war, cowardice (running away from direct combat, overcome by fear), and, finally, attempts to make up for his initial act by getting the "red badge of courage" when he carries the flag into battle. The depictions of the scenes from the Civil War lack their usual air of pride in fighting for one,s values, showing only bloodshed, suffering and fear of death. His other short novel, or rather a novella, entitled *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets,* portrays a poor girl forced to fight for survival on the street, succumbing to prostitution and finally death. The images from the work also show a world very distant from the world of romantic individualists wandering in nature and admiring its beauties. Here is an ugly world of urban life and individual human suffering.

A very captivating struggle for survival is also portrayed in his short story "The Open Boat." The four characters, the survivors from a ship which sank near the coast of Florida, must struggle on a small boat to get to the shore. Thesea is a strong, unfeeling force playing ruthlessly with their lives, showing no logic, sense or explanation as to why it "chooses" someone "to be saved" and someone else "to be damned."

While Stephen Crane offered a deep insight into the biological drives of individual characters, Theodore Dreiser was more concerned with the relation of his characters to their social setting. In the novel *Sister Carrie* (1900), a young girl comes to a big city (Chicago) where her life undergoes a change and she is transformed from a simple rural country girl to an experienced woman manipulating mento reach her own goals. The novel may be taken as a reflection of what happened to the entire country, which also underwent a change from a rural country to a future industrial and commercial giant. Carrie Meeber gradually takes her life in to her own hands and is not afraid to actively push through all kinds of obstacles on her way. Dreiser,s other masterpiece, *An American Tragedy,* depicts the ethical struggle of the protagonist, Clyde Griffiths, between his responsibility to a poor girl with whom he had an affair, resulting in her pregnancy, and a promise to marry the rich Sondra Finchley. As the indefinite article in the title may suggest, the ensuing tragedy is just one of such tragedies in a fast-growing society hungry for material wealth.

The motif of struggle for survival is also central to the short story "An Occurrence at Owl creek Bridge" (1890) by Ambrose Bierce. Although the story was written before the main onset of modernism, it is unusual in representing its main focal points - the movement from the social outside to the personal inside, from objective time to its subjective flow for the protagonist. Its treatment of time anticipates the work of the great English modernists, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.

In general, the writers mentioned here and their works responded to the changed social, cultural and economic conditions in the USA, which in turn were related to what was happening in Europe. Their characters were not carriers of romantic traits, but, as mentioned above, fighters dealing with all kinds of obstacles - from personal enemies and the enemy of the establishment, to almost cosmic forces of inescapable fate. They were governed by unmanageable drives - inner and outer. Clyde Griffiths, for example, is driven by physical attraction as well as by a drive to step up the social ladder. The same can be said of Carrie Meeber from *Sister Carrie.* Most naturalistic characters are thus helpless victims to forces outside their own control, lacking freewill and individual strength.

Ezra Pound

A discussion of modern poetry without Ezra Pound would not be possible since he is considered by many as the poet who defined modernism and also became one of the most important American poets of the twentieth century. He was born in a small American town to a family with strong historical roots, and was educated at the University of Pennsylvania (together with Hilda Doolittle and William Carlos Williams — other famous American Modernist poets). After a short period of teaching at a small midwestern college he left the USA for Europe, to become a leading personality in the centres of the then artistic avant-gardes which were sweeping through Europe,s capitals. He first went to Venice, but after a short time decided togo to London, where he soon became associated with London,s artistic circles and people like William Butler Yeats, Ford Maddox Ford, Wyndham Lewis, and so on. Soon he began to attend the meetings of *The Poet , s Club,* at which some English poets were discussing many problems of modern poetry, especially free verse, diction, and imagery. There he met T. E. Hulme who was instrumental for his elaboration of the theory of Imagism — a unique Anglo-American contribution to European avant-gardism. Hulme claimed that "beauty may be in small, dry things" and that poetry "always endeavours to arrest you, and to make you continuously see a physical thing" ("Romanticism and Classicism"). Romantic poetry was for Hulme typical by its "metaphors of flight," while "[i]n the classical attitude [one] never seem[s] to swing right along to the infinite nothing" ("Romanticism and Classicism"). In other words, Romantic poets are obsessed with something beyond the real — the figurative; whereas the poets of the coming Classical age (which can be loosely associated with what was later called Modernism) were more concerned with the material, the non-figurative and the literal.

Hulme,s desire for new poetry was followed by Pound,s statement of the three principles of this poetry: "1. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective. 2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation. 3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome" ("'A Retrospect," and 'A Few Don,ts,"). In the article "A Few Don,ts by an Imagiste," Pound elaborated on the principles, specifying especially his understanding of the concept of the "image" as well as the use of language, rhythm,

and rhyme. Another statement on Imagistic principles also appeared in the anthology *Some Imagist Poets* of 1915 as a preface to the poems. It is in away a variation of what has been stated so far — to use the exact word, create new rhythms, be free in the choice of the subject, present an image, produce hard and clear poetry which should be a result of concentration. The preface to the 1916 anthology does not bring any new "tenets" of Imagism, but explains the misunderstanding that the public had about such concepts as the image, rhythm, cadence, vers libre, etc. The 1917 anthology was published without any preface whatsoever.

As one could infer from what has already been said, of central importance in all the mentioned theoretical statements is, naturally, the concept of the image. It is in fact that what defines Imagism as a movement. Traditionally, image in literary studies is characterised as a verbal device which evokes sensual effects (pokrivčák and pokrivčáková 59). According to Abrams, images are "used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other work of literature, whether by literal description, by *allusion,* or in the *vehicles* (the secondary references) of its similes and metaphor" (121), but "should not be taken to imply a visual reproduction of the object referred to" (121).

Such concept of verbal images, that is the images made up of words, can be identified already in Peirce,s category of symbol. He claims that

> "[a]ny ordinary word, as 'give,, 'bird,, 'marriage,, is an example of a symbol. It is *applicable to whatever maybefound to realise the idea connected with the word;*
>
> it does not, in itself, identify those things. It does not show us a bird, nor enact before our eyes a giving or a marriage, but supposes that we are able to imagine those things, and have associated the word with them."
>
> (9)

It must be noted here, however, that Peirce,s understanding of the concept of symbol is slightly different from what is understood by this term in literary studies, where we speak about symbol as about "a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond itself" (Abrams 311). But the Imagists, understanding of verbal image differs even from traditional literary studies, since instead of taking verbal image as a sign pointing beyond itself (most

usually to re-present emotions) they tried to escape the re-presentation and took pains, in theory as well as in practice, to find images which would be clear presentations, without any semiotic quality, of something what Peirce defined as feeling when he described a person in a "dreamy state":

> Let us suppose he [the person] is thinking of nothing but a red color. Not thinking about it, either, that is, not asking nor answering any questions about it, not even saying to himself that it pleases him, but just contemplating it, as his fancy brings it up. Perhaps, when he gets tired of the red, he will change it to some other color,—say a turquoise blue,—or a rose-color;—but if he does so, it will be in the play of fancy without any reason and without any compulsion. This is about as near as may be to a state of mind in which something is present, without compulsion and without reason; it is called Feeling.
>
> (4)

For the Imagists, this was exactly the position they wanted to achieve. They may have been successful to present it theoretically, but the practice was much more difficult, available, if at all, only through extreme cases of what I would call a non-metaphorical metaphor in the case of Pound, or the Stevens, impossibility of metaphor. Both positions, however, force complexity into the literary meaning to the extent of its nullification.

The theory of Imagism emerges most clearly through two statements prefaced to their anthologies. In *Some Imagist Poets 1915,* they claim that they are not "a school of painters, [though they] believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous" (vii), or, in *Some Imagist Poets 1916,* that their movement is not about "the presentation of pictures. 'Imagism, refers to the manner of presentation, not to the subject" (v). To avoid the simplicity of a mechanical transfer of meaning by analogy, Pound stressed complexity and instantaneity, characterising the image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." For him, this can best be achieved by metaphor, that is "the most compressed form of image" (Juhasz 15) able to "conjoin the dualities" (13). It involves, however, the awareness of a constant tension between presenting the mental images of concrete things, as if seen directly in the essence of

their thingness, and as being "under [constant] pressure from meanings beyond them" (Miles viii), which is a perfect image of human existence.

The four Imagists, anthologies provide many examples of the existential struggle to break free from the duality of seeing things of the world. Metaphor is a perfect witness to – as well as an obstacle in – that struggle. Thus, as an example of "very little metaphor," i.e. of a poem in which the poet wanted to get rid of this duality, Gleason quotes F. S. Flint,s "Easter" published in the 1916 version of *Some Imagist Poets:*

Friend

we will take the path that leads

down from the flagstaff by the pond
through the gorse thickets;

see, the golden spikes have thrust their points through,
and last year,s bracken lies yellow-brown and trampled.

(51)

Even if the poem is not metaphorical, but rather narrative, one can find here images which, through their being poetically focused outside of a more determining context, may evoke a hint of a potential "beyond."

Naturally, all four of the Imagist anthologies provide more examples of non-figurative language, or atleast a language which the Imagist theorists wanted to be "direct," non-figurative, and depicting Hulme,s "physical thing" to "present" peirce,s "Feeling." The poems by H.D., for example, are such very clear visions and presentations of things. In "Hermes of the Ways," she uses the following images:

Apples on the small trees
Are hard,
Too small,
Too late ripened

By a desperate sun
That struggles through sea-mist.

The boughs of the trees
Are twisted
By many bafflings;
Twisted are
The small-leafed boughs.
But the shadow of them
Is not the shadow of the mast head
Nor of the torn sails.

(*Des Imagistes* 22)

The poet visualises everyday objects through their physical qualities, not through their symbolic or abstract meanings. Their objectivity is only slightly "distorted" by a subjective touch of personification ("desperate sun"), which, however, does not diminish their objective thingness. The reader here is not aware of a comparison, of seeing one object in terms of another, as, for example, the metaphor in Richard Aldington,s poem "the light is a wound to me" (*Des Imagistes* 13), or William Carlos Williams, "Your hair is my Carthage / And my arms the bow / And our words arrows" (*Des Imagistes* 39).

Undoubtedly, the most unique images and metaphors can be found in Ezra Pound,s poems. They range from clear presentations, "the petals fall in the fountain, / the orange coloured rose-leaves, / Their ochre clings to the stone" (*Des Imagistes* 46), to complex comparisons, "O fan of / white silk, / clear as frost on the grass-blade, / You also are laid aside" (*Des Imagistes* 45). But the nature of Imagism emerges most clearly in his famous short poem "In a Station ofthe Metro":

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough.

The poem can serve as an important representative text of Imagism for several reasons: 1. it uses concrete images (petals, bough, faces, crowd) without any abstract

descriptions, 2. it is short, 3. it does not represent, but presents. The author explains its creation as follows:

> "Three years ago in paris I got out of a 'metro, train at La concorde, and saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another and another, and then a beautiful child,s face, and then another beautiful woman, and I tried all that day to find words for what this had meant tome, and I could not find any words that seemed to me worthy, or as lovely as that sudden emotion."
>
> (Gaudier Brzeska)

Then he continues saying that what came to him, instead of words, were the "splotches of colour[3]." He finished writing the poem, or searching for an appropriate form of expression of the emotion, only after a year when he cut the original 30 lines of text to the two lines.

The poem represents all the pros and cons of poetic metaphor. Despite Pound,s claim that there may be no meaning in it, one is forced to search for it and find it, since this is the force of its figurativeness. There are two images juxtaposed, faces and petals; inviting an immediate comparison. It is, however, not a simple one, since one of the images seems to consist of another comparison, "apparition of these faces," comparing normal faces in the crowd to strange, ghostlike faces. The final image is metaphorical, for there is no "like" or "as," as the simile would use. But what this is an image of is the most difficult part of the metaphor.

There is a long history of the search for this poem,s meaning, from drawing critical attention to the word "apparition" as being an expression of suddenness (Bevilaqua), visual beauty (Knapp), mystery (Witemeyer), or the Underworld (Kenner), to the discussion of the way the two images are joined. Steve Ellis, for example, claims that it is also important to pay attention to how the lines were "joined" together, since there were versions of the poem in which the first line ended by a colon, semicolon, or even any punctuation mark. This, he claims, may tell us something about the equivalence or superposition of one line to the other, that is, about a crucial process in the creation of the final metaphorical effect. He refuses Earl Miner,s claim about the discordia concors

[3] See peirce,s description of *feeling* above.

in the poem, stating himself that Miner neglected "to consider the care that pound himself took to indicate to the reader how that gap should be 'imaginatively leaped," (Ellis).

A very important line of interpretation of the poem is based on Pound,s Oriental leanings, especially his preoccupation with the Japanese haiku. Thus Jyan-Lung Lin interprets Pound,s images as expressing the Zen mood of Yugen, that is, the sense of mysterious depth in nature:

> This mood, as mentioned before, is identified by Zen people as an essential precondition of enlightenment. It produces, and at the sametime is produced by, the image, which is not to be used as an ornament but to point at the Tao or self-nature, a mysterious totality of the inner and outer nature.

This is in perfect accord with Pound,s own comment on the nature of the poem, its images, and, by extension, the images of Imagism as such: "In a poem of this sort one is trying to record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective" (*Gaudier-Brzeska* 103), or, when we look at it from the other pole of the creative process, when "things internal are transformed, through art, into things external" (Juhasz 15).

In addition to his great role in founding Imagism, Pound became an important (and highly controversial) personality in two other aspects as well: 1, he carried experimentation in modern poetry almost to the most extreme levelsofar (in some of his Cantos), 2, he got involved in politics during WWII by supporting Mussolini, which led to his imprisonment after the war by the American Army and subsequent trial for treason. As a result of this, he spent several years in a mental hospital — through which he escaped capital punishment.

As for his experimentation, it could be said that he showed the "meaning" of poetry to the post-romantic and post-realistic readers. First of all, despite complicated form and content so typical for modernists, Pound is often claimed to have tried to make his poetry part of life. His life, however, was a little bit more complicated than the life of ordinary citizens. His work *The Cantos* was an attempt to write an epic poem which would reflect his life. Like many other writers who tried to do it (e.g. William

Wordsworth in his *Prelude* or Walt Whitman in *Leaves of Grass*), it took him a long time, much experimentation, and a change in style and themes.

T. S. Eliot

It would be quite difficult to find literary works more characteristic and symptomatic of twentieth century Anglophone literature than T. S. Eliot,s long poem *The Waste Land.* For many, it has become a symptomatic expression not only of the period when it was published, i.e. the aftermath of WWI with its disillusionment and the ensuing anxieties of modern life in the city, but of the general loss of values in the years to come as well.

Initially, the poem,s publication was an important event on the cultural scenes of both England and the USA. The person who was responsible for this, greatly shaping its final form by extensive proofreading and then using his influence among the publishers to arrange for its printing on both sides of the Atlantic, was Ezra Pound. He immediately recognised the importance of Eliot and considered *The Waste Land* to be as good as *Ulysses:* "His poem is as good in its way as Ulysses in its way, and there is so DAMN little genius, so DAMN little work that one can take hold of and say, 'This at any rate stands, makes a definite part of literature," (qtd. in Rainey 28). However, after initial popularity in the first half of the century, *The Waste Land,* unlike *Ulysses,* lost its overwhelming attraction in the second. The reasons for the relative decline of the poem,s impact in contemporary cultural milieu have not yet been adequately discussed. Not a small role could be attributed to a general lack of interest in poetry caused by changed cultural conditions, especially the rise of the television and the internet. Not of lesser importance, however, may be the personality of the poet himself; especially his opinions concerning culture and religion which, for most contemporary scholars, have become "obsolete," conservative, if not even straightforwardly "reactionary." It is not surprising, since the times in which T. S. Eliot lived and wrote (*The WasteLand* was published between WWI and WWII, the two most cataclysmic failures of human culture) could not have left him immune to all the complexities he was faced with, and the current literary scholarship, obsessed with ideological shortcuts, seems to be losing the ability to discriminate such complexities.

Various critical approaches to the reading and studying of literature, having their own points of culmination and demise over the span of the twentieth century, also have meant paying more or less attention to the poem, since philological, New Critical,

archetypal, structuralist, poststructuralist, cultural and postcolonial approaches pursued their own goals, not necessarily corresponding to the themes and language of *The Waste Land.* Despite these developments, one can say that the *The Waste Land* is not a thing of the past,that it is still powerful, and, as Rainey has put it, "[p]erhaps the ultimate testimony to the poem,s wild power is the fact that it has, for so long, survived the attention of its warmest admirers" (39—40).

The fact that T. S. Eliot was not only a poet but an important critic makes it necessary to view his poetry, including *The Waste Land,* within a larger picture, not only as an emotional outburst (he was writing it during strong upheavals in his marriage), but also as the imaginative embodiment of his opinions regarding cultural and philosophical phenomena of the time. It is a poem in which the individual self is firmly interlinked with its cultural constitution. Without the ability to sense a rich layer of cultural backdrop behind the self,s inner emotional drama, one cannot fully comprehend the universality of the poem,s appeal.

Before approaching *The Waste Land* from this aspect, we should clarify, however, what Eliot meant by culture. T. S. Eliot addressed the concept of culture most extensively in his *Christianity and Culture* in which he sees it not as a clearly defined phenomenon, or concept, but as "the product of a variety of more or less harmonious activities, each pursued for its own sake" (92). Although, in his opinion, it is possible to speak about culture at the level of an individual, group or class, or of society, it does not exhaust itself at only one of these levels, but has to be perceived as an interactive whole, since "the culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of a group or class, and [...] the culture of the group or class is dependent upon the culture of the whole society to which that group or class belongs" (93). He does not strictly distinguish between culture and religion, claiming that the "development of culture and the development of religion, in a society uninfluenced from without, cannot be clearly isolated from each other" (100). The same holds true for art and religion: "The artistic sensibility is impoverished by its divorce from the religious sensibility, the religious by its separation from the artistic" (98). This broad understanding of culture also thus includes, more or less, other such categories as class and elite, region, sect and cult, politics and education. Politics is claimed to be part of culture; not something standing against it and used as an instrument. At the same time, however, "uncultured" politics — driven

by profit – can have negative effects on culture: "American economic expansion can be also, in its way, the cause of disintegration of cultures which it touches" (168).

Although, on one hand, some of his opinions concerning education could be read as supporting restrictive access to education, on the other hand it is important to point to their flexibility and permeability, as is the case with his other concepts (class, elite, etc.). Therefore, in education, what is of primary importance is not the idea of universal accessibility, but the purpose of education: "It would be a pity if we overlooked the possibilities of education as a means of acquiring wisdom; if we belittled the acquisition of knowledge for the satisfaction of curiosity, without any further motive than the desire to know; and if we lost our respect for learning" (175.) True, nowadays one does not challenge the idea of uniform educational system, but neither did he. For while on one hand he claims that it "leads imperceptibly to the education of too many people, and consequently to the lowering of standards to whatever this swollen number of candidates is able to reach" (175), on the other hand he acknowledges the fact that "[E]ducation for everybody is the means we must employ for putting civilisation together again" (182—183). What his "aversion" against the idea of universality truly means can then maybe be characterised more as atypical modernistic fear of massification, and the consequent lowering of cultural standards, than the unacceptable elitism of the past: "A 'mass-culture, will always be a substitute-culture; and sooner or later the deception will become apparent to the more intelligent of those upon whom this culture has been palmed off" (184). But again, even his rejection of mass culture is not unequivocal. As Chinitz has pointed out, "there is also evidence of his lifelong attraction to various forms of 'lowbrow, culture: comic strips ('Krazy Kat,, 'Mut and Jef,), boxing, street slang, melodrama, vaudeville, sensational news stories (especially about murders), the music of Broadway and Tin Pan Alley, the bawdy comedy of Ernie Lotinga" (237). He maintains that there is "the constant presence of popular culture in his creative process" (240). and that the "elitist Eliot alone could never have written Eliot,s poetry, which issues in part from an internal struggle over popular culture" (241). This is hardly surprising since what today,s detractors of Eliot (branding him as a reactionary conservative and anti-Semite) seem to entirely forget is the simple fact that "T. S. Eliot was a creature of paradoxes, and paradoxes which he did his best to cultivate and sustain" (Howarth 57).

Although the "vicissitudes" of culture area key for understanding *The Waste Land,* the word itself does not occur in the poem. It lurks, however, behind every other word in it. The fact that the poem was written shortly after the time of the so far "unparalleled destructiveness" of WWI when culture was abused and lost, highlights its centrality and importance for those times, and, by extension, for today, when culture is in danger of becoming lost and "wasted" again.

There is no doubt that the poem is culturally heterogeneous, since in addition to European cultural layers, one can find there a strong presence of the elements of Indian culture, and, upon close analysis, intertextual overflows to other cultural spheres, past and present. However, what can be most strongly felt in it is the domination of European mythological, literary and philosophical sources. In one of the first responses to the publication of *The Waste Land* the author of the article printed in the *Times Literary Supplement* wrote that "[B]etween the emotion from which a poem rises and the reader there is always a cultural layer of more or less density from which the images or characters in which it is expressed may be drawn" ("A Zig-Zag of Allusion" 616). The poem,s cultural layer is indeed very dense as well as extensive. To recognise it, one needs education well above the mass level. For some of the first commentators it was a sign of the author,s immense learning and some considered it too intellectual, or too esoteric and deliberately mystifying (Munson 156), while others found it to be a "mad medley," "a smoke-screen of anthropological and literary erudition," owing its inspiration not only to Frazer and Weston, but "to Spenser, Shakespeare, Webster, Kyd, Middleton, Milton, Marvell, Goldsmith, Ezekiel, Buddha, Virgil, Ovid, Dante, St Augustine, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and others." Moreover, as the author continues, "[L]ines of German, French and Italian are thrown in at will or whim; so, too, are solos from nightingales, cocks, hermit-thrushes, and Ophelia," resulting not in the waste land, but rather the "waste paper" (Powell 156).

Ambiguous responses to the poem,s (multi)cultural background occurred also among critics drawing on similar critical orientation, like the American New Critics. While for John Crowe Ransom, for example, the problem of *The Waste Land* was in the fragmentariness and the disconnection of its individual cultural allusions, I. A. Richards on the other hand saw allusions as technical devices of compression (274). A thorough analysis of themes and symbols, in a truly New Critical way, was offered by Cleanth

Brooks who pointed to the unity of experience created out of the complexity of cultural material. As suggested above, speaking about culture in relation to *The Waste Land,* one is naturally led to the culture of Europe, although as Banerjee claims, "[s]tudying Indic thought with its radically different assumptions, alongside anthropology, comparative religion, and philology, Eliot attempted togo beyond the limits of his own cultural perspective, gaining an appreciation, at the sametime, of just how difficult it was to do so" (Banerjee 240).

Despite his Oriental leanings, and being American-born, it is "European culture" which dominates his work. What this concept meant for him was explained in the three lectures given to the German public after WWII, included in his *Christianity and Culture.* Eliot sees Europe here not as a politically rigid territory composed of nation-states, but as a kind of large community consisting of the interpenetration of local, national and international phenomena, competing as well as cooperating in various spheres — economic, political as well as spiritual, drawing on common sources — the culture of Rome, Greece and Israel. Eliot,s ideas here are so modern and up to date, that if one inserted some of his passages to current EU documents, they would appear perfectly compatible. Thus, for example, in the concept of European art he sees "the local tradition, the common European tradition, and the influence of the art of one European country upon another" ("The Unity of European Culture"). Healthy European culture needs, in his opinion, two conditions to be fulfilled:

> that the culture of each country should be unique, and that the different cultures should recognise their relationship to each other, so that each should be susceptible of influence from the others," adding that "this is possible because there is a common element in European culture, an interrelated history of thought and feeling and behaviour, an interchange of arts and of ideas."
>
> (The Unity of European Culture)

A crucial, though nowadays understood as very controversial, role in the unity of European culture Eliot attributes to religion, on one hand claiming that "no culture has appeared or developed except together with a religion" (*Christianity and Culture* 87), but, on the other hand, also saying that "a culture is more than the assemblage of its arts, customs, and religious beliefs." He speaks, however, of "the common tradition of

Christianity which has made Europe what it is" ("The Unity of European Culture"). Of course, EU documents do not mention any particular religion as dominant in Europe, despite the unsuccessful struggles of not so long ago, during the negotiations about the European constitution, to characterise Europe as primarily Christian. Even though one can agree with the argument of the necessity to "divorce the church and state" and not to allow the Christian Church, or any other Church for that matter, to destroy the mechanisms of civil democracy, the problem of the spiritual and imaginative essence of Europe should not be oversimplified, since "[I]t is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have—until recently—been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance" ("The Unity of European Culture").

Thus again, to truly understand Eliot, one cannot forget that he was "a creature of paradoxes," complexity and contradictions. It holds true for his approach to Christianity as well, since in *Christianity and Culture* he takes pains to stress that he is not a religious apologist, that "this book does not make any plea for a 'religious revival, in a sense with which we are already familiar" (4), that the concept is much more complicated for him and more sociological than connected to the practical, everyday issues of "churchgoing." As he has further emphasised,

> "I attempt, as far as possible, to contemplate my problems from the point of view of the sociologist, and not from that of the Christian apologist. Most of my generalisations are intended to have some applicability to all religion, and not only to Christianity; and when, as in what follows in this chapter, I discuss Christian matters, that is because I am particularly concerned with Christian culture, with the Western World, with Europe, and with England."
>
> (*Christianity and Culture* 143)

The strong position of Christianity, as the historically most important European religion, is key in Eliot,s conception of the cultural unity of Europe. It emerged as such, however, only later in his career — after he joined the Church of England in 1927. In *The Waste Land,* the omnipresent European cultural background was primarily created by more heterogeneous means of myth, history and art, all embodied in intertextual references and allusions. There are, in fact, just a few words which do not allude to

other textual realities. Eliot himself confirmed it by revealing his sources in his famous "notes" to the poem,s first book publication (which he slightly ridiculed later) — like Edgar Allan Poe, his famous American predecessor, who also attempted to guide readers into the intricacies and symbolism of his "The Raven" (see Poe,s "The Philosophy of Composition"), creating confusion as well as the disbelief of some and the admiration of others. It would thus be difficult, if not useless, to repeat Eliot,s explanation of the sources, or to elaborate on them and bring new links or forgotten allusions, for – over the years – it has been done by many of the poem,s commentators and critics. To understand the poem more fully, and in an "Eliotian" way, it seems better to mix the "tradition and individual talent," or the cultural and individual perception; reading the poem as a poem with the support of intellectual and cultural scaffolding (Brooks 185).

The very first lines of the poem[4] invite such an approach. Its motto "Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipseoculis meis vidi / in ampulla pendere, etcumilli pueri dicerent: Σiβνλλα τi Θελεις; / respondebat illa: &πο Θανεrν ΘελΨ." immediately takes even a casual reader to the "intellectual and cultural scaffolding." The heart of European culture, the ancient Greek and Latin mythology and literature, sets the tone for the whole poem, not only formally (using fragments of past works), but also thematically. In the image of the Sybil of Cumae hanging in a cage Eliot introduces the poem,s leitmotif – "the unbearable lightness of being." The Sybil was given eternal life by Apollo, but, because she refused to be his lover, she was not granted eternal youth. Therefore, she lives for as many years as there are grains in a "handful of dust," but her life is not full, being just a fragment of what it used to be, and losing its substance as she becomes older and lighter and lighter; not dying, eventhough she wishes to die. The lost substance is explored throughout the poem. It emerges in an incredibly rich intertextual world made up of fragments from various times and places.

The poem is divided into 5 parts of various lengths. Its final form, however, is the result of an incredibly long creative process, both at the level of composition as well as the poet,s internal imaginative processing of his worldly suffering into this ontological cleansing. The compositional process is usually associated with Ezra Pound,s almost

[4] My reading is based on *A Norton Critical Edition: T. S. Eliot The Waste Land,* edited by Michael North.

"co-authorial" reshuffling, which is, after all, said to have given the poem its internal coherence and force. However, it would not have been possible without "the fire" of Eliot,s primary mental wanderings into the fragmented world of the cultural past and present, of which he tried to make sense — in a truly modernistic way.

The first part, "The Burial of the Dead," is a straightforward beginning of the author,s "past and present" play. Even without being aware that the title is commonly understood as a reference to the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer,* one can sense in it a more general, universal coming to terms with the necessity of an end and a new beginning. Such duality is typical for all of Eliot,s references, which are both allusions to something else as well as standing on their own. The end-beginning imaginative move is clearly visible in the first lines of the text as well. "April is the cruellest month" must remind an informed reader of *The Canterbury Tales:* "When that Aprilis, with his showers swoot, / The drought of March hath pierced to the root" (Chaucer), although here the expressions evoke the opposite emotion.

While for Chaucer April marks the beginning of spring, joy, and an awakening to new life, for Eliot it is the "cruellest month," marking the end of warmth and forgetfulness, and exposing the naked waste of the land. However, it is suddenly exchanged for summer with a hidden motif of love, and a geographical jump from medieval England to German Starnbergersee and Hofgarten, seemingly taking the reader to the author,s own childhood; though, at the same time, appearing to be a reminiscence of a past encounter which, in turn, takes one to an even more distant past of Austrian nobility (see the note on this allusion in North 5). And again, even without being able to trace its cultural, historical or personal source, the use of German, alongside the previously mentioned place names of Starnbergersee and Hofgarten, as in "Bin gar keine Russin, stamm, aus Litauen, echt deutsch," lends the paragraph another intercultural layer, further intensified by "Russin" and "Litauen." Moreover, when one learns that Lake Starnberg is in fact the place where King Ludwig II of Bavaria, who was very fond of Richard Wagner,s work (to which Eliot refers through another German quotation, "Frisch weht der Wind / Der Heimat zu, / Mein Irisch Kind / Wo weilest du?") and listened to it in an artificial cave and rode sledges drawn by horses at night, one may begin to feel as if you are falling into a vortex in which individual artefacts blend into a totality of cultural impact.

The following stanza is a real tour de force of existential anxiety at the background of the desert (and deserted) land:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either

Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

(5–6)

Again, what one finds here is an overpowering cultural biblical context (see Eliot,s own note on this in North 21), interrelated with the previous reference from the motto (Sybil,swish to live as many years as there are grains in a "handful of dust") as well as with Eliot,s own near obsession with the motif of "shadow." The stanza is a very direct expression of the theme of "waste land," of civilizational dryness and lack of hope, of his times, "broken" images not rooted in any kind of refreshing life source — as the land here is astony one without any water producing shadows which give protection from the sun, but follow us as reminders of a loss. By definition, a shadow is something immaterial, but, at the same time, retains the relation to a material source without which it could not exist. It is a manifestation of what postmodern theory terms simulacrum, which also lacks substantiality. Eliot here imaginatively stretches the cultural emptying out into its extreme.

In addition to the famous Tarot card section of "Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante," rich with other cultural allusions and implying another way of shadowing, shallowing or de-substantialising reality, the part ends with a jump into the "Unreal city." It is the London of the present, with its crowds flowing over London

Bridge – being compared to the human shadows from Dante,s *Inferno* – and then, suddenly, shifts to someone called "Stetson" brought back trans historically to Mylae, the site of the ancient battle between Carthage and Rome.

The next part continues this fragmentation and de-historising of history and culture. Named "A Game of Chess," it could also be understood culturally and metaphorically, since it refers to a well-known game based on intellectual "manipulation" as well as to cultural phenomena (North 8). Here we can also find maybe the most direct expression of Eliot,s personal anxieties resulting from an unhappy marriage with Vivienne Haigh-Wood:

> "My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
> "Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.
>
> "What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
> "I never know what you are thinking. Think."
>
> (9)

There are other allusions to the present (war, pub drinking), but again, not without references to Shakespeare,s Anthony and Cleopatra, The Tempest, or a story from Ovid,s Metamorphoses. The third part, "The Fire Sermon," develops the cultural inroads into English literature by alluding to Prothalamion by Edmund Spenser ("Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song, / Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long") and Andrew Marvell,s To His Coy Mistress ("But at my back from time to time I hear / The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring"). In the latter reference, Eliot continues Marvell,s ironical treatment of a lady not willing to enjoy herself with the poet ("But at my back I always hear / Time,s wing?d chariot hurrying near"). Sexual overtones are strengthened in the image of the typist,s abandonment by a lover and Tyresias, transgender nature. The final lines of the part display the motif of an intense heat:

> Burning burning burning burning
> o Lord Thou pluckest me out

o Lord Thou pluckest
burning

(15)

Eliot himself explained it in his notes by reference to the Buddha,s Fire Sermon (see the note 308 in North, p. 25). This is one of a few "non-European" references in the poem, proving, in fact, not only the nonsense of Eliot,s supposed cultural conservatism (at some point in time he was immersed in the study of Oriental wisdom) (LeCarner), but of the poem,s universal aspiration. "Death by Water" is the shortest and undoubtedly the most poetical part of *The Waste Land.* It returns to the character of Phlebas, the drowned Phoenician sailor who was first introduced in "The Burial of the Dead." The overwhelming theme the part expresses is that of time, and loss in and through time, which results in sadness and existential grief:

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,

Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss.

A current undersea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell

He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew
o you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

(16)

The part is most fragmented even among the other fragments. It is very short and differs by its lyricism, as if cancelling out what Eliot had been painfully trying to express in previous sections. Though maybe because of that it paradoxically fits into the composition. Eliot originally wanted to leave it out entirely, but, after all, preserved it due to Pound,s advice. Again, critics find in it not only personal lyricism, but inter-cultural overtones going back to Eliot,s acknowledged original mythological inspiration, Weston,s *From Ritual to Romance,* where waters restore the dry waste land into its

fertility again. Water here, however, is juxtaposed with death, as if even its surplus would not save the world from forgiveness.

After the excess of water in "Death by Water," the poem,s final part, "What the Thunder Said," begins with its catastrophically deadening lack, following the depiction of the crucifixion scene ("he who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying" [...] "Here is no water but only rock / Rock and no water and the sandy road"). It then assumes the intensity of a speeding apocalypse ("cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air / Falling towers / Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London / Unreal"), to be substituted with more surreal images of decay, and the voice of thunder, expected to bring rain to the "jungle crouched, humped in silence." Then the thunder speaks, uttering a single syllable "Da," the same but understood differently by those to whom it was addressed (see Eliot,s note 401 in which he says that the meaning of the voice of thunder can be found in the *Upanishads;* North 25). Although Eliot himself in his notes gives sources for these final images, their force is greater when left to stand on their own. As such they express the beginning in the end, order in chaos, and peace in understanding — as he suggested in his final note, commenting on the nonsense word "Shantih," which ends the poem.

There is not much to be said on the conclusion, since, by its nature, the poem does not offer any conclusion or any closure. It is a tour de force of strong imagination bordering on incomprehensibility, displaying in a nutshell not only the cultural and intellectual history of Europe, based on our shared sources (Rome, Greece, Israel), but Oriental wisdom as well. Almost every word in the poem is an allusion or reference to an external phenomenon as well as to the author,s internal sense of being.

Although its fragmented nature seems to suit a postmodern sense of the self, it does not suit its lack of involvement, for *The Waste Land* is anything but a play of signifiers. And as such, it is still a warning and hope.

Wallace Stevens

The image plays an important role in the work of another American author —Wallace Stevens. Although he was not part of the "inner circle" of Imagists, his close association with some of its members (especially William Carlos Williams), as Juhasz claims, "brought him near the vortex of Imagist theory and practice… [and] no doubt spurred his own experiments in this vein" (18 n). His poems are "speculations about the nature of man and of the world" (16), using metaphor both as the principal figure through which he aims to express it as well as, again, the principal "obstacle" (16).

One of his first and perhaps most famous poems, which deals with the essentiality of reality, is the frequently anthologised "The Snow Man":

One must have a mind of winter

To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time

To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think

Of any misery in the sound of the wind,

in the sound of a few leaves,
Which is the sound of the land

Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds

Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

(Stevens, *The Collected Poems* 9—10)

The poem is a simple and clear, almost non-figurative, depiction of the reality of winter and the (im)possibility of a human perception of it. On one hand, there is nature: winter with its images (the frost, boughs, pine-trees, snow). On the other hand, the

mind: a human being, separated from and foreign to nature, facing loneliness and misery. Their point of contact is their point of departure — from oneself to the other, expressing the difficulty offiguration: "One must have a mind of winter," if one wants to "behold" it, in the light of its "distant glitter," which is the light of the essence.

The metaphor of such beholding is expressed by the snowman, the snow and the man, the man of snow. It is a non-representational trope, a human thing, balanced between the two worlds, striving to express the sensation of their unity, to unite the thing external with the thing internal. According to perkins, it is "a metaphor of a metaphor [...] a metaphor of a 'mind of winter,, and this, in turn, is a metaphor of something even more abstract: a mind that entertains nothingness." But since nothingness is ultimately un-metaphorical and un-figurative, "The Snow Man" is also "a radical critique of representation" (Hartman 15); the critique through which he hoped to defy the commonly known fact that "things stand over against us" (Bottum 214). Stevens himself makes it very clear in his other poems — "The poem is the cry of its occasion, / part of the res itself and not about it" (*The Collected Poems* 465) as well as in various occasional statements such as "A poem is like a natural object" (205). But what is important here is the "like," an indication of the metaphorical nature of perception, since if it were not for the "like," we would have no means to know it.

While "The Snow Man" is a figurative image of looming non-figurativeness, and a glimpse of a perceived nothingness, the poem "Of Mere Being" is tense with the poetic suggestion of utmost strangeness — a silent and artificially fragile epiphany of being:

The palm at the end of the mind,
Beyond the last thought, rises

In the bronze decor,
A gold feathered bird

Sings in the palm, without human meaning,
Without human feeling, a foreign song.

You know then that it is not the reason
That makes us happy or unhappy.
The bird sings. Its feathers shine.

The palm stands on the edge of space.
The wind moves slowly in the branches.
The bird,s fire-fangled feathers dangle down.

(*Opus Posthumous* 141)

Like the "The Snow Man," "Of Mere Being" shows both a division and a unity. The division between the world of "human meaning" and "human feeling" and the realm of the other where such qualities are absent. The otherness is suggested by a metonymical image of "A gold feathered bird" that "Sings in the palm." The bird sings, but the song is not human, it expresses neither a meaning nor a feeling, as the world "at the end of the mind" may not bear such qualities. But "[i]s this not to prove the ultimate creativity of self, of the mind which must always conceive a reality beyond form or metaphor, beyond thought, but nevertheless at the end of, not outside, the mind?" (Riddel). A reality which would be playful, arbitrarily colourful, non-referential, the result of the mind,s loss in itself, but despite its effort to show the beyond, still only an absolute opposite of the "physical thing," the other extreme of metaphor towards which image always gravitates, pulled by an irresistible force.

The Lost Generation

"You are a lost generation" — these are the famous words of Gertrude Stein used as a motto in Hemingway,s novel *The Sun Also Rises* — a programmatic work of a generation of American writers who left the USA and spent a considerable part of their careers in post WWI Europe. They fled America because of dissatisfaction with its values and conventions, its institutions and morality, and went to European capitals; mostly London and Paris, but also Barcelona, Madrid, and Rome. In Europe, they participated in significant events affecting the continent and tried to reflect them in a new style of writing (economy of language, symbolism, fragmentation, and pictorial language), since the old Victorian ways based on writers, ethical treatment of social issues were not applicable for the depiction of distress in the aftermath of WWI. The presence of war affected their own lives and values, estranging them to the common, simple pleasures of human existence, and making them abandoned and lost. Although the "Lost Generation" was never agroup with fixed membership or statutes, scholars usually agree that the most important artists included in the group are Ernest Hemingway, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein as their "tutor."

If one of the most important features of modernism was a new way and style of writing, then Ernest Hemingway cannot be excluded from the list of prominent stylistic innovators. He is usually characterised as a person who brought simplicity of expression but complexity of thought. His often quoted "iceberg theory" forces the reader to read between the lines to get to the meaning of simple and clear sentences. There is no doubt that such linguistic "minimalism" is also associated with his initial journalistic experience at the *Kansas City Star* where he worked after finishing the Oak Park highschool. The reporters there had to follow the journal,s style, summarised into a style sheet consisting of 110 directives: "Ernest himself later said the 110 directives were 'the best rules I,ve ever learned for the business of writing. I,ve never forgotten them., The main precepts were 'Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs. Use vigorous English. Be positive, not negative," (Dearborn 46). Hemingway,s avoidance of clichéd adjectives also stems from his journalistic Kansas City experience: "One example Ernest provided of the style sheet in action was that reporters were never to say anyone was 'seriously injured. All injuries are serious. [The victim] was, as I recall,

slightly injured or dangerously injured., Another dictum was to avoid adjectives, especially words like 'gorgeous,, 'grand,, or 'marvellous., Similarly, 'Slang to be enjoyable must be fresh," (Dearborn 46).

Hemingway,s unique minimalism is most clearly visible in his short stories. In "Hills Like White Elephants," for example, he plays out a complicated human relationship with just a few simple sentences and two characters – a girl named Jig and her companion or lover, referred to as the American, waiting for a train in a station somewhere in Spain. The conversation is short, first about the drinks they are going to have and then, without any warning for the reader about an operation. Only later do we realise that the "operation" is most probably abortion, though the word is never used in the story. Despite the shortness and simplicity of sentences, it is clear that the man insists on the going for an abortion, though, again, never saying it out loud. Jig,s responses show her unwillingness to do it, as well as her realisation of her partner,s attempt to persuade her to do it – again, not openly stated and rather sarcastic:

"If I do it you won,t ever worry?"

"I won,t worry about that because it,s perfectly simple."

"Then I,ll do it. Because I don,t care about me."

"What do you mean?"

"I don,t care about me."

"Well, I care about you."

"Oh, yes. But I don,t care about me. And I,ll do it and then everything will be fine."

"I don,t want you to do it if you feel that way."

(Hemingway 213)

The story,s setting is also very important. As Renner has it, "[T]o follow the girl,s development in 'Hills Like White Elephants,, it is essential to have a clear sense of the setting in which the development takes place" (28). Train stations are usually the places through which people come from one direction and go in another. Here, symbolically, from one way of life to another. There are two directions, two lines of rails with the

station in the middle, two sides of the valley with two landscapes, again divided by the station. While "on this side there was no shade and no trees" (Hemingway 211), on the other side "were fields of grain and trees along the banks of the Ebro" (213). Renner sees in it a symbolic intertwining of setting and conflict. "The choice of abortion is associated with the arid sterility of the hills on the barren side of the valley and by extension, with the aimless hedonistic life they have been leading. The choice of having the child is associated with the living, growing things on the other side of the valley…" (28).

The short story is frequently discussed also because of its open ending. The reader, in fact, does not know whether the girl will go for the operation or succumb to her unexpressed, yet very strong, wish to keep the child.

While Hemingway,s short stories are usually referred to as examples of a minimalistic style, some of his longer works are important reflections of crucial European events occurring in the first half of the twentieth century. The first time Hemingway came to Europe was in May 1918 to take part in WWI as a volunteer ambulance driver for the Red Cross on the Italian front. In just a few days he was wounded by a shrapnel from a bomb that exploded very near and killed a person who stood close to him. After his hospital treatment in Milan, where he methis first love (the American nurse Agnes von Kurowsky) he left for America only to come back again in 1921 — this time to Paris and accompanied by his first wife, Hadley Richardson. Paris became the city which most significantly influenced Hemingway,s work, making him a representative of the "lost generation." Most critics therefore consider Paris as a "Mecca" of American literary expatriation; identified by many Americans with the "rejection of conservative mores in America, sexual liberation and alcohol consumption, creative cross-fertilization, and soon" (Herlihy-Mera 49).

In *The Sun Also Rises,* the company of Americans indeed do not pursue meaningful activities other than drinking and dancing. It must be said, however, that the city does not play a crucial role in it, for they do the same in Spanish Pamplona where they come to see the famous bullfighting. The motif of excessive drinking then seems to be rather typical of Hemingway,s writing, probably resulting from the author,s own drinking habits.

The novel is generally perceived as a portrayal of the "lost generation" and its disillusionment after WWI. Its protagonist, Jake Barnes, had suffered an unspecified wound in the war, which made him impotent — both physically as well as spiritually — and unable to have a meaningful relationship with his love Brett Ashley. Brett likes Jake, but she likes other men as well, which does not result in any strong sensation in Jake. He tries to make up for the loss of Brett by intensifying his "social" activities — partying in Paris and going with his friends to bullfights associated with excessive drinking during the San Fermín festival in Pamplona. His friends are also "lost," and unable to care about conventional American values. What Jake,s friend Bill tells him may be a true picture of them all as well: "You,re an expatriate. You,ve lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you. You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed by sex. You spend all your time talking, not working. You are an expatriate, see? You hang around cafés" (Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* 100). Their loss is thus an American loss, for they find themselves away from home (which many of them despise) and its culture, unable to make sense of life on foreign ground, and when fighting in foreign wars.

Whilst in *The Sun Also Rises* the war is hidden (only its consequences are visible in the protagonist,s destruction), the protagonist of *A Farewell to Arms* finds himself right in the middle of it. It is a story of love between an American ambulance driver at the Italian front during WWI, the "tenente" Frederic Henry, and his pretty Scottish nurse, Catherine Barkley. The depiction of Henry,s wounding and his subsequent stay at an American hospital in Milan, where he is treated by Catherine Barkley, is freely based on what happened to Hemingway himself. The couple,s fleeing on a boat to Switzerland is their attempt to make "separate peace" for themselves, which, however, cannot be enjoyed since Catherine dies in childbirth.

While *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* are more or less related to WWI (either through its devastating effects on the psychic life of soldiers or through the writer,s direct portrayal of the fighting and its consequences for the human psyche), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* depicts a few days in the life of an American volunteer in the Spanish Civil War. In it, Hemingway expressed one of modernism,s significant themes — the analysis of existential anxiety at the background of great social events. Although the story centres on Robert Jordan, a dynamiter given the task to blow up a bridge, it

also portrays the "historical violence of the Spanish civil War" as well as "a metaphysical violence," using "war symbolically, as a frame or correlative, for the inner crisis that springs from the recognition of the self, its existence and its annihilation" (Allen 204). As in *A Farewell to Arms,* there is death at the end, though this time it is not a woman who dies, but a man. The last scene leaves Robert Jordan wounded, facing his own unavoidable destruction, and, through personal sacrifice, giving a chance to his comrades to escape.

What is unique about this novel is that it shows not only a personal crisis, but the crisis of humanity which escaped the carnage of the first "war of the world" only to plunge into a second one. In between the wars there was a bloody struggle of nationalists and republicans in Spain, or, to put it maybe simplistically, in the line of this work,s main theme, a struggle of conservatism with modernism. The conservatists (including also extreme far right elements, fascists, nationalists, monarchists or orthodox Catholics) won and under the leadership of Francisco Franco ruled in Spain until 1975. Despite being labelled as modernists, the other side included all sorts of left-wing extremists (communists and socialists), but also republicans — and generally included the poorer parts of society. In the novel there are several descriptions of atrocities committed by both parties, e.g. Pilar,s description of the brutal murdering of fascists or the bombing and finally beheading of the guerrilla leader El Sordo and his group. In both cases life is "subordinated" to ideological hatred. The reader suddenly realises that humanity and culture come second, and what is important for the protagonists is just the naked fact of war. The depiction of this "spirit of war," of all wars, is perhaps one of the lasting successes of Hemingway,s creative ability. In the introduction to the Scribner edition of *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* Jeremy Bowen compares the portrayal of the Spanish Civil War to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1993:

> The smell of horse sweat, the wooden saddles laden with ammunition, the soldiers, tobacco, the trail that went uphill through the forest and then out into the high, sun-roasted mountains of Herzegovina, all transported me back to Hemingway,s novel. The fact that it was even possible to hear the echoes of a novel in the middle of the nasty, dangerous reality of the Balkans in the early

1990s shows how successfully Hemingway got into the minds of people who find themselves caught up in a war.

(1)

Had Hemingway finished his writing career here, we could describe him as one of the literary geniuses of the twentieth century — analysing the Euro-American cultural and social tensions during the time of armed conflict, and its consequences for human existence. However, he continued with other themes, which eventually earned him the Nobel Prize for literature, "for his mastery of the art of narrative, most recently demonstrated in *The Old Man and the Sea,* and for the influence that he has exerted on contemporary style" (*The NobelPrize,* The Nobel Prize in Literature 1954). He ended his life by committing suicide in 1961.

There is perhaps no better embodiment of the "roaring" 1920s, or the Jazz Age, than Francis Scott Fitzgerald. The decade is associated with several unforgettable phenomena, namely, the so-called Prohibition Era (1919 — 1933), during which Americans experienced a ban on the consumption of alcohol (which, in turn, led to bootlegging, speakeasies and, consequently, the rise of organised crime — Al Capone), the popularisation and rapid success of jazz music, the growing popularity of moving pictures, the rise of Hollywood and investment craziness at Wall Street. Americans suddenly found themselves obsessed with music, dancing, alcohol and sex, all inevitably coming to a sudden and brutal halt in the form of the Stock Market Crash in 1929, followed by the Great Depression. Although most of these events were made themes in Fitzgerald,s short stories and novels, one must say that they were also the themes of his own life, which was also crazy and glamorous, full of heavy drinking and frantic work to pay for it, and which also led to a sudden stop in the form of a fatal heart attack – and also his wife Zelda,s death in a mental hospital just a few years later.

Fitzgerald addressed these themes both in his short stories as well as in his novels. According to Sutton, "[U]sually, the pattern in Fitzgerald,s fiction is for material to appear first in his short stories and later in his novels" (164). In "Babylon Revisited," the author depicts the return of the protagonist Charlie Wales to Paris, the scene of his previous "wild life," led during the pre-Depression glaring years, and ended in the tragedy of his wife,s death, in order to get his daughter Honoria from the legal

guardianship of his sister-in-law. Charlie is constantly reminded of his past excesses, and, despite his strong effort in presenting himself as a person who managed to move on from his previous life and start a successful business, he nevertheless fails to achieve his goal due to the interference of his old friends who force themselves back into his life again.

A very similar motif, an effort to overcome the past, to win back the past love, or, as Sutton has it, to win "back afemale who was once his" (165), can be found in his masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby.* But this is not the only similarity. "Both works portray money, when not honestly earned, as corrupting that past innocence" (Sutton 165). Gatsby,s attempts to "recover" the love of Daisy Buchanan are, however, also precluded by his problematic past; namely, his suspicious way of making money.

The novel is also a great imaginative discussion of the American Dream, or rather its failure. Gatsby has managed to make big money to attract Daisy, but it does not bring him happiness or love. In the end, Daisy decides to stay with her husband and Gatsby is killed. Thus, as Hearne has it, "Fitzgerald sees the American dream—its ideology and its very character—as a contradiction to and a distortion of reality" (190), not as a fulfilment of romantic notions of love, happiness, and wealth. As the "roaring twenties" came to an end in disaster and death, metaphorically as well as physically, for the many newly rich - thus Gatsby inevitably meets the same destiny.

Literature of the American South

Since the very beginning of the formation of American culture, the south has shaped itself as a distinct cultural and economic entity. Its humid climate favoured agriculture based on the growing of tobacco and cotton and the use of slave work, both on plantations and as personal servants to attend the quasi-aristocratic families living in great houses built in the Greek style. The Civil War and Reconstruction had disrupted this culture, bringing, among other things, the collapse of traditional values and nostalgia, which, in turn, led to the rise of the myth of the "old South," with handsome gentlemen and pure southern "belles," created in a number of sentimental cheap works.

The writer who made the myth of the South a theme of most of his works was William Faulkner. Born in the South and living there for almost all of his life, he tried to chronicle its imaginative history in many short stories and novels. Most of them depict the largely conservative southern communities plagued with racial tensions; presenting their local destinies, usually set in the fictional Yoknapatawpha County, as universal human appeals – as "the old verities and truths of the heart" (Faulkner, *The Nobel Prize*).

In his widely anthologised short story "A Rose for Emily," Faulkner portrays the "decay" of a once famous family through the fate of an isolated and lost woman, not suited to the modern world. However, the theme is depicted much more intensively, and in a more elaborate form, in *The Sound and the Fury* — his first great novel. It is a story of four members of the Compson family — Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and the black servant Dilsey. Each part is told in a different narrative style and timeframe, making it difficult for the reader to grasp the incidents in their temporal development.

The first part is presented through the mind of Benjy, a mentally handicapped adult person, in broken and metaphorically coloured utterances. On "April Seventh, 1928" (as this part is named), Benjy, aged 33, and his younger companion Luster are watching a golf game. Benjy does not understand the game. He sees just the material things and movements, without comprehending their meaning, their abstract significance:

> Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster

was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting. Then they put the flag back and they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit. Then they went on, and I went along the fence. Luster came away from the flower tree and we went along the fence and they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass.

(*The Sound and the Fury,* locations 79—83).

Passing through a hole in the broken fence, Benjy snagged on a nail, which immediately sent his mind many years back to the time when he was crossing a fence with his sister Caddie:

'Wait a minute., Luster said. 'You snagged on that nail again. can,t you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail.,

Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over, Benjy. Like this, see. We stooped over and crossed the garden, where the flowers rasped and rattled against us. The ground was hard. We climbed the fence, where the pigs were grunting and snuffing. I expect they're sorry because one of them got killed today, Caddy said. The ground was hard, churned and knotted.

Keep your hands in your pockets, Caddy said. Or they'll get froze. You don't want your hands froze on Christmas, do you.

(locations 98—104).

The shifts in time, signalled by italics, is how Benjy,s mind works throughout the whole first part. For him and for Quentin, the protagonist of the second part of the book, time is not a progressive movement, but a series of stable flashes, existing in eternal or coincidental presents (Roggenbuck 581). What is also typical for Benjy are his synesthetic abilities —smelling the cold, smelling the sickness, his hands seeing the slipper– which create peculiar sensations for the reader, adding strange and fascinating dimensions to the "established" qualities of things.

As the title of the second part indicates, "June Second 1910," we move many years in to the past, to the time of Benjy,s temporal jumps in the first part, following his brother

Quentin,s coming to study at Harvard, and his suicide. The narrative style here is also highly "modernistic," almost a Joycean stream of consciousness. Unlike Benjy, Quentin is an intellectually capable person, though also carrying a curse — a disorganised consciousness, obsessed by time and family disintegration, falling into inevitable collapse:

> *"seeing on the rushing darkness only his own face no broken feather unless two of them but not two like that going to Boston the same night then my face his face for an instant across the crashing when out of darkness two lighted windows in rigid fleeing crash gone his face and mine just I seesaw did I see not good-bye the marquee empty of eating the road empty in darkness in silence the bridge arching into silence darkness sleep the water peaceful and swift not good-bye."*
>
> (locations 2804—2807).

To allow Quentin to go to Harvard, the family had to sell land belonging to Benjy, arousing in Quentin pangs of conscience. He is archetypally obsessed with water, which finally causes his death. In addition to the motif of water, Quentin is also tormenting himself by his almost erotic obsession with his sister Caddy who fell into disgrace by having an illegal affair and an illegitimate daughter Quentin, who, in turn, in the third part, is in conflict with her uncle Jason, Caddy and Quentin,s brother.

Jason,s part, entitled "April Sixth 1928," is the first of the last two stylistically "normal" parts. Jason Compson is the "black sheep of the family," in the sense that, unlike Benjy and Quentin, he is pragmatically obsessed with money and lacks any scruples. He steals money from his niece Quentin as well as his mother, even though the mother (a secluded egotistic hypochondriac) is fond of him and considers him the best of all her children. Jason is a symbol of the "new times" to which the rest of the family could not adapt, though his is also the destiny of a fall into disgrace. The last section, "April Eighth 1928," is focused on Dilsey — a black servant who keeps the family together, since she is the only person who is in fact "normal," not obsessed with anything. She takes care of Benjy and is not afraid to scold Jason and his niece Quentin for their conflicts. The "normalcy" of Dilsey is also signalled by the use of omniscient narrator.

All in all, the novel is one of the finest examples of twentieth century American literature. The author used a highly modernistic narrative style to portray "a plague"

the once aristocratic South has to face in modern times; the inevitable breaking of the link to land and traditional ways of life. The disintegration is presented through the archetypal images of earth, fire and water, all leading the characters to their collapse, except for Dilsey who becomes the symbol of a healthy attitude to life.

In addition to the towering personality of William Faulkner, the American South can boast of other similarly famous literary personalities including Truman Capote (the author of *In Cold Blood,* one of the first nonfiction novels), Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor (the famous Catholic novelist using the so-called Southern Gothic style), and even Harper Lee (the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird,* a famous novel displaying the conflict between the law and the code) (Stevens).

The latter is an example of how, even long after the Civil War, the South is still ruled by racism present in people's heads; that is, by the code clearly restricting the black population to clearly defined roles and behaviour in comparison to the whites, despite the fact that the law considers them equal. The story is told from the point of view of the young Jean Louise Finch (nicknamed Scout) whose father defends Tom Robinson, a black person charged with raping a white woman. Seeing his conviction in court and later death (despite his innocence), Scout gradually learns that many people in her town are unjust, racist, and even outright dangerous. The novel may thus be seen as yet another version of the treatment of southern society, including its racism, from the point of view of a small child; a twentieth century modification of Tom Sawyer's or Huckleberry Finn'sadventures.

African American Literature

The beginnings of African American literature can be traced back to the times of slavery, when authors of African descent living in the USA began to write, in the so called "slave narratives," about their experience of being slaves or escaping from slavery. One of the most famous of such accounts is Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845). The first attempts at literary creation, however, can be traced back to a more distant past, that is to the work of Phillis Wheatley (1753 — 1784) who was the first black woman writing poetry in colonial America.

Naturally, the most frequent themes in African American literature include slavery, racial relations, ethnicity, protest, the struggle for equality with the majority population, etc. Although slavery had ended by the end of the Civil War, it became part of African American historical memory and therefore it was depicted in 20th and 21st century literary works as well, though it was usually placed within a larger cultural context. One of such contexts was the so-called Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, during which there was a significant rise of Black culture and arts. The movement,s centre was Harlem, a New York borough with a majority black population. It was not restricted to literature, but, as has been indicated, encompassed wider cultural areas, especially one of the new musical expressions of the country,s black population — jazz.

The poet who perhaps best embodied the Harlem Renaissance was Langston Hughes (1002 – 1967). Born in Joplin, Missouri, he lived in several other Midwestern towns before moving to New York and becoming a central literary figure of this artistic movement. What characterises Hughes best is his simplicity, stemming from his attempt to write poetry for common black people whom he sees not in opposition and enmity to white people, but in the proudness in black identity and heritage, as well as linking poetry with music. Hughes, "metaphysics of simplicity" (Henzy 915) and his way of addressing the common (black) people earned him a comparison to Walt Whitman.

The Whitman variation was best expressed in his short poem "I, too" in which he is aware of racial inequality but hopes that this will disappear in the future. The poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (first published in 1921 in the journal *The Crisis* and later

collected into his first book of poems *The Weary Blues* in 1926) treats identity differently, concentrating on its historical context. In an almost archetypal string of images, the poet sees the blacks as an ancient race, existing long before their coming to America. The symbols of this ancient existence are rivers, the Euphrates, the Nile, the Congo, and the Mississippi. They symbolise movement as well as permanence and the lyrical subject draws strength and rootedness from them. The musical inspiration of Hughes, poetry is best visible in his "The Weary Blues" — the poem whose lyrical subject watches a black piano player perform in a Harlem bar. The sound and the movements of the player express his existential sadness and "weariness," which can be metaphorically transferred to the fate of the whole race. Although the ethnic colouring of the poem is undeniable, "I heard a Negro play," it is, however, not devoid of reference to a universal human "weariness" as well.

While Hughes, artistic aspiration was to address simple black people using simple, though not simplistic, language, another African American writer associated with Harlem (but not a member of the Harlem Renaissance group) was Ralph Waldo Ellison (1913 – 1994). If Hughes is primarily associated with his poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (some scholars say that, had he not written anything else, he would have become a literary celebrity anyway), Ralph Ellison,s masterpiece is *Invisible Man.* The novel was published in 1952 and in 1953 was immediately recognised by the National Book Award, which brought its author many honours and a permanent place in the pantheon of American literature. The novel was not only great, but it was the only one he wrote during his life. It addresses several issues that affected African Americans, especially their identity and racial tensions. The narrator,s invisibility is a sign of the attitude of society towards the black community, but the meaning of the novel cannot be restricted to racial problems. What we see in it is also a story of a black boy who relocates from the rural South (having been expelled from an all-black college) to industrial New York and comes into contact with socialist or communist ideas and groups. Although the consciousness of the narrator,s black identity as well as the setting (Harlem) is omnipresent in the novel, Ellison was not a black nationalist, but rather a black writer who was heavily influenced by great artists (R. W. Emerson, M.

Twain, F. Dostoevsky, T. S. Eliot, E. Hemingway, W. Faulkner) – irrespective of the colour of their skin.

The Beat Generation

While WWI is usually said to have been the main influence on the writers of the Lost Generation, WWII may be said to have been a catalyst for the rise of the Beat Generation – a group of various people who saw themselves as the opponents of everything that traditional American morality consisted of. They searched for liberation in alcohol, sex (including openness in gay and lesbian practices), new forms of music and writing (often "enhancing" their creative potential through experimentation with drugs) as well as in Eastern philosophy, most often Buddhism. The "Beats" were not a homogeneous group, but a free association of friends and friends, friends who shared their pacifist and anti-establishment views. The two most important centres of "Beat" activities were New York and San Francisco. In the 1960s they were substituted by the "Hippies" who added pacifism and anti-establishment activities to their agenda. The two most significant representatives of the Beat Generation were Jack Kerouac (1922 — 1969) and Allen Ginsberg (1926 — 1997).

Jack Kerouac was of Canadian American ancestry with strong Catholic leanings. Even though he wrote several novels, the work in which the values of his generation were best expressed was his "roman-3-clef" *On the Road.* The novel is significant for at least two reasons:

1. it is based on the author,s own experience from his "wild drinking travels" across America as well as Mexico, with real people standing for fictional characters, and
2. the author used the method of "spontaneous prose."

Its first version was written on a continuous scroll of paper without punctuation or paragraphs, and with graphic language depicting drinking and sexual sprees. The company to which the author offered the manuscript refused to publish it, claiming that it was pornographic. It was published only in 1957 when Kerouac changed the names of characters (the Neal Cassady of the first version becoming Dean Moriarty, Jack Kerouac becoming Sal Paradise, Allen Ginsberg turning into Carlo Marx, etc.). Kerouac also made the style less "spontaneous" (introducing paragraphs), and slightly "civilised" the language. With or without the changes, the novel became an American

classic, exploring themes like a lack of home, constant movement and life on the road; all of which, in fact, go back to the beginnings of American civilisation, that is, to the arriving of the first colonists, their permanent forays into the wilderness, and the colonisation of the West.

It may be said, however, that these archetypally American themes were, in Kerouac,s handling, enriched by something more significant: aspiritual quest — though not everyone has been able to see it. For example, as Prothero claims with regard to the whole movement, contemporary critics have inherited two key interpretive approaches to the Beats: "first, the tendency to view the beat movement rather narrowly as a literary and cultural impulse; and second, the inclination to judge this impulse negatively, as a *revolt against* rather than a *protest for* something" (205). Unlike other critics, he considers them "spiritual protesters as well as literary innovators" (208). The travels of Sal Paradise (Kerouac,s travels) across America in *On the Road* do indeed contain a spiritual element, and one could perhaps say the same of all the other "Beats"; however their spirituality stems rather from protest than a search for God.

Allen Ginsberg was perhaps the most controversial of the Beats. Although one can say that the words that characterise him best are "counterculture" and "anti-establishment," he also looks back to the "official" American cultural history for inspiration, and finds it, like many other American writers, in Walt Whitman. He openly says it in his poem "A Supermarket in California," in which Whitman is portrayed as a "childless, lonely old grubber, poking among the meats in the refrigerator and eyeing the grocery boys" ("A Supermarket in california" 23). This is in the America in which all romantic and noble ideas have been destroyed; leaving its best minds, as he expressed it in his best poem "Howl," "destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked…" ("Howl 9). The poem refers to Whitman not only thematically, but also through its form — long open sentences, enumerations and free verse, making its author an emulator of the best tradition of American literature, as well as a controversial and scandalous iconoclast.

"Howl," however, is not a continuation only of the American literary tradition, but as Meyers maintains, "is as densely allusive as *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses"* (89). Moreover, among his influences are included Dante, William Blake, the Surrealists, Jack

Kerouac and William Carlos Williams (Meyers 89). Ginsberg, in any case, expressed in it the existential trauma of a generation fed up with the consumerism and traditionalism of the post-WWII American society. The poem was first publicly read at Six Gallery meeting in 1955 and published next year by Lawrence Ferlinghetti,s City Lights Bookstore. It caused the attacks of conservative America against its supposed obscene language, ending up in the imprisonment of the store manager and a consequent trial, which, however, resulted in a ruling against the poem,s obscenity, and thus, ironically, made it much more famous.

Aside from the scandal that the poem created on the American cultural scene, it also presented an artistically striking picture of a society ruled by money and technology, driving its best minds to madness ("Howl" 9). Its central image, "the best minds of [his] generation destroyed by madness, / starving hysterical naked" ("Howl" 9), initiates the poet,s lamenting metaphorical listing of many other evils that befell them. The cause of those evils is provided in the second part of the poem; it is "Moloch" — a Canaanite cruel God embodied in the multiple manifestations of modernistic evils.

> Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable dollars! Children screaming under the stairways! Boys sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!
>
> Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless! Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy judger of men!
>
> Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the crossbone soulless jailhouse and Congress of sorrows! Moloch whose buildings are judgement! Moloch the vast stone of war! Moloch the stunned governments!
>
> Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money!
>
> Moloch whose fingers are ten armies! Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking tomb!
>
> ("Howl" 17)

The third part is a series of addresses to Carl Solomon, a person whom he met in the past in a psychiatric hospital and who was apparently admitted to such a hospital again. In his madness, which he considers holy, Ginsberg sees a cure for the madness

of the world, of his "best minds." Finally, in the "Footnote to Howl," he expresses the holiness of everything and everyone, which makes him both universal as well as simplistically childish.

In general, one can say that there was something childish, or adolescent, about the whole Beat movement. On one side, they were deeply suspicious and critical of the establishment, on the other one they were expressing their distaste through petty personal existential protests. The movement had its continuation in the Hippies of the 1960s with their countercultural protests based on non-violence, love and peace.

Native American Renaissance

Native American Renaissance is a term that denotes the rise of literature and culture of indigenous inhabitants in the territory of the present day USA. They had come from Asia through the frozen Bering Straits approx. 20,000 years ago and spread across the whole continent. Although referred to by European colonists as Indians, Amerindians, or, nowadays Native Americans, they have never been a homogenous people, but were made up of communities (tribes) with different names and different lifestyles (mostly sedentary tribes in the east, hunting tribes in the Plains, Pueblo building people in the Southwest). Until the mid-twentieth century, their culture was mostly oral and utilitarian, that is, used for ceremonial and practical purposes – dancing around a campfire to call for the rain, lullabies to put babies to sleep, educational tales to teach children about various aspects of tribal life. Naturally, there are also religious aspects to their cultural expressions, for example, origin myths telling stories about how the tribe came to be, about certain sacred phenomena, sun dances, etc. Some scholars even see their relationship to the American counterculture of the 1950s and 1960s, especially in their refusal of the Euro-American norms, spiritual connection to the environment and personal wholeness (Kaiser 189).

At the arrival of the first European colonists, Native Americans were a pre-technological civilisation, with their literary expressions mostly oral. Only in the 20th century, following the publication of the novel *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday in 1968, their written texts began to draw the attention of American readers. When the novel was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, it caused a significant stir on the American literary scene, initiating the so-called Native American Renaissance. Like in the case of the Harlem Renaissance, the Native American Renaissance brought to the spotlight the artistic production of a people who had almost been forgotten, or, if not, considered unworthy of any critical attention.

N. Scott Momaday was born in Lawton, Oklahoma, near the place which served as a symbolic setting for his famous *The Way to Rainy Mountain* – an unusual collection of tribal stories, mixed with his family and autobiographical memoirs and illustrated by his father, who was ateacher and visual artist. Although the book is tiny, it presents a symbolic picture of his native Kiowa ancestors on their way from Montana to new

settlements in Oklahoma. Memory of the past and place play a vital role in their survival. As Momaday himself claimed: "Both consciously and subconsciously, my writing has been deeply informed by the land with a sense of place. In some important way, place determines who and what we are. The land–person equation is essential to writing, to all of literature" (Momaday 12).

The dislocation of time and place is important for Momaday's most famous work, *The House Made of Dawn,* though it is presented not so much at the tribal level, but rather through the flashes of the protagonist's suffering. The novel is unique not only because of its depiction of a Native American view of the world (so different from mainstream American values) but also because of the author's narrative artistry, similar to Faulkner's *Sound and the Fury.* It is a story of a young Indian man, Abel, who has just returned from WWII and has to face life without a clear aim or purpose, falling into all the traps that such uprootedness brings – alcoholism, death, love, loss, hope. The novel shows Abel's close relationship to nature, the history of the tribe, and, especially, the sense of life without its communal support.

Momaday's work opened space for several younger writers – Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko as well as Sherman Alexie, to name just a few – who also drew on the Native American spirituality and closeness to nature, as well as their struggle with the worsening living conditions in twentieth century America.

Jewish American Literature

The American Jews are another minority that has greatly contributed to the formation of American literature and culture. Their presence in what is now the USA can be traced back to the mid-17th century, when they came mostly from Spain and Portugal. In the 19th century, there was a significant Jewish arrival from Central and Eastern Europe. As is also the case with other minority groups, Jews brought with them their own language, Yiddish, as well as a strong cultural and religious identity that became the object of analysis for many famous 20th century Jewish writers (Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth). On the other hand, however, Jewish ethnicity was never a central object of analysis for many other writers (Norman Mailer, Nathanael West), since they tried to see it, instead, in larger terms. Thus, Norman Mailer claimed that "[a] member of a minority group is — if we are to speak existentially — not a man who is a member of a category, a Negro or a Jew, but rather a man who feels his existence in a particular way. It is in the very form or context of his existence to live with two opposed notions of himself" (Mailer 77). The tension between these notions is usually one of the central themes of the ethnically based Jewish writers. Other themes include sense of belonging, persecution and anti-Semitism, as well as the holocaust.

One of the most famous 20th century Jewish American writers was Saul Bellow (1915 — 2005). His parents came from Saint Petersburg, but he was born in Canada and studied at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. In 1976 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. As Buckton-Tucker has it, "Saul Bellow,s protagonists, though varying in age, background, career and interests, share a common problem: they suffer from an inability to enter wholeheartedly into society and personal relationships as a result of a detachment from reality in one respect or another" (211).

We can find the same pattern in his perhaps most critically acclaimed work *Herzog* — a depiction of the midlife crisis of a university professor Moses E. Herzog. The tone of the novel is set already at its very beginning: "If I am out of my mind, it,s all right with me, thought Moses Herzog" (Bellow 3). And he behaves as if he were out of his mind — fails in his career as an academic and in his second marriage, must suffer his wife,s leaving him for his former colleague, dates another woman with fear of having to commit himself to a more permanent relationship, and is not able to establish

a meaningful relationship with his relatives either. Herzog becomes a symbol of the alienation of modern subject from family, community, religion, and, finally, oneself. The way that he deals with his problems is not ordinary. As an intellectual, he writes letters (that are never sent) to his friends, famous people, colleagues, politicians, and even to God. The letters are a kind of introspective analysis, often very ironical, which, however, do not succeed in making his existential anxieties any "lighter."

The novel,s style reflects the protagonist,s intellectual anxieties. It is sophisticated and ironic at the same time. The story is told from Herzog,s point of view, revealing in flashbacks events from his past, related both to his personal and social engagements, i.e. his marriages, attitudes to women, members of his family, religion, professional career, etc. Eventhough these depictions are purely imaginative, many of them retain links with real people as well as events from Bellow,s life, making it almost a roman 3 clef. The novel ends with Moses Herzog seemingly trying to overcome his alienation by stopping writing letters never intended to be sent, and "probing" reality by symbolically cleaning his house and preparing dinner for Ramona.

American Drama

The history of American drama is usually traced back to the late nineteenth century when authors like Bronson Howard and Claude Fitch began writing their plays. However, the first real success came only with Eugene O,Neill (1888 — 1953) who in 1936 received the Nobel Prize for literature. O,Neill,s plays are psychological treatments of the strength of human emotions, often stemming from his own family problems, and modelled on ancient drama. One of his best-known plays is *Mourning Becomes Electra* — an analogy with Aeschylus, trilogy *Oresteia.* His aim was, in fact, to test whether it would be possible to use the Greek sense of fate in a modern play performed for people without belief in God and supernatural retribution (Chirico 81).

While the original Greek play unfolded before the background of the Trojan War, eventsin O,Neill,s play follow the end of the American Civil War. It is divided into three parts, "Homecoming," "The Hunted" and "The Haunted." "Homecoming" is centred on the return of General Ezra Mannon (King Agamemnon in Aeschylus, play) to his home, where he is poisoned by his wife Christine (Clytemnestra) and her lover Adam Brant (Aegisthus). The second part begins with the return of Ezra Mannon,s son Orin (Orestes), his learning from Lavinia (Electra) about the murder of their father and his subsequent killing of Adam Brant. The last part is a full display of sin, guilt and "divine retribution," ending in Orin,s suicide and Lavinia,s live entombment within the walls of the Mannon house.

As the first American modernist playwright, O,Neill in his work combines several streams – naturalistic drives (internal and external), expressionistic alienation and existential anxieties, as well as conflict between the individual and the impersonal society, if not the universe. In *Mourning Becomes Electra,* all this is developed symbolically against the Puritan background of sin and guilt (so strong in the American imagination) and the fatal strength of human emotions. In his portrayal of Lavinia Mannon, the playwright gave usa symbol of the destructiveness of the human psyche.

Another important representative of a rather long list of great American playwrights of the twentieth century, and the one continuing O,Neill,s preoccupation with human

emotionality,was Tennessee Williams. Eventhough his *A Streetcar Named Desire* does not have such great inter-cultural and inter-textual aspirations as *Mourning Becomes Electra* (not drawing on the analogy with ancient Greek mythology, or history of a family), it nevertheless offers an insight into the deep, emotional crisis of a middle-aged woman who is notable to face her collapsing world. For many years, critics have argued about the nature of her struggle:

> "While some see the play as a psychological battle between characters, others see it as class warfare. Where one essay exalts Blanche DuBois as romantic heroine, another heaps praise on Stanley Kowalski as working-class hero. There,s no agreement over genre — is the work a tragedy or a melodrama or an example of conventional realism? Is it ultimately ambiguous and, if so, is its lack of clarity a mark of successor failure?"
>
> (Crittenden 117)

In fact, it is a little bit of everything. The play is both set in American realia, with its "Old World vs. New, rural vs. industrial" conflicts (Kolin and Wolter 241), as well as in almost archetypal, mythical conditions. Blanche comes to New Orleans to stay with her sister Stella after a series of personal disasters — the bankruptcy of her family business, loss of her job as a schoolteacher due to suspicions of unethical behaviour towards students, as well as her husband,s suicide. Hoping to find stability, Blanche, with her "southern belle" manners, runs into the brutality and primitivism of the god of drink Stanley Kowalski, the mythical Dionysus and the symbol of phallic potency (Roche-Lajtha 58). Instead of coming to terms with her life, her mental state deteriorates further and she ends up in a mental hospital.

In addition to Eugene O,Neill and Tennessee Williams, the great personalities of the American modernist theatre included Arthur Miller (1915 — 2005), with his masterpieces *Death of a Salesman* (1949) and *The Crucible* (1953), as well as Edward Albee (1928 – 2016), who became the progenitor of the theatre of the absurd in the USA with his play *The Zoo Story* (1958). *Who , s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*(1962) continued in a great tradition of family drama, drawing on such works as the above-mentioned *Mourning Becomes Electra* and *A Streetcar Named Desire.*

Part II

The American Dream in Twentieth Century Literature

All My Sons: American Dream & Postwar chaotic situation

Introduction:

The American Dream is the idea that in the United States anyone and whatever their background is can become rich and successful through hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit. *All my Sons* is a realistic drama about ordinary people struggling with the universal issues of grief, war, and the loss of idealism. The protagonist of *All My Sons*, Joe, is an uneducated man from an unremarkable background who has indeed become wealthy and successful, but at a great price to society. His determination to make money and keep his factory producing has led to the deaths of twenty-one men. Though Joe did what he did for the sake of his sons, so that he could pass on a prosperous business to them, his actions, paradoxically makes him lose both sons. Keller sacrifices other parts of the American Dream for simple economic success. Here, Miller showed how the American Dream used in only economic purpose destroyed other's lives and even the family of the businessman too. For fulfilling the dream, Joe had to pay a bigger part and the conflict between the individuals, families and idealistic ways showed the actual chaos here. In *All My Sons*, the American Dream comes only through the economic way and distorts the lives of people. At last the dream shows the Face of capitalism. Undoubtedly this running after money blindly of the smart protagonist actually made the others to suffer. Through Joe Keller, writer tried to show there are many people in the US like Joe and chaos also prevails there through the ladder of the American Dream.

American Dream in All My Sons:

In *All My Sons*, Arthur Miller has depicted the American Dream by exposing some fundamental tragedies in the lives of his protagonists. In *All My Sons*, the American Dreams is depicted contrarily where it is described how someone lives happily even after growing up, owing lots

of property and becoming prosperous financially. Joe Keller had become prosperous and auspicious in his life financially but his life turned into a tragic life as the story moves towards a conclusive end, Arthur Miller wants to convey two contradictory viewpoints in his play. Arthur Miller has evoked some fundamental questions in his play, *All My Sons* what are the individualistic social obligation, personal responsibility and dissimilarity between personal and public matters. Keller gives solid arguments during wartime how all his actions are so defensible in maintaining good business practice. In this play we find clear indication of the American Dream through the voices of the characters of Miller. Here are some of them with explanation –

⇒ **Frank: "That boy's going to be a real doctor; he's smart. [...] It's an honorable profession." (Act 1: Miller 8)**

The American Dream is something that people long for to be honored in society as great achiever or as someone who has changed the society in someway either big or small. But the main part about The American Dream is the honor and respect that come along with it. In this quote it is obvious that Frank Lubey believes that it is very important to be respected in America, especially as a person and worker. America is the land of opportunity, in which many immigrate to in order to find new opportunities or to even start fresh here or start of the family in America. To be respected by society, in America, is something that all Americans want, long and work at. In which Frank believes that it is something that everyone should aspire and work for.

⇒ **Chris: "I want a family, I want some kids, I want to build something I can give myself to." (Act 1: Miller 15)**

Chris would love to start a family and build his own life the way he wants, not the way that his parents want him to. One of the most important rights in America that people have unlike other countries is freedom. Most people in America dream about one day having a family of their own and being able to support that family with their skills and the things that they build on their own. This is exactly what Chris wants and although his parents have held him back, through the story he is ready to move on and get his American Dream by marrying Ann and having

children with her. Chris is extremely passionate about doing things in his own and would love to make his own choices, as he is an adult. The ideal American would have a family, kids, and a job that they are passionate about and supports their family.

⇒ **"Keller: We'll talk about it. I'm going to build you a house, stone, with a driveway from the road. I want you to spread out, Chris, I want you to use what I made for you . . . *(He is close to him now.)* . . . I mean, with joy, Chris, without shame . . . with joy." (Act 2: Miller 41)**

Joe Keller would love for his son Chris to enjoy what America has to offer on his, but of course with some help from his father. He would love for Chris to endure his life without any hardships or obstacles like he had to. A dream of Joe's of for the factory to run both smoothly and successfully with Chris, but this is not Chris' American Dream, it's his father's. Joe enjoys likes the idea of giving his boy everything he never had, this is the perfect example of the American Dream, which many people do in order to make the lives of the children the best they can be, so that they can pass their views and ethics upon to the next generation. However, Chris would like to be free from what his father wants and would love to do what he wants most to marry Ann and start a family, this is his American Dream.

⇒ **"Chris: Yes. I like it an hour a day. If I have to grub for money all day long at least at evening I want it beautiful. I want a family, I want some kids, and I want to build something I can give myself to. (Act 1: Miller 15)**

Chris begins to tell his father about his dream of marrying Ann and moving away to start a family of their own. Joe is upset because his dream for Chris was to run the family business, but Chris thought otherwise. Chris longs to create a life of his own, something that he can call "his". This is the American Dream because Chris, like many other Americans, wants to leave home and create a life of their own. Chris shows that he is very confident in his decision to marry Ann, because he will make it happen no matter what it takes.

Postwar chaotic situation in All My Sons:

In Miller's play the Keller's family is seen to be living the "American Dream", yet their ways and means of obtaining this are greatly criticized by Miller. Postwar chaotic views are depicted

through the characters here. Chaos and conflicts of self we see here in Kate Keller, Chris Keller, George Deever, Jim Bayliss, Frank Lubey and of course in Joe Keller. So, almost every character here shows chaotic situations. Here I am going to explore them through characters –

⇒ **Kate Keller:** Kate is the prime character who shows chaos from them very beginning of the play. She certainly knows that Larry is dead but still never want to accept that. She willingly wants to pretend that he is not dead. More than three years she is been waiting for Larry, because she knows if she declares Larry is dead then Joe must go to jail. She even in a country like the US wants to pretend with signs whether Larry is coming back or not. She says, **"This month is his birthday; his tree blows down, Annie comes. Everything that happened seems to be coming back" (Act 1, Miller 17)**. So, she wants to show that Larry is coming back. Kate sees worries in Joe. She says, **"He's worried. When he is worried he sleeps" (Act1, Miller 42).** Her assertive dialogue about Joe's worries actually symbolic to his guilt. This type of comments actually depicts chaos.

⇒ **Joe Keller:** Joe sees that the newspapers keep the conflict going up in Kate. He says, **" The trouble is the goddam newspapers…."(Act 1,Miller 13).** Chaos also comes with Chris's marriage with Anne. Joe says to Chris that, **"You marry that girl and you are pronouncing him dead" (Act 1, Miller 14).** Conflict also comes with Joe's self judgments. He thinks that whatever he did he has done for his son. Joe says**, "What the hell did I work for? That's only for you Chris" (Act1, Miller 15).** Joe is tensed about the reopening of the case, **"I mean if they want to open up the case again, for nuisance value, to hurt us" (Act 1, Miller 39).** At the end of the play Joe said to Chris that whatever he did it was from a businessman's perspective. He said, **"What could I do! I'm in business, a man is in business; a hundred and twenty cracked, you're out of business" (Act1, Miller 74).** Here he shows the American dream mixed with capitalism ruining the society and destroying people's life. Certainly, it's the chaos Miller showed.

⇒ **Chris Keller:** He is the man who shows maximum chaos with himself only. Though he pretends to be a self dignified man but internally he knows that his father Joe is responsible for the accident. He forcefully keeps himself believing this fact till the very end of the play. Even he argues with his father about Larry and his mom's pretensions. He says to Joe, **"Why do we allow her to go on thinking that we believe with her" (Act 1, Miller 12)?**

⇒ **Ann Deever:** She has doubts on Joe but she never tries to reflect them on anyone. Even when Chris is tensed too see supports Joe. She says to Chris that, **"A man should be paid for that…" (Act 1, Miller 36).** Here we also sense chaos.

⇒ **George Deever:** He at last hears his father and gets the story. Now he hates Joe Keller. So he gets into a conflict with his sister Ann. He says to her that, **"Everything they have is covered with blood" (Act 1, Miller 59).** He even tells the most important dialogue about the so called dream. It is **"A little man makes a mistake and they hang him by the thumbs; the big ones becomes ambassadors" (Act1, Miller 67).** This really shows the chaos of American society and Miller in this play shows how the dream is misused and practically he mocks at the ruining society with this dialogue.

⇒ **Frank Lubey:** Frank likes to use the stars to see people's future. Even in postwar period of the US it looks odd. But, he and Kate want to use it to profess Larry's coming back and the real back. He says, **"It would be practically impossible for him to die on his favorable day" (Act 1, Miller 4).** Here this shows chaos with the reality.

⇒ **Jim Bayliss:** We also find chaos in Doctor Jim's married life. Though he is a good husband he has many objections. He says to Ann that, **"When you marry, never – even in your mind- never count your husband's money" (Act 1, Miller 24).** He wants to do research but to support his family he can not afford that much risk. So, he has to abandon his wish here. It is also a chaotic situation here for him between passion and responsibility.

⇒ **Sue Bayliss:** She hates Chris as he tries to take her husband Jim in research instead of practice. And certainly that will reduce the income of her husband doctor Jim. She says to Ann that, **"He's driving my husband crazy with that phoney idealism of his, and I'm at the end of my rope on it" (Act1, Miller 47).** But she always pretends to be a good neighbor and a loving one to Chris.

So, if we think over these character's dialogues then undoubtedly we find one certain thing and it is that chaos is prevailing in the US. Miller in his play successfully depicted postwar chaotic situation through almost each and every character here. This chaos is created only with the misuse of the American Dream and falling into bad practices like capitalism and destroying social responsibilities.

Conclusion:

Miller wants to show that it is necessary to enhance some carefulness for others being a family member, it is most important to develop an individual's responsibilities to the family versus society at large. The family is also depicted as unit within the society and it is distorted or damaged by the individualistic actions. Chris is also characterized as an idealist who remains angry against the wartime profiteering. Every character is delineated with different kinds of self-blames, Joe Keller doesn't miss any chance to blame anybody and everyone for crimes of wartime and the main cause of his partner's imprisonment. When he has to encounter with truths of life, he finds faults in business practice and US army and everyone he may have contacts. Miller reveals how such individualistic flaws can be interpreted with the economic progress and business success in terms of American dream. Keller has sacrifices all other parts of the American dream for just materialistic pursuits or financial growth only. He has given up the main role of his life as head of family, the basic human nature how he has made sacrifices of Steve and Larry. Miller criticizes such system of capitalism which encourages just greed for profiteering shares in the business stakes holders who may want to sacrifice the human life and happiness. In *All my Sons*, Arthur Miller has delineated an ideal family character which seems externally very good and complacent but inwardly there is nothing good, having many dark aspects of American life which seems very charming in media portrayals. The

American dream idealizes the particular life-style of people in America which relates with potential and rights rather than morals or means. The deaths of the twenty-one airmen are the most obvious cost of the American Dream in the play. The tearing-apart of the Keller and Deever families and the acrimony in the Bayliss family is a further cost. Looking beyond those families, the entire neighborhood even participates in the corruption spread by greed: Joe's neighbors overlook his crime because he is prosperous and successful. Joe's suicide is an example of poetic justice indictment of the American Dream. This is because it is not collateral damage wreaked by Joe's determination to make money, but deliberate self-destruction by the champion of the American Dream. While the airmen and Joe's family can be seen as sacrifices on the altar of the American Dream, Joe himself is the final victim and the final sacrifice. Just as Larry could not live with the knowledge of Joe's crime, Joe himself cannot live with it once he comes to realize the truth that Larry knew instinctively. With Larry's final letter in his hand, Joe says, **"Sure, he was my son. But I think to him they were all my sons. And I guess they were, I guess they were" (Act 3, Miller 89).** The American Dream, Miller suggests, operates against the interests of society and of humankind.

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1. The American Dream in Arthur Miller's "All My Sons"

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ABSTRACT

This study is distinctively restricted to the concept of the American Dream in modern drama in American literature. The American Dream is the product of the West and the frontier experience, rather than the puritan tradition, because of its essential belief in the goodness of man and nature. The American Dream in Miller's All My Sons shows the father- son relationship and its deterioration in American family. This play " All My Sons " represents a kind of criticism of the American Dream. It aims to find out the very existence of the American Dream testifies to its reality. The dramatist Miller in All My Sons criticizes war-profiteers and expresses an overt hatred for them. The hero's sense of social unrelatedness is symbolized by his hedged-backyard. It is divided into four sections, each analyzing a topic.
Finally, the study has reached some conclusions that verify the hypothesis of the study.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is true that " American literature" at its highest level is based on the discrepancy between American history and the American Dream. If we look closely at the literary works of the great American writers, we find that American literature has been an expression of the hopes, aspirations, down-falls and achievements of that great nation. All early American literature echoes the illusions and the disillusions of the American Dream.

1.1. The Vision of the New World

The American shores received immigrants of various nationalities but Europe had the lion's share of this flux; to be more precise the largest stock was that of England's. (Mann, 1992) One of the early writers states that the Americans are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. (Crevecoeur, 1962) Another, supporting the same view, states that " New World has been an asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe. This signifies that the immigrants had experienced oppression and tyranny as inherent qualities of the New World which was also war-ridden. They came to the New World in order to escape these

hard realities. In this sense, the New World is depicted in most of the writings of the early settlement of America as a refuge, an asylum, and a paradise. (Crevecoeur, 1962) This view on life reflects a world in which freedom is a necessity ; peace is an inherent quality; love is an entity; abundance is a reality. such was the vision of the New World. Such is the concept of the American Dream.

1.2. The American Dream

The American Dream refers to the romantic expectations of fulfilment in life and the possibility of material success. (Bewley, 1968) Historically, the idea of a New World which will be a terrestrial paradise is not a new one. the Greeks believed in the Elysian Fields where blessed heroes of Greece went after death to their eternal afterlife. The Romans had the Islands of the Blessed, which produced abundance of food. The Christians were firm believers in the Garden of Eden. Even Columbus (the American explorer), during his third voyage of exploration to America (1498-1500), thought that he had found the real site of the terrestrial paradise. However, the American Dream is the product of the West and the frontier experience, rather than the puritan tradition, because of its essential belief in the goodness of man and nature.Thus it is true that at first the New World fell heir to pastoral visions but in the course of time these romantic visions clashed with the realities of the frontier and wilderness. (Luedltke, 1992) The American Dream has roots in the American experience. The settlement of a virgin land made the American tough and the frontier experience shaped their spirit. (Bradford,
1956)

The New World continued to hold the promise of fulfillment and satisfaction. This promise is
sometimes met with denial especially when man holds inadequate views of life. Most Americans pursue this dream with a firm belief in the goodness of man and nature. Geoffrey Perrett in A Dream of Greatness says :

> "In pursuing the realization of the American Dream, Americans have ever lost sight of three objectives: abundance in a world of scarcity; liberty in a world of tyrannies; peace in a world torn by wars." (Prette, 1986)

The dream is a new way of life completely different from the old one. furthermore, the American Dream has flourished at a national level to shape a leading nation. Finally, the aspirations and faith in life which are inherent qualities of the American Dream had their fruition in a nation destined to rule the world as a super- power.

1.3. All My Sons: Plot

Arthur Miller (1915- 2005) was one of the most significant dramatists in modern American literature. He dealt with more social issues and different political cases that were suffering from the American society at that time such capitalism, communism and

socialism. In All My Sons, Miller builds and reveals dramatic action that, by its very movement- by its creation, suspension, and resolution of tension; its inexorable rush toward tragic confrontation- proves that the past is always present and cannot be ignored, forgotten, or denied. (Bigsby, 1997) Miller's play , All My Sons which is a play about a war- profiteer, Joe Keller who sold defective plane parts to the government during war-time. Yet, Joe Keller escaped the hand of justice but his friend Steve, who was working for him, was put into prison for being responsible for the death of twenty one pilots. Joe Keller has two sons: Larry , the younger, has been reported missing in action for three years but his mother believes that he is alive. She urges those around her to hold to the same hope too.

Chris, the older, has come out of the war with ideal ideas and a concept of world brotherhood. He has, also, invited Ann home. Ann is Steve's daughter and Larry's former fiancée. The arrival of Ann, together with Chris's declared intention of marrying her, has made ' mother' very angry because the action signifies Larry's death. She tells Chris that if Larry is dead, Joe has killed him. Chris, who claims to want to live clean, says he cannot ' love a guilty father'. He wants his father to pay for his crime by admitting his guilt to the authorities. (
Miller, 1961)

Larry had sent a letter to Ann before he committed suicide, telling her that he would kill his father if he saw him because all those who died at the front lines were his sons. Chris reads the letter loudly, so that Joe can understand that there is something bigger than the family pretending to be convinced by the idea, Joe Keller goes up to his room and commits suicide.

1.4. The American Dream in Miller's All My Sons:

Joe Keller tells Chris in a moment of unmistakable frustration. He thinks that he is practical like most American war- profiteers, as he says, who have made a fortune out of war business. Furthermore, he thinks that he has exploited this chance for the sake of the family and for him:

> " nothing is bigger than that …. I'm his father and he is my son, and if there is something bigger than
> that I'll put a bullet in my head" (Miller, 1961)

He also tells his son how he was forced to leave his family at the age of ten and how he had to fight so early for a living. Yet, Chris who has just come out of war with uncompromising idealism, feels that he cannot enjoy the fruits of a war- time economy " with joy …. And without shame", because , as a survivor, he feels guilty enjoying things at the expense of those who died at the front lines. He saw with his own eyes how the fighters were sacrificing themselves for each other.

> " they didn't die; they killed themselves for each other… a kind of responsibility, Man for man". (Miller, 1961)

It is obvious that Chris is expressing worldly brotherhood. Yet, he is not sure if he is doing the right thing because he, as a survivor, is burdened with guilt. Throughout the play his actions and speech support this view. For instance, when he kisses Ann, she tells him that he has kissed her like Larry's brother. He feels ashamed mainly because of his hypocrisy. He denounces the flourishing war- time materialism and promises Ann a lot of money. He urges the other to be better and he doesn't do that. Accordingly, Sue's remark has much truth in it:

> " if Chris wants people to put on the hair shirt let him take off his broadcloth,"

For a long time, he has doubted his father but he won't make my investigations. He tells Ann that he loves his parents but when his father's criminal case is expressed publicly he states that he cannot love a guilty father. Chris demands too much from his father. He wants him to acknowledge the death of those who die at the front lines as something monumental, but the father can hardly see behind the hedge- in backyard of his house. Miller's precisely chosen setting, in fact, allows little contact with the outside world, let alone abstract notions such as martyrdom and brotherhood.

For Keller, such things do not exist and hence war is unreal as long as it doesn't affect his personal life. A critic made the point that:

> Like many uneducated self-made men, Keller has no capacity for abstract considerations, whatever is not personal or at least immediate has no reality for him. He has the peasant's insular loyalty to family which excludes more generalized responsibility to society at large or to mankind in general. (Wells, 1979)

Therefore, those who are engaged in the social action of war continue to be foreigners for him. Their death does not mean anything for him.

Moreover, he is a man of limited knowledge and obvious ignorance. His surprise at Frank's remarks about the value of dictionaries and the possibility of eking out a living from book collecting testifies to his social unrelatedness.

The Greeks believed in a world controlled by fates that were directed by the gods, but Arthur Miller prefers to believe that people's characters have the biggest influence in determining their fate. Failure, in Miller's eyes, should not be blamed on an indefinable hostile fate or social system but on individuals who refuse to accept their responsibilities and connection to fellow human beings. It is the flaws that exist in Keller's character that ensure his defeat

rather than any divine authority. Keller knowingly shipped out faulty aircraft parts that may have caused numerous deaths. To try to save his business, he has knowingly put others at risk. Because he refuses to accept responsibility for his actions, his guilt drives him toward the destruction of his relationship with both the sons whom he so wanted to have follow in his footsteps, and finally, of himself. (Abbotson, 2007)

Keller, the hero of this play, failed to find a connection with the world that is considered as a crime

especially if there is a world to connect with and if there is a way to connect with it. (Cross, 1979) That is to say, Keller's isolation is due to his ignorance and simplicity of mind. However, Keller is aware that his separateness has nothing to do with any factors outside himself than his self-imposed imperatives. For example, when his wife criticizes his talent for ignoring things, he responds that he ignores what he has got to ignore. Accordingly, he knows that there is a world outside and he is responsible to it. This knowledge, to a very large extent, is blurred by his commitment to familial obligations.

Furthermore, if he doesn't know the consequences of his anti-social action, he won't assume innocence

or least he won't concern himself with the reactions of the neighborhood. He feels the burden of guilt, a thing which explains his game of the policeman and thieves with children.

On the other hand, Chris is hypocritical. He has long suspected his father but will never do anything

about that. He wants his father to pay for his crime so that he can feel clean. At one moment, he stands for America:

" I was dying every day and you
were killing my boys and you
did it for me."

At another he criticizes it :

"this is the land of the great big dogs,
You do not love a man here, you eat him."

But, when Keller commits a second anti-social action by putting a bullet into his own head and his son cries " I didn't mean to"; these nice words ring hollow throughout the drama. The guilty father has sacrificed himself so that his selfish son can feel clean.
Joe Keller in All My Sons is misguided by familial obligations. When he tells Chris that,

" who worked for nothing. Did they
ship a gun or a truck outa Detroit
before they got their
price? Is that clean? It's dollars and
cents, nickles and dimes, what's
clean? (Miller, 1961)

Keller sounds earnest and loving; though misguided. Yet, half- truths do not excuse Keller's anti- social

action; therefore, he is guilty. In the meantime, Chris Keller is burdened with guilt. He feels that it is hard for him to love a guilty father. His words:

> " I know you are no worse than most men but I thought you were better. I never saw you as a man. I saw you as my father.

The character explains the nature of his guilt which is mainly egotistic. Obviously, the father is misguided but his capacity for love elicits wonder and sympathy.

II. CONCLUSION

The American Dream has obviously an unmistakable impact on the American mind. Owing to the fact
that the first generations have experienced and acted out the enchantment of glory through their struggle against wilderness, tyranny, and other natural forces. The democratic experience has contributed to the welfare of this country (America) which is destined to rule the world as a super power. The American Dream has created a mighty Republic out of wilderness. In All My Sons, Miller shows the struggle between the father and the son in American family to announce the deterioration we can find and see in that society through the characters that
appeared throughout the actions. So the hypothesis of this study is accepted.

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The American Dream in Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*

CONTENTS

Abstract

Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby,* Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* are works that were written during the period of the Great Depression, a time of hardship when the American dream lost its value as people lost their belief in equality, prosperity and success. There are many different views of the American dream, and each of the three selected writers incorporate the effects of the Great Depression in their works in order to present a focus on a particular aspect of the American dream. In *The Great Gatsby,* Francis Scott Fitzgerald highlights the false hopes of the idealized dream of getting rich which leads to disillusionment and failure. In a similar manner, Lorraine Hansberry, in *A Raisin in the Sun*, depicts the broken dream and harsh reality of living as an African-American in Chicago during the period between the 1920s and the 1930s. Likewise, in *The Day of the Locust*, Nathanael West shows the complete failure of the American dream when people are enchanted with the tales of easy money. The depression-era literature revealed facts of American life, with a particular focus on the decayed social and moral values and the decline of the American dream. In contrast to the works depicting the loss of the American dream, there were also those who stressed the power and durability of the dream that helped Americans face the hardships with fortitude and hope in rebuilding the economy as well as the nation and its values. The popularity of the socially critical literary works of the Great Depression shows the public concern with the ills of society as the belief in the rebuilding of the pure, old values for which their ancestors were fighting.

Keywords: American dream, freedom, equality, disillusionment, *The Great Gatsby*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Day of the Locust*, twentieth century literature

Introduction

Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* are literary works from the twentieth century that deal with the American dream from three different perspectives. This paper analyses the works with the aim of presenting the writers' disillusionment with the American dream.

The Introduction presents the topic of the American dream by highlighting its origin and significance and traces its presence over the course of the major periods of American history. It focuses particularly on the period of the Great Depression by presenting the collapse of the American dream as reflected in the selected works of three writers of the period. Firstly, the paper deals with the theme of failure of the American dream through the experience of Jay Gatsby, the main character in *The Great Gatsby*. Secondly, the paper explores Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* with a particular focuses on life in Chicago during the 1920s and 1950s through the experience of an African-American family, the Youngers who are the main characters. Thirdly, an emphasis is placed on Hollywood, a city where, according to Nathanael West, the basic values as well as the American dream are corrupted for good without a chance to improve.

1. Understanding the American dream

There is something in which every American strongly believes and fights for and that is the American Dream. In order to completely understand the aim of this paper, there is a need for an explanation of that important term and how it has been functioning through history. To begin with, the American dream is a mythic structure; a set of ideals

and beliefs in freedom, prosperity and the possibility to achieve goals of becoming rich and to create a perfect and safe environment for families. For a long time, the American dream has been an ideal for prosperity, not only for Americans but also for people across the globe. “Believers in the American Dream assume that America is a land of opportunity where, if one is virtuous and works hard, one will achieve wealth and success”, claims dr. Aimable Twagilimana (qtd.
in Bloom 203).

During the Colonial Period, people from all over the world, especially Europe, believed in the stories of a place with abundant lands and wealth, as well as the chance to start a new life in a new world - that place was America. So for different reasons, people started coming more and more to that newly-found land. Soon, Europeans populated the East Coast and moved forward to explore the land and its possibilities, and there their dreams turned into rights. Personal freedoms, political and religious freedom, the right to prosper and create a business are some of the rights that became achievable on the American continent. Those rights and dreams very quickly became a part of the American heritage and tradition. The Pilgrims maybe did not talk about the American dream in these words, but they did have an idea of it somewhere in their minds for they did live it as people who imagined and created a destiny for themselves. Through time, it has become a unique concept that Americans have accepted and defined in different ways according to their own life and experience. The first literary reference to the American dream can be found in “Epic of America”, James Truslow Adams’ novel from 1931. In this novel he wanted to explain what attracted all of those people across the world to settle in America. In his works, Adams emphasized important historical themes and to him the most important one was what he called

> …that American Dream of a better, richer and happier life for all our citizens of every rank, which is the greatest contribution we have made to the thought and welfare of the world. That dream or hope has been present from the start. Ever since we became an independent nation, each generation has seen an uprising of ordinary Americans to save that dream from the forces which appeared to be overwhelming it. (qtd. in Cullen 4)

From that quote the usage of the term American dream is noticeable but it is still "not clear whether he actually coined the term or appropriated it from someone else" (Cullen 4). As Cullen further states, "the phrase rapidly entered common parlance as a byword (…) not only in the US but in the rest of the world," and today everyone knows at least something about the American dream that has spread across the globe and has become a component of an American identity as well as an association of the American nation (Cullen 4). The American dream also means the right to equality, whether political or religious, life, and a sense of identity as it is rooted in the Declaration of Independence which proclaims that "all men are created equal" and have a right to pursue their dreams. The history of the United States, however, shows that these ideals were not extended to women, African-Americans or Native Americans although all of these people had to fight for their freedom to have control over the course of their lives and, more importantly, for equality on the whole. Even today, these alleged, birth-rights are not something every citizen of the United State has. Nevertheless, the power of belief in a better life resides in most of the people and they are prepared to work hard for it. That is the reason why people are still coming to America. All newcomers strive to achieve the greater status through dedication and therefore to become successful. The term today "appears to mean that in the United States anything is possible if you want it badly enough" (Cullen 5).

Some people tend to misunderstand the real meaning of the American dream so they come to the United States and think that the riches will just fall from the sky or that they will get rich overnight. They all believe in the rags-to-riches dream, the extraordinary upward journey from poverty to richness, and that it is happening to everyone who is willing to work hard for it and to succeed. But the truth is different and people often stay disappointed, especially those who come from different parts of the world to the United States just because of all those stories of easily earned money. The American dream is not just coming and gaining money, it is a lot more. It promises not freedom to do whatever somebody wants, but freedom to dream and that dream asks for a risk and sacrifice and in return, the person gets self-fulfilment and dignity as well as wealth.

According to Cullen, everybody has a different dream and, therefore, there are several kinds of dream. According to him, the first American dream is, that of the

Pilgrims, which was the desire for a better life for their future generations. The second is stated in the
Declaration of Independence, which is also the foundation of the US Constitution. Another, one that is the most familiar is "the dream of upward mobility, a dream typically understood in terms of economic and social advancement" (Cullen 8). It is a dream of rising from poverty to fortune and fame, where every person wanted to become someone and not be left behind; everybody wanted to rise from rags to riches.

Everything functioned perfectly until the 20th century when the American dream had its challenges. The Great Depression caused widespread difficulties during the 20's and 30's and many of those who were directly affected experienced disillusionment with the dream. The Depression caused the loss of the "old idea – and faith – that America was a land of infinite possibilities and honesty" (Kochan 2). During these years the biggest struggle was that "of the ordinary man to hold fast to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' which were vouchsafed to us in the past in vision and on parchment" (qtd. in Cullen 4). In order to express their disappointment with the current state in their country as well as great disillusionment with the fact that the United States had been turning into a heartless, materialistic and overly consuming society, many writers created works to express their critical views. They wanted to show how their country was out of control and that it was nothing near what their ancestors fought for. Many works express the idea of the American dream turning out badly and being unachievable instead of being easy to reach. It can be said that they are turning to the pessimistic side, which was not the case before the Great
Depression when people strongly believed in every possible chance of easily earned money. As a situation and event itself says, people and writers were depressed and they wanted to show and express their feelings to a broader audience and to reach out to the ordinary men and women. Texts such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Lorraine Hansberry's *A*
Raisin in the Sun and Nathanael West's *The Day of a Locust* question principles of the American dream. These stories are exploring the path to the achievement of the American Dream as well as the hardships in achieving it. Through different situations and perspectives, writers tried to depict the reality of life in the twentieth century and the

corruption of the American dream when people forgot its basic meaning; they just wanted to get rich, no matter what the cost. Money, great wealth, respectable positions in circles of important people and fame are what became admirable and important. Americans had drastically changed and reversed the national focus from values such as progress, hard work, self-reliance, perfectibility, humility, dignity and happiness to the devaluing of values through excess, selfishness and vanity. They corrupted not only the American dream, but also the dreams of their ancestors.

2. Failure of the American dream in *The Great Gatsby*

Francis Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* was published in New York in 1925. Those were the 1920s, often referred to as the Roaring Twenties. That was a time of great social change, jazz music was being played everywhere, and material success was seen as the most important aspect of the American dream. Because of the popularity of jazz music, that decade is also called the Jazz Age. During the 1920s, people in America wanted to build a great economic empire in order to prosper as much as they can. That seemed like a very good plan but people were too focused on the present and not thinking of the future. This means that they made their lives easier and enjoyed life to the maximum. However, the enjoyment did not last for a long time; their dream of building a utopia and living in it quickly turned into a downfall. What led them into the failure were pure materialism and a constant wish to get more and more. People forgot what really mattered and that is "the pursuit of progress for happiness"; instead they became "purely materialistic and corrupt" (Bertrand 3). What
Fitzgerald wanted to show with this novel is the corruption and decay of the old American dream. It is a novel "commenting on the myth of American ascendancy" (Bloom 67).
Through *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald showed how people were behaving and living in America and how the rest of the world saw America - as a land of a great wealth, a continent of complete dominance and superiority. The setting is the city of New York in the 1920s. His depiction of Long Island "captures the aspirations that represented the opulent, excessive and exuberant 1920s" in a very revealing manner (Bloom 67).

Although the era was one of the most optimistic, the dreams of those people who were only seeking a better and higher social status became nightmares. *The Great Gatsby* perfectly captures the betrayal of the belief in the American dream in a corrupt society. This will be the most visible through characterization of the main characters in the events and situations that occur in the novel.

The first character to start with is Jay Gatsby, an ultimate dreamer. He is a perfect example of a self-made man, rising from poverty to great riches and prosperity.

> He had 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 as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself.
>
> (Fitzgerald 53)

This quote presents a very good description of Gatsby's character and appearance. "Gatsby is such a man who equates quantity with quality, cost with value" (Kochan 3). He is a decent and humble mid-western boy who strongly and decisively wanted to succeed in life and make something of himself. "Gatsby is a *mythic* character," just like the American dream: stuck between illusion and reality of life (Kochan 3). His flaw was that he lived in a world of complete deception; he created a whole new life for himself:

> The truth was that Jay Gatsby, of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen year old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.
>
> (Fitzgerald 105)

He even adjusted his way of talking, using phrases such as "old sport," just to show that he was always a part of that rich world: "Of course, of course! They're fine!" and he added hollowly, "…old sport" (Fitzgerald 90). What is more, he acquired false riches; he gained his wealth illegally by participating in organized crime, including distribution of alcohol which was illegal in the 1920s. Because he was poor, Gatsby dreamt of the life

where he has everything: a big mansion, a woman he loves, so much money that he does not have to worry about anything and he stuck to his dream until the very end of his young life. Besides his childhood dream of becoming rich, the other reason why he wanted to gain enormous wealth was Daisy. They met and fell in love during the war when Gatsby was a soldier, but they got separated from each other because of the war. Years and years passed by and he still held on to his mission of reuniting with her, always thinking: “Can’t repeat the past?” he cried incredulously. “Why of course you can!”(Fitzgerald 118). Gatsby did not stop thinking about
Daisy for even a second, being in love with the image of her that he created:

> There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams -- not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart. (Fitzgerald 103)

Once Gatsby reunited with her, he

> hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy, and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes.
>
> Sometimes, too, he stared around at his possessions in a dazed way, as though in her actual and astounding presence none of it was any longer real. Once he nearly toppled down a flight of stairs. (Fitzgerald 98)

This is the description of a man in love, a man full of affection and admiration for a woman that he loves more than himself. Daisy, whose voice and thoughts are “full of money,” is Gatsby’s “silver idol” of illusion (Fitzgerald 122-128). Gatsby’s mansion in West Egg proves that he strove to make his fortune to impress Daisy and to be closer to her:

> “It was a strange coincidence,” I said.
>
> “But it wasn't a coincidence at all.”
>
> “Why not?”
>
> “Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay.”

(Fitzgerald 84)

It is important to note that this novel, as well as Fitzgerald's other novels, is based on a concept of social classes which means that he is "the first American writer who seems to have discovered that such a thing as an American class really existed" (Kochan 2). The division of social classes is best seen by the place where each character lives since there is "a strong relationship in the novel between the geography of the roads and the characters' social values" (Bertrand 4). Nick Carraway, Daisy's cousin and now Gatsby's neighbour, came from the Midwest to New York. He is in search of the world that is "in uniform, and at a sort of moral attention forever" (Fitzgerald 4). The reason is his disillusionment caused by the death and destruction of World War I and he wants to find his fortune somewhere else, he wants to start a new life. He was hoping to find his happiness and fulfilment

> …on that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York…twenty miles from city… (where) a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western Hemisphere, the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound. (Fitzgerald 7)

But, all he found was a decay of morals. Fitzgerald portrayed that moral emptiness of people through the Valley of ashes – a polluted environment and black depiction of humanity: This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. (Fitzgerald

26)

That is the description of the lowest class of people and the environment where they lived.

They were on their way to the West Egg, where Gatsby and Nick lived.

While the Valley of Ashes represents the lowest class of people, West Egg represents the newly rich Americans such as Gatsby. They made their fortune during the rising years of the US stock market or through illegal means. The newly rich or new money are "crude, garish and flamboyant" as well as tasteless and extravagant (Bloom 69). One of the examples for that is Gatsby's mansion: "The one on my right was a

colossal affair by any standard – it was a factual imitation of Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking a new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden" (Fitzgerald 7). Once Gatsby became rich, he wanted to show off to others, to flaunt his great wealth. However, despite all of the obvious riches, newly rich are just "cheap materialistic imitations of the American dream" (Bloom 69).

In contrast to West Egg, East Egg represents old wealth or old money and Tom and Daisy are part of that world. They belong to the upper class of people, white Anglo Saxon Protestant Americans who care only about themselves because, after all, they were born in abundance and wealth; they inherited all of their money from their ancestors. The newly rich Gatsby constantly tries to get closer to the old money but he will never be able to cross the bridge between the two classes. The reason is that they possess old-wealth taste, tradition, and heritage; something the newly rich will never have. Tom and Daisy Buchanan have an elegance and grace since they have always been living lives of rich people. Their elegance is seen from the look of their home: "cheerful red and white Georgian Colonial mansion, overlooking the bay" (Fitzgerald 9).

Even though East Coast aristocracy possesses "sophistication, refinement and breeding", they are not the embodiment of the real American dream of self-made individuals (Bloom 70). As Nick says, they are "careless people, Tom and Daisy — they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money of their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made." (Fitzgerald 191). This shows that they are actually a perfect match and poor, innocent Gatsby does not belong to their world.

As much as Gatsby was obsessed with Daisy and reliving the past, he was obsessed with money as well. He just did not want to get back to his old life as a poor man and, as Nick says "Americans, while occasionally willing to be serfs, have always been obstinate about being peasantry" (Fitzgerald 95). Gatsby escaped from that world of "peasantry" through mainly materialistic things such as his trophies, piles of silk shirts, crazily expensive cars, a tacky mansion and enormous library full of unread books. To Gatsby, these things represented everything he ever wanted, they were symbols of the American dream:

> he opened for us two hulking patent cabinets which held his massed suits and dressing-gowns and ties, and his shirts, piled like bricks in stacks a dozen high… He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray. (Fitzgerald 99)

At that moment, Daisy realized that these shirts represent Gatsby's obsession with the American dream, but he sees it only as the accumulation of wealth. He also wanted to show his wealth by throwing his famous weekend parties: he never showed up to them but people knew about him: "I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited — they went there" (Fitzgerald 45). They are a metaphor for the greed, material excess and desire for pleasure – things that represented the Roaring Twenties. His guests were mostly newly rich people who wanted to become someone and to climb a social ladder as high as they could.

Despite these fancy parties, endless piles of shirts and his big mansion, Gatsby did not win over the only person he ever loved – Daisy. She was just a bitter manifestation of the American dream – a fickle, materialistic woman of the 1920s who did not know what to do with herself. Gatsby eventually realizes that his fascination with Daisy is just a worthless dream, a memory which he should have left in the past, as Nick concluded after the conversation between them: "He wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was" (Fitzgerald 118). After facing the truth, Gatsby became disappointed and his optimism turned to cynicism. In the end, Daisy chooses Tom which shows the victory of materialism and wealth over goodness and love. Gatsby became a victim of the greed, apathy and elusive American dream that led him to death. In his pursuit of happiness to gain success, status and wealth, Gatsby "follows a dream that ultimately becomes a nightmare" (Bloom 79).

Nevertheless, Fitzgerald did not finish his novel in the dark of complete pessimism:

> Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we

will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And then one fine morning—So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past. (Fitzgerald 193) Fitzgerald still believed that there is a future for everyone who got stuck in the past and that the possibility to relieve the old American dream is still present.

3. African-Americans and the American dream in *A Raisin in the Sun*

Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* was first produced on Broadway in 1959. The best words to describe the play are that "A Raisin in the Sun is a celebration of African American hope in the future and belief in the ultimate, if long delayed, justice implicit in the documents of American democracy. It also reflects the determination of African
Americans to be seen by the white majority as real people, sharing universal values and dreams" (Sternlicht 165). What is more, it "discusses the impact of labour and housing discrimination on the American dreams of these black populations through experiences of two generations of the Younger family" (Bloom 171). It was a huge success since the theme concerning African-Americans was not very common during that time. For this play,
Hansberry took the title from the famous long poem titled "Harlem", written by Langston Hughes, in which he asks "What happens to a dream deferred, / Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun" (Hughes). Hansberry's play helps us understand the challenges that African-
American workers in Chicago had to go through during the period between the 1920s and the 1950s. The lives of African- Americans in Chicago were everything but easy because they were living under racial segregation. The play has some autobiographical elements since Hansberry wrote the play according to what she was witnessing while growing up. As already mentioned in the previous section, 1930 is the year that is the most associated with the Great
Depression. Nevertheless, Hansberry's family stayed economically stable through this period.
For the 1930s standards, the Hansberry's belonged to upper middle class, unlike the most of African-Americans who lived in degrading poverty at that time. In her plays, Hansberry focuses on the harsh reality of African-Americans, whom she cared very much about even though she did not feel all the difficulties they were going through. Willing to help other African-Americans in their struggle to achieve their constitutional rights, her family fought against segregation. Her father even challenged a Supreme Court

decision against integration. Showing that African-Americans have opinions and voices, as well as the strong will to fight for the equality, he realized his right to buy a house in a Chicago neighbourhood where up to that point only white people had lived. Being black in a white neighbourhood was very difficult, as is evident in the incident when Hansberry herself was nearly killed by a brick that was thrown through a window by angry whites. Hansberry's memory of her mother's loaded gun which served to protect her family from the violence of racism also illustrates the hardships. Such traumatic memories got stuck in her mind so they were probably a part of the reason why Hansberry chose the theme of a black family's brave decision to move into a new and unfriendly environment for her first play. Another important event from her life that she incorporated in her play was her father and his early death which deeply touched Hansberry. We can connect the character of Big Walter with her father. The cause of much of the action in *Raisin* develops as a consequence of the death of Big Walter, a character whom the audience never sees, although there are many references to him in the dialogues.

Even though Hansberry never lived in a household that is like the Younger's, she was familiar with such households throughout her childhood so she had enough material for her play. The plot is built around the Younger family, whose members do not know the comforts middle-class families have since they are living in a small, crowded apartment.

In the early 20th century, thousands of African-Americans moved to northern industrial cities in order to achieve wealth and their American dream; to find jobs that would create a better life for them and their families, and the Youngers were one of them. The play reveals frustrations that complicate their dreams for success. The matriarchal figure is Mama who takes care of her son Walter Lee, his pregnant wife, and her younger daughter. Her husband died, leaving a ten-thousand-dollar insurance policy and Mama is the beneficiary. Now, the real problem pops up because every member of the family has different plans for spending that money; they have different dreams they want to accomplish. Mama wants to buy a house to finally fulfil a dream she had with her deceased husband. Mama's son, Walter Lee, would rather invest the money in a liquor store with his friends because he believes that it is a sure deal and that the investment will solve their financial problems forever. Walter's wife, Ruth, supports Mama rather than

her husband with hope to provide more space and opportunity for their son, Travis. Finally, Beneatha, Walter's sister and Mama's daughter, wants to invest the money in her education in medical school. Moreover, she wishes that her family members were not so interested in moving to the white neighbourhood and blending in the white world. However, their dreams and wishes were hardly achievable because of segregation, racism, intolerance and violence against which Hansberry's father was fighting. Although the position of African-Americans was at the lowest point; the Youngers knew that, if they wanted to accomplish even the smallest thing, they will have to struggle to the maximum, especially to liven their American dream of "success, equality and freedom" which is seen "as an ambiguous process" (Bloom 175). Political scientist Jennifer Hochschild collected data and, in her book *Facing Up to the American Dream* from 1996, suggested that "working-class black Americans, for example, believe in it with an intensity that baffles and even appals more affluent African-Americans, who see the dream as an opiate that lulls people into ignoring the structural barriers that prevent collective as well as personal advancement" (Cullen 6). The fact is that African-Americans were discriminated and did not have the same opportunities as whites. Still, they did not lose their faith. The working conditions of Chicago blacks were very harsh, which is represented through the experience of Big Walter Lee, told by Mama. She presents him as a brave man who fought for the happiness of his family: "That man worked hisself to death like he done. Like he was fighting his own war with this here world…" (Hansberry 503). Mama wants to say that his life was a constant struggle against a personal hardship and hateful economic and social surroundings. Also, she insists that the money they received when Big Walter Lee died was not anywhere near the value of his life: MAMA (*She holds the check away from her, still looking at it. Slowly her face sobers into a mask of unhappiness*) Ten thousand dollars. (*She hands it to RUTH*) Put it away somewhere, Ruth. (*She does not look at RUTH; her eyes seem to be seeing something somewhere every far off*) Ten thousand dollars they give you. Ten thousand dollars.

> TRAVIS (*To his mother, sincerely*) What's the matter with Grandmama don't she want to be rich? (Hansberry 519)

Her frustration reveals to the readers her disappointment with the unjust assessment of the value of her husband's life and the American dream. Although ten thousand dollars was quite a lot of money in the 1950s, it cannot replace Big Walter's worth in Mama's life and in society. She realizes that the American dream she heard so much about is now twisted by the corrupt society through violence, inequality and constant disrespect of African-Americans. The vision of a peaceful and secure life that black Southern migrants, such as the Youngers, hoped to have when they escaped to the North to find justice and jobs, was now crushed: MAMA: Oh—So now it's life. Money is life. Once upon a time freedom used to be life—now it's money. I guess the world really do change . . .

> WALTER: No—it was always money, Mama. We just didn't know about it.
>
> MAMA: No . . . something has changed. You something new, boy. In my time we was worried about not being lynched . . . You ain't satisfied or proud of
>
> nothing we done. I mean that you had a home; that we kept you out of trouble till you was grown; that you don't have to ride to work on the back of nobody's streetcar—You my children—but how different we done become. (Hansberry
>
> 523)

Mama and Big Walter were industrious and ambitious; they had been, unfortunately, assigned the demeaning roles of servants, dependents and unskilled workers: "My husband always said being any kind of a servant wasn't a fit thing for a man to have to be. He always said a man's hands was made to make things, or to turn the earth with - not to drive nobody's car for 'em – or – (*she looks at her own hands*) carry them slop jars" (Hansberry 543). Mama was always determined to take care of her family, even if that meant to take low-paying jobs. She even considers taking on an additional job: "I could maybe take on a little day work again, few days a week" (Hansberry 502). She does whatever she can to take the best care for her family, she "hopes for the day when her children will be able to achieve more in life than she did" (Bloom 176). For her, most important is her family's happiness: "…Big Walter used to say, he'd get right wet in the eyes sometimes, lean his head back with the water standing in his eyes and say, "Seem

like God didn't see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams – but He did give us children to make them dreams seem worth while" (Hansberry 503).

African-Americans rarely got respect or decent jobs because "white Americans commonly denied blacks their humanity, dignity and value" and achieving anything, especially American dream, was hard for them (Bloom 177). Results of such discrimination were their exhaustion, poverty, great anger and disappointment, as it can be seen from Big Walter's life from Mama's words: "I seen…him…night after night…come in…and look at that rug…and then look at me…the red showing in his eyes…the veins moving in his head…I seen him growing thin and old before he was forty…working and working and working like somebody's old horse…killing himself" (Hansberry 562).

The play also shows how job discrimination affected the generation of the 1950s, like Mama and Big Walter's son and his wife Ruth who are deeply dissatisfied with their work:

> WALTER A job. (*Looks at her*) Mama, a job? I open and close car doors all day long. I drive a man around in his limousine and I say, "Yes, sir; no, sir; very good, sir; shall I take the Drive, sir?" Mama, that ain't no kind of job . . . that ain't nothing at all. (*Very quietly*) Mama, I don't know if I can make you understand. (Hansberry 522)

To Walter, having a job as a car driver lowers his manhood, self-esteem and individual worth; he sees it as a servitude to white Americans. He just thinks that no one, not even Ruth, understands him:

> WALTER (*Rising and coming to her and standing over her*)
> You tired, ain't you? Tired of everything Me, the boy, the way we live – this beat-up hole – everything. Ain't you? (She doesn't look up, doesn't answer) So tired – moaning and groaning all the time, but you wouldn't do nothing to help, would you? You couldn't be on my side that long for nothing, could you?
> (Hansberry 493-494)

Nevertheless, Mama was always there for all of them, to give them support and to remind them of always being optimistic and to believe: "MAMA: There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing" (Hansberry 573).

At the end, some members of the Younger family achieve part of their dreams so we can assume the faith and path of their lives: “Hansberry clearly suggest that the Younger family, as a whole, has legitimate grounds for hope for improvement in their employment opportunities and economic situation” (Bloom 184). While future work possibilities for Ruth seem hardly achievable, Beneatha, Mama’s younger daughter, has more chance of finding a good job with her education and Walter Lee will succeed financially because he becomes more reasonable: “Mama. You always telling me to see life like it is… You know it’s all divided up… Between the takers and the taken. (*He laughs*) I’ve figured it out finally”
(Hansberry 570). This is a very positive sign that shows that Walter found new strength and optimism. He finally understands that life is not about having a dream, but doing your best in order to achieve it; one should stay strong and take risks.
A Raisin in the Sun shows optimism and transcends the hopelessness suggesting that Walter and Beneatha will eventually achieve their dream of success.

In 1960, one year after the publication of the play, the job market “opened widely for African-Americans through social welfare programs” (Bloom 183). This positive change in work opportunities was a big step in the realization of the American dream of economic success for African Americans. Despite the racial inequality, Hansberry always believed in the possibility to realize the American dream and she expressed her convictions in *A Raisin in the Sun.*

4. Broken values in Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*

Another novel written as a response to the Great Depression that hit America with the stock market crash in October 1929 is Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*. The novel was written in 1939 with a setting in Hollywood, California. Unlike Hansberry's play that expresses optimism for the African-Americans and Fitzgerald's novel that shows hope for improvement of broken values, West wrote this novel with complete pessimism, leaving out every piece of faith in the American dream. *The Day of the Locust* depicts the harsh reality of living in Hollywood by showing the obscene, vulgar landscapes as a remainder of the country's poverty at that time. Hollywood was a place where people kept coming with the intention of realizing their dreams of wealth and success, but West saw the American dream as a spiritual and material betrayal in the years of this economic depression. In the introduction to the novel, David Thompson, British film critic and historian, states that

> Nathanael West was one of the first writers to feel the disappointment in America and to relate it to the false promises, the shine of advertising, and the cult of being good-looking and happy…This is the classic American dream slipping over into nightmare; it is the locusts eclipsing the sunlight. ("97. *The*
>
> *Day of the Locust*")

Once again people a created false picture, this time of Hollywood, as a city where everyone can become someone easily and quickly. People wanted to be rich or at least famous, and what better place for that than Hollywood where people without money and talent could easily be both. This novel is exactly about that desire to become famous and rich; it tells the story of people who came to Hollywood in search of the American dream. But here, the American dream is represented as a dream of a personal fulfilment that reached the highest point of broken values, as Cullen writes:

> Like the others, its roots go back to the origins of American life, from the socalled adventurers seeking sudden fortunes on the plantations of Virginia to the speculators mining their prospects in western cities like Las Vegas. But nowhere does this dream come more vividly into focus than in

> the culture of Hollywood - a semi-mythic place where, unlike in the Dream of Upward Mobility, fame and fortune were all the more compelling if achieved without obvious effort. This is most alluring and insidious of American Dreams, and one that seems to have become predominant at the start of the twenty-first century. (Cullen 9)

The characters in this novel dream about having a life of luxury, lots of money, and hoping to have their happily-ever-after ending. Todd Hackett, Faye Greener, and Homer Simpson travel west with the hope to pursue success in Hollywood and attain the life and happiness that come, as they think, with the American dream. Nevertheless, they all failed in that attempt. Like the European settlers who came to America, these characters had different reasons for coming but their goal was the same.

To begin with, Todd Hackett is the main character who comes to California when "A talent scout for National Films had brought Tod to the coast after seeing some of his drawings in an exhibit of undergraduate work at the Yale School of Fine Arts(…)to learn set and costume designing" (West 60). Being enthusiastic and wanting to succeed in his career of designing movie sets, "When the Hollywood job had come along, he had grabbed it despite the arguments of his Mends who were certain that he was selling out and would never paint again" (West 61). The moment he came to Hollywood, he was enchanted with it, especially with the people: "As he walked along, he examined the evening crowd (…) Scattered among these masquerades were people of a different type. Their clothing was sombre and badly cut (…) At this time Tod knew very little about them except that they had come to California to die" (West 60). Those were the Midwestern immigrants who moved to Hollywood where they became bitter and disillusioned because it did not offer them the dream they expected. At one point, he came to the conclusion that "they were the people he felt he must paint" (West 60).
So, his biggest challenge became the depiction of that lower-middle class. Just as Europeans continued coming to the new world in colonial times, Tod felt and predicted at the beginning of the novel that Americans would continue coming to California. Tod sees them as victims who make up his apocalyptic painting "The Burning of Los Angeles":

> He was going to show the city burning at high noon, so that the flames would have to compete with the desert sun and thereby appear less fearful,

> more like bright flags flying from roofs and windows than a terrible holocaust. (…) And the people who set it on fire would be a holiday crowd. (West 118)

Tod, although "he was an artist, not a prophet", strongly believed that these people, who came to Hollywood and realizing that their dreams would not fulfil, would revolt and end it in a riot (West 118).

His painter's eye gives the close details of life in Hollywood, while his intellectual status opens up the critical opinions of various characters and their interactions and contributes to our seeing Tod as a non-participant in many ways above the other characters. Although Tod is an observer for a while, his life begins to go downhill as he associates more frequently with the lower levels of Hollywood society and falls under Faye's influence, becoming her victim.

Faye is an untalented Hollywood actress who is shallow, heartless and manipulative: "Faye played one of the dancing girls. She had only one line to speak, "Oh, Mr.Smith!" and spoke it badly" (West 67). She came to Hollywood with the intention to become famous and rich and she eagerly stuck to that plan. No matter what it took, she wanted that fame, she wanted to conquer Hollywood and reach her goal: "I'm going to be a star some day," she announced as though daring him to contradict her.(…)"It's my life. It's the only thing in the whole world that I want."(…) "If I'm not, I'll commit suicide" (West 98). She was seducing men and, "when she had had as much as she wanted, she pushed him away" (West 112). Faye represents Hollywood and every male character from the novel wants to have her, wants at least a chance to be with her. Even Tod, who is a voice of reason in this novel, falls under Faye's temptation. She presents the beautiful and tempting; the outer beauty, not inner: "That was because her beauty was structural like a tree's, not a quality of her mind or heart" (West 126-127). With this description of Faye, West depicted the depth of Hollywood; it has good grounds for success and it is tempting to the people but it is empty. The surroundings became ugly because the people who are living there became bitter and greedy. She, as Hollywood, is the failure of the American dream, unable to fulfil what she promises; all she ever offered was false hope. Just like Gatsby, Faye is playing roles all the time, unable to be real to anyone. Nevertheless, everyone is constantly chasing her

since they misunderstand her empty affection and flirting without any romantic intensions. That is why she represents a false dream. Tod realized her true behaviour and personality and even shows that on his painting: In "The Burning of Los Angeles" Faye is the naked girl in the left foreground being chased by the group of men and women who have separated from the main body of the mob. One of the women is about to hurl a rock at her to bring her down. She is running with her eyes closed and a strange half-smile on her lips. (West 108)

Homer Simpson is the only character who stands out in *The Day of the Locust* because he does not fit easily into Hollywood life. He is not a performer, like Faye or her father Harry, but he is not a part of the crowds that Tod hopes to paint either. Nevertheless, Homer is the closest character to the disillusioned crowd who has come to California to die: "Tod examined him eagerly. He didn't mean to be rude but at first glance this man seemed an exact model for the kind of person who comes to California to die, perfect in every detail down to fever eyes and unruly hands" (West 79). In Hollywood, Homer is an outsider who came from the Midwest "from a little town near Des Moines, Iowa, called Wayneville, where he had worked for twenty years in a hotel" (West 80). He is a largely empty character and a very small part of the novel focuses on Homer's point of view since his life is blank. Early in the novel, Homer is rather shy than bitter. Yet, as the novel continues and Homer falls under Faye's influence, his shyness and meekness become instruments of a new bitterness since she was only using him for financial purposes. Faye's victimization of Homer creates in him tension that eventually erupts into the violence that occurs at the end of the novel when Homer becomes a part of the riot, just as the others who are left disappointed by Hollywood. Hollywood is a city that sucks in every single person with the false hope, without exceptions and that is why Tod included even himself in the painting; he ends up, together with Homer, in the riot he predicted. All the characters in *The Day of the Locust* eventually realized that the picture of perfect life that Hollywood represents is not as easy to obtain as they thought. They grow discontented and disappointed with their lives, which indicate the downfall of this lower level of Hollywood society.

West's modernism declared the death of the American Dream. He completely overturned the American dream and proved that it is hardly possible to create happiness, success and order out of the chaos of everyday life.

Conclusion

The twentieth century was a century full of bitterness and dissatisfaction with the American dream and the corrupted, materialistic society. The cause of such negative perceptions was found in the harshness of the Great Depression. Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* are works written during that period concerning the theme of losing one's belief in the American dream. Despite the utter pessimism and complete dissatisfaction that is expressed in the novel *The Day of the Locust*, the novel *The Great Gatsby* and the play *A Raisin in the Sun* highlight the disillusionment but do offer some hope. Fitzgerald expressed a dose of optimism at the end of the novel with which he pointed out that the future of the American dream and fixed values still exists. Moreover, Lorraine Hansberry spoke openly about the position of African – Americans and their struggle to reach the American dream. With the happy ending, she expressed her belief that things can change and that all people, especially African – Americans, can achieve their dreams. The theme of broken values of the American dream that pervaded the twentieth century literature made the works popular, which shows that people do care about fixing the corruption of society and still have faith that equality of opportunity and progress can be achieved by bringing back the pure, old values for which their ancestors fought.

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PART 3

Important movements

- **The 20th century**

Important movements in drama, poetry, fiction, and criticism took shape in the years before, during, and after World War I. The eventful period that followed the war left its imprint upon books of all kinds. Literary forms of the period were extraordinarily varied, and in drama, poetry, and fiction the leading authors tended toward radical technical experiments.

Experiments in drama

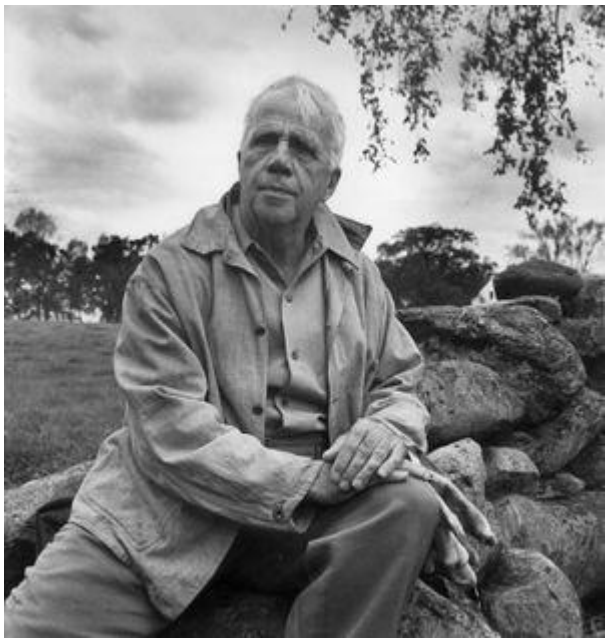
Although drama had not been a major art form in the 19th century, no type of writing was more experimental than a new drama that arose in rebellion against the glib commercial stage. In the early years of the 20th century, Americans traveling in Europe encountered a vital, flourishing theatre; returning home, some of them became active in founding the Little Theatre movement throughout the country. Freed from commercial limitations, playwrights experimented with dramatic forms and methods of production, and in time producers, actors, and dramatists appeared who had been trained in college classrooms and community playhouses. Some Little Theatre groups became commercial producers—for example, the Washington Square Players, founded in 1915, which became the Theatre Guild (first production in 1919). The resulting drama was marked by a spirit of innovation and by a new seriousness and maturity.

Eugene O'Neill, the most admired dramatist of the period, was a product of this movement. He worked with the Provincetown Players before his plays were commercially produced. His dramas were remarkable for their range. *Beyond the Horizon* (first performed 1920), *Anna Christie* (1921), *Desire Under the Elms* (1924), and *The Iceman Cometh* (1946) were naturalistic works, while *The Emperor Jones* (1920) and *The Hairy Ape* (1922) made use of the Expressionistic techniques developed in German drama in the period 1914–24. He also employed a stream-of-consciousness form of psychological monologue in *Strange Interlude* (1928) and produced a work that combined myth, family drama, and psychological analysis in *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931).

No other dramatist was as generally praised as O'Neill, but many others wrote plays that reflected the growth of a serious and varied drama, including Maxwell Anderson, whose verse dramas have dated badly, and Robert E. Sherwood, a Broadway professional who wrote both comedy (*Reunion in Vienna* [1931]) and tragedy (*There Shall Be No Night* [1940]). Marc Connelly wrote touching fantasy in an African American folk biblical play, *The Green Pastures* (1930). Like O'Neill, Elmer Rice made use of both Expressionistic techniques (*The Adding Machine* [1923]) and naturalism (*Street Scene* [1929]). Lillian Hellman wrote powerful, well-crafted melodramas in *The Children's Hour* (1934) and *The Little Foxes* (1939). Radical theatre experiments included Marc Blitzstein's savagely satiric musical *The Cradle Will*

Rock (1937) and the work of Orson Welles and John Houseman for the government-sponsored Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Theatre Project. The premier radical theatre of the decade was the Group Theatre (1931–41) under Harold Clurman and Lee Strasberg, which became best known for presenting the work of Clifford Odets. In *Waiting for Lefty* (1935), a stirring plea for labour unionism, Odets roused the audience to an intense pitch of fervour, and in *Awake and Sing* (1935), perhaps the best play of the decade, he created a lyrical work of family conflict and youthful yearning. Other important plays by Odets for the Group Theatre were *Paradise Lost* (1935), *Golden Boy* (1937), and *Rocket to the Moon* (1938). Thornton Wilder used stylized settings and poetic dialogue in *Our Town* (1938) and turned to fantasy in *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942). William Saroyan shifted his lighthearted, anarchic vision from fiction to drama with *My Heart's in the Highlands* and *The Time of Your Life* (both 1939).

- **The new poetry**



Robert Frost

Poetry ranged between traditional types of verse and experimental writing that departed radically from the established forms of the 19th century. Two New England poets, Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost, who were not noted for technical experimentation, won both critical and popular acclaim in this period. Robinson, whose first book appeared in 1896, did his best work in sonnets, ballad stanzas, and blank verse. In the 1920s he won three Pulitzer Prizes—for his *Collected Poems* (published 1921), *The Man Who Died Twice* (1925), and *Tristram* (1927). Like Robinson, Frost used traditional stanzas and blank verse in volumes such as *A Boy's Will* (1913), his first book, and *North of Boston* (1914), *New Hampshire* (1923), *A Further Range* (1936), and *A Masque of Reason* (1945). The best-known poet of his generation, Frost, like Robinson, saw and commented upon the tragic aspects of life in poems such as "Design," "Directive," and "Provide, Provide." Frost memorably crafted the language of common speech into traditional poetic form, with epigrammatic effect.

Just as modern American drama had its beginnings in little theatres, modern American poetry took form in little magazines. Particularly important was *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, founded by Harriet Monroe in Chicago in 1912. The surrounding region soon became prominent as the home of three poets: Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, and Edgar Lee Masters. Lindsay's blend of legendary lore and native

oratory in irregular odelike forms was well adapted to oral presentation, and his lively readings from his works contributed to the success of such books as *General William Booth Enters into Heaven, and Other Poems* (1913) and *The Congo, and Other Poems* (1914). Sandburg wrote of life on the prairies and in Midwestern cities in Whitmanesque free verse in such volumes as *Chicago Poems* (1916) and *The People, Yes* (1936). Masters's very popular *Spoon River Anthology* (1915) consisted of free-verse monologues by village men and women, most of whom spoke bitterly of their frustrated lives.

Hughes, Langston

Writing traditional sonnets and brief, personal lyrics, Edna St. Vincent Millay and Sara Teasdale were innovative in being unusually frank (according to the standard of their time) for women poets. Amy Lowell, on the other hand, experimented with free verse and focused on the

image and the descriptive detail. Three fine Black poets—James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Countee Cullen—found old molds satisfactory for dealing with new subjects, specifically the problems of racism in America. The deceptively simple colloquial language of Hughes's poetry has proved especially appealing to later readers. While Conrad Aiken experimented with poetical imitations of symphonic forms often mingled with stream-of-consciousness techniques, E.E. Cummings used typographical novelties to produce poems that had surprisingly fresh impact. Marianne Moore invented and brilliantly employed a kind of free verse that was marked by a wonderfully sharp and idiosyncratic focus on objects and details. Robinson Jeffers used violent imagery and modified free or blank verse to express perhaps the most bitter views voiced by a major poet in this period.

Except for a period after World War II, when he was confined in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., Ezra Pound lived outside the United States after 1908. He had, nevertheless, a profound influence on 20th-century writing in English, both as a practitioner of verse and as a patron and impresario of other writers. His most controversial work remained *The Cantos*, the first installment of which appeared in 1926 and the latest in 1959 (*Thrones: 96–109 de los cantares*), with a fragmentary addendum in 1968 (*Drafts & Fragments of Cantos CX–CXVII*).

Like Pound, to whom he was much indebted, T.S. Eliot lived abroad most of his life, becoming a British subject in 1927. His first volume, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, was published in 1917. In 1922 appeared *The Waste Land*, the poem by which he first became famous. Filled with fragments, competing voices, learned allusions, and deeply buried personal details, the poem was read as a dark diagnosis of a disillusioned generation and of the modern world. As a poet and critic, Eliot exercised a strong influence, especially in the period between World Wars I and II. In what some critics regard as his finest work, *The Four Quartets* (1943), Eliot explored through images of great beauty and haunting power his own past, the past of the human race, and the meaning of human history.

Eliot was an acknowledged master of a varied group of poets whose work was indebted to 17th-century English Metaphysical poets, especially to John Donne. Eliot's influence was clear in the writings of Archibald MacLeish, whose earlier poems showed resemblances to *The Waste Land*. A number of Southern poets (who were also critics) were influenced by Eliot—John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, and Allen Tate. Younger American Metaphysicals who emerged later included Louise Bogan, Léonie Adams, Muriel Rukeyser, Delmore Schwartz, and Karl Shapiro. But there were several major poets strongly opposed to Eliot's influence. Their style and subjects tended to be romantic and visionary. These included Hart Crane, whose long poem *The Bridge* (1930) aimed to create a Whitmanesque

American epic, and Wallace Stevens, a lush and sensuous writer who made an astonishing literary debut with the poems collected in *Harmonium* (1923). Another opponent of Eliot was William Carlos Williams, who invested his experimental prose and magically simple lyrics—in works such as *Spring and All* (1923)—with the mundane details of American life and wrote about American myth and cultural history with great sweep in *In the American Grain* (1925).

- **Fiction**

The little magazines that helped the growth of the poetry of the era also contributed to a development of its fiction. They printed daring or unconventional short stories and published attacks upon established writers. *The Dial* (1880–1929), *Little Review* (1914–29), *Seven Arts* (1916–17), and others encouraged Modernist innovation. More potent were two magazines edited by the ferociously funny journalist-critic H.L. Mencken—*The Smart Set* (editorship 1914–23) and *American Mercury* (which he coedited between 1924 and 1933). A powerful influence and a scathing critic of puritanism, Mencken helped launch the new fiction.

Mencken's major enthusiasms included the fiction of Joseph Conrad and Theodore Dreiser, but he also promoted minor writers for their attacks on gentility, such as James Branch Cabell, or for their revolt against the narrow, frustrated quality of life in rural communities,

including Zona Gale and Ruth Suckow. The most distinguished of these writers was Sherwood Anderson. His *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) and *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921) were collections of short stories that showed villagers suffering from all sorts of phobias and suppressions. Anderson in time wrote several novels, the best being *Poor White* (1920).

In 1920 critics noticed that a new school of fiction had risen to prominence with the success of books such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* and Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*, fictions that tended to be frankly psychological or modern in their unsparing portrayals of contemporary life. Novels of the 1920s were often not only lyrical and personal but also, in the despairing mood that followed World War I, apt to express the pervasive disillusionment of the postwar generation. Novels of the 1930s inclined toward radical social criticism in response to the miseries of the Great Depression, though some of the best, by writers such as Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Henry Roth, and Nathanael West, continued to explore the Modernist vein of the previous decade.

Critics of society

F. Scott Fitzgerald

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) showed the disillusionment and moral disintegration experienced by so many in the United States after World War I. The book initiated a career of great promise that found fruition in *The Great Gatsby* (1925), a spare but poignant novel about the promise and failure of the American Dream. Fitzgerald was to live out this theme himself. Though damaged by drink and by a failing marriage, he went on to do some of his best work in the 1930s, including numerous stories and essays as well as his most ambitious novel, *Tender Is the Night* (1934). Unlike Fitzgerald, who was a lyric writer with real emotional intensity, Sinclair Lewis was best as a social critic. His onslaughts against the "village virus" (*Main Street* [1920]), average businessmen (*Babbitt* [1922]), materialistic scientists (*Arrowsmith* [1925]), and the racially prejudiced (*Kingsblood*

Royal [1947]) were satirically sharp and thoroughly documented, though *Babbitt* is his only book that still stands up brilliantly at the beginning of the 21st century. Similar careful documentation, though little satire, characterized James T. Farrell's naturalistic *Studs Lonigan* trilogy (1932–35), which described the stifling effects of growing up in a lower-middle-class family and a street-corner milieu in the Chicago of the 1920s.

Zora Neale Hurston

The ironies of racial identity dominate the stories and novels produced by writers of the Harlem Renaissance, including harsh portraits of the Black middle class in Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* (1928) and *Passing* (1929) and the powerful stories of Langston Hughes in *The Ways of White Folks* (1934), as well as the varied literary materials—poetry, fiction, and drama—collected in Jean

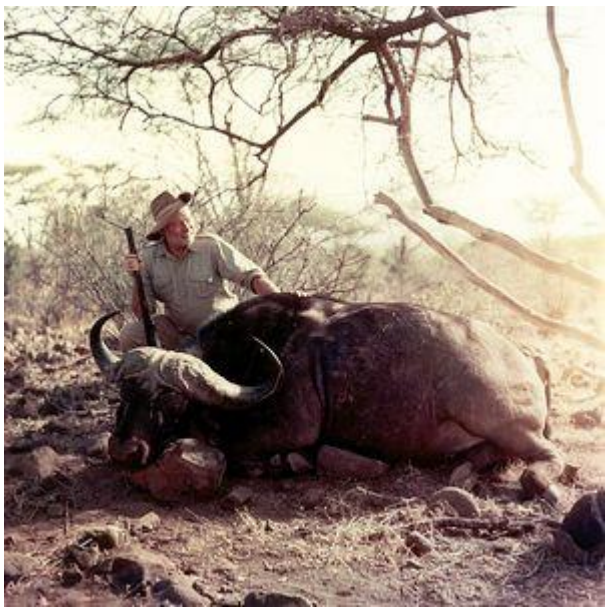
Toomer's *Cane* (1923). Richard Wright's books, including *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938), *Native Son* (1940), and *Black Boy* (1945), were works of burning social protest, Dostoyevskian in their intensity, that dealt boldly with the plight of American Blacks in both the old South and the Northern urban ghetto. Zora Neale Hurston's training in anthropology and folklore contributed to *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), her powerful feminist novel about the all-Black Florida town in which she had grown up.

A number of authors wrote proletarian novels attacking capitalist exploitation, as in several novels based on a 1929 strike in the textile mills in Gastonia, N.C., such as Fielding Burke's *Call Home the Heart* and Grace Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread* (both 1932). Other notable proletarian novels included Jack Conroy's *The Disinherited* (1933), Robert Cantwell's *The Land of Plenty* (1934), and Albert Halper's *Union Square* (1933), *The Foundry* (1934), and *The Chute* (1937), as well as some grim evocations of the drifters and "bottom dogs" of the Depression era, such as Edward Anderson's *Hungry Men* and Tom Kromer's *Waiting for Nothing* (both 1935). The radical movement, combined with a nascent feminism, encouraged the talent of several politically committed women writers whose work was rediscovered later; they included Tillie Olsen, Meridel Le Sueur, and Josephine Herbst.

Particularly admired as a protest writer was John Dos Passos, who first attracted attention with an anti-World War I novel, *Three*

Soldiers (1921). His most sweeping indictments of the modern social and economic system, *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) and the *U.S.A.* trilogy (*The 42nd Parallel*, *1919*, and *The Big Money* [1930–36]), employed various narrative innovations such as the "camera eye" and "newsreel," along with a large cast of characters, to attack society from the left. Nathanael West's novels, including *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933), *A Cool Million* (1934), and *The Day of the Locust* (1939), used black comedy to create a bitter vision of an inhuman and brutal world and its depressing effects on his sensitive but ineffectual protagonists. West evoked the tawdry but rich materials of mass culture and popular fantasy to mock the pathos of the American Dream, a frequent target during the Depression years.

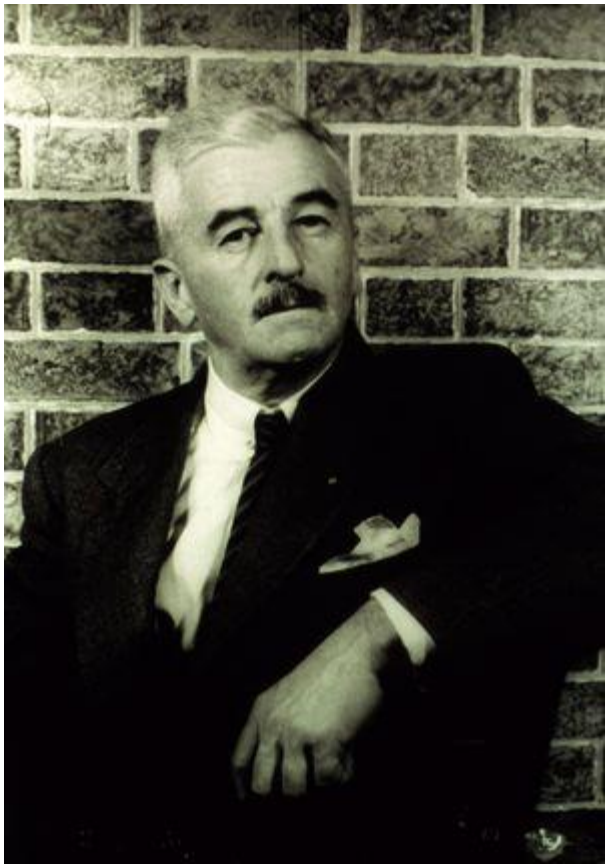
Hemingway, Faulkner, and Steinbeck



Ernest Hemingway hunting in Kenya

Three authors whose writings showed a shift from disillusionment were Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and John Steinbeck.

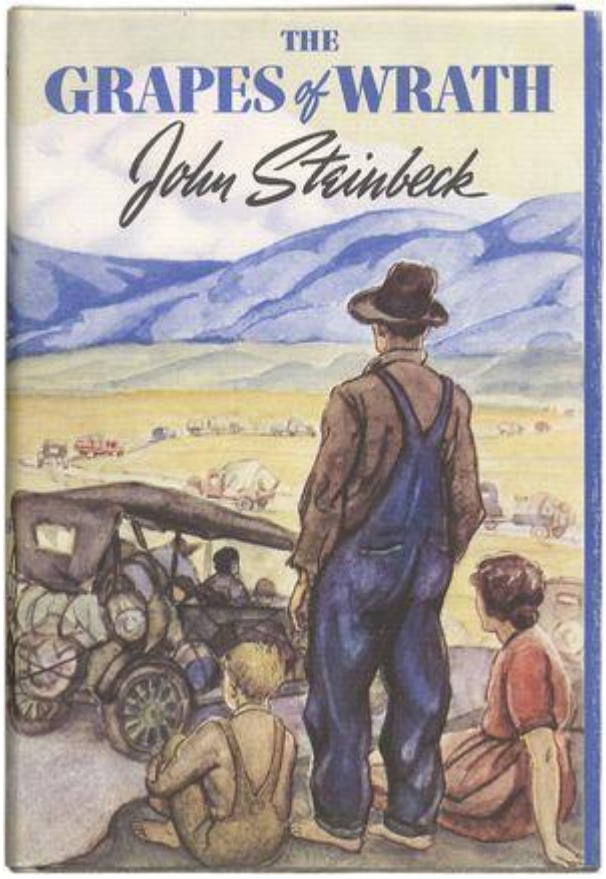
Hemingway's early short stories and his first novels, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), were full of the existential disillusionment of the Lost Generation expatriates. The Spanish Civil War, however, led him to espouse the possibility of collective action to solve social problems, and his less-effective novels, including *To Have and Have Not* (1937) and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), embodied this new belief. He regained some of his form in *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) and his posthumously published memoir of Paris between the wars, *A Moveable Feast* (1964). Hemingway's writing was influenced by his background in journalism and by the spare manner and flat sentence rhythms of Gertrude Stein, his Paris friend and a pioneer Modernist, especially in such works of hers as *Three Lives* (1909). His own great impact on other writers came from his deceptively simple, stripped-down prose, full of unspoken implication, and from his tough but vulnerable masculinity, which created a myth that imprisoned the author and haunted the World War II generation.



William Faulkner

Hemingway's great rival as a stylist and mythmaker was William Faulkner, whose writing was as baroque as Hemingway's was spare. Influenced by Sherwood Anderson, Herman Melville, and especially James Joyce, Faulkner combined stream-of-consciousness techniques with rich social history. Works such as *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Light in August* (1932), *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), and *The Hamlet* (1940) were parts of the unfolding history of Yoknapatawpha County, a mythical Mississippi community, which depicted the transformation and the decadence of the South. Faulkner's work was dominated by a sense of guilt going back to the American Civil War and the appropriation of Indian lands. Though often comic, his work pictured the disintegration of the leading families and, in later books such as *Go Down, Moses* (1942) and *Intruder in the*

Dust (1948), showed a growing concern with the troubled role of race in Southern life.



dust jacket of *The Grapes of Wrath*

Steinbeck's career, marked by uneven achievements, began with a historical novel, *Cup of Gold* (1929), in which he voiced a distrust of society and glorified the anarchistic individualist typical of the rebellious 1920s. He showed his affinity for colourful outcasts, such as the *paisanos* of the Monterey area, in the short novels *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), and *Cannery Row* (1945). His best books were inspired by the social struggles of migrant farm workers during the Great Depression, including the simply written but ambiguous strike novel *In Dubious Battle* (1936) and his flawed masterpiece, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). The latter, a protest novel

punctuated by prose-poem interludes, tells the story of the migration of the Joads, an Oklahoma Dust Bowl family, to California. During their almost biblical journey, they learn the necessity for collective action among the poor and downtrodden to prevent them from being destroyed individually.

Lyric fictionists

An interesting development in fiction, abetted by Modernism, was a shift from naturalistic to poetic writing. There was an increased tendency to select details and endow them with symbolic meaning, to set down the thought processes and emotions of the characters, and to make use of rhythmic prose. In varied ways Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Cabell, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Faulkner all showed evidence of this—in passages, in short stories, and even in entire novels. Faulkner showed the tendency at its worst in *A Fable* (1954), which, ironically, won a Pulitzer Prize.

Willa Cather

Lyricism was especially prominent in the writings of Willa Cather. *O Pioneers!* (1913), *The Song of the Lark* (1915), and *My Ántonia* (1918) contained poetic passages about the disappearing frontier and the creative efforts of frontier folk. *A Lost Lady* (1923) and *The Professor's House* (1925) were elegiac and spare in style, though they also depicted historic social transformations, and *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927) was an exaltation of the past and of spiritual pioneering. Katherine Anne Porter, whose works took the form primarily of novelettes and stories, wrote more in the style of the Metaphysical poets, though she also wrote one long, ambitious novel, *A Ship of Fools* (1962). Her use of the stream-of-consciousness method in *Flowering Judas* (1930) as well as in *Pale*

Horse, Pale Rider (1939) had the complexity, the irony, and the symbolic sophistication characteristic of these poets, whose work the Modernists had brought into fashion.

Two of the most intensely lyrical works of the 1930s were autobiographical novels set in the Jewish ghetto of New York City's Lower East Side before World War I: Michael Gold's harsh *Jews Without Money* (1930) and Henry Roth's Proustian *Call It Sleep* (1934), one of the greatest novels of the decade. They followed in the footsteps of Anzia Yezierska, a prolific writer of the 1920s whose passionate books about immigrant Jews, especially *Bread Givers* (1925), have been rediscovered by contemporary feminists.

Another lyrical and autobiographical writer, whose books have faded badly, was Thomas Wolfe, who put all his strivings, thoughts, and feelings into works such as *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929) and *Of Time and the River* (1935) before his early death in 1938. These Whitmanesque books, as well as posthumously edited ones such as *The Web and the Rock* (1939) and *You Can't Go Home Again* (1940), dealt with a figure much like Wolfe, echoing the author's youth in the South, young manhood in the North, and eternal search to fulfill a vision. Though grandiose, they influenced many young writers, including Jack Kerouac.

Walter BlairMorris DicksteinThe Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

- **Literary criticism**

Some historians, looking back over the first half of the 20th century, were inclined to think that it was particularly noteworthy for its literary criticism. Beyond doubt, criticism thrived as it had not for several generations. It was an important influence on literature itself, and it shaped the perceptions of readers in the face of difficult new writing.

The period began with a battle between two literary groups, one that called its movement New Humanism and stood for older values in judging literature and another group that urged that old standards be overthrown and new ones adopted. The New Humanists, such as Irving Babbitt, a Harvard University professor, and Paul Elmer More, were moralists whose work found an echo in neotraditionalist writers such as T.S. Eliot, who shared their dislike of naturalism, Romanticism, and the liberal faith in progress. The leader of the opposition, hardly a liberal himself, was the pugnacious H.L. Mencken, who insisted that the duty of writers was to present "the unvarnished truth" about life. His magazine articles and reviews gathered in *A Book of Prefaces* (1917) and the six volumes of *Prejudices* (1919–27) ushered in the iconoclasm of the 1920s, preparing the ground for satiric writers such as Sinclair Lewis. Mencken was a tireless enthusiast for the work of Joseph Conrad and Theodore Dreiser, among other modern writers. With his dislike of cant and hypocrisy, Mencken helped liberate American literature from its moralistic framework.

Socio-literary critics

In this period of social change, it was natural for critics to consider literature in relationship to society and politics, as most 19th-century critics had done. The work of Van Wyck Brooks and Vernon L. Parrington illustrated two of the main approaches. In *America's Coming-of-Age* (1915), *Letters and Leadership* (1918), and *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (1920), Brooks scolded the American public and attacked the philistinism, materialism, and provinciality of the Gilded Age. But he retreated from his critical position in the popular *Makers and Finders* series, which included *The Flowering of New England* (1936), *New England: Indian Summer* (1940), *The World of Washington Irving* (1944), *The Times of Melville and Whitman* (1947), and *The Confident Years* (1952). These books wove an elaborate cultural tapestry of the major and minor figures in American literature. In *Main Currents in American Thought* (1927–30), Parrington, a progressive, reevaluated American literature in terms of its adherence to the tenets of Jeffersonian democracy.

The growth of Marxian influence upon thinking in the 1920s and '30s manifested itself in several critical works by V.F. Calverton, Granville Hicks, Malcolm Cowley, and Bernard Smith, as well as numerous articles in journals such as *Modern Quarterly*, *New Masses*, *Partisan Review*, and *The New Republic*. Though the enthusiasm for communism waned, Marxism contributed to the historical approach of outstanding critics such as Edmund Wilson and Kenneth Burke and to the entire school of New

York intellectuals that formed around *Partisan Review* and included critics such as Lionel Trilling and Philip Rahv.

Moral-aesthetic critics

Wilson and Burke, like Cowley, Morton D. Zabel, Newton Arvin, and F.O. Matthiessen, tried to strike a balance between aesthetic concerns and social or moral issues. They were interested both in analyzing and in evaluating literary creations—i.e., they were eager to see in detail how a literary work was constructed yet also to place it in a larger social or moral framework. Their work, like that of all critics of the period, showed the influence of T.S. Eliot. In essays and books such as *The Sacred Wood* (1920) and *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933), Eliot drew close attention to the language of literature yet also made sweeping judgments and large cultural generalizations. His main impact was on close readers of poetry—e.g., I.A. Richards, William Empson, and F.R. Leavis in England and the critics of the New Criticism movement in the United States, many of whom were also poets besides being political and cultural conservatives. Along with Eliot, they rewrote the map of literary history, challenged the dominance of Romantic forms and styles, promoted and analyzed difficult Modernist writing, and greatly advanced ways of discussing literary structure. Major examples of their style of close reading can be found in R.P. Blackmur's *The Double Agent* (1935), Allen Tate's *Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas* (1936), John Crowe Ransom's *The World's Body* (1938), Yvor Winters's *Maule's Curse* (1938), and Cleanth

Brooks's *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947). Though they were later attacked for their formalism and for avoiding the social context of writing, the New Critics did much to further the understanding and appreciation of literature.

- **After World War II**

The literary historian Malcolm Cowley described the years between the two world wars as a "second flowering" of American writing. Certainly American literature attained a new maturity and a rich diversity in the 1920s and '30s, and significant works by several major figures from those decades were published after 1945. Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Katherine Anne Porter wrote memorable fiction, though not up to their prewar standard; and Frost, Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, E.E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, and Gwendolyn Brooks published important poetry. Eugene O'Neill's most distinguished play, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, appeared posthumously in 1956. Before and after World War II, Robert Penn Warren published influential fiction, poetry, and criticism. His *All the King's Men*, one of the best American political novels, won the 1947 Pulitzer Prize. Mary McCarthy became a widely read social satirist and essayist. When it first appeared in the United States in the 1960s, Henry Miller's fiction was influential primarily because of its frank exploration of sexuality. But its loose, picaresque, quasi-autobiographical form also meshed well with post-1960s fiction.

Impressive new novelists, poets, and playwrights emerged after the war. There was, in fact, a gradual changing of the guard.

Not only did a new generation come out of the war, but its ethnic, regional, and social character was quite different from that of the preceding one. Among the younger writers were children of immigrants, many of them Jews; African Americans, only a few generations away from slavery; and, eventually, women, who, with the rise of feminism, were to speak in a new voice. Though the social climate of the postwar years was conservative, even conformist, some of the most hotly discussed writers were homosexuals or bisexuals, including Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, Paul Bowles, Gore Vidal, and James Baldwin, whose dark themes and experimental methods cleared a path for Beat writers such as Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and Jack Kerouac.

- **The novel and short story**

Realism and "metafiction"

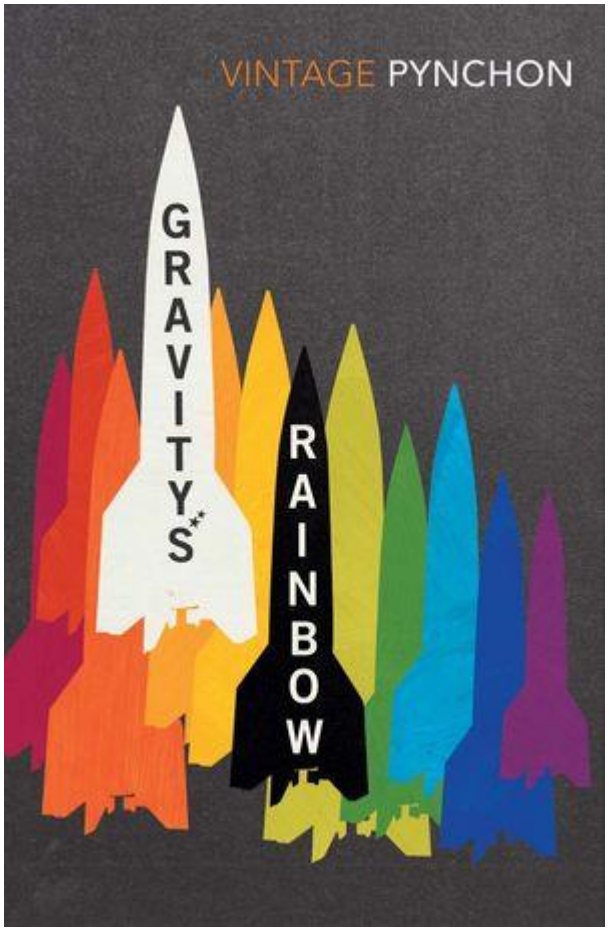
Two distinct groups of novelists responded to the cultural impact, and especially the technological horror, of World War II. Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) and Irwin Shaw's *The Young Lions* (1948) were realistic war novels, though Mailer's book was also a novel of ideas, exploring fascist thinking and an obsession with power as elements of the military mind. James Jones, amassing a staggering quantity of closely observed detail, documented the war's human cost in

an ambitious trilogy (*From Here to Eternity* [1951], *The Thin Red Line* [1962], and *Whistle* [1978]) that centred on loners who resisted adapting to military discipline. Younger novelists, profoundly shaken by the bombing of Hiroshima and the real threat of human annihilation, found the conventions of realism inadequate for treating the war's nightmarish implications. In *Catch-22* (1961), Joseph Heller satirized the military mentality with surreal black comedy but also injected a sense of Kafkaesque horror. A sequel, *Closing Time* (1994), was an elegy for the World War II generation. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., in *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), described the Allied firebombing of the German city of Dresden with a mixture of dark fantasy and numb, loopy humour. Later this method was applied brilliantly to the portrayal of the Vietnam War—a conflict that seemed in itself surreal—by Tim O'Brien in *Going After Cacciato* (1978) and the short-story collection *The Things They Carried* (1990).

In part because of the atomic bomb, American writers turned increasingly to black humour and absurdist fantasy. Many found the naturalistic approach incapable of communicating the rapid pace and the sheer implausibility of contemporary life. A highly self-conscious fiction emerged, laying bare its own literary devices, questioning the nature of representation, and often imitating or parodying earlier fiction rather than social reality. Russian-born Vladimir Nabokov and the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges were strong influences on this new "metafiction." Nabokov, who

became a U.S. citizen in 1945, produced a body of exquisitely wrought fiction distinguished by linguistic and formal innovation. Despite their artificiality, his best novels written in English—including *Lolita* (1955), *Pnin* (1957), and *Pale Fire* (1962)—are highly personal books that have a strong emotional thread running through them.

In an important essay, "The Literature of Exhaustion" (1967), John Barth declared himself an American disciple of Nabokov and Borges. After dismissing realism as a "used up" tradition, Barth described his own work as "novels which imitate the form of the novel, by an author who imitates the role of Author." In fact, Barth's earliest fiction, *The Floating Opera* (1956) and *The End of the Road* (1958), fell partly within the realistic tradition, but in later, more-ambitious works he simultaneously imitated and parodied conventional forms—the historical novel in *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960), Greek and Christian myths in *Giles Goat-Boy* (1966), and the epistolary novel in *LETTERS* (1979). Similarly, Donald Barthelme mocked the fairy tale in *Snow White* (1967) and Freudian fiction in *The Dead Father* (1975). Barthelme was most successful in his short stories and parodies that solemnly caricatured contemporary styles, especially the richly suggestive pieces collected in *Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts* (1968), *City Life* (1970), and *Guilty Pleasures* (1974).



Gravity's Rainbow

Thomas Pynchon emerged as the major American practitioner of the absurdist fable. His novels and stories were elaborately plotted mixtures of historical information, comic-book fantasy, and countercultural suspicion. Using paranoia as a structuring device as well as a cast of mind, Pynchon worked out elaborate "conspiracies" in *V.* (1963), *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), and *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973). The underlying assumption of Pynchon's fiction was the inevitability of entropy—i.e., the disintegration of physical and moral energy. Pynchon's technique was later to influence writers as different as Don DeLillo and Paul Auster. In *The Naked Lunch* (1959) and other novels, William S. Burroughs, abandoning plot and coherent characterization, used a drug addict's consciousness to depict a hideous modern landscape.

Vonnegut, Terry Southern, and John Hawkes were also major practitioners of black humour and the absurdist fable.

Other influential portraits of outsider figures included the Beat characters in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), *The Dharma Bums* (1958), *Desolation Angels* (1965), and *Visions of Cody* (1972); the young Rabbit Angstrom in John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (1960) and *Rabbit Redux* (1971); Holden Caulfield in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951); and the troubling madman in Richard Yates's powerful novel of suburban life, *Revolutionary Road* (1961).

Though writers such as Barth, Barthelme, and Pynchon rejected the novel's traditional function as a mirror reflecting society, a significant number of contemporary novelists were reluctant to abandon Social Realism, which they pursued in much more personal terms. In novels such as *The Victim* (1947), *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), *Herzog* (1964), *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970), and *Humboldt's Gift* (1975), Saul Bellow tapped into the buoyant, manic energy and picaresque structure of black humour while proclaiming the necessity of "being human." Though few contemporary writers saw the ugliness of urban life more clearly than Bellow, his central characters rejected the "Wasteland outlook" that he associated with Modernism. A spiritual vision, derived from sources as diverse as Judaism, Transcendentalism, and Rudolph Steiner's cultish theosophy, found its way into Bellow's later novels, but he also wrote darker fictions such as the novella *Seize the Day* (1956), a study in failure and blocked

emotion that was perhaps his best work. With the publication of *Ravelstein* (2000), his fictional portrait of the scholar-writer Allan Bloom, and of *Collected Stories* (2001), Bellow was acclaimed as a portraitist and a poet of memory.

Four other major Jewish writers—Bernard Malamud, Grace Paley, Philip Roth, and Isaac Bashevis Singer—treated the human condition with humour and forgiveness. Malamud's gift for dark comedy and Hawthornean fable was especially evident in his short-story collections *The Magic Barrel* (1958) and *Idiots First* (1963). His first three novels, *The Natural* (1952), *The Assistant* (1957), and *A New Life* (1961), were also impressive works of fiction; *The Assistant* had the bleak moral intensity of his best stories. Paley's stories combined an offbeat, whimsically poetic manner with a wry understanding of the ironies of family life and progressive politics. While Roth was known best for the wild satire and sexual high jinks of *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), a hilarious stand-up routine about ethnic stereotypes, his most-lasting achievement may be his later novels built around the misadventures of a controversial Jewish novelist named Zuckerman, especially *The Ghost Writer* (1979), *The Anatomy Lesson* (1983), and, above all, *The Counterlife* (1987). Like many of his later works, from *My Life as a Man* (1974) to *Operation Shylock* (1993), *The Counterlife* plays ingeniously on the relationship between autobiography and fiction. His best later work was his bitter, deliberately offensive story of a self-destructive artist, *Sabbath's*

Theater (1995). Returning to realism, but without his former self-absorption, Roth won new readers with his trilogy on 20th-century American history—*American Pastoral* (1997), *I Married a Communist* (1998), and *The Human Stain* (2000)—and with *The Plot Against America* (2004), a counter-historical novel about the coming of fascism in the United States during World War II. The Polish-born Singer won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1978 for his stories, written originally in Yiddish. (*See also* Yiddish literature.) They evolved from fantastic tales of demons and angels to realistic fictions set in New York City's Upper West Side, often dealing with the haunted lives of Holocaust survivors. These works showed him to be one of the great storytellers of modern times.

Another great storyteller, John Cheever, long associated with *The New Yorker* magazine, created in his short stories and novels a gallery of memorable eccentrics. He documented the anxieties of upper-middle-class New Yorkers and suburbanites in the relatively tranquil years after World War II. The sexual and moral confusion of the American middle class was the focus of the work of J.D. Salinger and Richard Yates, as well as of John Updike's Rabbit series (four novels from *Rabbit, Run* [1960] to *Rabbit at Rest* [1990]), *Couples* (1968), and *Too Far to Go* (1979), a sequence of tales about the quiet disintegration of a civilized marriage, a subject Updike revisited in a retrospective work, *Villages* (2004). In sharp contrast, Nelson Algren (*The Man with the Golden Arm* [1949]) and Hubert Selby, Jr. (*Last Exit to*

Brooklyn [1964]), documented lower-class urban life with brutal frankness. Similarly, John Rechy portrayed America's urban homosexual subculture in *City of Night* (1963). As literary and social mores were liberalized, Cheever himself dealt with homosexuality in his prison novel *Falconer* (1977) and even more explicitly in his personal journals, published posthumously in 1991.

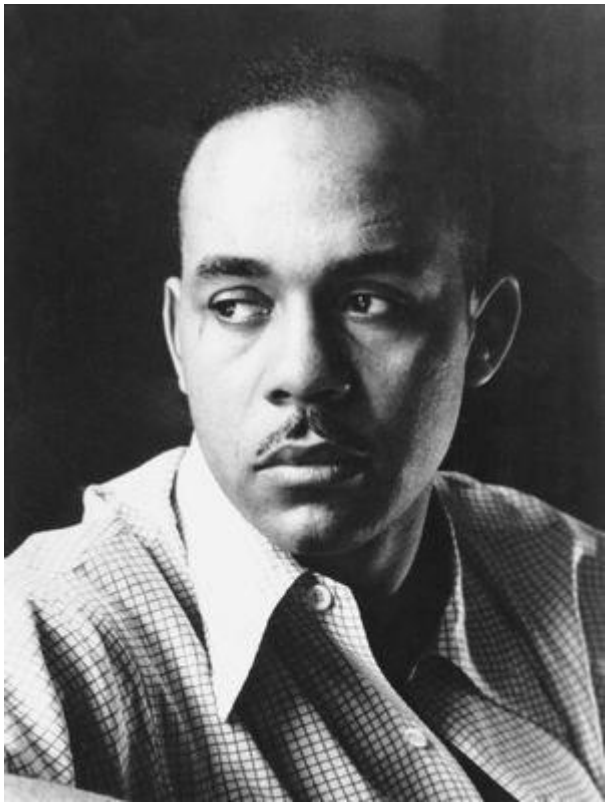
- **Southern fiction**

Post-World War II Southern writers inherited Faulkner's rich legacy. Three women—Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, and Carson McCullers, specialists in the grotesque—contributed greatly to Southern fiction. O'Connor, writing as a Roman Catholic in the Protestant South, created a high comedy of moral incongruity in her incomparable short stories. Welty, always a brilliant stylist, first came to prominence with her collections of short fiction *A Curtain of Green* (1941) and *The Wide Net, and Other Stories* (1943). Her career culminated with a large family novel, *Losing Battles* (1970), and a fine novella, *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972), which was awarded the 1973 Pulitzer Prize. McCullers is best remembered for her first book, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (1940), an intricate gothic novel set in a small town in the Deep South. She also published *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1941), *The Member of the Wedding* (1946), and *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1951), all later adapted to the stage or screen. Other fine storytellers in the Southern tradition include Elizabeth Spencer, whose short fiction was collected in *The Southern Woman* (2001),

and Reynolds Price, whose best novels were *A Long and Happy Life* (1961) and *Kate Vaiden* (1986). Initially known for his lyrical portraits of Southern eccentrics (*Other Voices, Other Rooms* [1948]), Truman Capote later published *In Cold Blood* (1965), a cold but impressive piece of documentary realism that contributed, along with the work of Tom Wolfe and Norman Mailer, to the emergence of a "new journalism" that used many of the techniques of fiction.

William Styron's overripe first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951), clearly revealed the influence of Faulkner. In two controversial later works, Styron fictionalized the dark side of modern history: *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967) depicted an antebellum slave revolt, and *Sophie's Choice* (1979) unsuccessfully sought to capture the full horror of the Holocaust. Inspired by Faulkner and Mark Twain, William Humphrey wrote two powerful novels set in Texas, *Home from the Hill* (1958) and *The Ordways* (1965). *The Moviegoer* (1961) and *The Last Gentleman* (1966) established Walker Percy as an important voice in Southern fiction. Their musing philosophical style broke sharply with the Southern gothic tradition and influenced later writers such as Richard Ford in *The Sportswriter* (1986) and its moving sequel, *Independence Day* (1995). Equally impressive were the novels and stories of Peter Taylor, an impeccable Social Realist, raconteur, and genial novelist of manners who recalled a bygone world in works such as *The Old Forest* (1985) and *A Summons to Memphis* (1986).

- **African American literature**



Ralph Ellison

Black writers of this period found alternatives to the Richard Wright tradition of angry social protest. James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison, both protégés of Wright, wrote polemical essays calling for a literature that reflected the full complexity of Black life in the United States. In his first and best novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), Baldwin portrayed the Harlem world and the Black church through his own adolescent religious experiences. Drawing on rural folktale, absurdist humour, and a picaresque realism, Ralph Ellison wrote a deeply resonant comic novel that dealt with the full range of Black experience—rural sharecropping, segregated education, northward migration, ghetto hustling, and the lure of such competing ideologies as nationalism and communism. Many

considered his novel *Invisible Man* (1952) the best novel of the postwar years.

Toni Morrison

Later two African American women published some of the most important post-World War II American fiction. In *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise* (1998), Toni Morrison created a strikingly original fiction that sounded different notes from lyrical recollection to magic realism. Like Ellison, Morrison drew on diverse literary and folk influences and dealt with important phases of Black history—i.e., slavery in *Beloved* and the Harlem Renaissance in *Jazz*. She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993. Alice Walker, after writing several volumes of poetry and a novel dealing with the civil rights movement (*Meridian* [1976]), received the Pulitzer Prize for her Black feminist novel *The Color Purple* (1982). African American men whose work gained attention during this period included Ishmael Reed, whose wild comic techniques resembled Ellison's; James Alan McPherson, a subtle short-story writer in the mold of Ellison and Baldwin; Charles

Johnson, whose novels, such as *The Oxherding Tale* (1982) and *The Middle Passage* (1990), showed a masterful historical imagination; Randall Kenan, a gay writer with a strong folk imagination whose style also descended from both Ellison and Baldwin; and Colson Whitehead, who used experimental techniques and folk traditions in *The Intuitionist* (1999) and *John Henry Days* (2001).

- **New fictional modes**

The horrors of World War II, the Cold War and the atomic bomb, the bizarre feast of consumer culture, and the cultural clashes of the 1960s prompted many writers to argue that reality had grown inaccessible, undermining the traditional social role of fiction. Writers of novels and short stories therefore were under unprecedented pressure to discover, or invent, new and viable kinds of fiction. One response was the postmodern novel of William Gaddis, John Barth, John Hawkes, Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon, Robert Coover, Paul Auster, and Don DeLillo—technically sophisticated and highly self-conscious about the construction of fiction and the fictive nature of "reality" itself. These writers dealt with themes such as imposture and paranoia; their novels drew attention to themselves as artifacts and often used realistic techniques ironically. Other responses involved a heightening of realism by means of intensifying violence, amassing documentation, or resorting to fantasy. A brief discussion of writers as different as Norman Mailer and Joyce Carol Oates may serve to illustrate these new directions.

In his World War II novel, *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), Mailer wrote in the Dos Passos tradition of social protest. Feeling its limitations, he developed his own brand of surreal fantasy in fables such as *An American Dream* (1965) and *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967). As with many of the postmodern novelists, his subject was the nature of power, personal as well as political. However, it was only when he turned to "nonfiction fiction" or "fiction as history" in *The Armies of the Night* and *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* (both 1968) that Mailer discovered his true voice—grandiose yet personal, comic yet shrewdly intellectual. He refined this approach into a new objectivity in the Pulitzer Prize-winning "true life novel" *The Executioner's Song* (1979). When he returned to fiction, his most effective work was *Harlot's Ghost* (1991), about the Central Intelligence Agency. His final novels took Jesus Christ (*The Gospel According to the Son* [1997]) and Adolf Hitler (*The Castle in the Forest* [2007]) as their subjects.

Joyce Carol Oates

In her early work, especially *A Garden of Earthly Delights* (1967) and *them* (1969), Joyce Carol Oates worked naturalistically with violent urban materials, such as the Detroit riots. Incredibly prolific, she later experimented with Surrealism in *Wonderland* (1971) and Gothic fantasy in *Bellefleur* (1980) before returning in works such as *Marya* (1986) to the bleak blue-collar world of her youth in upstate New York. Among her later works was *Blonde: A Novel* (2000), a fictional biography of Marilyn Monroe. While Mailer and Oates refused to surrender the novel's gift for capturing reality, both were compelled to search out new fictional modes to tap that power.

The surge of feminism in the 1970s gave impetus to many new women writers, such as Erica Jong, author of the sexy and funny *Fear of*

Flying (1974), and Rita Mae Brown, who explored lesbian life in *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973). Other significant works of fiction by women in the 1970s included Ann Beattie's account of the post-1960s generation in *Chilly Scenes of Winter* (1976) and many short stories, Gail Godwin's highly civilized *The Odd Woman* (1974), Mary Gordon's portraits of Irish Catholic life in *Final Payments* (1978), and the many social comedies of Alison Lurie and Anne Tyler.

- **The influence of Raymond Carver**

Perhaps the most influential fiction writer to emerge in the 1970s was Raymond Carver. He was another realist who dealt with blue-collar life, usually in the Pacific Northwest, in powerful collections of stories such as *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981) and *Cathedral* (1983). His self-destructive characters were life's losers, and his style, influenced by Hemingway and Samuel Beckett, was spare and flat but powerfully suggestive. It was imitated, often badly, by minimalists such as Frederick Barthelme, Mary Robison, and Amy Hempel. More-talented writers whose novels reflected the influence of Carver in their evocation of the downbeat world of the blue-collar male included Richard Ford (*Rock Springs* [1987]), Russell Banks (*Continental Drift* [1984] and *Affliction* [1989]), and Tobias Wolff (*The Barracks Thief* [1984] and *This Boy's Life* [1989]). Another strong male-oriented writer in a realist mode who emerged from the 1960s counterculture was Robert Stone. His *Dog Soldiers* (1974) was a grimly downbeat portrayal of the drugs-and-Vietnam generation, and *A*

Flag for Sunrise (1981) was a bleak, Conradian political novel set in Central America. Stone focused more on the spiritual malaise of his characters than on their ordinary lives. He wrote a lean, furious Hollywood novel in *Children of Light* (1986) and captured some of the feverish, apocalyptic atmosphere of the Holy Land in *Damascus Gate* (1998). In leisurely, good-humoured, minutely detailed novels, Richard Russo dealt with blue-collar losers living in decaying Northeastern towns in *The Risk Pool* (1988), *Nobody's Fool* (1993), and *Empire Falls* (2001), but he also published a satiric novel about academia, *Straight Man* (1997). Some women writers were especially impressive in dealing with male characters, including E. Annie Proulx in *The Shipping News* (1993) and *Close Range: Wyoming Stories* (1999) and Andrea Barrett in *Ship Fever* (1996). Others focused on relationships between women, including Mary Gaitskill in her witty satiric novel *Two Girls, Fat and Thin* (1991), written under the influences of Nabokov and Mary McCarthy. Lorrie Moore published rich, idiosyncratic stories as densely textured as novels. Deborah Eisenberg, Amy Bloom, Antonya Nelson, and Thom Jones also helped make the last years of the 20th century a fertile period for short fiction.

- **Multicultural writing**

The dramatic loosening of immigration restrictions in the mid-1960s set the stage for the rich multicultural writing of the last quarter of the 20th century. New Jewish voices were heard in the fiction of E.L. Doctorow, noted for his mingling of the historical with the fictional in novels such

as *Ragtime* (1975) and *The Waterworks* (1994) and in the work of Cynthia Ozick, whose best story, *Envy; or, Yiddish in America* (1969), has characters modeled on leading figures in Yiddish literature. Her story *The Shawl* (1980) concerns the murder of a baby in a Nazi concentration camp. David Leavitt introduced homosexual themes into his portrayal of middle-class life in *Family Dancing* (1984). At the turn of the 21st century, younger Jewish writers from the former Soviet Union such as Gary Shteyngart and Lara Vapnyar dealt impressively with the experience of immigrants in the United States.

Novels such as N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969, James Welch's *Winter in the Blood* (1974) and *Fools Crow* (1986), Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977), and Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* (1984), *The Beet Queen* (1986), and *The Antelope Wife* (1998) were powerful and ambiguous explorations of Native American history and identity. Mexican Americans were represented by works such as Rudolfo A. Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), Richard Rodriguez's autobiographical *Hunger of Memory* (1981), and Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* (1983) and her collection *Woman Hollering Creek, and Other Stories* (1991).

Kincaid, Jamaica

Some of the best immigrant writers, while thoroughly assimilated, nonetheless had a subtle understanding of both the old and the new culture. These included the Cuban American writers Oscar Hijuelos (*The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* [1989]) and Cristina Garcia (*Dreaming in Cuban* [1992] and *The Agüero Sisters* [1997]); the Antigua-born Jamaica Kincaid, author of *Annie John* (1984), *Lucy* (1990), the AIDS memoir *My Brother* (1997), and *See Now Then* (2013); the Dominican-born Junot Díaz, who won acclaim for *Drown* (1996), a collection of stories, and whose novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) won a Pulitzer Prize; and the Bosnian immigrant Aleksandar Hemon, who wrote *The Question of Bruno* (2000) and *Nowhere Man* (2002). Chinese Americans found an extraordinary voice in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976) and *China Men* (1980), which blended old Chinese lore with fascinating family history. Her first novel, *Tripmaster*

Monkey: His Fake Book (1989), was set in the bohemian world of the San Francisco Bay area during the 1960s. Other important Asian American writers included Gish Jen, whose *Typical American* (1991) dealt with immigrant striving and frustration; the Korean American Chang-rae Lee, who focused on family life, political awakening, and generational differences in *Native Speaker* (1995) and *A Gesture Life* (1999); and Ha Jin, whose *Waiting* (1999; National Book Award), set in rural China during and after the Cultural Revolution, was a powerful tale of timidity, repression, and botched love, contrasting the mores of the old China and the new. Bharati Mukherjee beautifully explored contrasting lives in India and North America in *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988), *Jasmine* (1989), *Desirable Daughters* (2002), and *The Tree Bride* (2004). While many multicultural works were merely representative of their cultural milieu, books such as these made remarkable contributions to a changing American literature.

During the 1990s some of the best energies of fiction writers went into autobiography, in works such as Mary Karr's *The Liar's Club* (1995), about growing up in a loving but dysfunctional family on the Texas Gulf Coast; Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* (1996), a vivid portrayal of a Dickensian childhood amid the grinding conditions of Irish slum life; Anne Roiphe's bittersweet recollections of her rich but cold-hearted parents and her brother's death from AIDS in *1185 Park Avenue* (1999); and Dave Eggers's *A Heartbreaking Work of*

Staggering Genius (2000), a painful but comic tour de force, half tongue-in-cheek, about a young man raising his brother after the death of their parents.

The memoir vogue did not prevent writers from publishing huge, ambitious novels, including David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* (1996), an encyclopaedic mixture of arcane lore, social fiction, and postmodern irony; Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001, National Book Award) and *Freedom* (2010), both family portraits; and Don DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997), a brooding, resonant, oblique account of the Cold War era as seen through the eyes of both fictional characters and historical figures. All three novels testify to a belated convergence of Social Realism and Pynchonesque invention. Pynchon himself returned to form with sprawling, picaresque historical novels: *Mason & Dixon* (1997), about two famous 18th-century surveyors who explored and mapped the American colonies, and *Against the Day* (2006), set at the turn of the 20th century.

- **Poetry**

The post-World War II years produced an abundance of strong poetry but no individual poet as dominant and accomplished as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, or William Carlos Williams, whose long careers were coming to an end. The major poetry from 1945 to 1960 was Modernist in its ironic texture yet formal in its insistence on regular rhyme and metre. Beginning in the late 1950s,

however, there were a variety of poets and schools who rebelled against these constraints and experimented with more-open forms and more-colloquial styles.

Formal poets

The leading figure of the late 1940s was Robert Lowell, who, influenced by Eliot and such Metaphysical poets as John Donne and Gerard Manley Hopkins, explored his spiritual torments and family history in *Lord Weary's Castle* (1946). Other impressive formal poets included Theodore Roethke, who, influenced by William Butler Yeats, revealed a genius for ironic lyricism and a profound empathy for the processes of nature in *The Lost Son and Other Poems* (1948); the masterfully elegant Richard Wilbur (*Things of This World* [1956]); two war poets, Karl Shapiro (*V-Letter and Other Poems* [1944]) and Randall Jarrell (*Losses* [1948]); and a group of young poets influenced by W.H. Auden, including James Merrill, W.S. Merwin, James Wright, Adrienne Rich, and John Hollander. Although they displayed brilliant technical skill, they lacked Auden's strong personal voice.

Experimentation and Beat poetry

By the mid-1950s, however, a strong reaction had developed. Poets began to turn away from Eliot and Metaphysical poetry to more-romantic or more-prosaic models such as Walt Whitman, William Carlos Williams, Hart Crane, and D.H. Lawrence. A group of poets associated with Black Mountain College in western North Carolina,

including Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, Edward Dorn, and Denise Levertov, treated the poem as an unfolding process rather than a containing form. Olson's *Maximus Poems* (1953–68) showed a clear affinity with the jagged line and uneven flow of Pound's *Cantos* and Williams's *Paterson*. Allen Ginsberg's incantatory, prophetic "Howl" (1956) and his moving elegy for his mother, "Kaddish" (1961), gave powerful impetus to the Beat movement. Written with extraordinary intensity, these works were inspired by writers as diverse as Whitman, the biblical prophets, and English poets William Blake and Christopher Smart, as well as by the dream-logic of the French Surrealists and the spontaneous jazz aesthetic of Ginsberg's friend the novelist Jack Kerouac. Other Beat poets included Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gregory Corso, and Gary Snyder, a student of Eastern religion who, in *Turtle Island* (1974), continued the American tradition of nature poetry.

The openness of Beat poetry and the prosaic directness of Williams encouraged Lowell to develop a new autobiographical style in the laconic poetry and prose of *Life Studies* (1959) and *For the Union Dead* (1964). Lowell's new work influenced nearly all American poets but especially a group of "confessional" writers, including Anne Sexton in *To Bedlam and Part Way Back* (1960) and *All My Pretty Ones* (1962) and Sylvia Plath in the posthumously published *Ariel* (1965). In her poetry Plath joined an icy sarcasm to white-hot emotional intensity. Another poet influenced by Lowell

was John Berryman, whose *Dream Songs* (1964, 1968) combined autobiographical fragments with minstrel-show motifs to create a zany style of self-projection and comic-tragic lament. Deeply troubled figures, Sexton, Plath, and Berryman all took their own lives. Lowell's influence can still be discerned in the elegant quatrains and casually brutal details of Frederick Seidel's *Life on Earth* (2001), as in the crisp elegiac poems of his award-winning *Sunrise* (1980).

"Deep image" poets

Through his personal charisma and his magazine *The Fifties* (later *The Sixties* and *The Seventies*), Robert Bly encouraged a number of poets to shift their work toward the individual voice and open form; they included Galway Kinnell, James Wright, David Ignatow, and, less directly, Louis Simpson, James Dickey, and Donald Hall. Sometimes called the "deep image" poets, Bly and his friends sought spiritual intensity and transcendence of the self rather than confessional immediacy. Their work was influenced by the poetry of Spanish and Latin American writers such as Federico García Lorca, Juan Ramón Jiménez, César Vallejo, and Pablo Neruda, especially their surreal association of images, as well as by the "greenhouse poems" (1946–48) and the later meditative poetry of Roethke, with their deep feeling for nature as a vehicle of spiritual transformation. Yet, like their Hispanic models, they were also political poets, instrumental in organizing protest and writing poems against the Vietnam War. Kinnell was a Lawrentian poet who, in poems such as "The Porcupine" and "The

Bear," gave the brutality of nature the power of myth. His vatic sequence, *The Book of Nightmares* (1971), and the quieter poems in *Mortal Acts, Mortal Words* (1980) are among the most rhetorically effective works in contemporary poetry.

New directions

James Wright's style changed dramatically in the early 1960s. He abandoned his stiffly formal verse for the stripped-down, meditative lyricism of *The Branch Will Not Break* (1963) and *Shall We Gather at the River* (1968), which were more dependent on the emotional tenor of image than on metre, poetic diction, or rhyme. In books such as *Figures of the Human* (1964) and *Rescue the Dead* (1968), David Ignatow wrote brief but razor-sharp poems that made their effect through swiftness, deceptive simplicity, paradox, and personal immediacy. Another poet whose work ran the gamut from prosaic simplicity to Emersonian transcendence was A.R. Ammons. His short poems in *Briefings* (1971) were close to autobiographical jottings, small glimpses, and observations, but, like his longer poems, they turned the natural world into a source of vision. Like Ignatow, he made it a virtue to seem unliterary and found illumination in the pedestrian and the ordinary.

Both daily life and an exposure to French Surrealism helped inspire a group of New York poets, among them Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, James Schuyler, and John Ashbery. Whether O'Hara was jotting down a sequence of ordinary moments or paying tribute to film stars, his

poems had a breathless immediacy that was distinctive and unique. Koch's comic voice swung effortlessly from the trivial to the fantastic. Strongly influenced by Wallace Stevens, Ashbery's ruminative poems can seem random, discursive, and enigmatic. Avoiding poetic colour, they do their work by suggestion and association, exploring the interface between experience and perception.

Other impressive poets of the postwar years included Elizabeth Bishop, whose precise, loving attention to objects was reminiscent of her early mentor, Marianne Moore. Though she avoided the confessional mode of her friend Lowell, her sense of place, her heartbreaking decorum, and her keen powers of observation gave her work a strong personal cast. In *The Changing Light at Sandover* (1982), James Merrill, previously a polished lyric poet, made his mandarin style the vehicle of a lighthearted personal epic, in which he, with the help of a Ouija board, called up the shades of all his dead friends, including the poet Auden. In a prolific career highlighted by such poems as *Reflections on Espionage* (1976), "Blue Wine" (1979), and *Powers of Thirteen* (1983), John Hollander, like Merrill, displayed enormous technical virtuosity. Richard Howard imagined witty monologues and dialogues for famous people of the past in poems collected in *Untitled Subjects* (1969) and *Two-Part Inventions* (1974).

Autobiographical approaches

Rich, Adrienne

With the autobiographical knots and parables of *Reasons for Moving* (1968) and *Darker* (1970), Mark Strand's paradoxical language achieved a resonant simplicity. He enhanced his reputation with *Dark Harbor* (1993) and *Blizzard of One* (1998). Other strongly autobiographical poets working with subtle technique and intelligence in a variety of forms included Philip Levine, Charles Simic, Robert Pinsky, Gerald Stern, Louise Glück, and Sharon Olds. Levine's background in working-class Detroit gave his work a unique cast, while Glück and Olds brought a terrific emotional intensity to their poems. Pinsky's poems were collected in *The Figured Wheel* (1996). He became

a tireless and effective advocate for poetry during his tenure as poet laureate from 1997 to 2000. With the sinuous sentences and long flowing lines of *Tar* (1983) and *Flesh and Blood* (1987), C.K. Williams perfected a narrative technique founded on distinctive voice, sharply etched emotion, and cleanly observed detail. He received the Pulitzer Prize for *Repair* (2000). Adrienne Rich's work gained a burning immediacy from her lesbian feminism. *The Will to Change* (1971) and *Diving into the Wreck* (1973) were turning points for women's poetry in the wake of the 1960s.

Rita Dove

That decade also enabled some older poets to become more loosely autobiographical and freshly imaginative, among them Stanley Kunitz, Robert Penn Warren, and W.S. Merwin. The 1960s invigorated gifted Black poets such as Robert Hayden, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Michael S. Harper. It formed the background for the work of the young poets of the 1980s, such as Edward Hirsch, Alan Shapiro, Jorie Graham, Cathy Song, and Rita Dove, whose sequence about her grandparents, *Thomas and Beulah*, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1987. Graham's increasingly abstract and elusive work culminated

in *The Dream of the Unified Field* (1995), selected from five previous volumes. The AIDS crisis inspired *My Alexandria* (1993) by Mark Doty, *The Man with Night Sweats* (1992) by Thom Gunn, and a superb memoir, *Borrowed Time* (1988), and a cycle of poems, *Love Alone* (1988), by the poet Paul Monette. With razor-sharp images and finely honed descriptive touches, Louisiana-born Yusef Komunyakaa emerged as an impressive African American voice in the 1990s. He wrote about his time as a soldier and war correspondent in Vietnam in *Dien Cai Dau* (1988) and received the Pulitzer Prize in 1994 for his volume of new and selected poems *Neon Vernacular* (1993). His poems were collected in *Pleasure Dome* (2001). Billy Collins found a huge audience for his engagingly witty and conversational poetry, especially that collected in *Sailing Alone Around the Room* (2001), published the year he became poet laureate.

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- **Drama**

Miller, Williams, and Albee

Two post-World War II playwrights established reputations comparable to Eugene O'Neill's. Arthur Miller wrote eloquent essays defending his modern, democratic concept of tragedy; despite its abstract, allegorical quality and portentous language, *Death of a Salesman* (1949) came

close to vindicating his views. Miller's intense family dramas were rooted in the problem dramas of Henrik Ibsen and the works of the socially conscious ethnic dramatists of the 1930s, especially Clifford Odets, but Miller gave them a metaphysical turn. From *All My Sons* (1947) to *The Price* (1968), his work was at its strongest when he dealt with father-son relationships, anchored in the harsh realities of the Great Depression. Yet Miller could also be an effective protest writer, as in *The Crucible* (1953), which used the Salem witch trials to attack the witch-hunting of the McCarthy era.

Tennessee Williams

Though his work was uneven, Tennessee Williams at his best was a more powerful and effective playwright than Miller. Creating stellar roles for actors, especially women, Williams brought a passionate lyricism and a tragic Southern vision to such plays as *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), *A*

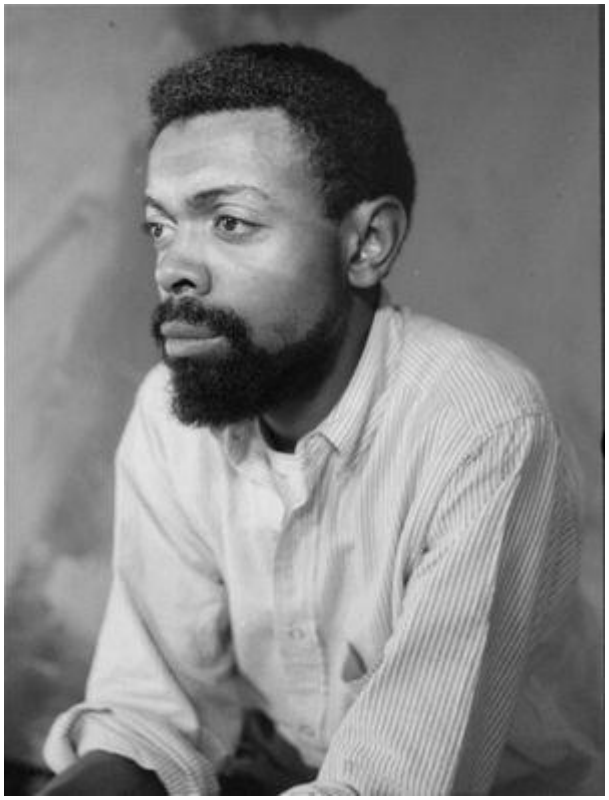
Streetcar Named Desire (1947), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), and *The Night of the Iguana* (1961). He empathized with his characters' dreams and illusions and with the frustrations and defeats of their lives, and he wrote about his own dreams and disappointments in his beautifully etched short fiction, from which his plays were often adapted.

Miller and Williams dominated the post-World War II theatre until the 1960s, and few other playwrights emerged to challenge them. Then, in 1962, Edward Albee's reputation, based on short plays such as *The Zoo Story* (1959) and *The American Dream* (1960), was secured by the stunning power of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* A master of absurdist theatre who assimilated the influence of European playwrights such as Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco, Albee established himself as a major figure in American drama. His reputation with critics and audiences, however, began to decline with enigmatic plays such as *Tiny Alice* (1964) and *A Delicate Balance* (1966), but, like O'Neill, he eventually returned to favour with a complex autobiographical drama, *Three Tall Women* (1994).

The Off-Broadway ascendancy

The centre of American drama shifted from Broadway to Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway with works such as Jack Gelber's *The Connection* (1959). American playwrights, collaborating with the Living Theatre, the Open Theatre, and other adventurous new companies, were increasingly free to write radical and innovative plays. David Rabe's *The*

Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel (1971) and *Sticks and Bones* (1972) satirized America's militaristic nationalism and cultural shallowness. David Mamet won a New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for *American Buffalo* (1976). In plays such as *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1984), he showed brilliantly how men reveal their hopes and frustrations obliquely, through their language, and in *Oleanna* (1992) he fired a major salvo in the gender wars over sexual harassment.



Amiri Baraka

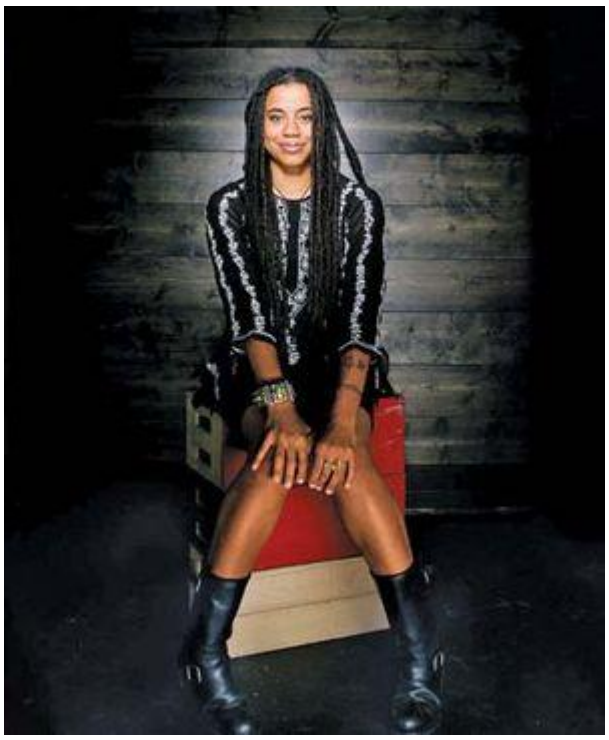
Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Ed Bullins inspired an angry Black nationalist theatre. Baraka's *Dutchman* and *The Slave* (1964) effectively dramatized racial confrontation, while Bullins's *In the Wine Time* (1968) made use of "street" lyricism. Maria Irene Fornés's *Fefu and Her Friends* (1977) proved remarkable in its exploration of women's relationships. A clear indication of Off-

Broadway's ascendancy in American drama came in 1979 when Sam Shepard, a prolific and experimental playwright, won the Pulitzer Prize for *Buried Child*. Shepard's earlier work, such as *The Tooth of Crime* (1972), was rooted both in the rock scene and counterculture of the 1960s and in the mythic world of the American West. He reached his peak with a series of offbeat dramas dealing with fierce family conflict, including *Curse of the Starving Class* (1976), *True West* (1980), *Fool for Love* (1983), and *A Lie of the Mind* (1986).

Other important new voices in American drama were the prolific Lanford Wilson, Pulitzer winner for *Talley's Folly* (1979); John Guare, who created serious farce in *The House of Blue Leaves* (1971) and fresh social drama in *Six Degrees of Separation* (1990); and Ntozake Shange, whose "choreopoem" *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf* moved to Broadway in 1976. Other well-received women playwrights included Marsha Norman, Beth Henley, Tina Howe, and Wendy Wasserstein. In a series of plays that included *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1984), *Fences* (1987), for which he won a Pulitzer Prize, and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1986), August Wilson emerged as the most powerful Black playwright of the 1980s. Devoting each play to a different decade of life in the 20th century, he won a second Pulitzer Prize, for *The Piano Lesson* (1990), and completed the 10-play cycle in 2005, shortly before his death.

The anguish of the AIDS epidemic proved a dark inspiration to many gay playwrights, especially Tony Kushner, who had gained attention with *A Bright Room Called Day* (1991), set in Germany in 1932–33; he won Broadway fame with his epically ambitious two-part drama *Angels in America* (1991–92), which combined comedy with pain, symbolism with personal history, and invented characters with historical ones. A committed political writer, Kushner often focused on public themes. His later plays included *Slavs!* (1996) and the timely *Homebody/Kabul* (2001), a brilliant monologue followed by a drama set in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. After writing several Off-Broadway plays about Chinese Americans, David Henry Hwang achieved critical and commercial success on Broadway with his gender-bending drama *M. Butterfly* (1988). Richard Nelson found an enthusiastic following in London for literate plays such as *Some Americans Abroad* (1989) and *Two Shakespearean Actors* (1990), while Richard Greenberg depicted Jewish American life and both gay and straight relationships in *Eastern Standard* (1989), *The American Plan* (1990), and *Take Me Out* (2002), the last about a gay baseball

player who reveals his homosexuality to his teammates. Donald Margulies dealt more directly with Jewish family life in *The Loman Family Picnic* (1989). He also explored the ambitions and relationships of artists in such plays as *Sight Unseen* (1992) and *Collected Stories* (1998).



Suzan-Lori Parks

The 1990s also saw the emergence of several talented women playwrights. Paula Vogel repeatedly focused on hot-button moral issues with humour and compassion, dealing with prostitution in *The Oldest Profession* (1981), AIDS in *The Baltimore Waltz* (1992), pornography in *Hot 'n' Throbbing* (1994), and the sexual abuse of minors in *How I Learned to Drive* (1997). A young African American playwright, Suzan-Lori Parks, gained increasing recognition with her surreal pageant *The America Play* (1993), an adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* called *In the Blood* (1999), and *Topdog/Underdog* (2001), a partly symbolic tale of

conflict between two brothers (named Lincoln and Booth) that reminded critics of Sam Shepard's fratricidal *True West*. She later adapted George and Ira Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* in 2012, and her *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*, produced in 2014, placed Homer's *Odyssey* in the context of the American Civil War. Other well-received works included Heather McDonald's *An Almost Holy Picture* (1995), a one-man play about the spiritual life of a preacher; poet Naomi Wallace's *One Flea Spare* (1995), set in London during the Great Plague of 1665; and Margaret Edson's *Wit* (1995), about the slow, poignant cancer death of a literary scholar whose life has been shaped by the eloquence and wit of Metaphysical poetry.

- **Literary and social criticism**

Edmund Wilson

Until his death in 1972, Edmund Wilson solidified his reputation as one of America's most versatile and distinguished men of letters. The novelist John Updike inherited Wilson's chair at *The New Yorker* and turned out an extraordinary flow of critical reviews collected in volumes such as *Hugging the Shore* (1983) and *Odd Jobs* (1991). Gore Vidal brought together his briskly readable essays of four decades—critical, personal, and political—in *United States* (1993). Susan Sontag's essays on difficult European writers, avant-garde film, politics, photography, and the language of illness embodied the probing intellectual spirit of the 1960s. In *A Second Flowering* (1973) and *The Dream of the Golden Mountains* (1980), Malcolm Cowley looked back at the writers between the world wars who had always engaged him. Alfred Kazin wrote literary history (*An American Procession* [1984], *God and the American Writer* [1997]) and autobiography (*Starting Out in the Thirties* [1965], *New York*

Jew [1978]), while Irving Howe produced studies at the crossroads of literature and politics, such as *Politics and the Novel* (1957), as well as a major history of Jewish immigrants in New York, *World of Our Fathers* (1976). The iconoclastic literary criticism of Leslie Fiedler, as, for example, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960), was marked by its provocative application of Freudian ideas to American literature. In his later work he turned to popular culture as a source of revealing social and psychological patterns. A more-subtle Freudian, Lionel Trilling, in *The Liberal Imagination* (1950) and other works, rejected Vernon L. Parrington's populist concept of literature as social reportage and insisted on the ability of literature to explore problematic human complexity. His criticism reflected the inward turn from politics toward "moral realism" that coincided with the Cold War. But the cultural and political conflicts of the 1960s revived the social approach among younger students of American literature, such as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who emerged in the 1980s as a major critic, theorist, and editor of Black writers in studies such as *Figures in Black* (1987) and *The Signifying Monkey* (1988). In the 1990s Gates evolved into a wide-ranging essayist, along with Cornel West, Stanley Crouch, bell hooks, Shelby Steele, Stephen Carter, Gerald Early, Michele Wallace, and other Black social critics.

Literary biography and the "new journalism"

The waning of the New Criticism, with its strict emphasis on the text, led not only to a surge of historical criticism and cultural theory but also to

a flowering of literary biography. Major works included Leon Edel's five-volume study of Henry James (1953–72), Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life* (1961), Richard Ellmann's studies of James Joyce (1959) and Oscar Wilde (1988), R.W.B. Lewis's revealing biography of Edith Wharton (1975), Joseph Frank's five-volume biography of Dostoyevsky (1976–2002), Paul Zweig's brilliant study of Walt Whitman (1984), and Carol Brightman's exhaustive life of Mary McCarthy (1992).

Joan Didion

One positive result of the accelerating complexity of post-World War II life was a body of distinguished journalism and social commentary. John Hersey's *Hiroshima* (1946) was a deliberately controlled, unemotional account of atomic holocaust. In *Notes of a Native Son* (1955), *Nobody Knows My Name* (1961), and *The Fire Next Time* (1963), the novelist James Baldwin published a body of the most eloquent essays written in the United States. Ralph Ellison's essays on race and culture in *Shadow and Act* (1964) and *Going to the Territory* (1986) were

immensely influential. Norman Mailer's "new journalism" proved especially effective in capturing the drama of political conventions and large protest demonstrations. The novelist Joan Didion published two collections of incisive social and literary commentary, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1968) and *The White Album* (1979). The title essay of the first collection was an honest investigation of the forces that gave colour and significance to the counterculture of the 1960s, a subject also explored with stylistic flourish by journalists as different as Tom Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson. The surreal atmosphere of the Vietnam War, infused with rock music and drugs, gave impetus to subjective journalism such as Michael Herr's *Dispatches* (1977). The mood of the period also encouraged strong works of autobiography, such as Frank Conroy's *Stop-Time* (1967) and Lillian Hellman's personal and political memoirs, including *An Unfinished Woman* (1969) and *Scoundrel Time* (1976). Robert M. Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974) defied all classification. Pirsig equated the emotional collapse of his central character with the disintegration of American workmanship and cultural values.

Theory

The major New Critics and New York critics were followed by major but difficult academic critics, who preferred theory to close reading. European structuralism found little echo in the United States, but poststructuralist theorists such as Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Derrida found a welcome in the less-political atmosphere,

marked by skepticism and defeat, that followed the 1960s. Four Yale professors joined Derrida to publish a group of essays, *Deconstruction and Criticism* (1979). Two of the contributors, Paul de Man and J. Hillis Miller, became leading exponents of deconstruction in the United States. The other two, Harold Bloom and Geoffrey H. Hartman, were more interested in the problematic relation of poets to their predecessors and to their own language. Bloom was especially concerned with the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson on modern American poets. After developing a Freudian theory of literary influence in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and *A Map of Misreading* (1975), Bloom reached a wide audience with *The Western Canon* (1994) and *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1998), both of which explored and defended the Western literary tradition.

Philosophers Richard Rorty and Stanley Cavell and critic Richard Poirier found a native parallel to European theory in the philosophy of Emerson and the writings of pragmatists such as William James and John Dewey. Emulating Dewey and Irving Howe, Rorty emerged as a social critic in *Achieving Our Country* (1998) and *Philosophy and Social Hope* (1999). Other academic critics also took a more-political turn. Stephen Greenblatt's work on Shakespeare and other Elizabethan writers and Edward Said's essays in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983) were influential in reviving historical approaches to literature that had long been neglected. Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) directed

attention to the effects of colonialism on the arts and society. His essays were collected in *Reflections on Exile* (2000). Other critics deflected this historical approach into the field of cultural studies, which erased the lines between "high" (elite) and "low" (popular) culture and often subsumed discussion of the arts to questions of ideology. Meanwhile, a wide range of feminist critics, beginning with Kate Millett, Ellen Moers, Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, and Elaine Showalter, gave direction to new gender-based approaches to past and present writers. Critics who came to be known as queer theorists, such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, produced innovative work on texts dealing with homosexuality, both overt and implicit.

All these methods yielded new dimensions of critical understanding, but in less-adept hands they became so riddled with jargon or so intensely political and ideological that they lost touch with the general reader, with common sense itself, and with any tradition of accessible criticism. This drew the ire of both conservatives, such as Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), and writers on the left, such as Russell Jacoby in *The Last Intellectuals* (1987) and *Dogmatic Wisdom* (1994). Reactions against theory-based criticism set in during the 1990s not only with attacks on "political correctness" but also with a return to more informal and essayistic forms of criticism that emphasized the role of the public intellectual and the need to reach a wider general audience. There was a revival of interest in literary journalism. Both older critics, such as Frank Lentricchia in *The Edge of Night* (1994) and Said in *Out of*

Place (1999), and younger critics, including Alice Kaplan in *French Lessons* (1993), turned toward autobiography as a way of situating their own intellectual outlook and infusing personal expression into their work.

James R. GilesMorris DicksteinThe Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

Edward Harrigan

- **Edward Harrigan**

American actor, producer, and playwright

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Harrigan, Edward

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Born:

October 26, 1845? New York City New York

Died:

June 6, 1911 New York City New York

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Edward Harrigan, byname **Ned Harrigan**, (born October 26, 1845?, New York City, New York, U.S.—died June 6, 1911, New York City), American actor, producer, and playwright, half of the comedy team of Harrigan and Hart.

Harrigan—whose year of birth has been identified variously as 1843, 1844, and 1845—began his theatrical career in San Francisco, where in 1861 he was singing with Lotta Crabtree. After developing his skill as a comedian, Harrigan formed a team with Sam Rickey and returned to New York City. In 1872 he formed a new partnership with Tony Hart (original name Anthony Cannon; 1857–91), and Harrigan and Hart remained together until 1885. In 1876 they became comanagers of the Theatre Comique in New York City. After a new theatre was destroyed by fire in 1884, Harrigan became sole manager of Harrigan's Park Theatre. During his long career he wrote several hundred sketches and plays, mostly burlesques.

- **Frederik Pohl**

American author

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Alternate titles: Ernst Mason, Frederik George Pohl

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The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

Last Updated: Article History

Born:

November 26, 1919 New York City New York

Died:

September 2, 2013 (aged 93) Arlington Heights Illinois

Awards And Honors:

Hugo Award (1977) Nebula Award (1976)

Notable Works:

“Fermi and Frost” “Gateway” “Jem” “The Age of the Pussyfoot” “The Meeting” “The Space Merchants” “The Way the Future Blogs”

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Frederik Pohl, in full **Frederik George Pohl**, (born November 26, 1919, New York City, New York, U.S.—died September 2, 2013, Arlington Heights, Illinois), American science-fiction writer whose best work uses the genre as a mode of social criticism and as an exploration of the long-range consequences of technology in an ailing society.

Pohl was a high-school dropout, but, by the time he was 20 years old, he was editing the science-fiction magazines *Astonishing Stories* and *Super Science Stories*. In the late 1930s Pohl and others interested in science fiction formed a group known as the Futurians, which dedicated itself to the creation and promotion of constructive and forward-looking ("futurian") science fiction. Other members included Isaac Asimov and C.M. Kornbluth. During World War II Pohl served in the U.S. Army Air Forces and then worked briefly in an advertising agency before returning to writing and editing.

Literary Favorites: Fact or Fiction?

Though many of his works are known for their humour, Pohl often addressed serious issues. His most famous work, *The Space*

Merchants (1953), was written in collaboration with Kornbluth. It tells the story of Mitchell Courtenay, a "copysmith star class" for a powerful advertising agency who is made head of a project to colonize Venus in order to create consumers in space. This chilling portrait of a world dominated by the economic perspective of advertising executives made Pohl's reputation. Pohl wrote several other books with Kornbluth; some of their work can be found in *Our Best: The Best of Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth* (1987).

Pohl's other novels include *The Age of the Pussyfoot* (1969); the Nebula Award-winning *Man Plus* (1976); *Gateway* (1977), which won both the Hugo and the Nebula Award for best novel; *Jem* (1980), the first and only novel to capture a National Book Award for science fiction (hardcover), bestowed only in 1980; *Chernobyl* (1987); and *All the Lives He Led* (2011). The trilogy composed of *The Other End of Time* (1996), *The Siege of Eternity* (1997), and *The Far Shore of Time* (1999) imagines the future Earth at the centre of a galactic war. Pohl's numerous short-story collections include *The Best of Frederik Pohl* (1975), *Pohlstars* (1984), and *The Gateway Trip: Tales and Vignettes of the Heechee* (1990). Pohl also won the Hugo Awards for best professional editor (1966–68) for his work at *If* magazine, for best short story for both "The Meeting" (1973, written with Kornbluth) and "Fermi and Frost" (1986), and for best fan writer for his blog *The Way the Future Blogs* (2010).

Pohl's other works included a memoir, *The Way the Future Was* (1978), and an environmental handbook with Asimov, *Our Angry Earth* (1991). He also wrote biography: *Tiberius* (1960; written as Ernst Mason) and the *Encyclopædia Britannica* article on the Roman emperor Tiberius. Pohl was inducted into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame in 1998.

This article was most recently revised and updated by Amy Tikkanen.

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